

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to pay official State visit to Republic of Belarus

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing will pay an official State visit to the Republic of Belarus at the invitation of President of the Republic of Belarus Mr Lukashenko while paying a goodwill visit to the Russian Federation.

During the visit to the Republic of Belarus, the Senior General will meet President of the Republic of Belarus Mr Lukashenko, the Belarusian Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Council of the Republic of Belarusian National

Assembly of Belarus and senior officers from the Belarusian government to talk about further strengthening of strategic cooperation in all sectors and friendly relations, economic and security measures between the governments and the peoples of both countries.

SAC members and senior officers from the Myanmar government will accompany the Senior General to pay an official State visit to the Republic of Belarus. — MNA/TTA

PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing-led high-level Myanmar delegation arrives in Saint Petersburg



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives the salute of the Guard of Honour as he and his entourage leave Vnukovo International Airport in Moscow for Saint Petersburg.

A high-level Myanmar delegation led by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who is on an official

visit to Russia, left Vnukovo International Airport in Moscow yesterday.

Russian Minister of Economic Development Mr Maxim Reshetnikov, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, officials,

and the Guard of Honour saw off the senior general and his entourage.

At the airport, the Senior General received the salute of the Guard of Honour of the Russian Federation, and the

Guard of Honour played the national anthems of both countries.

The Senior General and entourage arrived at Pulikovo Airport in Saint Petersburg in the evening, local time. The Sen-

ior General and his entourage were welcomed by Chairman Mr Grigoriev of the External Relations Committee of Saint Petersburg, Myanmar Consul-General U Aung Pe Thet and officials. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

Boosting Agriculture-Based Industries to Strengthen the State Economy and Increase Output

TO promote manufacturing and industries rooted in agriculture and livestock farming – the country's primary economic sectors – supporting the development of the State economy and enhancing product output.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with members of the Bago Region government on 30 August 2024)

Objectives of 80th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day 2025

- To actively participate in serving three main functions of Tatmadaw national defence duty, training duty and public benefit duty upholding Our Three Main National Causes;
- To steadfastly carry out measures for State development and genuine, eternal peace by ending the armed conflicts under the Constitution (2008) and NCA;
- To protect the State and its citizens from dangers and provide sector-wise assistance for the safety and socioeconomic development of the people;
- To provide necessary assistance to hold a free and fair multiparty democratic general election by Tatmadaw for the emergence of a Union based on democratic and federal systems after carrying out measures per the stipulations of the State of Emergency.

Gold Market Rate as of 5 March 2025

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K5,450,000 as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

Nominate Now for Prestigious ASEAN Prize 2025

THE ASEAN Secretariat is calling for nominations for the ASEAN Prize 2025, a prestigious regional award which aims to acknowledge the inspiring and outstanding achievements of an individual or organization in fostering the ASEAN identity, promoting the ASEAN spirit and championing the ASEAN way.

Nominees should have exceptional merit in contributing to the following designated focus areas:

- Collaboration between ASEAN Member States;
- Collaboration between ASEAN and the world;
- People-to-people engagement among ASEAN Member States;
- Economic integration and promotion of standards between ASEAN Member States; or
- Excellent contribution to ASEAN Community Building

The Judging Committee Meeting for the ASEAN Prize, chaired by ASEAN Secretary-General, will convene an intensive assessment to select this year's recipient. The panel of judges for the ASEAN Prize 2025 comprises former and current ASEAN Secretaries-General.

Submissions for the ASEAN Prize 2025 are open from now until 16th May 2025. The nominee must be an ASEAN citizen or an ASEAN-based organization. The nomination form for the ASEAN Prize 2025 can be downloaded from the ASEAN Secretariat website <https://asean.org/nomination-form/>. The nominee must submit the duly filled-in form **no later than 11 April 2025** to the ASEAN Affairs Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office 9, Nay Pyi Taw, or amns.mofa@gmail.com.

50,000+ explore Myanansankyaw Golden Palace, Shwenandaw Monastery

A TOTAL of 58,204 local and foreign visitors visited the Myanansankyaw Golden Palace and Shwenandaw Monastery (Shwekyaunggyi) in Mandalay until February, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Mandalay Branch).

Both sites are over 165 years old and have significant historic structures that attract researchers studying Myanmar's ancient craftsmanship and visitors seeking relaxation.

"Visitors are amazed by the traditional Myanmar craftsmanship and the palace's grand halls. The palace grounds with their beautiful and clean lawns are popular for photography and relaxation. Weekends and holidays see a higher number of visitors. Many also take pho-



tos at Shwenandaw Monastery, which features intricate historical designs," said an official from the department.

According to records, 4,993 international visitors and 53,211 domestic visitors visited these historic sites. Among them, 14,145 people explored Myanansankyaw Golden Palace, while 39,066 visited Shwenandaw Monastery.

Entrance fees for local visitors are set at K500 per adult, with free entry for children and students. The same fee applies to Shwenandaw Monastery. Foreign tourists must pay a Mandalay Zone entry fee of K15,000, which grants access to Myanansankyaw Golden Palace, Shwenandaw Monastery and Bargaya Monastery in Amarapura. — Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-Printing House)/KZL

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.

(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)

Myanmar, Russian Federation to promote cooperation in military technology

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with the Defence Minister of the Russian Federation.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, currently in Moscow of the Russian Federation, held a meeting with Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation Mr Andrei Removich at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation yes-



Photos showcase SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing exchanging gifts with Russian Defence Minister Mr Andrei Removich (above) and the meeting is underway (below).



terday.

On arrival at the Ministry of Defence, the Senior General and his entourage were cordially welcomed by the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation.

At the meeting, they frankly discussed cooperation in all areas of the defence sector between the two countries, improvement of civilian and military relations between the two countries and two Tatmadaws with a plan to further promote relations, cooperation in providing humanitarian aid, and enhancement of cooperation in military technology.

The meeting was also attended by SAC Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo, Council Member General Nyo Saw, National Security Adviser Admiral Moe Aung, Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Thit Linn Ohn, senior Tatmadaw officers of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and the Myanmar Military Attaché (Army, Navy and Air). The Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation was accompanied by Secretary Mr Sergey Kuzhugotovych Shoigu of the Russian Federation Security Council, officials of the Ministry of Defence and senior officers from the Russian armed forces. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL



Myanmar's Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets Vice-Chairman Mr Sholban Kara-Ool of the State Duma, the Russian Federation, yesterday.

a pagoda or a Buddha image by Myanmar in the Buddha Park of Kalmykia Republic and goodwill visits of the Myanmar delegation to Kalmykia Republic.

After the meeting, the Senior General and the Head of Kalmykia Republic posed for documentary photos. — MNA/TTA

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Vice-Chairman of State Duma of the Russian Federation, Head of Kalmykia Republic

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, currently in Moscow of the Russian Federation, received Vice-Chairman Mr Sholban Kara-Ool of the State Duma of the Russian

Federation at Radisson Collection Hotel in Moscow yesterday afternoon.

They cordially discussed the implementation of the discussed measures to cooperate between the Hluttaws of both countries, sending Myanmar delegations to the State Duma

for the exchange of experiences, and further promotion of friendly relations between two Hluttaws of both countries.

The Senior General also received Head of Kalmykia Republic of the Russian Federation Mr Batu Khasikov and party to talk about the establishment of



Head of Kalmykia Republic of the Russian Federation Mr Batu Khasikov shakes hands with the Senior General.

Russia's FM conferred 'Sithu' Title by Myanmar, bolstering bilateral relations

ON behalf of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, State Administration Council Chairman and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Than Swe, who is a member of the Myanmar delegation, presented the "Sithu" title to Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov at 10:30 am on 5 March 2025, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia. The title was conferred to Sergey Viktorovich

Lavrov by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing State Administration Council Chairman and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Following the conferment ceremony, the two sides held open and cordial discussions on further enhancing bilateral relations and cooperation, as well as Myanmar's role as the country coordinator for ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations. — MNA



Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov receives the 'Sithu' title.

NATIONAL

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Russia-ASEAN Economic Commission Chairman

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, currently in the Russian Federation, received a delegation led by Russia-ASEAN Economic Commission Chairman Mr Ivan Polyakov at the meeting room of Hotel Radisson Collection in Moscow on the evening of 4 March.

At the meeting, both sides cordially discussed the functions of the commission, the development of cooperation in the agricultural sector between Myanmar and the Russian Federation, prospects to export watermelon, mango and other fruits of Myanmar to the Russian Federation, plans to recycle waste, cooperation in aerospace and technology, and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting was attended together with the Senior General by SAC Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo, Council Member General Nyo Saw, Union Ministers, the Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation and officials. The Russia-ASEAN Economic Commission Chairman was accompanied by commission officials. — MNA/TTA



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with the Russia-ASEAN Economic Commission Chairman and his delegation.

Officer trainees in Russia urged to uphold loyalty and advance national interests

During the Moscow meeting between the Senior General and officer trainees, emphasis

is placed on AI, technology, and strengthened bilateral ties for future development.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing underlined that officer scholarship students have to be

loyal to the State.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime

Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met military and civilian officer trainees in the Russian Federation at the Radisson Collection Hotel in Moscow, the Russian Federation, on the evening of 4 March.

Speaking on the occasion, the Senior General said that officer scholarship students have to be loyal to the State. As Tatmadaw members joined Tatmadaw by taking an oath of making the sacrifice of life for the sake of the State, they had to avoid the actions of harming the State's interests. They need to serve their duties with a firm concept of being loyal to the State and Tatmadaw. Likewise, as they all are State service personnel, they are required to be free from party politics.



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets military and civilian officer trainees in the Russian Federation.

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NATIONAL



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing speaks at the Myanmar-Russia Economic Forum in Moscow yesterday.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers supplementary speech at Myanmar-Russia Economic Forum

The Russia-Myanmar Business Forum, jointly organized by the Myanmar Embassy to the Russian Federation, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry-UMFCCI and Myanmar Airways International (MAI), Roscongress Foundation, Fund RC-Investments, Russia-ASEAN Business Council and Russia-Myanmar Business Council, took place at the Business Hall of Radisson Collection Hotel in Moscow yesterday morning.

It was attended by Myanmar's Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr Kan Zaw, Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation Mr Maxim Gennadyevich Reshetnikov, UMFCCI President U Aye Win, business people from the Russian Federation and guests.

The Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations and the Russian Minister of Economic Development delivered opening speeches.

The UMFCCI President explained a brief on doing business in Myanmar whereas delegates from both countries submitted their topics.

They all watched a video clip on the use of Russian MIR cards in Myanmar.

In the afternoon session, the Senior General delivered a supplementary speech at the forum. He said: Myanmar successfully hosted the 5th Myanmar-Russia government to government trade and

economic cooperation commission's retreat, the plenary meeting and signing the agreements as well as the business forum this month.

As meeting result of the commission meeting, cooperation could be raised in legal frameworks, trade and investment, energy, transport, construction, infrastructural development, banking service and monetary, information, communication, technology, tourism, education, science and healthcare services sectors.

Especially, the Senior General expressed his satisfaction with cooperation as a new stride with the Russian Federation to upgrade the Dawei Special Economic Zone to be a strategic outlet to the sea.

Myanmar has adopted a strong legal framework and expects to sign the agreement to raise investment and protection between the two countries as a result of this ceremony soon thanks to the efforts of relevant departments and coordination.

To link maritime trade with inland trade, Russian businesspersons will be invited to invest in many opportunities in necessary transport infrastructures along the economic corridors in Myanmar.

At today's meeting with businesspersons on investment and trade measures, not only governments of both countries but businesspersons can expand the communication networks in various sectors with opportunities for cooperation. Especially, although Myanmar and Russia are located a far distance between, it is

believed that they can promote cooperation in trade and investment for all business arenas through today's forum.

At present, it is a pleasure that investments were initially put in the agriculture sector of Myanmar. The forum emphasized cooperation in the transfer of agriculture and livestock-based modern technology through investment in the agriculture, industrial and service sectors.

Moreover, it can be seen that projects in the industrial and energy sectors are being implemented with investment and new technology. With regards to the infrastructure sector, Myanmar wishes to soon join hands with Russian business counterparts in renewable energy without ecological impact, especially wind power, solar power and hydropower along hilly regions and coastal areas.

As both countries have initiated payment ways as part of a cooperation measure, trade will be smoother than in the past. Russia is one of the top 10 of the world in digital development. Hence, Myanmar wishes to cooperate with Russia in the information and digital infrastructure sector. In this regard, Myanmar is keen to further promote healthcare services and pharmaceutical production with Russia. Myanmar has to primarily initiate to create job opportunities for the people to enhance human resources through human resource development. The Senior General expressed special thanks to Russia for the enhancement of the capacity of the human resources of

Myanmar to work in energy, information and technology, service and health sectors which the Russian Federation shows its special interest in.

The Senior General reaffirmed that Myanmar will provide aid for proper opportunities and jobs for private businesses to be implemented through the government-to-government coordination between the two countries.

He noted that in the future, both countries have to strive together to implement the ways which can contribute to bilateral cooperation between the two countries to initiate common interests.

The first point is that Russia and Myanmar are trustworthy and close-friendly nations. Russia is a great power stretching extensively from the East to the West, from Asia to Europe. It is a strategically significant country with global interest and influence. No matter how much Russia's achievements are challenged, its wealth and technological advancements cannot be suppressed. Therefore, I want to bring your wealth and technology to the Asian region for expansion and collaboration. Myanmar offers this opportunity to you. That is why I invite you to invest in Myanmar with confidence. Before investing, come and see the situation in Myanmar for yourself. The delegations coming from Myanmar represent our country, and if you visit Myanmar, you will gain a deeper understanding of the real conditions of its people.

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NATIONAL

SAC Chair PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets embassy's and military attache's families in Russia



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing speaks at the meeting with family members of the embassy and military attache office.

The State Administration Council Chairman and Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who is on a goodwill visit to Moscow, the Russian Federation, met the families of the Myanmar Embassy and the Military Attaché office to the Russian Federation at the Myanmar Embassy yesterday morning, local time.

The meeting was attended by SAC Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo, Council Member General Nyo Saw, Union Minister 1 at the SAC Chairman's Office Admiral Moe Aung, Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Thit Linn Ohn and his wife, Myanmar Military Attaché (Army, Navy, Air) Brig-Gen Moe Kyaw and his wife, as well as embassy and military attaché family members and officials.

The Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation, along with the embassy and military attaché families, introduced themselves. Afterwards, the Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister delivered a

speech, stating that the visit was aimed at developing the Russia-Myanmar friendship and was successful, as he met leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, and achieved positive results.

He also highlighted the long history of Russia-Myanmar diplomatic relations, which have lasted over 77 years, with strong ties dating back to ancient times, as well as Russia's assistance to Myanmar in the education and health sectors. He also mentioned that this is his 11th goodwill visit to Russia since becoming Tatmadaw's Commander-in-Chief.

He said that the two countries have cooperated in defence matters in the past, with Tatmadaw officers being accepted as scholars in Russia after 2001, continuing to attend every year, contributing valuable human resources for the state and Tatmadaw, while Russia has also assisted in upgrading Tatmadaw.

The Chairman of the State Administration Council then encouraged the embassy and military attaché families to

collaborate in supporting relations with Russia, noting that some military officers who studied in Russia have already served in high-ranking civilian positions, bringing great benefits to the country. He also advised the families to spend their free time reading books and studying languages, especially Russian literature and language, and to live in unity and harmony within the embassy.

He also explained that Russia has always stood by Myanmar on the international stage and that the Ukrainian conflict began when some countries took actions undermining Russia, with the West intervening to weaken it, following past efforts by Western countries to disintegrate the Soviet Union, while the international situation continues to change over time.

He also expressed the need for all individuals to focus on and study issues that could benefit the country, take note of opportunities for national progress, enhance trade relations between Russia and Myanmar, improve trade based

on Novosibirsk, export quality products, and promote the trade sector, as there are already products that can be traded between the two countries.

He said that he established the Myanmar Theravada Buddhist Centre in Moscow to promote the spread of Buddhism in Russia and that he would like to see the monks provided with all the necessary services as much as possible. Afterwards, the State Administration Council Chairman and the Prime Minister presented food and honorariums to the embassy's families, which were received by the Ambassador and the Myanmar Military Attachés (Army, Navy, Air). The Ambassador then returned the souvenirs to the State Administration Council Chairman and the Prime Minister.

Afterwards, the State Administration Council Chairman and the Prime Minister signed the visitors' book of the Myanmar Embassy to the Russian Federation and cordially greeted the families of the embassy. — MNA/TH

Officer trainees in Russia urged to uphold loyalty ...

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He continued to say that outstanding personnel were chosen to continue further studies in the Russian Federation thanks to the farsightedness of previous Tatmadaw leaders. As a result, invaluable human resources were produced for the country. Hence, those trainees need to value themselves and continue making more efforts in their studies.

It needs to spend time and money on learning post-graduate courses comprising its own cost and State fund. Hence, the trainees need to strive to become remarkably educated persons to serve the interests of the State.

Trainees need to observe the education system of the Russian Federation, European countries and developed countries to benefit the State.

Myanmar has to strive to keep abreast of other countries in the technology sector. Trainees have to constantly study AI technology to benefit society.

Using the Russian language can enhance friendly relations. In successive eras, Russia has supported Myanmar, whereas Myanmar also stands for Russia.

The Senior General recounted that his goodwill visit

to the Russian Federation was more important than the ordinary goodwill visit. He held talks with the Russian Prime Minister and chairmen of the State Duma and the Federation of the Council of the Federal Assembly. The discussions comprised the opening of consulates and military and civilian training.

The Senior General presented foodstuff and cash awards to the trainees.

Also present at the meeting were SAC Joint Secretary General Ye Win Oo, Council Member General Nyo Saw, Union Ministers, the Chief Minister of Bago Region, Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Thit Linn Ohn, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and the Myanmar Military Attaché (Army, Navy and Air). — MNA/TTA

OPINION

MMQR to improve financial services of Myanmar

IN BOTH developing and developed countries, financial transaction systems operate in pursuit of international standards, ensuring smooth economic flows and the well-being of citizens in various aspects of their socioeconomic lives. On 27 February this year, the implementation of MMQR, Myanmar's National QR Standard for digital payments was officially launched.

As it was a significant milestone in the development of Myanmar's financial services sector, the national-level QR code system, Myanmar QR (MMQR) — which enables fast and convenient payments — has been implemented in conformity with Myanmar's national standards. It is now ready for use in alignment with international standards.

With the implementation of MMQR, Myanmar integrates various QR payment systems, making transactions more convenient and accessible for the people. It enables cost-effective, fast, and secure digital payments in daily life. Since many citizens have limited knowledge of digital financial systems, ongoing educational efforts are necessary to ensure the widespread adoption of MMQR.

Moreover, the system efficiently manages government-related payments, such as electric meter bills, taxes, salaries for public and private employees, insurance premiums, and microfinance loans. In line with the National Payment System Strategy, the development of digital banking has created a need for a seamless interconnection between different financial service providers. The adoption of MMQR enables interoperability across financial systems through a standardized QR code, ensuring secure and efficient digital transactions.

As the primary entity overseeing Myanmar's payment system, the Central Bank of Myanmar aims to modernize the financial system to align with international standards. This includes promoting financial inclusion, reducing reliance on cash, expanding digital payments, and streamlining trade, investment, tourism, and international remittances.

With the implementation of MMQR, Myanmar integrates various QR payment systems, making transactions more convenient and accessible for the people. It enables cost-effective, fast, and secure digital payments in daily life. Since many citizens have limited knowledge of digital financial systems, ongoing educational efforts are necessary to ensure the widespread adoption of MMQR.

As such, the launch of MMQR benefits both unbanked individuals and existing users by enhancing financial participation, reducing cash dependence, and providing access to diverse financial services in line with international digital finance standards.

With the advancement of information and communication technology in Myanmar, mobile phone usage has significantly increased, leading to the widespread adoption of mobile financial services. As mobile phone penetration rises, people in regions without traditional banking services increasingly require financial services.

To facilitate broad access to digital payment methods, the Central Bank of Myanmar has implemented regulatory frameworks for mobile banking, internet banking, mobile financial services, mobile payment services, and merchant payment processing services to enable people to be friendly with advanced financial techniques under the law, rules and regulations, and directives.

IT STARTED with a plate of sushi. The delicate slices of raw fish gleamed under the dim lights of a seaside stall, paired with a dab of soya sauce and a curl of ginger. I was at a bustling street market in a small coastal town, the sort where vendors shout over each other and the air hums with life. I didn't think twice before tucking in. It was delicious — until it wasn't.

Two weeks later, my skin turned a sickly yellow, my energy drained away like water through a sieve, and I found myself staring at a doctor who said three words that flipped my world upside down: "You have Hepatitis A."

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) is one of the most common types of hepatitis viruses that cause liver inflammation and jaundice. This type has been around for

The Invisible Enemy in My Bowl

By Laura Htet (UDE)



Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling food to remove any potential germs that could contaminate the food. **ILLUSTRATION: CONCEPT ART**

a long time — longer than we have been alive, lurking in the shadows of human history. In recent years, its increase has been largely linked to unclean water and food, overcrowding, and poor sanitation, especially concerning toilets. If you think about it, you may have noticed that the number of infectious diseases has increased in recent years. I certainly didn't — until it hit me personally. My story isn't just about bad sushi; it's about how an invisible enemy travel, how it hides in plain sight, and how I fought it off with lessons I'll never forget.

Hepatitis A spreads mainly through consuming water or food contaminated with the faeces of an infected person. Yes, it's as grim as it sounds. The virus doesn't need a handshake or a sneeze — it hitchhikes on something as innocent as a piece of sushi or a sip from a glass. That's why people are often urged to avoid eating street food that isn't prepared or cooked hygienically. But it's not just street food — even in large restaurants, if food isn't prepared cleanly, it can still pose a risk. My sushi came from a vendor with a weathered wooden stall and a grin, but I didn't notice the flies buzzing nearby

or ask how the fish was washed. I didn't know then that HAV thrives in places where cleanliness takes a back seat.

Back home, I'd always prided myself on being careful — washing my hands, boiling water when camping, avoiding dubious roadside stalls. But travelling? That's when my guard slipped. The town I visited wasn't dirty by any stretch — just busy, crowded, and alive. Yet, behind the scenes, overcrowding and poor sanitation were brewing a perfect storm. A single infected person, a poorly washed hand, a bucket of unboiled water — it only takes one weak link. And I was the unlucky domino that fell.

When the doctor explained how I'd got sick, I started replaying every bite I'd taken on that trip. Since the spread is reportedly high right now, you should be cautious about these types of food, he warned me:

- Foods that flies have landed on (those buzzing pests around my sushi were a red flag I ignored).
- Foods left uncovered and exposed (the fish sat out, absorbing more than just the salty air).
- Foods that aren't fully cooked (raw seafood and

half-cooked skewers were staples that week).

- Foods handled or prepared without clean hands (who knew where those hands had been?).
- Raw foods like seafood, fruit, or vegetables (my beloved sushi was the smoking gun).

It was astonishing to realize how vulnerable we are to what we eat. I'd always thought of food as fuel, a source of joy — not a potential assassin. But HAV doesn't care about our love for sushi or our trust in a friendly vendor. It's a stowaway, sneaking into our system through the simplest of mistakes. I learned the hard way that flies aren't just annoying — they're couriers for a virus that can knock us flat.

The symptoms crept up like a thief in the night. As the name suggests, Hepatitis A causes liver inflammation and jaundice (yellowing of the skin). That was the first clue — my reflection in the mirror started looking like a stranger with a sickly glow. Then came the pale stools and dark urine, a bizarre duo I'd never noticed before. My abdomen ached on the upper right side, where my liver was silently screaming for help. Other symptoms were typical of viral infections: fever that left me shivering under blankets, fatigue that made lifting a spoon feel heroic, muscle aches that turned my body into a battlefield, and a loss of appetite paired with nausea that made food my enemy.

I didn't connect the dots at first. I thought it was jet lag or a stomach bug from the trip. But when my friends started joking about my "new tan," I knew something was wrong. The doc-

tor's diagnosis was a gut punch — not just because I was ill, but because it was preventable. If I'd known what to look for, if I'd been more cautious, I might have dodged this bullet.

Hepatitis A is highly contagious, but it can be easily controlled. It spreads primarily through eating or drinking something contaminated with the virus. If we focus on keeping four things clean — food, water, hands, and toilets — we can prevent this disease. That's it. Four simple rules I'd broken without realizing.

The science is astonishingly straightforward. At 85°C for just one minute, the virus dies. Boiling water reaches 100°C, so cooking food thoroughly or boiling it already acts as prevention. If bottled water isn't available, boil our drinking water — drinking it after boiling is safe. I wish I'd insisted on bottled water that day or checked if the ice in my drink was clean. Wash our hands regularly. Even if we haven't used the toilet, we could touch something handled by an infected person who didn't wash their hands, and it could end up in our mouth. So, wash our hands thoroughly before eating every time. I'd scrubbed my hands before meals at home, but on the road? I got lazy. Big mistake.

To stop the virus from spreading via toilets, make sure ours is fly-proof and clean. Doing this can prevent infection. The guesthouse I stayed at had an open latrine with flies buzzing in and out — another clue I overlooked. Prevention isn't rocket science; it's about discipline. And I'd let mine slip.

Since it's a virus, there's no definitive cure. Treatment involves plenty of rest, eating a nutritious diet, and using medication to relieve symptoms. With rest, hydration, and proper nutrition, our immune system can fight off the virus. My doctor sent me home with a prescription for rest — literal bed rest — and a stern warning: avoid alcohol entirely — it can further damage the liver. That part was easy; I didn't even want to look at a glass of anything.

Recovery was slow. I spent weeks on the sofa, sipping water and nibbling bland crackers while my body waged war. My mum brought me broth, and my friends sent memes to cheer me up, but mostly, I slept. The fatigue was crushing — like someone had unplugged my battery. But little by little, the yellow faded from my skin, my appetite crept back, and the pain in my side dulled to a memory.

Months later, I'm back to normal. My skin's its usual shade, my energy's returned, and I can eat sushi again (though I inspect it like a detective now). But Hepatitis A left its mark — not on my liver, which healed, but on my habits. I boil water obsessively when I travel. I wash my hands until they're raw. I ask vendors questions that make them blink — Where's your water from? How's this prepared? I've become that person, and I'm fine with it.

So, here's my plea: don't wait for the yellow skin to wake you up. Check your water. Scrub your hands. Cook your food. It's not glamorous, but it's powerful. Because the next time I bite into a piece of sushi, I'll know I'm the one in control — not the invisible enemy.

60% of adults will be overweight or obese by 2050: study

The world's health systems will come under crippling pressure, the researchers warned, with around a quarter of the world's obese expected to be aged over 65 by that time.

NEARLY 60 per cent of all adults and a third of all children in the world will be overweight or obese by 2050 unless governments take action, a large new study said Tuesday.

The research published in the Lancet medical journal used data from 204 countries to paint a

grim picture of what it described as one of the great health challenges of the century.

"The unprecedented global epidemic of overweight and obesity is a profound tragedy and a monumental societal failure," lead author Emmanuela Gakidou, from the US-based Institute for

Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), said in a statement.

The number of overweight or obese people worldwide rose from 929 million in 1990 to 2.6 billion in 2021, the study found.

Without a serious change, the researchers estimate that 3.8 billion adults will be overweight or

obese in 15 years — or around 60 per cent of the global adult population in 2050.

The world's health systems will come under crippling pressure, the researchers warned, with around a quarter of the world's obese expected to be aged over 65 by that time.

They also predicted a 121-per cent increase in obesity among children and adolescents around the world.

A third of all obese young people will be living in two regions — North Africa and the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean — by 2050, the

researchers warned.

But it is not too late to act, said study co-author Jessica Kerr from Murdoch Children's Research Institute in Australia.

"Much stronger political commitment is needed to transform diets within sustainable global food systems," she said.

That commitment was also needed for strategies "that improve people's nutrition, physical activity and living environments, whether it's too much processed food or not enough parks," Kerr said.

SOURCE: AFP



Obesity has soared as people eat more unhealthy foods, researchers have warned. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

NATIONAL

Govt urges ministries to assess needs before submitting budget proposals

WHEN submitting the Budget Estimate and Revised Estimate, the Union-level organizations and ministries should carefully assess and verify the actual needs before making their submissions, said Vice-Senior General Soe Win.

Vice-Chairman of State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win said so at the coordination meeting on reviewing revenue and expenditure estimates of the Union for the 2025-2026 financial year held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting, the Vice-Senior General, who is also Vice-Chairman of the Financial Commission, said in drafting the annual budget estimates for each financial year, the government has to ensure that the budget deficit and GDP do not exceed five per cent. When reviewing the budget estimates for the 2024-2025 financial year, it is observed that certain revenue-generating ministries and organizations have not been able to reach their revenue targets due to various reasons. Similarly, on the expenditure side, there have been cases where unnecessary and excessive budget requests were submitted, as well as requests for projects that were presumed to be completed. Moreover, some projects are not completed, and certain operations fail to commence as planned due to various reasons by the end of the financial year. As a result, surplus funds are returned, leading to a significant amount of surplus funds for the State.



State Administration Council Vice-Chairman Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Senior General Soe Win addresses the coordination meeting on reviewing revenue and expenditure estimates of the Union for the 2025-2026 financial year yesterday.

He continued that GDP is calculated based on both revenue and expenditure and when comparing the budget deficit to the GDP ratio, unspent funds can lead to a reduction in GDP. Moreover, when the ministries that need to use the funds can utilize the allocated funds on time, projects and operations can be completed, contributing to the growth of their respective ministries' GDP.

It is the most important issue. In this regard, the Head of the State instructed that "it is essential to carefully utilize the budget. There are budget requests that are unnecessary, unfeasible and unrealistic. If the requests are reviewed before submitting, the initial budget estimate could be significantly reduced." Therefore, the ministries and Union organizations are urged to analyze depending on the

essential and non-essential projects before submitting the budget proposals.

In allocating the revenue, the newly established Industrial Development Commission, Electricity and Energy Development Commission and Agriculture and Livestock Development Commission will have to work with the ministries for economic development. Therefore, the expenditure is likely to be increased. On the other hand, if the unspent funds that are not needed are allocated to the commission and its relevant ministries, it will show significant GDP growth. When the GDP improves, there will also be an increase in revenue. Therefore, when submitting the Budget Estimate and Revised Estimate, the Union-level organizations and ministries should carefully assess and verify the actual needs before making

their submissions.

According to the findings of the pre-scrutiny committee and officials, the initial submissions by the ministries indicated GDP with a budget deficit at 7.04 per cent. When the two departments and three committees under the Ministry of Planning and Finance scrutinized that ratio, it revealed GDP with a budget deficit of 6.56 per cent. Then, the deputy minister found 5.85 per cent, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Planning and Finance scrutinized up to 5.24 per cent.

The pre-scrutiny committee chairman and focal ministries collectively reviewed and made adjustments to the necessary expenditure and estimated GDP based on the 2025-2026 financial year budget estimate. Based on the result, the GDP and budget deficit ratio are reduced to 4.74 per cent, and the amount not more than five per cent of the deficit and GDP can be allocated to the ministries related to three commissions and other essential sectors depending on the needed funds.

He continued that the expenditures also should be estimated for maintenance after natural disasters, social protection, education and health sectors. Preparations should be made when the pre-scrutiny committee completes the reviews, as there can be instructions by the Prime Minister for further projects aiming to promote the State economy.

Afterwards, Commission Secretary Union Minister U Win Shein, Deputy Minister U Min Htut and Union Auditor-General Dr Khin Naing Oo reported on their respective sectors. Those from Union-level organizations and Union ministries discussed financial matters. — MNA/KTZH

SAC Chairman Prime Minister ...

FROM PAGE 6

When doing business, you must consider the market. Myanmar has a population of only 51 million. However, the countries surrounding Myanmar have a combined population of around two to three billion. In addition to the 10 ASEAN countries, Myanmar shares borders with major economies such as China, India, and the densely populated Bangladesh. If you think about how to find a market for your products in these countries, it would be even more beneficial. One potential approach is to produce high-value products based on Myanmar's natural resources. Another approach is for businesses to directly invest in Myanmar, utilizing their technology and resources to manufacture products locally. If either of these business models is implemented in Myanmar, I can confidently say that it will yield significant benefits.

Yesterday, I met His Excellency, Mr President. We had extensive discussions

and reached several agreements regarding cooperation with Myanmar. Please don't be too concerned about some of the current challenges we are facing – these are just temporary. I believe that through our joint efforts, we can overcome these difficulties together. What truly matters is the determination and commitment to take action. That is why I would like to extend a warm welcome to our Russian friends, citizens, and businesspeople. If necessary, I will personally meet you again in Myanmar. Thank you.

After the ceremony, the Senior General cordially greeted attendees.

After the forum, State Administration Council Information Team Leader Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun replied to queries raised by Russian media. He said:

During this visit to Russia, not only we met Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin but also the Secretary of Russia's Security Council, the Chairman of the Federation Council, the Chairman

of the State Duma, and the Minister of Defence, along with other Russian leaders. In summary, Myanmar-Russia cooperation will be enhanced in all aspects, including economic, political, social, and defence sectors. When we met President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, we were able to establish a strong partnership and alliance between Myanmar and Russia. We discussed ways to enhance cooperation in various sectors, including economy, politics, and social affairs. Today, we are attending the Myanmar-Russian Business Forum in Russia, which serves as a platform for fostering business connections. Russia is a reliable and everlasting friend of Myanmar. We deeply appreciate Russia's support for Myanmar on both global and domestic issues.

With Russia's assistance, we will construct a 110-megawatt nuclear power plant. Additionally, we will collaborate with Russia on the Dawei Deep-Sea Port,

which will play a crucial role in Southeast Asia's economic infrastructure. This is a major project. By utilizing the Dawei Deep-Sea Port and land borders, we can establish a new trade route to Da Nang Port in Vietnam and other ports without passing through the Malacca Strait. Why is this deep-sea port important? The Dawei Deep-Sea Port is located in southern Myanmar, just above the Malacca Strait, which connects the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean. This project will create a significant alternative trade route.

In Saint Petersburg, we will open a new Myanmar Consulate-General to strengthen diplomatic ties after holding a meeting between Myanmar and Russia. Afterwards, we will visit Belarus. After returning, we will visit Vladivostok, Russia, where we will also open another new consulate-general. What I want to emphasize is that starting today, Myanmar-Russia relations will become even stronger and more stable. We are opening a new historical chapter in our bilateral relations, and I am delighted to share this message. — MNA/TTA

NATIONAL

Indian Ambassador calls on Deputy PM, PM Office Union Minister



SAC Member, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister at the Prime Minister's Office Admiral Tin Aung San receives Indian Ambassador Mr Abhay Thakur yesterday.

MEMBER of the State Administration Council, Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister at the Office of the Prime Minister Admiral Tin Aung San met Mr Abhay Thakur, Ambassador of India to Myanmar, at the guest hall of the State Administration Council Office yesterday afternoon. They held frank discussions and exchanged

views on ongoing projects between Myanmar and India, matters related to transport and trade, issues concerning the electricity and energy sector, and ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

Officials from the Office of the Prime Minister were also present at the meeting. — MNA/MKKS

MoFA Deputy Minister receives Indian Ambassador

DEPUTY Minister for Foreign Affairs U Lwin Oo received Mr Abhay Thakur, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

They exchanged views on enhancing the existing ties of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries and emphasized the importance of utilizing existing bilateral mechanisms to achieve fruitful outcomes. — MNA



The Indian ambassador calls on MoFA Deputy Minister U Lwin Oo in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar detains 250 undocumented foreign nationals

THE government continues efforts to identify and repatriate foreign nationals who have entered Myanmar illegally, particularly those involved in online gambling, telecom fraud and other criminal activities in border regions. Authorities are working systematically to investigate and deport these individuals to their respective countries as per legal procedures.

As part of ongoing operations, 250 more illegal foreign nationals were detained yesterday in Myawady, specifically in the Shwe Kokko and Myawaddy-Mahtawthalay areas of Kayin State. These individuals had entered Myanmar through border routes from neighbouring countries and were engaged in online gambling and telecom fraud activities.

Relevant departments are

now compiling personal information and records to facilitate their repatriation as soon as possible. Kayin State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Colonel Min Thu Kyaw and officials inspected the detention conditions and supervised the registration process for the detainees.

A total of 4,242 illegal foreign nationals have been identified and detained in Myanmar between 30 January and 5 March 2025. Of these, 757 have already been deported to their respective countries via Thailand following proper legal procedures, while the remaining 3,485 are being held in preparation for their repatriation. Authorities have confirmed that they are being securely detained and provided with necessary care until their transfer is completed. — MNA/KZL

Agriculture and Economic Development meeting concludes



The commemorative group photo at yesterday's concluding event. PHOTO: MAUNG THI

THE closing ceremony of the meeting on Agriculture and Economic Development with business leaders from five countries organized by the Myanmar-India Friendship and Development Association took place at the Esperado Lake View Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

Association Chairman U Zaw Zaw Naing and Mr Fmr Genesan Arunasiam first played the video clips featuring activities of the association in local and foreign countries and ag-

riculture and livestock farming sectors.

Mr Fmr Genesan Arunasiam, Mr S Gunasekaran, Chief Executive Officer of Myanmar Tourism Bank U Win Lwin, Dr Ashish K Kandhway, Mr Ravindra Jain, Mr Noresh Kumas and Rajeev Rawal from the Indian Embassy to Myanmar briefed attendees related to agriculture and business sectors.

Attendees then posed for the documentary photo.

The meeting was attended

by officials from the Indian Embassy to Myanmar, the Russian Embassy, the Nepali Embassy and foreign embassies, business people from Myanmar, India, Canada, Singapore and Malaysia, the Myanmar Tourism Bank, the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association and local business people.

The next similar meetings will be in May in Malaysia, in India from 22 to 24 August, and in Myanmar in December. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

Myanmar hosts international conference to foster agri & economic growth, strengthening ties with global partners

THE Myanmar-India Friendship and Development Organization organized a three-day meeting on Agriculture and Economic Development with businesspeople from five countries at Esperado Lake View Hotel in Yangon from 2 to 5 March. The meeting will bring bilateral relations with other countries, including India, and also be supportive measures for agriculture, breeding, tourism, banking, construction, technology and other related industries, creating job opportunities locally.

Being an agriculture-based country, Myanmar has many vacant, fallow and virgin land. Some regional countries, despite their economic growth, are interested in Myanmar due to various factors such as land scarcity, investment in the agriculture and livestock sectors, the desire to collaborate with countries that have good water and land resources, and the increasing economic opportunities. The meeting with the business people from India, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia and South Africa will promote the socioeconomic status of people residing in rural areas.



U Zaw Zaw Naing (Chairman of Myanmar-India Friendship and Development Association)

The meeting is being held with the relevant economic officials from embassies in Myanmar and business people from five countries to develop the agriculture and livestock sector by cooperating with the Myanmar Tourism Association and Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association. The representatives were from India, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia and South Africa. We launched such doing as we have plenty of fallow, vacant and virgin land and we cooperate with

other countries that will invest to develop the agriculture and livestock sectors.

We will receive technologies from Canada and India for the agricultural sector; and it is important for the State economy. Malaysia also wants to cooperate in palm oil, durian plantation and other businesses in Myanmar. Singapore experiences a scarcity of land, so it shows interest in making investments in agriculture. For the agricultural sector of the country, we have plans to cooperate with other countries in addition to the attending countries, and the meeting will be held in local and foreign countries. The conferences on agricultural cooperation with Myanmar will also be held in Malaysia and India. We agreed to hold the meeting in Myanmar in December. The conference will bring good outcomes for agriculture and livestock. The Head of the State also prioritizes the new generations, so we will gather many youths in the agriculture and livestock sectors while cooperating with other countries, so we can create job opportunities. We will cooperate with India in the IT and medicine sectors.



U Yan Win (Chairman of Myanmar Tourism Bank and Myanmar Tourism Federation)

Myanmar is an agricultural and livestock-based country. The Head of

the State instructed to develop the economy through the agriculture and livestock sectors. All have to work together to promote agriculture, livestock and construction. In the tourism industry, it is connected with agriculture and livestock, and the holding of international conferences can bring benefits to the country. They can also support agriculture, tourism, banking and other industries. The government also works with China, India, Japan, Korea and ASEAN countries to promote the tourism industry. If the relevant organizations work together while the government is paving the way, the participant countries also bring benefits to their respective countries.



Mr Ravindra Jain (Rotary Club of Yangon, Vice-President & President-Elect)

Today's conference is fine and important. The intention of holding this conference through the collaboration of Mr Tanga

Raja and Myanmar officials is to promote the economic status of Myanmar and India. India and Myanmar have had a relatively close relationship since 1942. Therefore, we both have strong religious beliefs and cooperation in the education and business sectors. Our Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, always talks about the need to have fine relationships with our neighbouring countries. Myanmar is also included.

Myanmar is an agriculture-based country, and if we have quality samplings and innovative technologies through India-Myanmar cooperation, it is sure that the economy of Myanmar will be promoted through the agricultural sector. Therefore, it is such a good chance that the more we produce, the more income we receive. It is such pride.



U Shein Win (Chairman of Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association)

The conference was attended by most of the countries, and India played a key role. Our association signed with the Myanmar-India Friendship and

Development Association. The major point is that Myanmar must engage in trade with India. Currently, India is experiencing rapid growth and shares similarities with Myanmar in terms of natural resources and goods. They are high in technology and affordable. In the agriculture sector, there are many facts that Myanmar can learn. The fertilizer can be used naturally without losing its original effectiveness. Similarly, the seed sector offers valuable lessons. There are plans for collaboration in the electricity sector.

The forums can contribute to many international papers. As it communicated with developing countries, we can get good advice and extend our friendship. Therefore, it is a good and valuable chance for Myanmar.



U Aung Zaw Win (Vice-Chairman of Myanmar-India Friendship and Development Association)

Hosting agricultural and livestock-related exchange programmes between Myanmar and foreign economists and business professionals benefits the rural population of Myanmar. Since rural

areas primarily engage in agriculture and livestock farming, the introduction of necessary technology and investments drives their development.

When the agricultural sector thrives, it is sure that it naturally contributes to State economic growth. The economic transformations of India and Malaysia also involved significant advancements in agriculture. Moreover, collaborating with India will enhance the livelihoods of farmers. As the government is working on improving the socioeconomic status of rural farmers through the agricultural sector, and the organizations also work together, Myanmar's agriculture and livestock industries will develop rapidly. Economic development fosters national stability and helps reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. — Thitsa (MNA)/ KTZH

Coal production and despatch surge in India

India's coal production for the month of February reached 928.95 million tonnes (MT), reflecting a 5.73 per cent increase compared to 878.55 MT in the same period last year.

THE total coal production from captive and commercial mines for the financial year 2024-25 has reached 167.36 million tonnes (MT) as of February 2025, the Ministry of Coal said in a release on Wednesday.

This represents a 32.53 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase compared to the 126.28 MT produced by 28 February 2024, as per the ministry.

Coal dispatch has also witnessed a significant surge, with total despatch for the financial year reaching 170.66 MT, surpassing the 128.45 MT recorded in the previous year.

This marks a 32.86 per cent YoY growth, ensuring a stable and uninterrupted coal supply to key sectors such as power, steel, and cement. Bhaskarpara Coal mine of M/s Prakash Industries Limited commenced coal production on 15 February 2025, with a Peak Rated Capacity (PRC) of 15 MT, as per the ministry.

India's coal production for the month of February reached 928.95 million tonnes (MT), reflecting a 5.73 per cent increase compared to 878.55 MT in the same period last year, as per the ministry's data released on 1 March. — ANI



India's coal sector continues its strong performance with significant growth in both production and dispatch up to February 2025. PHOTO: ANI

Airbus to manufacture A400M key components in UAE

AIRBUS is looking to manufacture key components of its A400M aircraft in the United Arab Emirates, the Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported Tuesday.

Gabriel Semelas, president of Airbus in Africa and the Middle East, said the initiative is expected to integrate local advanced manufacturing and engineering entities into the global aerospace supply chain. Airbus also plans to establish maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facilities for the A400M in the UAE, alongside a dedicated training center. Semelas noted that the company will provide training and technical support to the UAE workforce. — Xinhua

Japan retailer Trial to acquire supermarket Seiyu for 380 bln yen

JAPANESE discount supermarket chain operator Trial Holdings Inc. said Wednesday it will acquire rival Seiyu Co for 380 billion yen (\$2.5 billion) and make it a wholly owned subsidiary, creating a retail group with sales exceeding one trillion yen.

Under the deal set to close by July, Trial, whose stronghold is in southwestern Japan, will

acquire all shares in Seiyu held by US investment firm Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co and retail giant Walmart Inc. Seiyu operates many stores in Tokyo and its vicinity, as well as in central and western Japan.

KKR and Walmart currently hold 85 per cent and 15 per cent stakes in Seiyu, respectively. — Kyodo



Photo shows the headquarters of Japanese discount supermarket chain operator Trial Holdings Inc in Fukuoka on 5 March 2025. PHOTO: KYODO

Saudi Aramco reports US\$106.2B net income for 2024

SAUDI Arabian Oil Company, commonly known as Saudi Aramco, announced Tuesday a net income of US\$106.2 billion in 2024, down from 121.3 billion dollars in the previous year.

The company also noted a decline in cash flow from operating activities, which fell to 135.7

billion dollars in 2024 from 143.4 billion dollars in 2023.

Saudi Aramco declared a base dividend of 21.1 billion dollars for the fourth quarter of 2024, a 4.2-per cent year-on-year increase. The payout is scheduled for the first quarter of 2025. Additionally, the company expects total dividends to reach

\$85.4 billion in 2025.

The company is on track to deliver a growth strategy across upstream and downstream. It anticipates generating an additional \$9-10 billion in operating cash flow from its upstream gas business and \$8-10 billion from downstream growth by 2030. "Our strong net in-

come and increased base dividend illustrate Aramco's exceptional resilience and ability to leverage its unique scale, low cost, and high reliability to deliver industry-leading performance for our shareholders and customers," said Aramco President and CEO Amin H. Nasser. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ST. MARY VOY.NO. (0BGZKS1NC)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ST. MARY VOY.NO. (0BGZKS1NC)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-3-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** 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 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm 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 CMA-CGM SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0343-792N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI-ACTIVE VOY.NO. (0343-792N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-3-2025** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (ASIA) PTE., LTD.

ROLLING UPDATES WORLD

“Accomplished more in 43 days than most administrations,” says President Trump

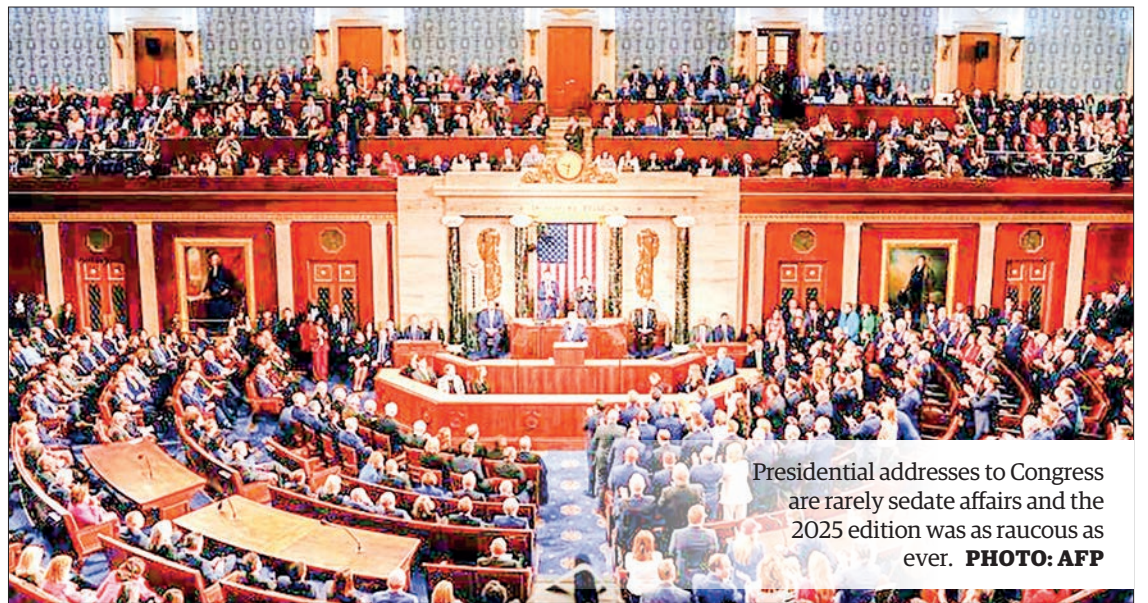
Trump said, “America is back,” to applause and chants of “USA, USA” from Republican lawmakers.

US President Donald Trump said that his administration has accomplished more in 43 days than most administrations in four years or eight years and “we have just started”. He stated that the US is on the “verge of a comeback, the likes of which has never witnessed”.

Donald Trump is addressing the joint session of Congress on Tuesday (local time), his first since taking over as President in his second term in office.

After greeting Johnson, US Vice-President JD Vance, US First Lady Melania Trump, and

Congress, Trump began his address. Trump said, “America is back,” to applause and chants of “USA, USA” from Republican lawmakers. In his joint session of the Congress, he said, “Six weeks ago, I stood beneath the dome of this capitol and proclaimed the dawn of the golden age of America. From that moment on it has been nothing but swift and unrelenting action to usher in the greatest and most successful era in the history of our country. We have accomplished more in 43 days than most administrations accomplished in



Presidential addresses to Congress are rarely sedate affairs and the 2025 edition was as raucous as ever. **PHOTO: AFP**

four years or eight years, and we are just getting started. Our spirit is back, our pride is back, and our confidence is back and

American Dream is surging bigger and better than ever before. The American dream is unstoppable and our country is on the

verge of a comeback, the likes of which has never witnessed and perhaps will never witness again.” — ANI

Greenland rejects Trump pledge to make island American

GREENLAND’S prime minister on Wednesday hit back at President Donald Trump’s pledge to take the Arctic territory “one way or the other”, insisting that islanders did not see their future with the United States or even Denmark.

Mute Egede rejected Trump’s expansionist ambi-

tions to annex the sparsely populated but mineral-rich and strategically placed island, in a partisan address to the US Congress in Washington on Tuesday.

“We don’t want to be Americans, or Danes either. We are Greenlanders. The Americans and their leader must under-

stand that,” Egede wrote in a Facebook post.

“We are not for sale and can’t just be taken. Our future is decided by us in Greenland,” he said, six days before the island’s legislative elections where the longstanding question of independence tops the agenda. — AFP



Prime minister Mute Egede ruled out Greenland becoming part of the United States. **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Britain to mark 80 years since end of WWII with military flypast

BRITAIN will mark 80 years since the end of World War II in Europe with a four-day celebration including street parties, a flypast of old and modern aircraft and a military procession to Buckingham Palace.

The anniversary, set to be among the last major wartime commemorations with a significant veteran presence, will also see union flags draped on London’s Cenotaph war memorial that honours Britain’s war dead.

“Eighty years ago, the freedoms we enjoy today were defended by our remarkable Second World War generation,” British Defence Secretary John Healey said in a statement published on Tuesday. “Our duty today is to safeguard the British values they sacrificed so much to uphold,” he added. The commemorations marking the official Allied victory in Europe on 8 May 1945 will kick off with the military procession followed by the flypast featuring the Red Arrows aerobatics team alongside current and historic military aircraft. — AFP

German parties agree on plan to boost infrastructure, defence

GERMAN parties seeking to form the next government agreed on Tuesday to set up a 500-billion-euro (about \$531 billion) infrastructure fund and to exempt defence spending from constitutionally enshrined debt brake.

The proposal by Germany’s CDU/CSU union and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) aims to exempt defence spending above one per cent of GDP from the debt brake’s limitations. The constitutional debt brake was introduced in 2009 to limit the country’s budget deficit. According to the parties’ announcement, a motion to amend the Basic Law will be introduced next week in the Bundestag, the lower house of parliament. A two-thirds majority in the Bundestag will be needed to approve constitutional amendments.— Xinhua

SPORTS



Japan's powerboat racing started as an outlet for legal betting. PHOTO: AFP

Japan powerboat racing revs up bid to shed shadowy reputation

RACERS shut away for a week incommunicado and airport-style metal detectors — powerboating in Japan deploys strict measures as one of only four sports in the country that can be legally bet on.

Powerboat racing started more than 70 years ago under a special gambling law that classifies it alongside horse racing, speedway and cycling in Japan.

The niche sport, which has seen 30 fatal accidents, has long been in the shadows because of its close association with betting.

But now organizers are keen to shed that image and attract new fans to the fast and furious action.

The rules are simple. Six racers battle it out over three

laps of a 600-metre oval course in single-seater boats that can reach speeds of up to 80 kilometres per hour (50 miles per hour). Men and women compete together and the 1,600 pilots racing professionally range in age from 17 to 75.

Even the most successful racers are virtual unknowns, but racer Tomonori Tsuchiya believes attitudes are changing.

"There have been a lot of adverts on TV recently and I think the media has helped it become a major sport," he told AFP at a race in Tokyo, overlooked by Mount Fuji.

"More kids are seeing it on TV and thinking that they want to become boat racers too". — AFP

Myanmar U-22 to play two friendlies against Team Hong Kong

THE Myanmar U-22 football team, which has been preparing for international competitions this year, will play two friendly matches against the Hong Kong U-22 team this month.

The friendly matches will take place on 19 and 22 March at the Thuwunna Youth Training Centre in Yangon, where the Myanmar U-22 team will

face off against the Hong Kong U-22 team. The Myanmar team is currently led by Japanese coach Kurozaki, who selected around 150 players in February for trials. The final squad consists of over 30 players, including 28 from Myanmar National League clubs and several athletes who performed well in national sports events. The

Myanmar U-22 team has been training since 3 March and will have two weeks of preparation for the matches against Hong Kong.

Team Myanmar will also compete in the ASEAN U-22 Championship, the AFC U-23 qualifiers and the XXXIII SEA Games this year. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Raducanu 'couldn't see ball through tears' in Dubai stalker scare



Emma Raducanu practices at Indian Wells, where she is returning to action for the first time since being targeted by a stalker in Dubai. PHOTO: AFP

EMMA Raducanu revealed Tuesday she "couldn't see the ball through the tears" after being targeted by a stalker during last month's Dubai WTA 1000 tournament.

The British tennis star

was left distraught after a man later said to be displaying "fixated behavior" appeared at a courtside seat during her defeat to Karolina Muchova.

The man was escorted away by security, subsequently

given a restraining order and banned from attending WTA Tour events.

Former US Open champion Raducanu, 22, is making her first tournament appearance since her troubled Dubai campaign at this week's event in California.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Raducanu said she was determined not to let the incident derail her career.

"There's a part of you that thinks, 'I'm not gonna let a middle-aged creep stop me doing what I love to do,'" Raducanu told The Athletic.

"I'm here because I feel a lot better now. A lot happened obviously after Dubai, so I just needed to kind of take my time after," she said. — AFP

Real Sociedad aim to increase Man United misery in Europa League

REAL Sociedad are hoping to forget their struggles this season and compound Premier League giants Manchester United's when they meet on Thursday in the Europa League last 16.

The Basque side host Ruben Amorim's tormented Red Devils in San Sebastian before the second leg at Old Trafford next week.

Real Sociedad suffered a 4-0 thumping at La Liga leaders Barcelona on Sunday, continuing a poor domestic campaign,

although they were missing several regular starters and were reduced to 10 men early on.

"It's in the past now and we have to prepare as best as we can for the game on Thursday," said coach Imanol Alguacil.

Sitting ninth in La Liga the Europa League represents their best hope of silverware this season, as is also the case for United, who flunked out of the FA Cup on penalties against Fulham on Sunday.

La Real are also in the Copa del Rey semifinals but a

1-0 home defeat by Real Madrid in the first leg leaves them in a tough spot before the return in April. With the Europa League final taking place at the home of their bitter rivals Athletic Bilbao, Alguacil's side have all the stimulus they need.

"It motivates Athletic for sure, and us too," said club spokesman Xabi Prieto at the group stage draw in August.

Luka Sucic and Spain's Euro 2024 final hero Mikel Oyarzabal should return after knocks to face Manchester United. — AFP



Real Sociedad's Japanese forward Takefusa Kubo will be fresh for the Man United clash after serving a suspension against Barca. PHOTO: RITZAU SCANPIX/AFP

"Accomplished more in 43 days than most administrations," says President Trump
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HIGH-PRECISION CLOCK

Japan's Shimadzu launches world's 1st commercial optical lattice clock

Japanese precision equipment maker Shimadzu Corp. said Wednesday that it has begun selling an optical lattice clock with a deviation of less than one second over 10 billion years, making it the most accurate on the market.

The device measures 114 centimeters in width, 109.3 centimetres in height and 65 centimetres in depth. The Kyoto-based maker aims to sell 10 units over three years at a suggested retail price of 500 million yen (\$3.3 million) each.

The company started taking orders for the high-precision clock after developing a transportable model in November 2024 in collaboration with researchers from institutions including the University of Tokyo.

Its miniaturization allows the product to be used outdoors, and it could find practical applications in areas such as monitoring movements of the Earth's crust related to plate tectonics, volcanic activity and other phenomena, Shimadzu said. Invented in 2001 by Hidetoshi Katori, a professor at the University of Tokyo's Graduate School of Engineering, an optical lattice clock has a timekeeping uncertainty hundreds of times smaller than that of cesium atomic clocks that currently define the second. — Kyodo



The opening meeting of the third session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, 5 March 2025. PHOTO: DING HAITAO/XINHUA

China's national legislature opens annual session

Lawmakers reviewed economic and social development plans and budgets for 2024 and 2025.

THE 14th National People's Congress (NPC), China's national legislature, opened its third session on Wednesday morning at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders attended the opening meeting. Premier Li Qiang delivered a government work report at the meeting.

Lawmakers reviewed a report from the State Council on the implementation of the 2024 plan for national economic and social development and on the 2025 draft plan, as well as the draft plan for national economic and social development in 2025.

They also reviewed a report from the State Council on the execution of the central and local budgets for 2024 and

on the draft central and local budgets for 2025, as well as the draft central and local budgets for 2025.

Li Hongzhong, vice chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, explained a draft amendment to the Law on Deputies to the National People's Congress and to the Local People's Congresses at Various Levels. — Xinhua



Finland launches Europe's 1st 50-qubit quantum computer

FINLAND'S leading research institute VTT and computer company IQM announced on Tuesday that they have developed and launched Europe's first 50-qubit superconducting quantum computer.

The computer is located at premises of the state-owned VTT Technical Research Centre in Micronova in Espoo, southern Finland, and is open to researchers and companies through the VTT QX quantum computing service. "With this quantum computer,

we can develop applications and new algorithms for material modeling and simulation, optimization problems, and artificial intelligence," said Erja Turunen, VTT's executive vice-president, in a press release.

IQM Quantum Computers' co-CEO and co-founder Jan Goetz disclosed that the 50-qubit system is a baseline for the IQM Radiance 54-qubit quantum computer. Finland first announced its efforts in quantum computing development back in No-

vember 2020 with a total budget of 20.7 million euros (US\$21.85 million) from the Finnish government to develop a 50-qubit quantum computer. The project was phased into three parts. The five-qubit quantum computer was completed in 2021. In the spring of 2022, it was connected to the Internet via the LUMI supercomputer of Finland's Scientific Computing Center, for the use of Finnish researchers and later also more widely for business users. — Xinhua

This undated photo shows Europe's first 50-qubit superconducting quantum computer developed and launched by the Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT) and computer company IQM. PHOTO: VTT/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA