

The **Global** **NEW LIGHT** of **MYANMAR**

**Four Objectives of the National Defence and Security Council**

- 1. To steadfastly strive for emergence of political forces and the people’s representatives who can implement a genuine, disciplined multi-party democratic system while constantly emphasizing on the national interests of the State.
- 2. To persistently strive for promoting the socio-economic life of the people through the development of agro-based industries in improving the agricultural sector, the vital foundation of the economic growth of the State.
- 3. To put emphasis on enhancing the national education and health sectors for sustainable development of the State.
- 4. To implement multi-party democratic system, with the participation of the people, to ensure the success of multi-party democratic general election process and successfully moving towards with the multi-party democratic system aspired by the entire people.

**Myanmar, Russia pledge deeper cooperation across multiple sectors**

The emergence of qualified Hluttaw candidates through Myanmar’s election is expected to help effectively carry out development undertakings for the State.

A DELEGATION led by Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, who observed the electoral process of the multiparty democratic general election held in Myanmar, called on Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the Bayintnaung Villa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, they exchanged views on observing the election process of Myanmar as a Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation together with international election observation teams, and witness in free and active participation of the voting people in casting ballots.

They also discussed prospects of emerging qualified candidates through the election to be able to carry out development undertakings for the State, plans to hold the elections in relevant phases, and conducting further phases of the election in the remaining townships.

Moreover, their discussions focused on the political progress in Myanmar, improvement of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, and the further promotion of cooperation in sectors of defence, economy, science and technology, education, legal affairs, culture, and parliaments.

After the meeting, the Senior General and the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation exchanged gifts and had documentary



Acting President and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Mr Sholban Kara-Ool exchange commemorative gifts during the latter’s call on the former yesterday.

photos taken together with all attendees.

Also, present at the meeting were Secretary of the Commission General Ye Win Oo, Commission member Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe, Union Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Kan Zaw and officials. The Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of Russia was accompanied by Mr Iskander Azizov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar, and delegation members. — MNA/TTA



# NATIONAL

- **Let us encourage production for prosperity of the Nation.**
- **Let us ensure education sector for the development of the Nation.**
- **Let us protect our environment for the prosperity of the Nation.**

Myanmar Gazette

**Appointment and Duty Assignment for Permanent Secretary/Director-General**

THE National Defence and Security Council has appointed and assigned U Myint Swe from the Chairman’s Office of the Union Civil Service Board to the duties of Permanent Secretary and Director-General.

## Energy Museum opens in Thanlyin to mark Ministry and Refinery anniversaries



Visitors are seen enthusiastically looking into the display at the museum.

IN commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ministry of Energy and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thanlyin Oil Refinery, the Energy Museum in Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region, is now open from 10 am to 5 pm daily, except on Mondays, commencing on 24 December 2025.

The museum is visited by retired military officers, fire service personnel, residents of Thanlyin, university teachers and students, interested members of the public in Yangon and Thanlyin, retired employees of the Ministry of Energy, Thanlyin Refinery staff, and their families. Museum officials will provide explanations on the history of Myanmar’s energy sector to all visitors.

The Energy Museum is designed to present the history of Myanmar’s energy sector. The exhibition aims to highlight the sector’s past and inform its future, providing a comprehensive resource for future generations of students to learn about energy development in Myanmar.

The museum features exhibits spanning from the feudal era to the present day, including historical documents, models, equipment, oil and gas exploration and production processes, tools used in oil exploration and production, miniature models, offshore blocks, the Thanlyin Oil Refinery Centennial exhibition, factory miniatures, and exhibits related to the future of the energy sector. All displays are systematically arranged, and entry is free to the public. — MNA/MKKS

- ### Four National Objectives for 78<sup>th</sup> Independence Day 2026
1. To safeguard the non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty by all citizens, as they are the most essential and suitable national objectives and national duties
  2. To strive forward for national unity and Union peace to implement sustainable and balanced development
  3. To establish a genuine, disciplined democratic system completely by exercising the freedom and justice in accordance with the laws and regulations
  4. To advance other economic sectors and promote MSMEs based on regional products

### 6 special civil appeal cases passed judgements, 1 special criminal case, and 3 special civil appeal cases heard

A special appeal tribunal court consisting of the Union Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Union U Tha Htay, judges of the Supreme Court of the Union: U Myo Tint, U Thaung Naing, U Win Myint and Daw Soe Khet Khet was convened yesterday morning at Zeyathiri District Court in Nay Pyi Taw, and passed judgements for six special civil appeal cases: No 21/2025 (Magway), 35/2025 (Ayeyawady), 36/2025 (Magway), 39/2025 (Yangon), 40/2025 (Mandalay) and 44/2025 (Magway).

In addition, a total of four special appeal cases: one special criminal appeal case No 9/2025 (Yangon), and three special civil appeal cases: No 38/2025 (Mandalay), 41/2025 (Bago) and 47/2025 (Mandalay) were heard. — MNA

## Publication of Year 4 Action Plan (2026) of the Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027)

THE Supreme Court of the Union has been implementing the Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027) with the motto “Providing Justice by All”. The yearly Action Plans have been drawn and implemented in order to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The Year 4 Action Plan (2026) of the Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027) is published today in Myanmar-English versions.

The Judicial Strategic Plan for five-year (2023-2027) has been set up to implement the Action Plans yearly as the strategic initiatives as per priorities to achieve the vision, mission and values of the judiciary with the five Strategic Action Areas; Facilitate and Expand Public Access to Court Services; Promote Public Awareness; Enhance Judicial Independence and Administrative Capacity; Promote and Ensure the Professionalism, Accountability and Integrity



This image illustrates the cover of the publication.

of the Judiciary; Promote Efficient Case Management and Court Specializations.

Therefore, priority 1 initiatives of the Action Plan have been implemented from 2023 to 2025, and incomplete actions from previous years will continue to be carried out this year. And then, the new initiatives will be targeted in the 2026 Action Plan.

The Year 4 Action Plan 2026 of the Judicial Strategic Plan is available on the website of the Supreme Court of the Union, [www.unionsupremecourt.gov.mm](http://www.unionsupremecourt.gov.mm). — MNA



NATIONAL

Call for Unity, Steadfastness  
Amid Attempts To Divide

All citizens must stand orderly and united through thick and thin. We must never lose sight of our main goal and persevere it without deviation regardless of any attempt by the detractors to divide, incite and provoke us.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by General Aung San  
at 7:40 pm on 1 January 1947)



International Observers Share Feedback on  
Myanmar’s 2025 General Election



Union Election Commission Chair U Than Soe speaks at the ceremony featuring observational remarks by international missions who monitored Phase I of the multiparty democratic general election.

A CEREMONY of remarks on observation by international election observers who monitored Phase I of the multiparty democratic general election held in 102 townships on 28 December 2025 took place at the Jasmine Nay Pyi Taw Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, with an address by Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Than Soe.

Also present at the ceremony were UEC member U Myo Hlaing, deputy ministers, election observation delegations led by Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of Russia Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Central Election Commission member of Russian Mr Igor Borisov, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr Deng Xijun, Ms Chen Xuanbo from the International Depart-

ment of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Deputy Chairman of the Election Commission of Kazakhstan Mr Yerman Mukhtar, member of the Cambodian Election Commission Mr Yich Samethy, Head of International Relations of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Mr Nguyen Duc Thinh, Mr Mario Jose Armengol Campos from Nicaragua, Retired Maj-Gen Mr Sahni Arun Kumar of India and Mr Yusuke Watanabe of the Japan-Myanmar Association, directors-general of the relevant ministries, and officials from the UEC Office and guests.

Speaking on the occasion, the UEC Chairman said that the Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman expressed his pleasure and gratitude for being

able to visit and observe the election process. The UEC Chairman emphasized that holding the election is crucial for forming the respective Hluttaws, and through the Hluttaws, assigning responsibilities to the President, Vice-President, administrative bodies, and union-level organizations appointed by the President, thereby enabling the government to carry out its duties. It is therefore important that the election is conducted fully and in accordance with the law.

The 2025 multiparty democratic general election marks an important milestone for the nation. The role of the observers who participated in monitoring the election process for correctness, integrity, and credibility is extremely significant. Their participation has highlighted the importance of transparen-

cy, freedom, fairness, and collaborative coordination in the democratic process. Their observations and recommendations will strengthen public confidence and contribute to the further development and flourishing of the democratic system.

Myanmar’s foreign policy is independent, active, and non-aligned. It is based on the principles of global peace and maintaining friendly relations with other nations. On this foundation, it will be possible to promote and strengthen cooperation through mutual understanding and goodwill between countries.

The UEC Chairman expressed his delight and was deeply grateful for the sincere support and steadfast friendship of the observation teams toward Myanmar. Their encouragement

reflects true camaraderie and brotherhood. Not only will the governments of their countries and Myanmar continue to maintain strong relations, but the ties between the peoples of both countries will also remain as enduring bonds of friendship.

The UEC Chairman invited them to openly and transparently share their observations and comments regarding their election monitoring experience. By receiving their perspectives, the commission will be able to identify ways to carry out future activities even more effectively.

Election observers from the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and Cambodia gave their remarks on the election observation process.

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# NATIONAL

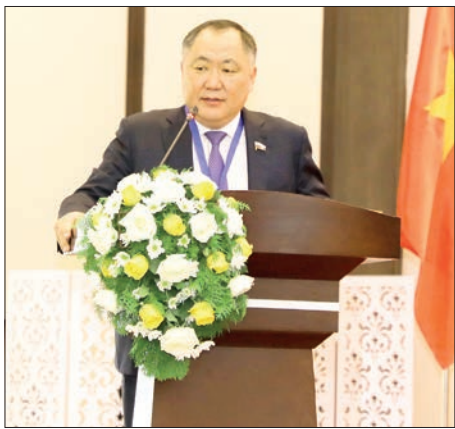
## Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

ARMED terrorists have been launching attacks by using residential homes and administrative buildings in towns and villages as cover, where they have forcibly settled. They aim to shield themselves from Tatmadaw counterattacks while also persuading temporarily displaced persons to return to their native areas and recruiting new members. That enables terrorists to use civilians as human shields. Tatmadaw is committed to safeguarding the sovereignty of the State and will respond to these threats based on intelligence and prevailing conditions. Therefore, residents in areas where terrorists have taken control must prioritize their safety and protect themselves from being exploited by these groups.

*(An excerpt from guidance given by Chairman of the State Administration Council, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to Shan State cabinet members and state-level departmental officials on 3 September 2024)*

## International Election Observers Comment on Myanmar Vote

FROM PAGE 3



**Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation**

Distinguished Chairman of the Union Election Commission of Myanmar, officials, and international guests, yesterday, we observed the election of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held in collaboration with international election observation teams. Our delegation included not only representatives from political parties in Russia but also representatives from the Election Commission. They have experience studying elections not only in Myanmar but also in other countries on multiple occasions. We have also shared the experiences of our team members. Therefore, we are here to observe Myanmar's election by comparing it with our own experiences. During our observation yesterday, we clearly saw the efforts and dedication of the Myanmar Election Commission. This work is definitely not easy, and it is evident that they are truly putting in a lot of effort. While we were observing, we noticed that voters were using electronic voting machines. According to officials, these machines are fully protected against any external electronic interference, and we could see that these machines were functioning properly and reliably. No signs of outside disruption were observed. Using these machines ensures that the election results are genuine and credible. The use of electronic voting machines in this election is a real advantage. From what we observed, these machines greatly reduced the time required for voting compared to previous elections. The voting process was faster, and voters were organized in long, orderly lines, participating actively and happily. We also saw that the staff members of the

Union Election Commission were serving their duties attentively and energetically. Yesterday, we exchanged brief greetings with voters and asked a few questions. All of them were enthusiastic and showed genuine interest in the election. They said they were preparing to vote actively and happily. We also observed that party representatives monitoring the election were performing their duties carefully. Some voters were even waiting at polling stations with their family members, which reflects a true sense of communal participation. Seeing this, we feel that the public has confidence in the election and in its security measures. Therefore, I would like to express my pride and satisfaction regarding the election. We, as the Russian delegation, are proud of the successful conduct of the election and the dedication of those responsible for ensuring its smooth operation and full security. Therefore, we believe that both the organizers of the election and the participating citizens will achieve the stability, peace, development, and success they desire. The diligent and lawful efforts made in conducting the election are not to be forgotten. I am confident that those responsible are carrying out their duties with great care. In conclusion, I would like to express that we are pleased and proud of the Election Commission staff for their dedicated efforts, the sincere commitment of Myanmar's leaders to the election, and the strong enthusiasm of the people. We convey our heartfelt congratulations on the successful conduct of phase 1 of the election.



**Mr Igor Borisov, Member of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation**

Distinguished friends attending the

ceremony, Mingalaba! Our delegation leader has already shared a very comprehensive view of the election being held in Myanmar, and I would like to add a few of my own observations. The already-conducted election is transparent and in accordance with the law, and I would like to express our gratitude for that. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of those responsible, we had the opportunity to observe the election closely. We were able to speak with some of the voters and also visit polling stations to interact with the staff of the Union Election Commission. We learned about the operation of the Electronic Voting Machines as well. We would like to commend the organizers for arranging both the election process for our observation and the use of the electronic voting machines. From the legal framework to the organization of the election, the security measures, and the active work of the staff, we, as the Russian Election Commission, can confidently declare that this is a high-standard, transparent, and well-conducted election. I would like to add that this election was conducted in an orderly manner, and we did not observe any opponents of the election or those trying to derail the democratic path. In the early stages before the election, there were some attempts on the internet to spread news aimed at disrupting the election. We are well aware that Myanmar's election was targeted through information technology attacks. However, both the Election Commission and the citizens successfully overcame these challenges, ensuring that the election process could proceed smoothly along the democratic path. I also want to emphasize again the support from the Head of State of Myanmar and the active participation of the people, which made it possible to successfully carry out the election. Finally, I would like to note that if Myanmar needs assistance regarding electoral matters, we are ready to provide support.

**Mr Deng Xijun, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China**

On behalf of our country, I would like to express our gratitude for inviting us to come and observe. We are especially pleased and honoured to have had the



opportunity, over the past three days, to study how Myanmar is organizing and conducting its election. We are particularly grateful to the Myanmar Election Commission for inviting and granting us this observation opportunity. Notably, the successful conduct of these elections reflects the agreements and cooperative efforts between Myanmar's Acting President Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Myanmar and China have been collaborating on many initiatives, and China continues to provide substantial support to Myanmar. Yesterday, we visited six polling stations in Nay Pyi Taw. From my observations, everything appeared to be well-organised and running smoothly. Specifically, the preparation and arrangement of the polling stations were systematic, and we saw voters participating actively. At the last polling station, even about an hour before closing, people were still lined up and waiting to cast their votes. We observed that the staff responsible for the election were performing their duties accurately and efficiently. They were carefully verifying voters' ID cards and information, working with patience and diligence. The first part of this election is proceeding smoothly and peacefully. Since it has been successful, we believe that Phases II and III can also be conducted successfully. We also noticed that voters have expectations that after the election, their lives will improve, the economy will get better, and in some areas, conflicts will decrease, leading to greater peace and stability. This election is an internal affair for Myanmar, and from China's perspective, it is successful. We believe it will contribute to national reconciliation and coexistence. China and Myanmar

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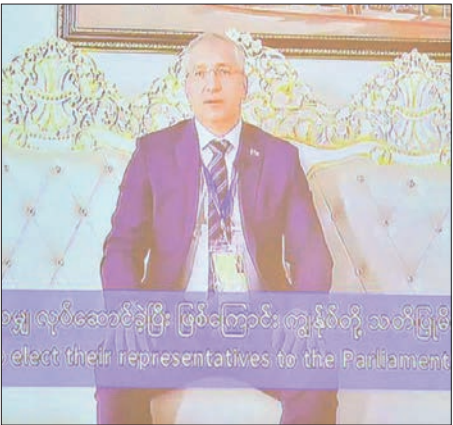


NATIONAL

International Election Observers Comment on Myanmar Vote

FROM PAGE 4

maintain good, friendly, and cooperative relations. We are always ready to assist Myanmar and are committed to supporting initiatives that foster development between the two countries. Therefore, we hope that this election will contribute to the economic and social development of Myanmar through collaborative efforts.



Mr Alexei Bashan, Deputy Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Belarus

On 28 December 2025, as part of the Belarusian delegation, we came as observers to study and monitor how the elections of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar are being conducted. The first thing I noticed is that the Election Commission's operational capacity is highly organized and of excellent quality. Every effort has been made at the designated polling stations to ensure that citizens can vote freely and securely. Ensuring such security is extremely important for each polling station. We observed that many voters personally came to cast their votes to make their own choices and decide their future. This is very positive because young people and family members were actively participating, showing genuine interest and respect for the process. Today, we noticed that citizens are making every effort to elect representatives to the parliament. These elected representatives will later form a government and continue to build the nation. We observed that the people of Myanmar are actively participating because they want to personally determine their own destiny. This is particularly impressive and a source of great pride. We also noticed that there were no violations of the law, and the innovative use of electronic voting machines highlights a modern approach to voting. This technology speeds up the process and eliminates delays. There were no long lines of voters; everything was simple, fast, and efficient. We are especially pleased that necessary preparations, including initial training for polling station staff and voters, were carried out in advance. Citizens of all ages came on time to vote with confidence. Overall, seeing smiles on the faces of voters indicates their trust and belief in their future. Thank you.



Mr Shpakouski Aliaksandr, Member of Parliament of Belarus

The leaders of the Parliamentary Committee on Cooperation with the Republic of the Union of Myanmar arrived in Myanmar on 24 December and today visited three polling stations in the city. At present, conditions are peaceful and calm, and every measure has been taken to ensure that citizens can freely express their will. Elections are the only legitimate path in the political process, and we believe they provide fair competition in establishing authority and convening the Hluttaw. Concrete steps are being taken for dialogue and cross-party consensus. Political groups that refuse to participate in society are removing themselves from the legal framework and pursuing paths inconsistent with the constitutional framework. Such groups are undermining election activities in certain areas to prevent the proper conduct of the electoral process. We believe that, based on the results of the Hluttaw elections, lawful governing bodies can be formed in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Belarus is always ready to assist and support in this process. Over the past four years, the Myanmar government has achieved successes in addressing domestic political issues. Although challenges remain, Belarus remains prepared to provide necessary political support to our friends in Myanmar, and the presence of Belarusian observers is part of this commitment. This serves as a testament that our leaders support Myanmar's goal of peace and the stable and secure development of its territory.



Mr Yerman Mukhtar, Deputy Chairman of the Election Commission of Kazakhstan

First of all, I would like to extend my greetings to all the distinguished guests who are here this event. I would like to begin by stating that all the guests present here will play an important role in building close diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Kazakhstan. I am the Deputy Chairman of the Election Commission of Kazakhstan. The main purpose of our delegation's visit is to observe and study the elections being held in Myanmar, to further strengthen and continue diplomatic cooperation between our two countries, and to discuss matters of mutual interest. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Myanmar Election Commission for their warm welcome and for creating the best possible conditions for our observation mission. Since our arrival, we have received a great deal of relevant information regarding the elections conducted in Myanmar, both in Yangon and in Nay Pyi Taw. In particular, the speech delivered by the Chairman of the Myanmar Election Commission enabled us to gain a clear understanding of all the processes being carried out by the Commission and the technological aspects that will be used in the elections. We observed that the elections in Myanmar involve truly practical and genuinely competitive electoral processes. We are also considering applying the positive practices and valuable information we observed here in our own country. I would like to share a few of my observations regarding the elections. Conducting an election within a single day is indeed a very large and demanding task. In doing so, we were able to see one of the challenging aspects faced by the Election Commission. Bringing together and managing large numbers of people in a single day is extremely difficult. We also observed that, in carrying out the elections, not only the Election Commission but also representatives from the respective political parties came to observe and that all parties were cooperating in the process. Another point we observed is that the voter lists have been prepared very carefully and systematically. At the respective polling stations, arrangements have been made so that all voters can easily find their names on the lists. In addition, voters are able to check their names not only on the posted voter list boards but also in the register upon arrival at the polling station, sign their names, and then proceed to the voting booth to cast their ballots by secret vote. We also observed that voting machines were used at polling stations in a thorough and highly effective manner. Voters participated actively and cast their ballots enthusiastically. Furthermore, we noted that journalists from both domestic and international media were gathering news on the election process, and that state-owned media were also

reporting on and broadcasting the elections. One particularly important point is that a large number of young people were among those casting ballots. This demonstrates that, with strong youth participation in the electoral process, Myanmar's young people hold great hope and expectations for the country's future. In addition, I would like to state that we are ready to further strengthen and expand diplomatic relations between our two countries. In conclusion, I wish the elections in Myanmar every success and a smooth completion. Thank you all.



Mr Yich Samethy, Member of Election Commission in Cambodia

On behalf of the Election Commission of Cambodia, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to visit and observe. Yesterday, when I visited the polling stations in Nay Pyi Taw, I would like to share the following observations. First, I observed that the preparation and conduct of the polling stations were extremely well organized, complete, and peaceful. Voters were able to participate in the election in an orderly manner, exercising their democratic rights without any external interference, obstruction, sabotage, or intimidation. Secondly, all officials on duty at the polling stations were carrying out the voting, vote-counting, and overall electoral processes properly and thoroughly in accordance with the prescribed laws and regulations. Another key point is transparency. Throughout the entire voting process, it was conducted openly and transparently. The opening and closing of polling stations, voting, and vote counting were all carried out carefully with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including state authorities. We observed that political parties, as well as international election observers and the media, were also able to participate and cooperate throughout the process. Fourth, by using Myanmar's electronic voting machines, voters were able to cast their ballots in a way that made both voting and vote counting faster and more accurate than before. In addition, we observed that voters coming to cast their ballots had a good understanding of how to use the voting machines. Fifth, we also found that not only were voters able



NATIONAL

Terror groups fund arms and military costs through drug trafficking: MoHA Union Minister

THE Central Committee on Counter-Terrorism Meeting 2025 was held yesterday at the Areindama Hall, Myanmar Police Force Headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, Chairman of the Central Counter-Terrorism Committee, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, said terrorism has been changing in various forms along with political, social, and technological developments. According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), the nature of terrorism is shifting from conventional methods to more technologically advanced hybrid forms. Non-state actors around the world are increasingly using drones. In Myanmar, terrorist groups are using drone technology to attack civilian targets and destroy infrastructure, while also increasingly using the cyber domain for propaganda and fundraising.

The government drafted the Counter-Terrorism Law with five objectives and enacted it on 4 June 2014. Then, the central committee was formed to implement 19 tasks, and also five working committees and five working groups were formed to carry out the plans effectively.

The Union minister then mentioned the brutal actions of terrorists against the civilians, resulting in thousands of deaths, damage to 7,598 buildings and property, 9,908 deaths including civilians, monks, children, ad-



The 2025 meeting of the Central Committee on Counter-Terrorism underway yesterday, presided over by Committee Chair Union Minister Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung.

ministrative officials, and government staff, whereas 13,011 were injured due to the terrorist attacks between 1 February 2021 and 26 December 2025.

He added that the terrorist groups worldwide raise funds through illegal channels such as drug trafficking and human trafficking. For the country to be removed from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) monitoring list, it is necessary to prevent and combat the financing of terrorism. Efforts must be carried out in accordance with domestic laws and international stipulations, including United Nations Security Council resolutions 1373 and 2462.

He stated that the drug

trafficking activities of the AA terrorist group have expanded significantly, involving the smuggling of chemical precursors for drug production, drug manufacturing, transportation and storage, domestic distribution, and coordination for export in connection with international drug smugglers. From 2016 to 23 December 2025, there were 24 drug seizure cases involving AA members, including nine cases in which AA leadership figures were directly involved.

He continued that according to confessions, those arrested were not engaged in drug trafficking as private business activities but were acting under assignments given by the AA

group. About 70 per cent of the profits obtained from drugs were used to purchase weapons and ammunition. The group was also found to be engaged in transnational crimes such as money laundering, human trafficking, and exchanging drugs for weapons through connections with international arms smuggling networks.

Terrorism, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, money laundering, and human trafficking are interconnected, and according to 2025 international and regional cases, the terrorist groups mainly receive their funds for military expenses and procurement of weapons from drug trafficking. Money earned from drugs and

human trafficking is laundered through various means, including cryptocurrencies, to conceal traces and then reused for terrorist activities. As these crimes are connected transnationally, regional cooperation is essential. The key to preventing and suppressing terrorism and other transnational crimes lies in information exchange and mutual legal assistance. Myanmar has enacted the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Law and has formed a central committee in accordance with the law. Therefore, existing central committees formed under relevant laws must work together through mutual coordination and cooperation.

He then mentioned the role of international cooperation in combating terrorism, active participation of the country in activities of INTERPOL and ASEANAPOL, drafting of national policy guidance for combatting terrorism (CT) and violent extremism (VE/CVE) based on UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism and the BIMSTEC Convention.

The committee members, working committee chairmen, working group heads, secretaries, and members then presented their explanations and suggestions.

The Union minister gave proper instructions and concluded the meeting. — MNA/KTZH

International Election Observers Comment on Myanmar Vote

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to vote at polling stations in a safe and secure environment, but appropriate and reliable security arrangements were also in place for polling station staff. Sixth, we did not observe any irregularities or misconduct of any kind. In addition to the absence of such issues, we found that the election was conducted smoothly and effectively, with no instances of improper

procedures. Furthermore, polling stations were easily accessible for all voters, and the voting process was convenient and well organized. As a result, we observed that this election process was comprehensive and carried out with full accountability. In conclusion, in accordance with the invitation of the Government of Myanmar, we came to observe the 2025 general election and visited numerous polling

stations during our observation. At the polling stations we observed, the elections were conducted calmly and properly in accordance with the law and relevant regulations, and were carried out in a free, fair, and transparent manner. Moreover, as we did not observe any irregularities whatsoever, we found that the entire election process was sound, credible, and able to gain broad public trust. Therefore, we

hope that future stages of the elections will also be conducted as smoothly and effectively as at this stage. We would also like to express our gratitude for the invitation. As the year 2026 approaches, we wish all colleagues and distinguished guests a happy and prosperous New Year. Thank you.

The UEC Chairman spoke words of appreciation. — MNA/TTA

The people are urged to receive vaccination of COVID-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of COVID-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increase of death rate due to the disease.



NATIONAL

Investment in disaster prevention enhances the resilience of the nation

❖ Investment in disaster prevention not only enhances the resilience of the nation but also helps protect economic and other development gains from being lost due to natural disasters.

(An excerpt from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the second cash donation to provide aid for the people affected by the devastating Mandalay earthquake and to initiate rehabilitation efforts held on 29 May 2025)

MoFR Union Minister receives Russian State Duma Deputy Chairman

UNION Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Kan Zaw received Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, accompanied by Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Iskander Azizov, at the Internal Revenue Department, Office 46 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

They cordially discussed bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Russia, payment systems for finance, investment and trade between the two countries, the projects of

mutual interest, and further mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister Daw Than Than Lin and departmental heads from the Ministry of Finance and Revenue. — MoFR

Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw holds talks with Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation yesterday.



International election observers leave Nay Pyi Taw Airport

THE international election observers who monitored the multiparty democratic general election (Phase I) held on 28 December 2025, departed from Nay Pyi Taw Airport for Yangon.

They were seen off at the airport by U Myo Hlaing, Member of the Union Election Commission, U Myint Soe, Member of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, chairpersons and members of the Union Territory and District Election Subcommittees, officials, and officials of the Union Election Commission Office.

Election observers included Mr Deng Xijun, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, and Ms Chen Xuanbo of International Affairs Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Mr Yerman Mukhtar, Deputy Chairman of the Election



Delegates from international election observation missions are seen ahead of their departure from Nay Pyi Taw.

Commission of Kazakhstan, a delegation led by Mr Yich Samethy, Member of the National Election Committee of Cambodia, a delegation led by Mr Nguyen Duc Thinh, Head of International Relations of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the delegation led by Mr Mario Jose Armengol Campos from Nicaragua, and the delegation led by retired General Mr Sahni Arun Kumar from India departed at 12:30 pm, while the delegation led by Mr Sholban Kara-Ool, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, and the delegation led by Mr Igor Borisov, Member of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, departed from Nay Pyi Taw by air at 6:20 pm. — MNA/YHT(NLM)

UEC Member meets Nicaraguan Ambassador to discuss 2025 general election process



UEC Member U Myo Hlaing receives Nicaraguan Ambassador Mr Mario Jose Armengol Campos yesterday.

UNION Election Commission Member U Myo Hlaing received Mr Mario Jose Armengol Campos, Hanoi-based Ambassador of the Republic of Nicaragua to Myanmar, at the Bagan Hall of the Jasmine Nay Pyi Taw Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, U Myo Hlaing explained the successful conduct of Phase One of the 2025 multiparty democratic general election, as well as the associated electoral processes.

The Nicaraguan Ambassador noted that he had been able to observe voters casting their ballots freely, fairly and transparently, and to study the systematic implementation of the election procedures. He expressed his gratitude for the warm and courteous hospitality extended to him and raised questions on matters he wished to learn more about. The Union Election Commission member responded to them through open and cordial discussions.

Officials from the Union Election Commission Office were also present at the meeting. — MNA/MKKS



Move forward to achieve success with comprehensive preparations

THE XXXIII SEA Games have now concluded. Athletes from the participating countries competed with determination and a strong spirit. Those athletes gave their utmost effort, both mentally and physically, as they competed to bring success and honour to their respective nations.

At the XXXIII SEA Games, Myanmar’s sports contingent bagged three gold, 21 silver and 49 bronze medals, totalling 73, standing at the 7th position among the SEA countries. Compared with the XXXII SEA Games, the number of medals obtained at the XXXIII SEA Games is lower.

The XXXIII SEA Games offered many lessons for Myanmar sports teams and athletes. We must study the strengths and advantages of the competing teams that are more advanced and successful than we are, and make the necessary improvements based on our own needs. Both individually and as teams, it is essential to identify weaknesses and make the required adjustments. Only then will we be able to achieve the rightful successes at future SEA Games.

who cheered through various media platforms, set an impressive record of encouragement. Our gratitude goes to all those supporters.

The XXXIII SEA Games offered many lessons for Myanmar sports teams and athletes. We must study the strengths and advantages of the competing teams that are more advanced and successful than we are, and make the necessary improvements based on our own needs. Both individually and as teams, it is essential to identify weaknesses without hesitation and make the required adjustments. Only then will we be able to achieve the rightful successes at future SEA Games.

This is not the time to blame one another for results that were below expectations or for falling short of standards. Instead, we must prepare for upcoming competitions and focus on how we can demonstrate greater skills and capabilities. We must always remember that our efforts are not only for ourselves but also bring honour to our country and our people. Athletes must keep in mind that while they compete, more than 50 million Myanmar people are watching and waiting for the national flag of Myanmar to be raised at the top.

Seasonal Influenza and the Emerging ‘K’ Virus: Global Trends and Myanmar’s Public Health Response

By Dr Aung Tun

SEASONAL influenza, commonly known as “the flu”, is a contagious respiratory illness that affects millions of people worldwide every year. While most people recover within a short time, influenza can sometimes lead to serious illness, hospitalization, or even death, especially among vulnerable groups. Recently, global health authorities have reported increased influenza activity and the emergence of a new influenza A (H3N2) subclade, often referred to as the “K virus”.

This article aims to explain seasonal influenza in simple terms, describe the global and Myanmar situation, highlight symptoms and risks, explain the new K virus, and provide clear guidance on vaccination and prevention.

1. What is Seasonal Influenza?

Seasonal influenza is an acute viral infection of the respiratory system caused mainly by influenza A and B viruses. These viruses circulate throughout the year, but infections usually increase during certain seasons, especially in cooler months.

Influenza spreads easily from person to person through:

- Droplets are released when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks
- Close contact, such as shaking hands
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth

Unlike the common cold, influenza often starts suddenly and can make people feel very unwell. Although many people recover without treatment, influenza should not be considered a “mild illness” for everyone.

2. Global Situation of Seasonal Influenza

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), global influenza activity has increased since late 2025. Many countries in the Northern Hemisphere have reported an earlier and stronger influenza season than usual.

Key global points include:

- Influenza A viruses are currently the most common worldwide
- The A (H3N2) subtype is predominant in many regions
- Increased influenza activity has been reported in Asia, Europe, North America, and parts of Africa

- Health systems may experience pressure due to high numbers of respiratory infections during influenza seasons
- WHO surveillance shows that influenza viruses constantly change (genetic drift). One important recent change is the rise of a new A (H3N2) subclade, known as J.2.4.1 or “K subclade”.

3. Myanmar Situation

Myanmar, like other tropical and subtropical countries, experiences influenza activity throughout the year, with peaks during rainy and cooler seasons.

In Myanmar:

- Influenza A viruses, especially A (H3N2), are commonly detected
- Influenza often affects children, elderly people, and those with chronic diseases
- Influenza-like illness contributes to outpatient visits and hospital admissions every year

Regional data from South-East Asia indicate that influenza remains a significant public health concern. Continuous surveillance and public awareness are essential to reduce severe outcomes.

4. Signs and Symptoms of Influenza

Influenza symptoms usually appear 1-4 days after infection and may include:

- Sudden fever
- Cough (usually dry)
- Sore throat
- Runny or blocked nose
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Extreme tiredness or weakness

In children, additional symptoms may include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Most people recover within 7–10 days, but cough and weakness may last longer.

5. Is Influenza Dangerous? (Risks and Complications)

Yes, influenza can be dangerous, especially for high-risk groups.

Possible complications include:

- Pneumonia
- Worsening of chronic diseases (heart disease, asthma, diabetes)
- Respiratory failure
- Hospitalization and death

High-risk groups include:

- Adults aged 65 years and above
- Children under 5 years
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic diseases (heart, lung, kidney, and

- diabetes)
- People with weakened immune systems
- Health and care workers

For these groups, influenza is not just a seasonal illness but a serious health threat.

6. The New “K Virus”: Is It Dangerous?

Recently, WHO reported an increase in a new influenza A (H3N2) subclade called K (J.2.4.1). Important facts about the K virus:

- It is not a completely new virus, but a genetically changed form of influenza A (H3N2)
- It has spread to many countries since mid-2025
- Current evidence shows no increase in disease severity compared to previous influenza strains
- WHO continues close monitoring through global surveillance systems

In simple terms, the K virus spreads more easily in some areas, but there is no evidence that it causes more severe illness than other seasonal influenza viruses.

7. Myanmar’s Public Health Response to Respiratory Tract Infections

The Ministry of Health is continuously monitoring the incidence of respiratory tract infections, including seasonal influenza.

The Influenza A H3N2 strain, which is currently reported by global media to be causing increased infections in some countries, is the same strain that has been circulating in Myanmar in 2025. However, the specific Subclade K has not yet been detected.

Key Points for the Public:

- \* No need for excessive concern: The public does not need to be overly concerned because the general population is expected to have a moderate level of immunity against the strain.
- \* Treatment and Prevention: The currently used influenza vaccines and treatments are effective in preventing and treating the disease.
- \* Preparedness: Public hospitals are prepared with influenza treatments and the capacity to provide intensive care for patients who develop severe flu symptoms.

For severe influenza cases, public hospitals in Myanmar are providing treatment and essential medicines in line with national clinical guidelines. Patients with serious symptoms such as breathing difficulty, persistent high fever, or complications are referred to hospitals where they can receive supportive care, including oxygen therapy, fever control, hydration, and antiviral medicines when indicated.

The Ministry of Health and relevant health facilities continue to ensure the availability of necessary medicines and clinical management for severe influenza cases, especially for high-risk groups such as older adults, young children, pregnant women, and people with chronic diseases. Early care-seeking at public hospitals is strongly encouraged to reduce complications and prevent deaths.

- \* Ongoing Efforts: The Ministry is carrying out real-time information dissemination and health education for the public and is accelerating disease surveillance efforts.

8. Should People Get the Influenza Vaccine?

Yes. Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended. WHO and public health experts agree that vaccination is the best

way to prevent influenza and its complications.

Key points about vaccination:

- Influenza vaccines have been used safely for over 60 years
- Vaccine composition is updated every year to match circulating viruses
- Even if the virus changes, the vaccine still helps reduce severe illness and death
- Vaccination is especially important for high-risk groups and health workers
- Recent studies suggest that the current influenza vaccine still provides good protection against hospitalization, even with circulating A (H3N2) subclade K viruses.

6. How Can We Prevent Influenza?

Prevention requires both vaccination and healthy behaviours.

Personal Prevention Measures

- Get vaccinated every year
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wear a mask if you have flu-like symptoms
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Stay at home when ill to prevent spreading infection

Community and Health System Measures

- Early detection and treatment of severe cases
- Protection of health workers
- Public awareness and risk communication
- Strengthening disease surveillance

10. Still Preventable

Seasonal influenza remains a serious but preventable disease. The recent increase in global influenza activity and the emergence of the A (H3N2) K subclade remind us that influenza viruses continue to evolve. However, there is no need for panic. With vaccination, early care-seeking, and simple preventive measures, influenza-related illness and deaths can be significantly reduced. Protecting high-risk groups and strengthening public awareness are key to safeguarding public health in Myanmar and worldwide.

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# NATIONAL

## People’s Military Service Training 17 concludes across commands

GRADUATION ceremonies for the 17<sup>th</sup> intake of People’s Military Service trainees were held yesterday at local training depots under the respective military commands across the country. The ceremonies followed military tradition, during which trainees took an oath of allegiance while holding the State Flag.

Officials from each training school delivered graduation speeches and presented outstanding graduation awards to the recipients, including the Best Trainee Award, Military Parade Award, Best Marksman-ship Award, Code of Conduct Award, Best Mine Handling Award, First Prize in Section Combat, First Prize in Assault, and Best Dormitory Award.

After the ceremonies, the chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, the chief ministers of regions and states, commanders from military commands, and other officials met with the graduating trainees and cordially encouraged them.



Bago Region Cabinet Minister U Thein Aung presents honorary cash assistance to graduate trainees from the People’s Military Service Training 17, who are of their own free will.

The trainees of the 17<sup>th</sup> intake of People’s Military Service were trained in subjects such as physical fitness, military training, military tactics, and general studies.

According to the 2008 Con-

stitution, Section 385 stipulates that every citizen has the duty to defend the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the State, while Section 386 provides that every citizen shall undergo military

training and serve in the defence of the State in accordance with the law.

Graduates of the 16th batch of People’s Military Service training have acquired the skills to work in an organized man-

ner (teamwork) and will proudly carry out their duties in national defence and security within their respective battalions and units, exemplifying nationalism, patriotism, team spirit, and esprit de corps. — MNA/KTZH

## Govt steps up demolition of illegal gambling hubs in Shwe Kokko, KK Park

THE Government of Myanmar has been conducting systematic operations to enter and clear illegal buildings in the Shwe Kokko and KK Park areas, which have been the main hubs for online scams and gambling. The operations also involve the seizure of materials used in these illegal gambling activities and the systematic demolition of unauthorized structures, carried out by joint teams including security personnel, administrative authorities and local officials. Yesterday, four additional illegal buildings in the KK Park area were demolished.

Specifically, in Section 3 of the Myawaddy-Maethawtalay (KK Park) area, a total of four illegal buildings – one four-storey building and three two-storey buildings used for online scams and gambling – were demol-



Demolition measures are ongoing in the KK Park Section 3.

ished yesterday. This brings the total number of illegal buildings systematically destroyed in the KK Park area to 519 out of 635 structures.

Furthermore, for illegal buildings in KK Park, demolition using machinery has been completed, and to ensure destruction, fire cylinders have been used since 14 December. Yesterday, five additional two-storey buildings were destroyed in this manner, bringing the total number of fully demolished buildings to 71.

In addition, materials used for online scams and gambling in the KK Park and Shwe Kokko areas were systematically burned today to prevent further misuse. The Government has reaffirmed that combating online scams and gambling is a national responsibility and has stated that operations will continue in coordination with domestic forces as well as the governments of neighbouring countries to ensure that such activities cannot take root within Myanmar. — MNA/MKKS

## Government adjusts year-end and New Year office holidays, substitute workdays

THE Government has designated consecutive office holidays during December 2024 and the 2025 calendar year for the public and civil service personnel to be able to travel leisurely and enjoy extended rest and recreation, and Saturdays have been assigned as substitute working days to compensate for these extended holidays.

For the period around Christmas, 26 December 2025 has been designated as an official office holiday, creating a continuous four-day holiday

from 25 December (Christmas Day) to 28 December (Sunday). In compensation, 3 January 2026 (Saturday) was set as a substitute working day.

However, as 3 January 2026 (Saturday) falls between the international New Year public holiday and the Independence Day holiday, coincides with the international New Year holiday period, and occurs in the lead-up to Independence Day, the substitute working day has been rescheduled to 10 January 2026 (Saturday). — MNA/MKKS

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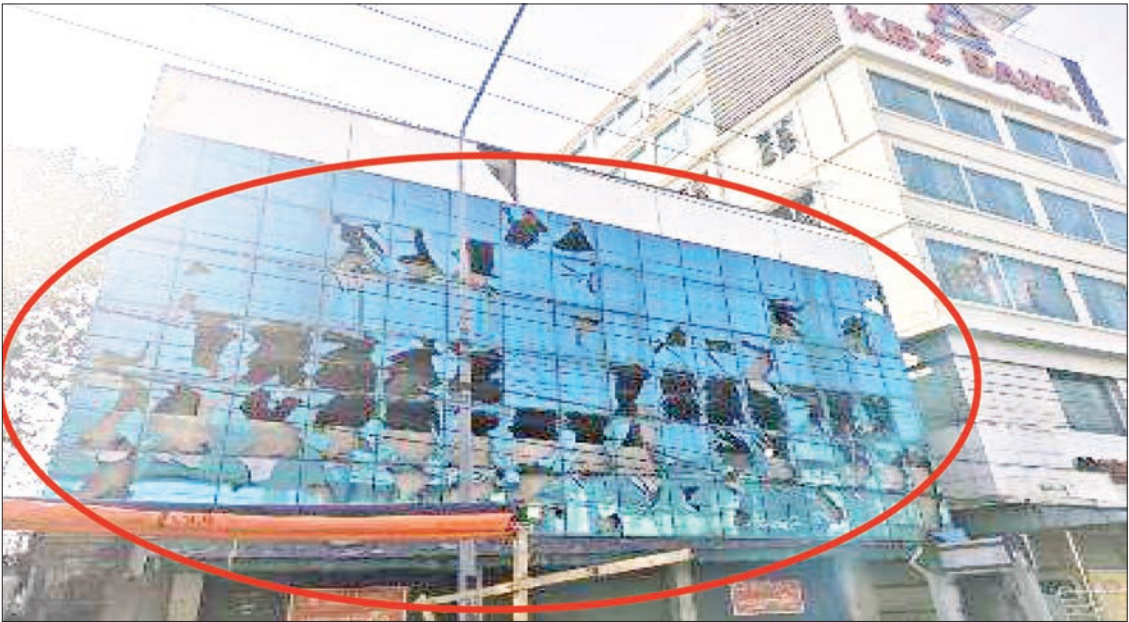
2025 Multiparty Democratic General Election Phase I successfully held with public participation despite terrorist disruptions

IN a democratic system, elections are of the utmost importance, and the voters must exercise their right to vote, which is one of their fundamental civic rights to choose and determine the future direction of the country. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar completed Phase I of the 2025 Multiparty Democratic General Election on 28 December.

In Phase I, all can see that voters cast their votes actively and peacefully at the polling stations in 102 townships nationwide as responsible citizens without any pressure from 6 am until the closing of polling stations.

While the government and the people were choosing the democratic path, terrorist groups continued violent extremism and carried out malicious and brutal acts with the intent to disrupt the election process, prevent eligible voters from reaching polling stations, destroy open polling stations, and intimidate voters. These acts included direct and indirect attacks such as firing homemade heavy weapons and rockets from a distance, detonating sound bombs, blocking transport vehicles used to carry voters to polling stations, issuing threat letters, dropping bombs using drones, firing from fixed-wing, and spreading false information.

On the day of Phase 1 election, the terrorists committed destructive actions such as exploding homemade sound bomb



This photo shows structural damage near Kanbawza Bank in Myawady caused by a mine blast carried out by terrorists.

at polling station 82 at the No 11 BEHS in Shwenyaungpin Ward in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, firing 107mm homemade rockets into Shwetaung and Mingala wards in Loikaw Township, Kayah State, exploding homemade mines near KBZ bank in Ward 3 and near the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge II in Ward 5, Myawady in Kayin State, attacking the government office of Taninthayi Region with fixed wings, blocking ways of 17 palm oil farmers who were going to the polling station from Maran nursery of Yuzana Palm Oil Company in Aungchantha village-tract, Khamaukgyi, attacking the polling station 2 in Shwebo, Sagaing Region, with bomb drops, firing six homemade rockets to the Nationalities Youth Resource Develop-

ment Degree College (Sagaing), dropping bombs near the polling station 3 at the No 2 BEHS in Sawbwa 1 Ward, Tamu, attacking from the north and south of Katha Township using heavy and small weapons, attacking inner part of Nantawkyun village, Madaya and Aungmyaythazan townships in Mandalay Region using 107mm rockets, dropping bombs near general administrative office, court and central prison of Myingyan, opening fire near the polling station 64 in Zone 9 and near BEPS (Pyun) in NyaungU. The terrorists committed attacks in 11 townships out of 102 constituencies of Phase I, starting from 27 December until the evening of 28 December. Although only five civilians were injured, voters who firmly believed in democracy,

had confidence in and supported the election management of the government queued to cast vote in 102 townships of Phase I election starting from 5:30 am on the morning of 28 December, and the voters who were still within the compound of polling station from the opening hour 6 am to 4 am and after 4 pm were also able to cast votes. By 5:30 pm, Phase I of the general election was completed successfully in 102 townships nationwide.

During the pre-election period of the 2025 Multiparty Democratic General Election, terrorist groups also carried out acts intended to disrupt election-related processes. In 41 townships, they engaged in activities such as distributing and posting false propaganda leaflets in public places, organizing and inciting

anti-election campaigns, writing incitements, hanging posters, shouting slogans and hurling insults to discourage voting, playing sound box, speaker urging people not to vote, destroying, toppling, or burning public awareness signboards and posters promoting successful elections (23 incidents), attacking election security members (four incidents), carrying out bomb attacks (six incidents), detonating homemade sound bombs (two incidents), bombing attacks using homemade grenades (six incidents), rocket attacks (three incidents), armed threats against responsible government officials and members of political parties (three incidents), and abductions (six incidents), amounting to a total of 54 acts of obstruction and destruction.

Even though terrorist groups and exile media attempted through various means to undermine the success of the election process, weaken the multiparty democratic system, and defame it through false and misleading reports, the Government and the people who support multiparty democracy successfully held Election Phase I with freedom, fairness, and transparency. This was done in the presence of international election observers, diplomats, media representatives, and voters who personally cast their votes.

Therefore, for the upcoming Phase II and Phase III, the government and officials of security and administration must make greater efforts to ensure that voters' rights are fully protected to cast their votes safely. Responsible citizens who welcome and support democracy, and who desire nationwide stability, peace, and development, are urged to cooperate with the relevant authorities by reporting any information or suspicious activities related to terrorist movements to continue leading towards the democratic path through simple and peaceful means. — MNA/KTZH



This image reveals damage caused by 107mm homemade rockets in Shwetaung and Mingala wards of Loikaw, Kayah State.



This photo captures the seized drone used to drop bombs on Polling Station 2 in Word 3 of Shwebo, Sagaing Region.



ECONOMY  
WORLD

Stocks mixed, as precious metals drop

EUROPEAN stock markets steadied after a mixed Asian showing Monday, as investors awaited fresh clues on the outlook for US interest rates.

The dollar largely rose against main rivals, precious metals retreated from record highs and oil prices firmed in quiet post-Christmas trading.

After the Federal Reserve lowered borrowing costs earlier in December, the US central bank indicated that it could stand pat when decision-makers gather again at the end of next month.

The minutes from the last meeting are published Tuesday and traders will be poring over their contents for any indication

about the Fed's plans for 2026.

The prospect of cuts has helped push world stock markets to multiple record highs this year, offsetting niggling worries about stretched valuations in the tech sector.

"Concerns about overvaluations and an AI bubble look set to continue to dominate market chatter into next year," Victoria Scholar, head of investment at Interactive Investor, noted on Monday.

On commodities markets, gold and silver slipped after hitting all-time peaks in recent days.

The precious metals have enjoyed strong buying, with gold

and silver both hitting record highs on expectations of more rate cuts, making them more desirable to investors.

Their status as a safe haven asset in times of turmoil has also added to their allure amid geopolitical upheaval with US strikes in Nigeria and a blockade of Venezuelan oil tankers.

On Monday, gold was sitting around \$4,450 an ounce, having peaked a whisker shy of \$4,550 on Friday.

Silver slid to \$75.64 an ounce after touching a record above \$84 on Monday.

Silver has seen a sharp run-up in recent weeks also owing to surging demand and tight



Gold bullion can be seen after being removed from casts at the ABC Refinery smelter in Sydney on 29 April 2025. PHOTO: AFP

supply.

Oil prices rose two per cent Monday, having sunk more than two per cent Friday as investors eyed a weekend meeting between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky on peace proposals.

Trump said Sunday a deal was closer than ever to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine but reported no apparent breakthrough on the issue of territory.

An end to the war could see sanctions on Russian oil removed, adding to an oversupplied market. — AFP

Italy's state railway, US fund in French joint venture



A picture shows the Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) logo on Trenitalia's new Frecciarossa 1000 high-speed train in Rome Termini Station during a press preview on 26 September 2025. PHOTO: AFP

ITALIAN state rail operator Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) said it will accelerate operations in its Trenitalia France unit via a billion dollar joint venture with US private equity fund Certares.

The agreement seeks to "accelerate the growth" of Trenitalia France and "consolidate its presence in France, the United Kingdom, and cross-border markets", the partners said in a statement.

Trenitalia France plans to expand its fleet to at least 19 trains, as well as open a maintenance facility outside Paris and also offer increased service capacity on existing

routes including Paris to the eastern city of Lyon from a current nine to 14 daily.

Trenitalia France also intends to compete with Eurostar on the latter's Paris-London route by 2029.

FS looks to push its ambitions at a time when high-speed rail services are expanding amid intensified cross-border competition.

The Italian operator is also considering moving in on the Paris-Brussels route, the group indicated during the presentation of its strategic plan earlier in December.

Monday's agreement with Certares, whose activities fo-

cus notably on travel and tourism, hospitality, business and consumer services, comprises establishing a joint venture and includes a 300-million-euros investment in Trenitalia France.

Trenitalia France is meanwhile planning to invest one billion euros in its routes in France and the United Kingdom.

The Italian operator has been in direct competition with French state network SNCF for four years, offering services from Paris to Lyon, Marseille, and Milan, without as yet being profitable.

Trenitalia France also intends to improve its services distribution through agreements with companies within Certares' portfolio, including travel agencies CWT, Ovation, Egencia (business travel), Havas Voyages, and Selectour (leisure travel).

In the coming year, Trenitalia France plans to focus on consolidating and retaining customers in France, hoping to boost occupancy rates on its red TGV trains, its management indicated earlier in December. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sri Lanka surpasses 2018 tourism record with over 2.33 mln arrivals in 2025

SRI LANKA on Monday surpassed its previous tourist arrivals record, welcoming the highest number of international visitors since 2018, tourism authorities said.

According to official data, total tourist arrivals in 2025 reached 2,333,797, exceeding the previous record of 2,333,796 set in 2018.

Tourism officials described the achievement as a strong signal of the sector's recovery and renewed growth after years of disruption, noting that arrivals during the year consistently outperformed expectations. — Xinhua

Babysitting services for foreign tourists taking off in Japan

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE babysitting services for foreign tourists are beginning to take off in Japan, driven by demand among wealthy families who wish to enjoy aspects of Japanese culture that may be difficult to experience with young children.

Some services also provide hands-on programmes for the little ones, allowing both parents and kids to make the most of their time in different ways. The trend reflects the diversification of traveller needs amid Japan's inbound tourism boom. — Kyodo

Vietnam estimated to welcome 21.5 mln intl arrivals in 2025

VIETNAM is estimated to receive 21.5 million international arrivals in 2025, local daily Nhan Dan reported Monday, citing the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism.

The Southeast Asian country is also expected to welcome 135.5 million domestic tourists this year, according to the report.

Total tourism revenue is estimated to exceed 1 quadrillion Vietnamese dong (about US\$39.8 billion). — Xinhua



# China to enhance digital yuan management with deposit features starting 2026

THE People's Bank of China (PBOC) announced on Monday that an upgraded framework for digital yuan management will take effect on 1 January 2026, moving the e-CNY beyond a cash-like instrument towards a form of digital deposit money.

The enhanced system will feature a new measurement framework, management system, operational mechanisms and ecosystem for the digital yuan, the central bank said.

The transition builds upon extensive domestic and cross-border trials that have seen the digital yuan adopted across a wide range of daily uses. These include retail transactions,

dining, tourism, education, healthcare, public services, and cross-border settlements, establishing a reliable and scalable model for digital currency in both online and offline scenarios.

Guided by a decade of pilot programme experience, the PBOC has unveiled an action plan to strengthen the digital yuan's management system and supporting financial infrastructure. The plan establishes the operational basis for classifying digital yuan held in commercial bank wallets as bank deposit liabilities.

Under the plan, commercial banks will be required to pay interest on digital yuan wallet balances

in accordance with prevailing deposit rate regulations. These balances will be integrated into banks' regular asset-liability management practices and will be protected by deposit insurance, just like ordinary bank deposits.

The PBOC will incorporate digital yuan operations into its reserve requirement framework. Wallet balances held with authorized commercial banks will be counted toward the reserve requirement calculation base, while non-bank payment institutions must deposit 100 per cent reserves against the digital yuan they manage.

As of the end of No-



This file photo shows a staff member of the Bank of Communications demonstrating the use of the digital RMB wallet at the Happy Valley Beijing theme park in Beijing, capital of China. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

vember 2025, China had recorded 3.48 billion cumulative digital yuan transactions worth 16.7 trillion yuan (approximately US\$2.37 trillion). — Xinhua

## Over 80% of facilities for disabled face labour shortage in Japan: survey



Hiroshi Ono, executive director of Kyosaren, holds a press conference in Tokyo on 9 December 2025. **PHOTO: KYODO**

OVER 80 per cent of facilities for people with disabilities in Japan are facing labour shortages, mainly due to lower wages than in other industries, a recent survey by a group supporting the disabled showed.

Of the 3,142 facilities surveyed from August to October, 84.2 per cent said they are facing staff shortages ranging from severe to slight, with many citing increased burdens on workers and declining service quality as a result,

Kyosaren said.

Regarding the reasons behind the difficulty in securing the necessary workforce, 81.9 per cent pointed to lower wages compared to other industries, while 59.1 per cent said there were not enough candidates with the required skills or qualifications.

In the survey, some facilities said they struggled to accept individuals with severe disabilities who require individual assistance. Some small-scale providers said they lacked financial resources to secure staff, Kyosaren said.

Kyosaren called for increased government funding for facilities that provide welfare services for people with disabilities, although the welfare ministry says the state budget for such services has quadrupled over the past 19 years. — Kyodo

## S Korean banks' lending rate rebounds in Nov

SOUTH Korean banks' lending rate rebounded in three months due to lower expectations for additional policy rate cuts, central bank data showed Monday.

The weighted average rate for new bank loans gained 0.13 percentage points from a month earlier to an annualized rate of 4.15 per cent in November after sliding for the past two months, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK).

The BOK cut its benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points in February and May each to 2.50 per cent after lowering it by the same basis points in October and November last year.

Expectations weakened for the BOK's additional interest rate cuts on the back of the local currency's depreciation

against the US dollar and the massive household debts.

The rate for banks' new corporate loans advanced 0.14 percentage points over the month to 4.10 per cent in November.

The lending rate for large companies increased 0.11 percentage points to 4.06 per cent, while the rate for small and medium firms rose 0.18 percentage points to 4.14 per cent.

The rate for fresh bank loans to households rose 0.08 percentage points to 4.32 per cent in November compared to the previous month.

Mortgage loan rate for households grew 0.19 percentage points to 4.17 per cent, while credit loan rate soared 0.27 percentage points to 5.46 per cent. — Xinhua

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SITC CAGAYAN VOY.NO. (2522S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SITC CAGAYAN VOY.NO. (2522S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **29-12-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD**

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MOON LIGHT VOY.NO. (M1012)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MOON LIGHT VOY.NO. (M1012)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **30-12-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 A.M to 11:20 A.M and 12 NOON to 4 P.M to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S THURIYA SANDAR WIN COMPANY LIMITED**



ROLLING UPDATES  
WORLD

Trump, Zelensky confer on peace deal for Ukraine, breakthrough eludes



A screen shot taken from a video released by the White House shows US President Donald Trump meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, the United States, 28 December 2025. The two leaders met in Florida on Sunday on the latest draft of a peace plan aimed at ending the Ukraine crisis.  
**PHOTO: XINHUA**

US President Donald Trump said Sunday that the two sides are “getting a lot closer, maybe very close” to a peace deal to end the Ukraine crisis after meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

However, there is little sign that any major breakthrough is emerging, though Trump described the talks as “excellent” with “a lot of progresses” made.

“This is not a one-day process deal. This is very complicated stuff,” Trump said at a joint press conference with Zelensky after the meeting, where the two leaders also spoke to European

leaders.

“In a few weeks, we will know one way or the other, I think,” Trump said. “It’s been a very difficult negotiation.”

It is widely thought that thorny issues include a potential timetable for a ceasefire, the establishment of a proposed demilitarized zone, the management of the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and control of the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine.

“We discussed all the aspects of the peace framework,” Zelensky said of his meeting with Trump at the press conference, noting that the 20-point peace plan

now was “90 per cent” complete — the same figure he mentioned earlier this month.

As for the security guarantees for Ukraine, Zelensky said the United States, Ukraine and Europe have almost 100 per cent agreed on security guarantees for Ukraine.

Trump said that he does not like to say percentages, but “thinks it could be close to 95 per cent” on the security issue.

“We could be very close. There are one or two very thorny issues, very tough issues, but I think we’re doing very well,” Trump said. Both Trump and Zelensky failed to specify the issues.

The two leaders spoke to European leaders, including chiefs of NATO and European Union, during the course of their meeting. Zelensky said Trump may meet him and European leaders in Washington in January as he and Trump “agreed that our teams will meet in upcoming weeks to finalize all discussed matters”.

Just ahead of his meeting with Zelensky, Trump said he “had a good and very productive telephone call” with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Sunday morning.

Yuri Ushakov, Putin’s top foreign policy aide, said in Moscow that during the lengthy phone call, Putin and Trump agreed that a long-term peace settlement was better than the temporary ceasefire pushed forward by the Ukrainians and the Europeans. — Xinhua

NEWS In BRIEF

More than a dozen dead in Mexico train derailment

A train carrying 250 people derailed partially on Sunday in Mexico, killing 13 people and injuring 98, officials said.

The train’s locomotive left the tracks during a trip in southern Oaxaca state, said the Mexican navy, which operates this particular rail line.

The navy had initially reported 20 people injured, but hours later announced in a statement that “98 were injured... and unfortunately, 13 people lost their lives.” — AFP

Indonesia nursing home fire kills 16: official

A fire at a nursing home on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi killed more than a dozen people, with three others injured, a local official said Monday.

Firefighters received the report of the blaze at 8:31 pm Sunday at a nursing home in the North Sulawesi provincial capital Manado, said the city’s fire and rescue agency chief Jimmy Rotinsulu. “There were 16 deaths; three (people) had burn injuries,” he told AFP. Many bodies of the victims were found inside their rooms, Jimmy said, adding that many of the elderly residents were likely resting in their rooms in the evening when the fire broke out. — AFP

Top DPRK leader oversees long-range strategic cruise missile launching drill - official news agency

KIM Jong Un, top leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), on Sunday oversaw a long-range strategic cruise missile launching drill conducted in the western waters off the Korean Peninsula, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Monday.

Two strategic cruise missiles flew along the planned flight orbit in space over the western waters off the peninsula for 10,199 seconds and 10,203 seconds, respectively, before hitting the target, the report said.

“The result of the launching drill is a practical verification and clear demonstration of the absolute reliability and combat readiness of our strategic counterattack capability,” Kim was quoted as saying.

Kim said that checking the reliability



and rapid response of the components of the DPRK’s nuclear deterrent on a regular basis and steadily demonstrating their might are a responsible exercise of the right to self-defence and war deterrence under the present situation in which the country is facing various security threats, according to the report. Kim also affirmed that the country would, as ever, devote all its efforts “to the unlimited and sustained development of the state nuclear combat force”, it said. — Xinhua

This picture taken on 28 December 2025 and released by North Korea’s official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 29 December 2025 shows a long-range strategic cruise missile hitting a target during a launching drill in the West Sea of North Korea. **PHOTO: KCNA VIA KNS / AFP**



SPORTS

Wawrinka ‘at peace’ with retirement but no plans to go quietly

THREE-TIME Grand Slam winner Stan Wawrinka said Monday he was “at peace” with his decision to make 2026 his last year on tour but insisted there were still goals to meet.

The 40-year-old announced this month that he plans to call it quits, with the United Cup in Perth starting Friday the beginning of the end for the popular Swiss star.

“Of course, I’m still passionate about the game, about the sport I love,” he said.

“What I received from it, the emotion playing in a different country, coming back here with a lot of fans, a lot of support, so I’m going to miss that part, that’s for sure,” he said.

“The last few months, I’ve had time to decide whether it will be my last year or not, and for me, it’s quite clear. I’m happy with the decision, I’m at peace with that.”

Wawrinka won the Australian Open in 2014, the French Open a year later and the US Open in 2016, at a time when Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic were dominating men’s tennis.



Switzerland’s Stan Wawrinka serves to Great Britain’s Jacob Fearnley during their men’s singles match on day 2 of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland-Garros Complex in Paris on 26 May 2025. PHOTO: AFP

A former world number three, he is now ranked 157 after struggling with injuries but said he would work as hard as ever this season.

“I still want to play some good tennis, I still have goals. Hopefully I can come back in the top 100, finish on a good ranking,” he said.

“I want to play the full year, the big tournaments, the main ones, and let’s see my ranking in the next few months.”

Wawrinka has 16 career ATP titles although the last came in Geneva in 2017.

He won Olympic gold in doubles alongside Federer at Beijing in 2008 and helped deliver a first Davis Cup triumph for Switzerland in 2014. — AFP

Aston Villa visits Arsenal in big Premier League clash



Brighton’s Swedish midfielder (26) Yasin Ayari (bottom R) falls to the ground during a scramble in front of the Arsenal goal at the end of the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Brighton and Hove Albion at the Emirates Stadium in London on 27 December 2025. PHOTO: AFP

PREMIER League leader Arsenal is at home to in-form Aston Villa in the most attractive and decisive of the six matches scheduled for Tuesday as the intense Christmas and New Year schedule continues.

Arsenal goes into the game after an unconvincing 2-1 win at home to Brighton, which saw goalkeeper David Raya make a series of fine saves and ended with Declan Rice as an emergency right-back, and coach Mikel Arteta could bring Gabriel Jesus into his starting line-up as he looks to freshen things up.

Ollie Watkins was Aston Villa’s hero as he came on as a second-half substitute to score two goals as Unai Emery’s side overcame a poor first half display to win 2-1 away to Chelsea.

That win keeps Aston Villa in third place after 11 consecutive wins in all competitions, and a win at the Emirates Stadium would leave them level on points at the top ahead of Manchester City’s visit to Sunderland on New Year’s Day.

Chelsea’s defeat to Aston Villa leaves the south London club 13 points behind Arsenal and fifth in the standings after a damaging run of one win in five league matches and just one league win in December. With Liverpool overtaking his side to move fourth, Enzo Maresca needs some relief when his side hosts a Bournemouth side that shipped four goals at Brentford on Saturday, with coach Andoni Iraola unable to field a settled defence and constant rumours over a possible departure for winger Antoine Semenyo. — Xinhua

Uganda, Tanzania measure progress to be made before hosting 2027 AFCON

UGANDA and Tanzania will co-host the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations with neighbours Kenya and the countries are getting a sense of how much progress they must still make on the pitch at the ongoing edition in Morocco.

The East African nations have long struggled to compete with the major continental powers and both face early elimination from this AFCON in decisive group games on Tuesday.

Uganda face Nigeria and Tanzania meet Tunisia with both the Cranes and the Taifa Stars almost certainly need wins to have a chance of making

the last 16.

Uganda have recorded just one victory in nine matches across three separate AFCON tournaments since reaching the 1978 final. Tanzania are appearing at just their fourth Cup of Nations and have never won a game. — AFP

Spurs rising star Gray eager to keep learning after first senior goal

TOTTENHAM Hotspur teenager Archie Gray is determined to improve after scoring his first professional goal in a valuable 1-0 win at Crystal Palace.

Gray was at fault when Spurs conceded a goal in a 3-0 loss at Nottingham Forest a fortnight ago after being dispossessed on the edge of his own penalty area, but was backed by Spurs manager Thomas Frank afterwards.

The 19-year-old retained his place in Spurs’ midfield and rewarded that decision at Selhurst Park with a close-range header to score for the first time on his 112<sup>th</sup> professional appearance.

“It was a difficult game for me at Forest,” said Gray after he helped Tottenham to only a second win in their last



Tottenham Hotspur’s English midfielder (14) Archie Gray (C) heads in the opening goal during the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Tottenham Hotspur at Selhurst Park in south London on 28 December 2025. PHOTO: AFP

nine Premier League matches.

“The mistake was obviously my fault but that game I just tried to get on

the ball as much as I could, tried to be positive and forget about the mistake.

“Obviously (this) still wasn’t the best game, it was a scrappy game but to get a goal is something every child dreams of,” he also told SpursPlay.

“We knew if we could keep a clean sheet, we would get the chances to try and get a goal. Our back four was amazing and everyone to be fair with the mentality.

“I just found myself in the right place at the right time and it was probably Richy’s (Richarlison’s) flick which did all the work. I was stood what, two yards out from goal?

“I didn’t really have much to do but it’s an incredible feeling.” — AFP



Trump, Zelensky confer  
on peace deal for Ukraine,  
breakthrough eludes

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# WORLD

## China-Cambodia-Thailand foreign ministers' meeting reaches three-point consensus

THE China-Cambodia-Thailand foreign ministers' meeting was successfully held in Yuxi City, southwest China's Yunnan Province, on Monday.

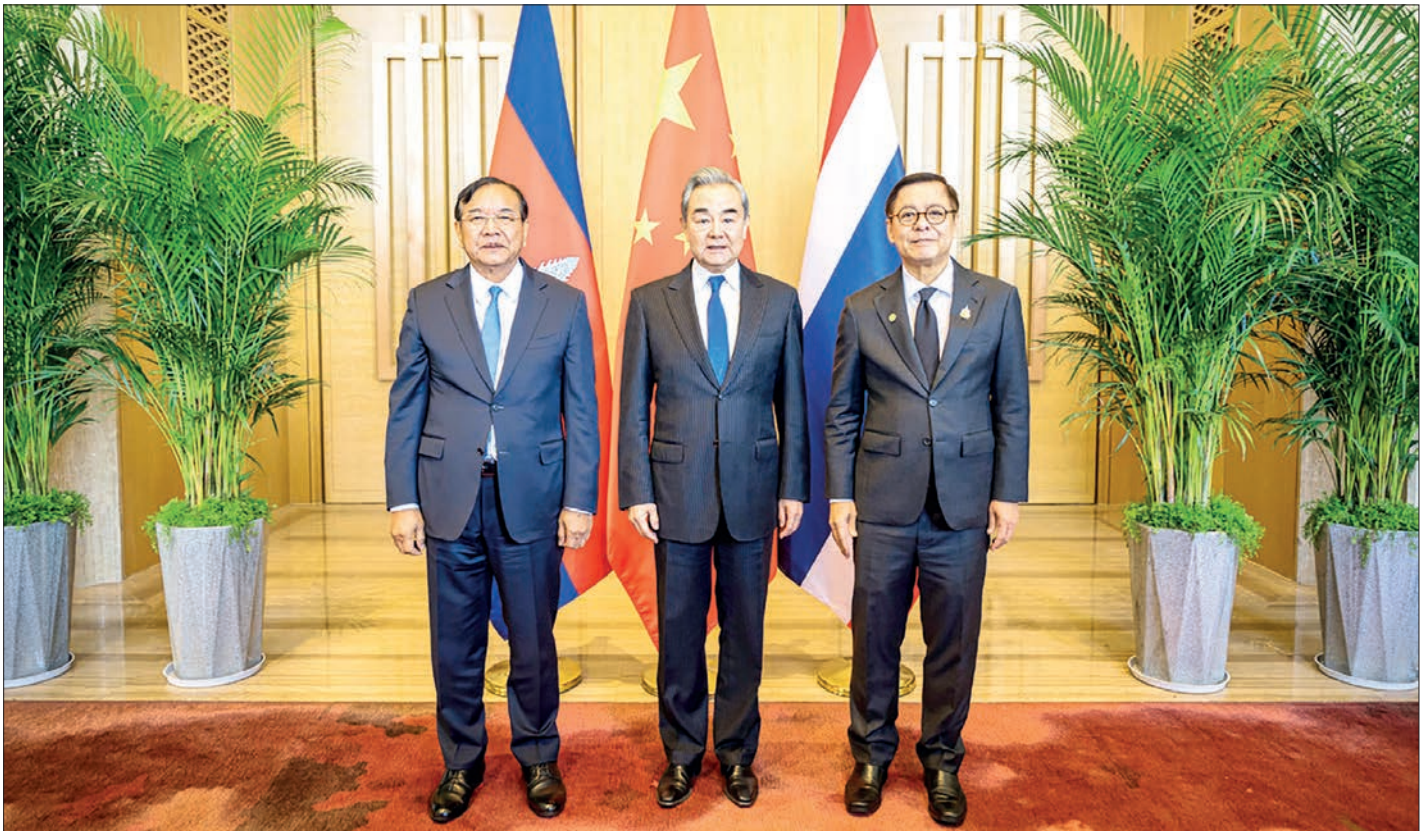
Following the signing of a joint statement agreeing to a ceasefire, Cambodian and Thai foreign ministers are leading delegations to meet in Yunnan from 28 to 29 December at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Since the outbreak of conflict on the Cambodia-Thailand border, China has been engaging in mediation and providing good offices, Wang said. China has on four occasions dispatched its special envoy for Asian affairs to conduct shuttle diplomacy, accommodating the legitimate concerns of both sides to resolve differences through dialogue and negotiation.

Wang, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that China is glad to see the recent ceasefire agreement reached between Cambodia and Thailand.

Wang said the foreign affairs and military authorities of Cambodia and Thailand have held in-depth exchanges on this matter, and both sides are committed to de-escalating the situation and are willing to improve bilateral relations on the basis of the ceasefire.

Wang added that the discussions among the three parties have been con-



The China-Cambodia-Thailand foreign ministers' meeting was successfully held in Yuxi city, southwest China's Yunnan province, on Monday. PHOTO: XINHUA

structive and productive, leading to important consensus as following:

First, all parties should look ahead and move forward together. The ceasefire agreement has not been easily achieved; it must not be abandoned halfway, let alone lead to the resumption of hostilities.

Second, progress should be steady

and incremental, avoiding stagnation. Implementing the ceasefire arrangements requires sustained communication and consultation, and the restoration of bilateral relations must also be gradually advanced.

Third, rebuilding mutual trust is paramount. The conflict has caused a loss

of trust, but Cambodia and Thailand are eternal neighbours. It is hoped that this meeting in Yunnan will help overcome the estrangement between the two sides, and this serves the interests of the Cambodian and Thai people and reflects the shared aspirations of all relevant parties. — Xinhua

## UN must reclaim its role as global peacemaker - IAEA Chief Grossi

THE UN is experiencing a financial crisis due to unpaid contributions from several countries, including the largest contributor and, by extension, the largest debtor - the US, which owes over \$3 billion.

The United Nations has become "barely involved" in resolving the world's conflicts and must urgently reclaim this role, argued Rafael Grossi, Director-General of the IAEA and candidate to lead the UN.

The UN is not helping in the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine, US President Donald Trump said earlier.

The United Nations is facing a severe financial crisis caused by unpaid contributions



Participants attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting as part of the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the UN headquarters in New York, the United States. PHOTO: SPUTNIK

from several member states. The largest contributor — and consequently, the largest debtor — is the United States, which currently owes more than \$3 billion. In response to this shortfall, the UN has begun laying off

staff and cutting critical humanitarian programmes. Austerity measures have also reached its headquarters: cafeteria prices have increased, and some dining facilities have been shut down entirely. — SPUTNIK

## Indonesian military, police deploy over 48,000 personnel for post-disaster recovery in Sumatra

THE Indonesian military and national police have deployed a total of 48,669 personnel to Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra provinces to support reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts after floods and landslides killed 1,140 people and caused extensive damage, senior officials said here on Monday.

Indonesian National Armed Forces Commander General Agus Subiyanto said 37,910 military personnel had been dispatched to assist post-disaster recovery, carrying out a wide range of humanitarian tasks, including the provision of clean water, medical evacuation, logistics

distribution, and trauma recovery services for affected communities.

"The involvement of military personnel will help with the installation of Bailey bridges, the construction of temporary and permanent housing, and the cleanup of mud in schools, Islamic boarding schools, roads, and other public facilities," he said at a press conference on post-disaster recovery and strategic planning in Jakarta.

To support the humanitarian mission, 89 units of defence equipment, including aircraft, helicopters, and warships, have been deployed, he added. — Xinhua