

UWSP Pledges to Work with State for Wa Region Development

Throughout its tenure, the government has remained committed to restoring peace and stability across the country and has extended invitations to all ethnic armed organizations to participate in peace talks with the goal of achieving lasting peace.

A delegation led by U Xiao Guoan, Vice-Chairman of the United Wa State Party (UWSP), paid a courtesy call on President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing at the Presidential Palace Reception Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, they cordially discussed the endeavours of the government during its tenure to initiate the peace and sta-

bility of the State and restoration of durable peace nationwide by adopting a firm vow, and extending the invitation to all ethnic armed organizations to join the peace talks so as to forge the durable peace.

They also highlighted discussions on the activities of the UWSA meeting with the government as a great effort for the future of the State, conducting the peace talks between Tatmadaw and Wa group

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President U Min Aung Hlaing and UWSP Vice-Chairman U Xiao Guoan exchange handshakes during the latter's courtesy call on the former in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

NPT, YGN seal transport sector cooperation agreement with Moscow



The documentary group photo session of the fifth Anniversary International Transport Summit 2026 underway in Moscow.

THE opening ceremony of the 5th Anniversary International Transport Summit 2026 was held on Monday at the Ballroom of the Carlton Hotel in Moscow, the Russian Federation. Dur-

ing the event, an Application of Transport Cooperation was signed between Moscow and 19 cities from around the world, including Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon of Myanmar.

Representing Nay Pyi Taw, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council U Kan Myint Than signed the agreement with Mr Maksim Liksutov, Deputy Mayor of Moscow and Head of the Department of Transport and Road Infrastructure Development, while Yangon Mayor and Yangon City Development Committee Chairman U Myo Myint Aung represented Yangon.

Similarly, transport cooperation agreements were also signed between Moscow and the cities such as Visakhapatnam (India), Accra (Ghana),

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FDA, IPC hold second joint working group meeting

TO strengthen pharmaceutical cooperation between Myanmar and India, the Department Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under the Ministry of Health and the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) of the Government of India held a joint working group meeting for the second time from 27 to 29 July in New Delhi, India.

The event was attended by a Myanmar delegation led by FDA Director-General Dr Swe Sett, IPC Secretary-cum-Scientific Director Dr V Kalaiselvan, and officials from both sides.

The meeting focused on the IPC certification process, cooperation in developing pharmaceutical standards and specifications, technology exchange in laboratory-based pharmaceutical

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ASEAN-ERAT Level-2 Course on Early Recovery launched in Myanmar

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Laymyethna Flood Victims Receive Emergency Food Assistance

NATIONAL

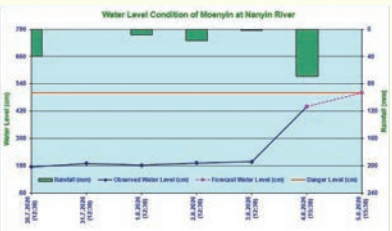
Weather

Flood Warning

Issued at 4 pm MST on 4 August 2026

ACCORDING to the 3:30 pm MST observation today, the water level of the Nanyin Creek at Mohnyin is observed as about two feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next one day.

It is especially alert to the people who settle near the creek banks and low lying areas in Mohnyin Township, to take precaution measure and to stay away from the flood-prone areas in time



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

Issued at 7 pm Tuesday 4 August 2026

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate over the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 5 August 2026: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Mandalay, Bago and Magway Regions and Kayah State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Kachin State, isolated heavy falls in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Bago, Magway, and Sagaing Regions and Chin, and Shan States. The degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

THE CONDITION OF CUMULONIMBUS CLOUD: The cumulonimbus clouds are developing in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Sagaing, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Chin, Rakhine and Shan States. In the area along the cumulonimbus clouds movement, the weather phenomena such as strong winds accompanied by rain, thunder, lightning and hail may occur and therefore it is recommended to be aware in advance of these phenomena.

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times in the Gulf of Mottama, off and along the Mon-Taninthyai Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 30 miles per hour. Wave height will be about 8-10 feet in the Gulf of Mottama, off and along the Mon-Taninthyai Coasts. Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, off and along the Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 25-30 miles per hour. Wave height will be about 7-9 feet in the Deltaic, off and along the Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR THE SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and the South Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 August 2026: One or two rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 August 2026: One or two times of rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5 August 2026: One or two times of rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 100 per cent. — DMH

Public Invited to Donate Robes for Daily Mahamuni Offerings

THE Mahamuni Image Board of Trustees has announced that members of the public may donate robes for the daily offering to the Mahamuni Buddha Image in Mandalay from 1 August.

The donation fee is set at K130,000 per robe. Donors may make arrangements in person at the donation centre in front of the

Mahamuni Buddha Image or by calling 09 960371990 at least five days in advance.

Donations may also be made online via the KPay system by scanning the QR code. Donors are required to send a screenshot of the payment, together with their name and the intended donation date, to Viber 09 960371990. — TWA/MKKS



Scan QR Code for online donation to the Mahamuni Buddha Image through the KPay system.

1st medium-level library training course for 2026 offered



This photo displays readers at a library.

MYANMAR Library Association (MLA) has announced that applications are open for the 2026 Batch 1 Intermediate Library Training Course. The online course is open to those who have

completed the MLA Basic Library Course, are currently working in a library, have relevant library experience, or are enrolled in a Library Diploma Course.

The course will run from 1 to 30 September, with classes conducted via Zoom from 9 am to noon, Monday to Saturday. Applications can be submitted through the online registration form.

As places are limited, priority will be given to

applicants who can attend the full course schedule. The Zoom link and class timetable will be sent to participants who have confirmed their attendance and paid the certificate fee on 30 August.

The certificate fee is K20,000 and must be paid via KPay by 28 August. After payment, applicants are required to send a screenshot of the payment receipt to 09 450627226 (Ko Win Zaw Latt) via Viber. — MT/ZS

Free Zumba classes energize Hpa-an residents, visitors

A free Zumba fitness class is held every Sunday for visitors and residents in Hpa-an, according to Tourism Hpa-an.

Zumba dance sessions aimed at promoting physical and mental well-being are being organized by the volunteer group Clean Hpa-An, with both visitors and residents of Hpa-an invited to participate.

The fitness dance classes

are being held at the State Futsal Stadium, and participants can join free of charge from 6 am to 8 pm. Led by young fitness instructors, the sessions welcome individuals, families and friends to take part together.

For further information, enquiries can be made to 09 255773394 or 09 685737394. — MT/ZS



The Zumba fitness dance in Hpa-an.

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise



NATIONAL

UWSP Pledges to ...

FROM PAGE 1
in 1989, and the concept of UWSP that the State is its parents in carrying out development of their region under care of the State, and the State fulfilments for the Wa region through the deployment of teachers and infrastructure development, the upgrade of hospitals to improve the healthcare sector in addition to appointment of health staff, and providing necessary materials for construction projects to develop the transport sector better.

Both sides also focused on the efforts of the State in accordance with the 2008 Constitution to achieve lasting peace, which is essential for building a new nation based on the democratic and a federal system desired by the people, the State's endeavours in accelerating measures to eliminate online scams and online gambling activities across the country, as well as intensifying efforts to prevent and suppress narcotics-related crimes, the efforts of UWSA in strictly super-

vising and taking effective action to eradicate online gambling activities and combat narcotics in its region.

Furthermore, they frankly talked about the future efforts to ensure the success of the internal peace process and the measures to be undertaken for the comprehensive development and progress of the Wa region.

After the meeting, the President and the Vice-Chairman of UWSP exchanged commemorative gifts and had documentary photos taken together with the attendees.

Also present at the meeting were Vice-President U Nyo Saw, Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Secretary Lt-Gen Min Naing and Lt-Gen Kyaw Ko Htaik from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief. The UWSP Vice-Chairman was accompanied by Deputy Secretary-General U Bao Aik Kham and officials. — MNA/TTA

NSPNC, UWSP conclude two-day peace talks



The concluding day of the meeting between the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee and the United Wa State Party in progress yesterday.

THE National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) and the United Wa State Party (UWSP) concluded their second day of peace talks in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with both sides signing a record of agreed outcomes and reaffirming their commitment to advancing the peace process through political dialogue.

The meeting was

held at the Horizon Lake View Hotel and attended by senior officials from both delegations, including NSPNC Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and UWSP Vice-Chairman U Xiao Guoan.

According to the meeting, discussions focused on issues carried over from the first day, including national unity, regional stability and development, healthcare,

agriculture, livestock, transport infrastructure and practical cooperation aimed at supporting the peace process. Both sides also reviewed the outcomes of their two-day discussions and signed a written record of the agreements reached.

The UWSP vice-chairman said the talks had been conducted in an open and constructive atmosphere, producing positive

results. He reiterated the party's support for resolving differences through political means, building consensus peacefully and maintaining the peace process. He also called for greater mutual respect, tolerance and cooperation among Myanmar's ethnic communities to promote long-term peace, stability and development.

Closing the meeting, the NSPNC Chairman described the discussions as productive and said the UWSP's location along the Myanmar-China border made it an important partner for bilateral relations. He expressed hope that the UWSP would continue participating in the peace process through regular engagement with the NSPNC.

The meeting concluded with both sides exchanging commemorative gifts. — MNA/ST

ASEAN-ERAT Level-2 Course on Early Recovery launched in Myanmar



The launch of the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team Level-2 Course on Early Recovery in progress in Nay Pyi Taw.

THE ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) Level-2 Course on Early Recovery has been launched to strengthen rapid and more effective recovery efforts in the event of natural disasters in the ASEAN region. Participants from ASEAN member states will not only receive classroom instructions but will also conduct field visits to observe ongoing and completed recovery activities.

Myanmar is hosting the course at the Parkroyal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw from 3 to 7 August, and a total of 14 ASEAN-ERAT member states are attending the training. The course is jointly organized by the Department of Disaster Management, the ASEAN-Japan Integration

Fund (JAIF), and the AHA Centre. Resource instructors from the Nay Pyi Taw Council, the Ministry of Construction, the Department of Disaster Management, the AHA Centre, UNDP, IOM, IFRC, and the Myanmar Red Cross Society are delivering the training sessions.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Soe Win said the course aims to equip ASEAN-ERAT members with the knowledge and skills needed to systematically transition from emergency response to early recovery following disasters. It also seeks to enhance participants' ex-

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MNREC Union Minister attends Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Committee meeting

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Hsan Oo attended the first central committee meeting of the Myanmar Gems Emporium at the Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, together with committee members and officials from the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association (MGJEA).

During the meeting, the Union minister said discussions would focus on successfully holding the 61st Myanmar Gems Emporium, completing repairs to the earthquake-damaged Maniyadana Jade Hall on sched-



ule, and renovating the Gemstone Emporium (Nay Pyi Taw). He added that the exhibition aims to increase foreign income, support MSME development, improve financial flows for local entrepreneurs and create more job opportunities.

Committee members and industry officials reported on their respective tasks, including renovation progress at the Maniyadana Jade Hall and the Gemstone Emporium. MGJEA officials also briefed the meeting on their ongoing work. The Union minister coordinated the necessary arrangements and delivered concluding remarks. — MNA/MKKS

NATIONAL

Cash awards, certificates presented for handover of ancient artefacts

CASH rewards totalling more than K104.9 million and certificates of recognition were presented to individuals who donated a total of 1,173 ancient artefacts, including items dating from the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Pyu period, Konbaung period, Waithali period and MraukU period. The donated artefacts included fragments of gold floral ornaments, silver coins, stone rings, stone beads, bronze weights, bronze bells, bronze alloy plates and pottery.

The award presentation ceremony was held at 9 am yesterday at the Lawkanat Hall of the Ministry of Hotels, Tourism and Culture in Nay Pyi Taw. The recipients included U Win Ko Ko from 3rd Pankhin Street, Pyinmana Township, Nay Pyi Taw, U Maung Maung Swe from Thagyun Village, Pyinmana Township, Nay Pyi Taw, U Ye Yint Zaw of Kyauktine Village, Pyawbwe Township, Mandalay Region, U Win Min



Union Minister U Maung Myint presents cash awards to an artefact donor.

Tun and U Soe Min of Padigon Village, Myothit Township, Magway Region and U Nyan Lin Htet of Yazadirit Road, Kyaikza (Khawza) Town, Ye Township, Mon State.

Individuals who discover or possess ancient artefacts, whether by chance or through personal collection, may hand them over to the State. For gold artefacts, expert committees assess the items, while the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation verifies their quality and weight. The original value is calculated based on the prevailing market

price of gold on the day of assessment.

For Pyu-period artefacts, donors receive the original value plus an additional 80 per cent for historical value and between 40 and 80 per cent for artistic value, along with extra rewards for exceptional items. For Bagan-period artefacts, donors receive an additional 70 per cent for historical value and between 40 and 70 per cent for artistic value. Rare and outstanding artefacts may receive an extra reward equivalent to 40 to 80 per cent of their historical value. As a result, rewards gener-

ally amount to between two and a half and more than three and a half times the current market value of the artefacts.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Hotels, Tourism and Culture U Maung Myint said that cultural heritage and ancient artefacts are invaluable symbols of the nation's dignity and enduring historical legacy, making their long-term preservation essential. He emphasized that public awareness and participation are vital to protecting the country's cultural heritage and expressed appreciation for the donors, who chose to hand over the artefacts to the State out of national interest rather than for personal financial gain. He added that the donated artefacts would be systematically preserved and displayed in national museums, and urged the people to report and hand over any ancient artefacts they discover to the relevant authorities. — MNA/KTZH

Mongyang's spring water supply project inspected

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, conducted a field inspection yesterday to review the implementation of a spring water supply system and related work in Ponlon Village, Mongyang Township. The project is being carried out to ensure year-round access to adequate clean drinking water for residents and reduce summer water shortages.

Mongyang Township Department of Rural Development Head U Thet Lin Tun and engineering staff examined the project site where a two-mile-long spring water pipeline and related infrastructure are being constructed from the water source to Ponlon Village. Officials also

met representatives of the tender-winning companies and members of the Village Water Supply Committee, instructing them to complete the project on time and in compliance with prescribed standards and specifications. The spring water supply project is being implemented using funds allocated under the Union budget for the 2026-2027 financial year, amounting to K79.2 million. Construction work commenced in the first week of August under the technical guidance and close supervision of township DRD staff. Upon completion, the project will benefit rural residents in Ponlon Village by providing a reliable supply of clean drinking water year-round. — Cho Than Nyunt (Rural)



Officials inspect the implementation of a spring water supply project in Mongyang Township.

ASEAN-ERAT Level-2 Course...

FROM PAGE 3

pertise in recovery procedures, facilitate the exchange of international experience and modern recovery technologies, and strengthen the overall capacity of ASEAN-ERAT members. The course would provide a valuable platform for participants to

share experiences.

Also present at the opening ceremony were Deputy Ministers Dr Than Soe and Dr Thant Zaw Lwin, Nay Pyi Taw Council Member U Tun Tun, relevant officials, the Operations Director of the AHA Centre and instructors. — MNA/KTZH

Department of Meteorology and Hydrology
Seismological Division
Nay Pyi Taw
Tel 067-3411269 Fax 067-3411253

Earthquake Information	
Date	4.8.2026
Time (MST)	09:26:35
Magnitude	3.7 (Slight)
Latitude	23.73 N
Longitude	94.23 E
Depth	50 km
Region	About 14 miles NW of Mawlaik.

For More detail Information
<https://www.moezala.gov.mm/>

EARTHQUAKE

A slight earthquake of magnitude 3.7 M with its epicentre inside Myanmar (about 14 miles northwest of Mawlaik), latitude 23.73 °N, longitude 94.23 °E, with a depth of 50 kilometres, about 34 miles south of the Tamu Seismological Observatory was recorded at 9 hours 26 minutes 35 seconds MST on 4 August 2026. — DMH

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

NATIONAL

Yedashe’s Model Village project introduced, committee formed



An initiation and committee formation ceremony for the Emerald Green village development projects is underway in Yedashe Township.

A ceremony to conduct an introductory briefing on the establishment of the Model Village Project and form a project committee for the 2026-2027 financial year took place in Nyaungbintha Village, Yedashe Township, yesterday.

Yedashe Township

Department of Rural Development Head Daw Yi Yi Pyone met village elders and villagers in the village and explained the objectives, implementation processes and rules and regulations to be followed in forming the project committee, as well as matters

requiring cooperation from the village. The villagers selected and formed a nine-member Model Village Project Committee through consensus to effectively lead and carry out project activities.

The project will commence implementation during the 2026-2027 financial year, focusing on six major areas including village infrastructure development, livelihood improvement, promotion of the rural economy, and establishment of a sustainable model village, with technical assistance and close cooperation from relevant departments and residents. — Karan (Rural)

Tonzang reviews healthcare, education and power services

AUTHORITIES inspected public services in Tonzang Township, including healthcare facilities, schools and electricity distribution, as part of efforts to support local development and recovery activities.

At Tonzang Township Hospital, officials reviewed medical services, the storage of medicines and supplies, and vaccine preservation facilities using solar power. The hospital, staffed by 94 health workers, has treated 60 inpatients, 446 outpatients, 28 minor surgery cases, four major surgery cases and two maternity cases to date.

They also visited Ton-



Schoolchildren are peacefully learning in a school class in Tonzang Township, Chin State.

zang Basic Education High School, where 4,732 students are attending classes across 63 schools in the township, supported by 271 teachers. Identification cards were also handed over to students under the “Lamin” project.

The inspection team later reviewed electricity distribution operations and discussed measures to improve power supply for government offices and residents. — MNA/KZL

NPT, YGN seal transport sector cooperation agreement with Moscow

FROM PAGE 1

Ankara (Türkiye), Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Goiania, Montes Claros and Porto Alegre (Brazil), Beirut (Lebanon), Belgrade (Serbia), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Managua (Nicaragua), Montevideo (Uruguay), Quito (Ecuador), and Vladivostok (Russian Federation).

The 5th Anniversary International Transport Summit 2026 is being held from 2 to 6 August. At the opening ceremony, welcoming remarks were delivered by Mr Maksim Liksutov, Deputy Mayor of Moscow for Transport and Industry, Mr Dmitry Zverev, State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Transport

of the Russian Federation; and Mr Vladimir Efimov, Deputy Mayor of Moscow for Urban Planning Policy and Construction.

The summit aims to promote the exchange of advanced expertise in transport modernization and digital innovation among partner cities, develop strategies for cooperation to improve urban transport systems, and enhance the quality of life for urban residents.

The Yangon Region Development Affairs Minister and Yangon City Development Committee Chairman (Mayor), Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee member, and YCDC officials attended the event. — MNA/KTZH

Advanced Excel Training for Staff Capacity Building opens

THE Department of Rural Development under the Myaungmya District, Ayeyawady Region, held the opening ceremony of an Advanced Excel Training for staff capacity building on 3 August at the department’s meeting hall. The training aims to enhance the performance and professional capacity of civil servants.



The staff capacity-building training is underway in Myaungmya Districts, Ayeyawady Region.

At the ceremony, District Head U Kyaw Thu Ko Ko explained that the training was organized to help

staff implement departmental and project-related activities more efficiently, accurately, systematically,

and promptly, thereby improving their overall work performance and capacity.

The trainer then in-

troduced the training subjects and explained the rules and regulations that participants are required to follow throughout the course.

The training will be conducted over 12 days, from 3 to 14 August, with 16 trainees from the district and township offices under the Myaungmya District participating, according to the Myaungmya District Department of Rural Development. — Myo Myo (DRD)

FDA, IPC hold second joint working group meeting

FROM PAGE 1

testing, capacity-building for skilled personnel, and strengthening pharmaceutical quality assurance and regulatory systems in line with international standards.

According to the FDA, the meeting was aimed at

strengthening pharmaceutical cooperation between Myanmar and India, expanding public access to quality and safe medicines, and promoting collaboration in pharmaceutical technology, as well as the development of pharmaceutical standards and specifications. — MT/ZS

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

Laymyethna Flood Victims Receive
Emergency Food Assistance

THE Ayeyawady Region government and the Ayeyawady Foundation yesterday provided relief supplies to flood-affected residents of Aingthapyu Village in Laymyethna Township. The assistance included rice, cooking oil, instant noodles, coffee mix, drinking water, medicines and other essential food items.

Chief Minister U Aye Kyaw and officials met affected residents and presented the aid. The chief minister also inspected damage to Bridge



The relief-supply handover ceremony is underway in Laymyethna Township.

No 1/6 on the Laymyethna-Aingthapyu-Ngathainggyoung road, which was damaged by erosion,

and reviewed efforts to construct a Bailey bridge. Since flooding began in wards and village-tracts

across Laymyethna Township, government departments, the Tatmadaw, the Myanmar Police Force, the Fire Services Department, the Myanmar Red Cross Society and social welfare organizations have been carrying out relief and rescue operations. Charity groups, individual donors, social organizations and artists from across the country have also been providing daily assistance through local coordination centres. — Regional IPRD/MKKS

13 flood relief camps
open as rescue efforts
continue in Laymyethna

HEAVY rainfall and riverbank erosion on the night of 30 July caused a breach in the Ngawun River embankment in Laymyethna Township, Ayeyawady Region, resulting in flooding in five urban wards, major roads in the town and 57 surrounding villages.

Thirteen flood relief camps have been opened, and personnel from the Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force, Fire Services Department, social welfare and charity organizations, together with

residents, are carrying out rescue and relief operations. These include evacuating residents and property, distributing food and providing healthcare services.

Efforts to prevent further erosion and flooding are also underway, including placing sandbags, installing flow-control measures and reinforcing embankments. Officials from the South-West Command have inspected the operations and coordinated the necessary support. — MNA/MKKS

Yaksawk's RBF pig farming
activities inspected

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, conducted a field inspection yesterday to review the progress of household income-generating pig farming activities carried out under the Rural Business Fund (RBF) Project in Kyauktaw Model Village, Yaksawk Township.

Yaksawk Township Department of Rural Development Head U Ye Min Aung, the project in-charge and staff visited the village to inspect pig farming activities and pig feed storage conditions of the Than Htike Aung, Toe Toe Aung and Tun Tun Aung groups operating under the group-based system. He also met RBF members and discussed

pig feed prices, livestock breeding costs and selling prices, while coordinating and providing necessary assistance based on village requirements.

The Rural Business Fund (RBF) Project aims to provide necessary capital for agricultural and livestock producers as well as small and medium-sized entrepreneurs in rural areas and enable livelihood activities to be carried out through a group-based system. Kyauktaw Model Village is implementing family income-generating pig farming activities through a group system, with each group receiving a project loan of K10 million along with members' contributed capital. — Maung Khaing (Rural)



Officials inspect a livestock breeding project in southern Shan State.

Spring water pipeline installation inspected in Yebyu

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, Yebyu Township, Taninthayi Region, conducted a field inspection yesterday morning of 4 August for the planned spring water pipeline installation project in Byaik Village. The project is being implemented in line with Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG-6) to ensure access to clean drinking water for rural communities.

During the inspection, U Myint Oo Aung, Head of the Department of Rural Development in Yebyu Township, together



Officials oversee a spring water pipeline installation project in Yebyu Township, Taninthayi Region.

with representatives from the contracted company, met members of the village water supply committee and residents. They explained the implementation plan and discussed the proposed

activities for the spring water pipeline project.

Afterwards, the inspection team assessed the village's current water consumption, the availability of water sources, and the proposed pipe-

line route to ensure the project's feasibility and effective implementation.

The spring water pipeline installation project will be implemented during the 2026-2027 financial year with a regional government budget of K110 million. The project will be carried out by Nice Generation Company.

Upon completion, the project is expected to provide a reliable year-round supply of clean drinking water for the residents of Byaik Village, according to the Department of Rural Development, Yebyu Township. — Ah Htwe (DRD)

Heavy Rainfall Warning No 35

Issued at 8 pm MST on 4 August 2026

ACCORDING to the observations at 4:30 pm MST today, due to the strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and the South Bay of Bengal and due to the convective clouds, rain or thundershowers are likely to be fairly widespread to widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Magway, Sagaing, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls from today morning to 7 August 2026.

Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along the Myanmar Coasts. Surface

wind speed in squalls may reach 25-30 miles per hour. Wave height will be about 7-9 feet off and along the Myanmar Coasts.

Advisory

People should be aware of the strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and the South Bay of Bengal and the Depression area over the West Bengal Coast near west Haldia, India, and such as the heavy rainfall with strong wind, flash floods and landslides in the hilly areas and near small rivers and inland water transport and domestic flights. — DMH

NATIONAL

Yamethin's VRFP funds disbursed

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, held a ceremony to disburse funds under the Village Revolving Fund Project (VRFP) in Aunggon Village, Yamethin Township, yesterday.

Yamethin Township Department of Rural Development Head Daw Aye Aye Win explained the objectives, implementation and benefits of the Village Revolving Fund Project. Officials then briefed participants on project activities, loan conditions, interest rates, repayment periods and rules and regulations to be followed. They hand-

ed over K58 million in revolving funds to members of the project implementation committee.

Aunggon Village is implementing small-scale agricultural and business activities using K58 million from the Village Revolving Fund Project. Under the supervision of the township head, members of the project committee disbursed the seventh round of revolving loans at low interest rates to a total of 180 beneficiaries from the village, including 176 people engaged in systematic agriculture and four in trading businesses. — Sein Lwin (Rural)



A village representative receives the Emerald Green project fund in Yamethin Township.

ASEAN discusses regional drug control measures

THE 47th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) and related meetings were held in Thailand, focusing on regional cooperation in combating drug-related issues.

Delegates discussed drug prevention efforts, information sharing on emerging synthetic drugs, reviews of ASEAN drug control plans, and the use of AI and digital tools in awareness pro-



The 47th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters and related meetings is underway in Thailand, attended by the Myanmar delegation through videoconferencing.

grammes.

Myanmar's CCDAC delegation attended the meeting via videoconferencing and highlighted the need for stronger regional cooperation to address drug production, trafficking and use. The meetings will continue until 5 August. — MNA/KZL

2 foreign nationals transferred over telecom fraud links

TWO foreign nationals linked to online gambling, telecom fraud and other criminal activities in the Myawady-Shwe Kokko area have been handed over to their respective countries through Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge II.

The two nationals, one from Indonesia and one from Belarus, were transferred in accordance with legal procedures on

humanitarian and friendly cooperation grounds.

Authorities stated that a total of 14,740 foreign nationals who illegally entered Myawady Township between 30 January 2025 and 4 August 2026 had been detained and processed. Of these, 13,814 had been repatriated to their respective countries via Thailand.

Another 213 foreign nationals are awaiting transfer, while 713 remain



Officials and foreign immigrants are seen before their deportation.

subject to legal action for immigration and drug-related laws. — MNA/KZL

49 offenders involved in online gambling arrested in Namhsan

TATMADAW columns conducting area security operations in Namhsan Township, Shan State (South), carried out searches following reports of online scam activities in the area. At about 2:30 pm yesterday, security forces raided a brick building with a corrugated iron roof measuring about 80 by 60 feet, located about 250 metres south of Narineyathit Village in Namhsan Township, which was allegedly being used for online scam operations.

During the operation, authorities arrested 49 suspects, comprising 38 Chinese nationals who had allegedly entered the



This image reveals the location where online scammers were arrested in southern Shan State.

country illegally (36 men and two women) and 11 Myanmar nationals (seven men and four women), who were allegedly involved in online scam activities, together with One P-365 pistol with two magazines and five rounds of 9 mm ammunition, one Uzi-type pistol with one magazine and nine rounds of .38-calibre ammunition, two AK-

47 assault rifles with two magazines and 50 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition, 67 mobile phones, four All in One computers, one CPU and six Starlink discs.

Offenders will face action under the existing law after proper examination, and the seized materials will be managed in accordance with the procedures. — MNA/KTZH

Online registration for 17th EPS-TOPIK opens 6 Aug

THE Public Overseas Employment Agency (POEA-EPS) has announced that online registration for the 17th EPS-TOPIK (Employment Permit System-Test of Proficiency in Korean), scheduled for 2026, will open on 6 August.

It will evaluate proficiency through the EPS-TOPIK and Skills Tests in three sectors: agriculture and livestock, construction, and forestry.

Key schedules include first stage (Online Applications) from 6 to 10 Au-



Labour officials inspecting the issuance of applications to EPS candidates in July 2025.

gust; test schedule announcement on 31 August; EPS-TOPIK Exam from 9 September to 9 October; exam results on 16 October; second stage (Skills Test Submissions) from 29 to 31 October; test schedule announcement on 2 November; Test & Job Capacity Assessment from 11 to 14 November; and final results on 20 November.

Applicants may choose only one job category when submitting their application. Those who rank within the allocated passing quota based on their test scores will be selected as successful candidates and become eligible to proceed with the employment application process.

While applying online, there are no restrictions on passport types (PV, PJ, etc.) or validity. However, POEA-EPS has announced that only PJ passports will be accepted when submitting job applications. — MT/ZN

OPINION

ARTICLE

Invite investment and expertise of Japanese businesspeople

MYANMAR and Japan established diplomatic relations in 1954, and the two countries have now enjoyed more than 70 years of diplomatic ties. The two countries' long-standing and cordial relations have fostered mutual respect, friendship, and bonds of goodwill among their peoples, which have remained strong and enduring throughout the history of both nations.

In addition, bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to US\$1,334.795 million in the 2023-2024 financial year; US\$1,194.394 million in the 2024-2025 financial year; and US\$1,343.665 million in the 2025-2026 financial year. The Thilawa Special Economic Zone is also a prominent example of Myanmar-Japan cooperation, with Japan playing a major role through investments accounting for 29.92 per cent of the total investment.

To further strengthen the friendly relations between Myanmar and Japan and accelerate efforts to promote comprehensive socioeconomic development in Myanmar, the Myanmar-Japan Business Forum was held on 28 July at the Myanmar Convention Centre (MCC) in Yangon. This forum will serve as a strong foundation for further expanding long-standing trade and investment between the two countries. By combining Myanmar's natural resources, agricultural sector, and young workforce with Japan's advanced technologies, capital, and management expertise, a mutually beneficial win-win economic environment can be further strengthened for both sides.

Myanmar Convention Centre (MCC) in Yangon. This forum will serve as a strong foundation for further expanding long-standing trade and investment between the two countries. By combining Myanmar's natural resources, agricultural sector, and young workforce with Japan's advanced technologies, capital, and management expertise, a mutually beneficial win-win economic environment can be further strengthened for both sides.

As Japan has achieved development as an advanced country, MSMEs and SMEs have played an important role in its economic growth. Therefore, the Government of Myanmar also welcomes investment from Japan in the MSME sector to support the development and growth of MSME businesses in Myanmar.

Therefore, the Myanmar-Japan Business Forum has served as an important platform for discussions that will help elevate economic relations between the two countries. It is also expected to contribute to the emergence of more sustainable and long-term partnerships and cooperation between Myanmar and Japan, as well as to help promote improvements in the socioeconomic lives of the people.

Myanmar's major export products to Japan include finished garments, footwear products, pulses and beans, pearls, and electronic equipment. The main import products from Japan are textile materials, transport equipment, electrical machinery, machinery and mechanical equipment, and lace and knitted textile products.

Japan is the ninth-largest foreign investor in Myanmar. In addition, around 300 Japanese companies are operating businesses in Myanmar; with more than 1,500 Japanese nationals residing and working in the country. As a result, economic cooperation between the two countries and people-to-people relations have continued to develop and strengthen.

To further strengthen the friendly relations between Myanmar and Japan and accelerate efforts to promote comprehensive socioeconomic development in Myanmar; the Myanmar-Japan Business Forum was held on 28 July at the

ON 1 July this year, the Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China came into force. The law marks three historic firsts. For the first time, it incorporates General Secretary Xi Jinping's important thought on strengthening and improving work on ethnic affairs into national legislation. For the first time, it clarifies in legal terms such as fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation and advancing the building of a community for the Chinese nation. For the first time, it defines in law the framework for work on ethnic affairs in the new era. It is a successful example of translating the major theoretical achievements and practical experience in work on ethnic affairs into the will of the state through legislation, providing a solid legal foundation for promoting ethnic unity and progress in the new era.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to our friends from all sectors in Myanmar the law's guiding principles, institutional framework, and practical results, and to share China's experience and thinking on promoting ethnic unity and progress through the rule of law.

First, the law establishes the fundamental principles for work on ethnic affairs by upholding equality among all ethnic groups and fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. From the outset, it makes the basic principle governing work on ethnic affairs and explicitly prohibits all forms of ethnic discrimination and oppression. It provides legal guarantees for the equal participation of all ethnic groups in state governance and

Fostering Unity Through the Rule of Law and Advancing Shared Prosperity Through Development

By Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Ma Jia

for sharing the benefits of development. It upholds the combination of national unity and regional ethnic autonomy, as well as the combination of ethnic factors with regional factors, while safeguarding the equal rights of ethnic minorities in political, economic, cultural, and other fields. Regardless of population size, every ethnic group is an equal member of the Chinese nation, united by a shared future. Guided by the goal of fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, the law fully respects cultural diversity. It protects by law the freedom of all ethnic groups to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and the freedom to preserve or reform their customs and traditions. It uses the rule of law to uphold harmony among diverse cultures while enabling every ethnic culture to flourish in its own way.

Second, the law promotes integration and shared development by creating more opportunities for interaction and integration among all ethnic groups, encouraging people to live, study, work, and enjoy life together. Promoting extensive interaction and integration among ethnic groups is a central task set out in a dedicated chapter of the law. Today, two-way

population mobility has become the norm in China. More than 33 million ethnic minority people live and work away from their registered hometowns, and over one-third of the ethnic minority population now resides in urban and dispersed areas. The pattern of "overall integration, local concentration, mutual interaction" continues to deepen. The law sets out detailed measures covering education, culture and tourism, sports, employment, and community development. It includes specific provisions for building integrated communities and promoting interaction and integration through education, cultural activities, sports, and tourism. These measures help people of different ethnic groups deepen mutual understanding, strengthen mutual respect, bridge differences, build consensus, and make the concept of the Chinese national community part of everyday life.

Third, the law focuses on improving people's well-being through balanced development so that all ethnic groups can share the benefits of Chinese modernization. It is designed to promote common prosperity and development for all ethnic groups. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the combined GDP of China's five

ethnic autonomous regions has grown from RMB3.25 trillion to RMB8.66 trillion in recent years, more than doubling in size, while regional development gaps have continued to narrow. From the northern frontier to the south, and from the plateau to the border regions, ethnic minority areas have made major advances in transport, energy, communications, and other infrastructure. Public services in education, healthcare, housing, and social security have continued to improve. Behind these steady gains are real improvements in people's sense of fulfilment and well-being.

The best way to assess a country's ethnic policy and governance is to look at the facts, examine its development, and see whether people's lives have truly improved. In China's ethnic minority areas, high-speed railways have reached border regions, highways now extend to remote villages, and power grids cover even mountainous areas. Schools have been built close to where people live, hospitals are equipped with advanced facilities, and housing conditions have improved greatly. Traditional cultures are also thriving. Ancient epics continue to be passed down, traditional festivals are celebrated with renewed vitality,

and intangible cultural heritage is being preserved from generation to generation.

In Xinjiang, GDP reached RMB2.14 trillion in 2025, more than doubling compared with 2012. Xinjiang produces over 90 per cent of China's cotton and has more than 22 million mu of vineyards, jujube orchards, and other speciality fruit plantations. Installed new energy capacity has exceeded 100 million kilowatts, providing strong momentum for economic transformation. The region has more than 8,000 schools of all types, with over six million students enrolled, while access to education continues to improve. Primary healthcare services now cover the entire region. At the same time, the Uyghur Muqam art form and the "Manas" epic have been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The lawful use of ethnic languages is fully protected, and traditional music, dance, and handicrafts are being systematically preserved.

In Xizang, GDP exceeded RMB300 billion in 2025, nearly tripling compared with 2012. Major infrastructure projects, including the Qinghai-Xizang Railway, the Lhasa-Xigaze Railway, and the Ya'an-Xigaze section of the Sichuan-Xizang Railway, continue to advance. The region's highway network

now exceeds 120,000 kilometres. The completion rate for nine-year compulsory education remains above 98 per cent, while the gross enrolment rate for senior secondary education exceeds 91 per cent. Healthcare has expanded from limited access to comprehensive urban and rural coverage. Average life expectancy has risen from 35.5 years in 1951 to 72.2 years. Historic progress has been made in addressing difficulties in medical care and transport for people living in remote areas. Cultural heritage, including Tibetan Opera and the Epic of King Gesar, is being systematically protected. More than 400 representative intangible cultural heritage items have been identified, allowing traditional culture to thrive in the course of its preservation.

Yunnan is home to 25 indigenous ethnic minority groups. In 2025, the province's GDP reached RMB3.27 trillion, and GDP per capita exceeded US\$10,000. In the province's 374 Border Happy Villages, the per capita disposable income of rural permanent residents reached RMB22,000, more than RMB5,000 above the provincial average. Six of the province's eight autonomous prefectures are now connected by high-speed rail, all 78 autonomous counties have access to high-grade highways, and rural power grids provide full coverage. In Menglian County, the Wa

tradition of mutual assistance known as Binong Saihai has been given renewed vitality and now serves as an important vehicle for promoting neighbourhood cooperation and ethnic unity. In Ruili, Wanding, and other China-Myanmar border areas, border trade, cultural exchanges, and youth exchanges continue to expand. The enduring Pauk-Phaw friendship between the peoples of the two countries is vividly reflected along the shared border.

Some claim that development in ethnic minority areas comes at the expense of cultural preservation and that economic growth inevitably weakens cultural identity. This does not reflect the reality in China. On the contrary, better economic conditions and greater public investment have revitalized many endangered cultural traditions. Traditional crafts now have broader opportunities to be passed down, and people of all ethnic groups have become more confident in preserving and showcasing their rich cultural heritage while embracing modernization.

China welcomes members of the international community to visit its ethnic minority areas and gain an objective and comprehensive understanding of the changes taking place through firsthand observation, exchanges, and cooperation. Countries

have different histories, cultures, and development paths. Mutual respect, equal exchanges, and sharing experience will help deepen understanding and strengthen cooperation among civilizations. As President Xi Jinping proposed in the Global Civilization Initiative, we should jointly advocate respect for the diversity of civilizations, promote the common values of humanity, strengthen international people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and work together to open up new prospects for cultural exchange, mutual learning, and closer ties among peoples around the world.

China and Myanmar are both multiethnic countries that place great importance on ethnic unity, social harmony, and border stability. The long-standing friendship among the ethnic groups living along the China-Myanmar border stands as a vivid testament to the enduring vitality of bilateral relations. China stands ready to share its experience in ethnic affairs governance with Myanmar, work together to achieve new progress in building a China-Myanmar community with a shared future, and contribute more to regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

(The views and opinions in the article solely belong to the author).



A 100-MILLION-YEAR-OLD beetle preserved in amber is offering scientists a rare peek into the early evolution of fireflies' signature light shows and their remarkable antennae.

The fossil, unearthed from Kachin amber in Myanmar, belongs to a newly identified genus named Icaroramus. An international team led by the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (NIGPAS), reported

Ancient beetle fossil sheds light on firefly glow and antenna evolution

the discovery recently in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

Fireflies belong to the order Coleoptera, which includes all beetles. So, this ancient beetle is actually a distant relative of the

fireflies that light up the summer nights today. What makes the specimen exceptional is the preservation of two key features in a single individual: highly complex antennae and intact light-emitting organs on the abdomen. Soft

tissues like these are rarely fossilized, making this discovery a valuable window into the distant past.

The antennae, consisting of twelve segments, bear two distinct pairs of side branches

on segments four through eleven -- one pair long with swollen tips, the other shorter and more slender. This double-branching structure is unlike anything seen in any other beetle, living or extinct, the study said.

The researchers suggest that the elaborate antennae likely helped the beetle detect airborne chemical signals, similar to how many modern insects use pheromones to find mates.

The light organs, however,

present a puzzle. In most modern fireflies, glowing is primarily a mating signal, and those species tend to have simpler antennae. However, Icaroramus combines bright light organs with highly branched antennae -- a combination rarely seen today.

The researchers believe its bioluminescence was most likely used as a warning to scare off predators, though they cannot entirely rule out a role in attracting mates.

The findings indicate that

by the mid-Cretaceous period, roughly 100 million years ago, early firefly relatives had already evolved sophisticated sensory structures and functional bioluminescence, said Cai Chenyang, a professor from the NIGPAS.

"The fossil provides rare evidence that multiple communication strategies had already emerged early in the evolutionary history of these insects, long before the fireflies we know today lit up the night skies," Cai added.

Source: Xinhua

NATIONAL

MRF holds coord meeting on post-flood recovery support in Ayeyawady Region

THE Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) discussed recovery plans for flood-affected paddy acres in Hinthada and Myanaung districts, Ayeyawady Region during a virtual meeting held on 2 August.

The meeting highlighted continuous assessments on the inundation and recession, stockpiling fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural inputs to sustain yields once waters recede, systematic distribution plans, re-



MRF and its member companies are coordinating with the regional government, regional Hluttaw representatives, and the regional Agriculture Department to deliver aid.

planting with fast growing rice, pre-raising rice seedlings in trays or nurseries to transplant once water level drops, using

Ayeyawady has 3.7 million acres of monsoon paddy, with flooding affecting only around 0.31 per cent of the total acres. Direct replanting or crop substitution assistance will be needed in locations where flood water recedes slowly.

MRF and its member companies are coordinating with the regional government, regional Hluttaw representatives, and the regional Agriculture Department to deliver aid, the federation announced. — NN/KK

Trading Amount and Forex Rate in the Market on 4 August 2026

	US\$	Chinese yuan	Thai baht	Indian rupee
Exchange rates	3,658.00~3,669.00	555.30~558.70	124.90~125.70	43.60
Trading amount in the market	15,789,828.56	1,365,678.29	79,265,193.05	
The amount sold by CBM to the market				

The foreign currency amount traded in the foreign exchange market was for the import of fuel oil, pharmaceutical and pharmaceutical raw materials, industrial raw materials, fertilizers, construction materials, animal feed, packaging materials, electronics, consumer goods, and paper. Of the CMP sector revenue, US\$3,008.00 was sold to the CMP sector and US\$5.00 million to the LNG sector. — MNA

MoEE ensures natural gas pipeline upgrades, leak prevention

UPGRADING natural gas pipelines connecting power plants and industrial facilities in Yangon Region and prevention measures to minimize losses were discussed during a coordination meeting held on 1 August at the Yangon Region Government Office.

Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Kyaw Naing Win, Yangon Region Minister for Electricity, Energy, Industry and Transport Dr Myo Thaw, departmental heads, and other officials

concerned attended the meeting.

Following opening remarks by the Deputy Minister, relevant officials presented quality standards and inspection requirements for pipeline connection works, route conditions and operational needs, right-of-way selection issues for pipeline routes within Yangon, and coordination procedures with the Ministry of Construction for pipelines passing through their road and bridge areas.

Attendees also en-



gaged in discussions on ensuring pipeline safety, reducing gas emissions, and maintaining workplace safety.

Dr Myo Thaw added supplementary remarks

to encourage cooperation between departments, while Deputy Minister U Kyaw Naing Win coordinated the presentations and discussions. — NN/KK

MTF discusses human resource development in tourism sector

THE Myanmar Tourism Federation discussed forming a new Myanmar-India tourism promotion team and human-resource development in the tourism industry during the MTF Executive Committee/Management Committee's coordination meeting held on 31 July at the MTF.

The meeting emphasized the appointment of chairpersons for existing tourism promotion teams covering Japan, South Korea, China, ASEAN, Europe, and Russia. Furthermore, the participants addressed details on establishing a new Myanmar-India tourism promotion team.

The meeting also ex-

plored conducting joint training courses with the Government Technical Institute (Insein), forming an MTF Steering Committee and a Kitchen Operation Committee, and offering internships to students from the National Management Degree College (NMDC).

Afterwards, MTF reviewed financial statements and the implementation of previous meeting resolutions. A proposed MOU with ITE Group, delegate selection for an upcoming workshop on sustainable packaging and branding for local souvenirs, and ongoing work by standing committees were also discussed. — NN/KK

Htantabin's MSY village project introduced, committee formed

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, held a ceremony yesterday to explain the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project and form the village project committee in Mepali Village, Htantabin Township in Yangon Region.

Htantabin Township Department of Rural Development Head Daw Cho Mi Aye first explained that the project activities are being introduced to create employment opportunities and increase family incomes for rural residents, as well as to implement village development activities with the increased revolving funds.

Officials then explained project procedures, rules and regulations to be followed, and election guidelines for forming the project management committee.

Mepali and Tayok-su villages in Htantabin Township will implement family income-generating activities using K30 million from the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project. During the meeting, local communities transparently elected seven committee members for the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project Management Committee to manage and operate the project funds systematically. — Maung Khaing (Rural)

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Ariana Grande withdraws from London musical, seeks to ‘step back’

POP star Ariana Grande has dropped out of what would have been her debut appearance in London’s West End, the show’s producers said Sunday, as a representative for the singer said she wants to take a “step back” from the public eye.

The 33-year-old Grande had been slated to star opposite her “Wicked” castmate Jonathan Bailey in the Stephen Sondheim musical “Sunday in The Park with George” in the summer of 2027 at London’s Barbican theatre.

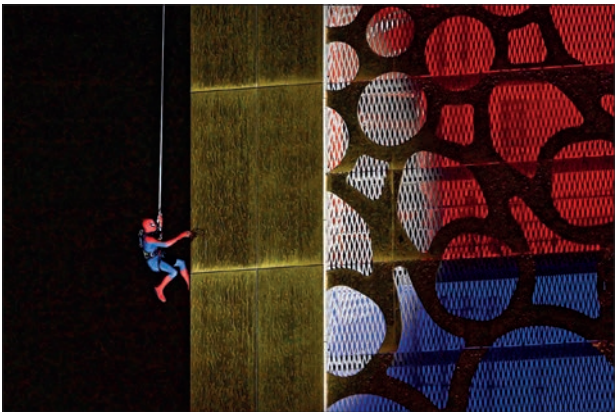
But amid renewed public scrutiny of the singer’s health, especially on social media, her representative said she wanted a “much-deserved break from public-facing work and appearances” when her “Eternal Sunshine” tour wraps in London on 1 September. “We can confirm that she has decided to step back from ‘Sunday in The Park with George,’” producers said in a statement carried on the show’s official X account, without providing a reason for Grande’s withdrawal. — AFP

“Spider-Man: Brand New Day” tops North American box office in opening weekend

SONY and Marvel’s superhero film “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” took the top spot at the North American box office during its opening weekend with an estimated US\$355 million, according to data released by measurement firm Comscore on Sunday.

The debut ranks as the second-largest domestic opening in Hollywood history, trailing only Disney and Marvel’s “Avengers: Endgame”, which opened to \$357 million in 2019.

Internationally, “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” brought in \$572 million during its opening weekend. Combined with its North



A man wearing the Spider-Man costume climbs the Dubai Frame during a promotional event for the movie “Spider-Man: Brand New Day” in Dubai on 1 August 2026.

PHOTO: AFP

American performance, the film’s worldwide opening reached \$927 million, making it the second best global debut of all time.

The film has received

an approval rating of 90 per cent based on 320 reviews to date on review-aggregation website Rotten Tomatoes. It earned an “A” on an “A+” to “F” scale

from audiences polled by market research firm CinemaScore.

Universal Pictures’ epic action film “The Odyssey” slipped to second place in its third weekend, earning \$51 million. Directed by Christopher Nolan and based on Homer’s ancient Greek epic poem, the film has grossed \$395.5 million in North America and \$911.4 million worldwide. Disney and Pixar’s animated film “Toy Story 5” landed in third place with \$6.3 million in its seventh weekend. The film has earned a domestic cume of \$461.7 million and a global total of \$1.066 billion. — Xinhua

Chinese film screening brings cultural insights, shared joy to Zimbabwean audience

LAUGHTER and cheers rippled through a packed cinema in Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital, on Saturday as scenes from the vibrant Chinese comedy-drama “One and Only” unfolded on the big screen.

Screened as a highlight of the Asian Cultural Festival 2026 held from 31 July to 1 August, the youth-centric film blended elements of sports and street dance, deeply resonating with an energetic, mostly young local audience.

Co-hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Zimbabwe alongside six other Asian embassies and Diplomatic Media, the festival used cinematic art to



A local woman (L) tries her hand at Chinese calligraphy during the Asian Cultural Festival 2026 in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 1 August 2026.

PHOTO: XINHUA

showcase Asian culture and foster cross-cultural friendship.

Before the lights dimmed for the screening, attendees immersed themselves in traditional Chinese culture through

interactive workshops, trying their hand at calligraphy and learning how to use chopsticks.

As 2026 marks the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, such immersive cinematic

and cultural experiences are offering Zimbabwean audiences a captivating window into contemporary Chinese society while further deepening long-standing bilateral ties.

Addressing the festival on Friday, Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe Zhou Ding highlighted the universal appeal of cinematic exchange, noting that core Asian values such as family, community, resilience, and mutual respect align closely with Zimbabwe’s Ubuntu philosophy. “We share the belief that a person is a person through other people,” the ambassador said, adding that true strength lies in togetherness. — Xinhua

Cambodia launches UNESCO-backed drive for cultural, creative industries

CAMBODIA’S Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA) has launched a UNESCO-supported national initiative to boost the country’s cultural and creative industries (CCIs), according to a joint press release on Monday.

CCIs are key drivers of economic growth, innovation, employment, and social inclusion, the release said, adding that they also play an essential role in safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting artistic expression.

“Despite this potential, the sector faces structural challenges, including limited under-

standing of CCIs, fragmented information, and weak coordination among public institutions, private actors, and civil society,” the press release said.

It added that the initiative, unveiled last week, aims to build an enabling environment through developing a new policy framework for Cambodia’s CCIs and establishing the first pilot support hub for CCIs at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh.

The project will also transform the cultural sector into a new engine for the national economy, it added. — Xinhua

Belgian Fries Day shines long-standing fry tradition

MANNEKEN Pis, Brussels’ iconic bronze statue and one of Belgium’s most recognizable symbols, donned a Belgian fry-shop operator’s outfit on Saturday as part

of celebrations marking the International Day of Belgian Fries.

The festivities began with a ceremony at Brussels City Hall, followed by a procession led by

a brass band. Fry-shop operators, members of the Order of the Friends of Manneken Pis, political representatives and invited guests crossed the Grand-Place before

proceeding to the nearby statue.

Dozens of onlookers gathered around the fountain as tourists paused to watch the unveiling. The all-white costume fea-

tured a traditional hat and sleeves embroidered with the words “ketchup” and “mayo”. During the ceremony, Manneken Pis was also awarded the medal of the Ordre National du Cornet d’Or, which was pinned to the outfit.

Bernard Lefevre, na-

tional president of NAVE-FRI-UNAFRI, Belgium’s national union of fry-shop operators, told Xinhua at the ceremony that the costume is the first in Manneken Pis’ extensive wardrobe to pay tribute to a frituriste, or Belgian fry-shop operator. — Xinhua

ECONOMY
WORLD

Variety of pouched curries
spice up summer in Japan

JAPAN'S booming ready-to-eat curry market is drawing shoppers with an ever-wider selection of products as the country's "curry season" begins, when curry roux consumption tends to increase during the warmer months.

In mid-July, about 150 pouched curry products, including regional specialties from around the world and others produced in collaboration with famous curry restaurants, were lined up at a Tokyo supermarket operated by Life Corporation.

"It is fun to choose from," said a woman in her 60s as she picked up a beef curry.

The major supermarket operator said sales of pouched curry products between January and June increased by around 10 per cent from the same period a year earlier.



This photo shows the pouched curry section at Life Sakurashinmachi supermarket in Tokyo on 15 July 2026.
PHOTO: KYODO

An original green curry released in January under its private brand "Life Premium", priced at 376 yen (\$2), is one of the most popular products. To ensure an authentic taste, the curry is made at a factory in Thailand using fresh local herbs and coconut milk, according to a company official.

Various unique curries have been produced by manufacturers nationwide.

Nishiki Foods Co, which produces around 60 kinds of curries under its Nishikiya Kitchen pouched food brand, released its summer-limited "Chilled Curry with Tomato and Japanese Dashi" for 420 yen ahead of the season.

House Foods Corp released "Chacha Meshi" for 321 yen in July, targeting the recent time-saving trend, allowing consumers to enjoy curry with corn grits resembling

rice after just 80 seconds in the microwave, without needing to prepare rice or even a plate.

Syokuyoku Corp reproduced an ancient curry based on an interview with a researcher and ingredients believed to have been used at the time, naming it "The Curry the Buddha Might Have Eaten — the taste of 2500 years ago".

Rankings and voting campaigns for various pouched curries have been held to promote unique products. ACE Group Co, which operates the grocery store chain Kitano Ace, has been giving "The Kitano Ace Curry Award" since 2019.

The store, known for a corner where hundreds of curry boxes fill rows of shelves as if at a bookstore, releases rankings in several categories based on votes from store staff nationwide. — Kyodo

Thailand draws US\$26.8 bln in chip, electronics
investment bids as supply chains shift

THAILAND has received more than US\$26.8 billion in investment applications for semiconductor and advanced electronics projects over the past three years, the country's investment promotion agency said on Monday, as manufac-

turers spread production away from established hubs.

According to the Thai Board of Investment (BOI), 880 high-technology projects were filed between 2023 and mid-2026. Printed circuit boards (PCB) accounted for

the single largest share, with 224 projects valued at \$9.85 billion.

The BOI attributed the inflows to global demand tied to artificial intelligence (AI), next-generation semiconductors, electric vehicles, and high-performance com-

puting.

"Amid global supply chain restructuring, Thailand has emerged as a premier global manufacturing base for printed circuit boards," BOI Secretary General Narit Therdsteeasukdi said in a statement. — Xinhua

Japan farm, food exports up 10.9% to record
high in 1st half of 2026

JAPAN'S exports of agricultural, forestry and fishery products and food products in the first half of 2026 rose 10.9 per

cent from a year earlier to 897.7 billion yen (\$5.7 billion), a record high for the period, the government said Tuesday.

Shipments to all of Japan's top 10 destinations, including the United States and Hong Kong, exceeded year-be-

fore levels, pushing the overall total to a new January-June peak for the second straight year. — Kyodo

China's service
trade grows 8.3%
in first half of 2026

CHINA'S services trade expanded 8.3 per cent year on year in the first half of 2026, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce on Tuesday.

The total value of service imports and exports reached nearly 3.78 trillion yuan (about US\$556.56 billion) from January to June this year, according to the data.

Throughout the period, travel service exports grew at the fastest rate among the top five service export categories, rising 31.1 per cent to 229.2 billion yuan.

Knowledge-intensive

services trade rose 6.7 per cent year on year to 1.66 trillion yuan during the same period, accounting for 44 per cent of all service trade. Notably, exports of personal cultural and entertainment services and the charges for the use of intellectual property surged 57.2 per cent and 44.3 per cent respectively.

Tuesday's data also showed that imports of transport services totalled 498.1 billion yuan during the period, up 30.4 per cent, the fastest growth rate among the top five service import categories.

— Xinhua



This photo shows the Trade in Services Exhibition area during the eighth China International Import Expo (CIIE) in east China's Shanghai, 9 November 2025.
PHOTO: XINHUA

Pakistan's headline inflation
eases to 9.2% in July

PAKISTAN'S headline inflation eased to 9.2 per cent year-on-year in July 2026, down from 11.1 per cent in June, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Monday.

The consumer price index (CPI)-based inflation stood at 4.1 per cent in July 2025, PBS data showed. On a month-on-month basis, inflation increased by 1.2 per cent in July, compared with a decline of 0.5 per cent in June and an increase of 3.4 per cent in July 2025.

July 2025. Urban inflation rose 8.7 per cent year-on-year in July, easing from 11.2 per cent in June, while it stood at 4.4 per cent in July 2025. On a month-on-month basis, urban CPI inflation increased by 1.2 per cent in July, compared with a decline of 0.5 per cent in June and an increase of 3.4 per cent in July 2025.

Rural inflation increased 9.9 per cent year-on-year in July, compared with 10.9 per cent in June and 3.5 per cent in July 2025. — Xinhua

Toyota lifts FY 2026 net profit outlook on weaker yen, robust hybrid demand

TOYOTA Motor Corp on Tuesday raised its net profit forecast for the current business year through next March to 3.25 trillion yen (\$20.6 billion) from 3 trillion yen, reflecting a weaker assumed exchange rate and robust demand for hybrid vehicles.

Despite the upward revision, the world’s largest automaker by volume maintained its forecast for a third straight annual decline in net profit, expecting it to fall 15.5 per cent from the previous year due in part to the impact of tensions in the Middle East. Toyota also raised its operating profit forecast for the financial year through March 2027 to 3.4

trillion yen from 3 trillion yen announced in May, although that would still represent a 9.7 per cent decline from the previous business year. It also revised its sales forecast upward to 54 trillion yen from 51 trillion yen, which would mark a 6.5 per cent increase.

The previous outlook was based on assumed exchange rates of 150 yen to the US dollar and 180 yen to the euro, but Toyota has revised them to 160 yen and 181 yen, respectively, a change expected to boost operating profit by 480 billion yen. A weaker yen generally increases the value of overseas earnings when they are repatriated. — Kyodo



This photo taken on 3 August 2026 shows sacks of rice for sale in Hanoi, Vietnam. PHOTO: XINHUA

Vietnam’s trade turnover hits US\$659.58B in first 7 months of 2026

VIETNAM’S total import-export turnover reached an estimated US\$659.58 billion in the first seven months of 2026, up 28.1 per cent year on year, the National Statistics Office said Monday.

The South-East Asian country recorded a trade deficit of US\$20.52 billion during the January-July period.

Exports rose 21.7 per cent year on year to US\$319.53 billion, with processed industrial products remaining the largest export category, valued at US\$287.91 billion. Imports climbed 34.8 per cent from a year earlier to US\$340.05 billion, the report said. — Xinhua

US aviation authority certifies Boeing 737 MAX-7 after nearly decade-long review

THE US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Monday certified Boeing’s 737 MAX-7 and authorized its production following almost a decade of extensive review.

The FAA said it had issued an amended type certificate confirming that the MAX-7 complies with all applicable design and safety requirements, and updated the production limitation record, authorizing Boeing to begin production of the aircraft.

The approval followed years of work to resolve complex technical issues and complete a thorough review of the aircraft’s design and supporting safety analyses, according to the agency.

During the certification process, the FAA performed or directly re-



(File) A Boeing 737 MAX jet lands following Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) test flight at Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington, on 29 June 2020. PHOTO: AFP

viewed significant work involving flight controls, system safety assessments, human factors, flight crew alerting and other novel, complex or safety-critical areas. Before granting approval, the FAA required the MAX-7 to incorporate several safety improvements that provide pilots with clearer information and warnings while preventing the engine inlet from overheating and potentially weakening the surrounding structure.— Xinhua

Thailand’s stock investor confidence improves in July

THAILAND’S stock investor confidence improved in July, mainly supported by fund inflows, the government’s economic stimulus packages, and corporate earnings, a survey showed on Tuesday. The investor confidence index, which predicts market conditions over the next three months, stood at 146.72 last month, up from 123.77 in the June survey and remaining in the “bullish” zone, according to the Federation of Thai Capital Market Organizations (FETCO).

Investor morale picked up across most categories, with retail investors up 11.9 per cent, proprietary investors up 25 per cent, and foreign investors up 25 per cent, while institutional investors were down 1.8 per cent, the FETCO said in a statement. — Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V OCEAN STAR VOY.NO. (SSL010)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V OCEAN STAR VOY.NO. (SSL010)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-8-2026** 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 SUPER LIGHT LOGISTICS COMPANY LIMITED

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V NJ JUPITER VOY.NO. (02/2026)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V NJ JUPITER VOY.NO. (02/2026)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-8-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **WILMAR** 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: **2301928**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:
M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

25 US states sue Trump administration over Section 301 tariffs

A coalition of 25 states filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration on Monday, arguing that US President Donald Trump exceeded his legal authority by imposing sweeping new tariffs on goods from 60 trading partners, according to a court document.

The complaint, filed in the US Court of International Trade, challenges the recently enacted levies of 10 per cent or 12.5 per cent on the vast majority of goods imported from the affected economies. According to the states, these economies collectively account for 99.4 per cent of US imports.

The coalition is asking the court to block the tariffs, declare them unlawful, and order refunds for the duties already paid.

The legal challenge centres on the administration's effort to preserve Trump's broad



This photo taken on 15 April 2026 shows a container terminal of the Port of New York and New Jersey, which serves as a critical gateway for trade and a major logistics hub for the Northeast of US, in New York, the United States. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

tariff regime after federal courts rejected two earlier versions imposed under different statutory frameworks. The states argue that federal officials seized upon Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 and forced-labour concerns merely as a pretext to rapidly recreate nearly identical global duties that the Supreme Court previously struck down in February.

"President Trump's illegal tariffs are nothing more than a tax on hard-working families, driving up the cost of groceries, household essentials, building materials, and countless everyday goods that New Yorkers rely on," said New York Governor Kathy Hochul in a statement.

Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield echoed

the sentiment, highlighting the economic impact on local communities. "Today, we're filing our third lawsuit against Trump's illegal tariffs," Rayfield wrote on X. "Once again, the president is raising costs on everyday goods for Oregon families and small businesses, and once again, we're leading a multistate coalition stepping up to stop him."

"After losing at the Supreme Court, the administration is once again trying to illegally raise taxes on families and businesses with a new round of tariffs," New York Attorney-General Letitia James said.

The White House rejected the coalition's arguments, asserting that Section 301 tariffs have proven to be a "legally durable tool" since the president's first term and remain so under the current administration. — Xinhua

ANA flight makes evasive manoeuvre before landing at Tokyo's Haneda airport

AN All Nippon Airways flight from Shanghai made an evasive manoeuvre while approaching Haneda airport around 6 am Tuesday, the company said.

ANA Flight 968's collision avoidance system was activated as the plane neared the airport in Tokyo. The pilot followed the system's instruction and climbed to avoid another aircraft.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism said its inspection plane, which had taken off from Runway D, was flying nearby and that the details were being investigated.

None of the 197 passengers and crew were injured and no problems were found with the aircraft, according to ANA. — Kyodo



This photo taken on 29 July 2026 shows Haneda airport's Runway D (foreground) where a Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism inspection plane took off on 4 August 2026 and was suspected of causing an All Nippon Airways' flight to make an evasive manoeuvre. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Japan, Mexico agree to boost energy cooperation amid Middle East tensions

JAPAN and Mexico agreed to strengthen cooperation in the energy sector during talks between their foreign ministers in Mexico City on Monday, Japan's Foreign Ministry said, as Tokyo seeks to bolster its energy security amid tensions in the Middle East.

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and his Mexican counterpart Roberto Velasco also agreed to convene the inaugural meeting of a high-level economic dialogue between the two countries

within the current fiscal year.

Japan has previously

imported Mexican crude as an alternative to Middle Eastern oil because

of its similar composition, part of Tokyo's broader effort to diversify energy supplies in response to geopolitical risks.

According to the ministry, Velasco said Mexico, which hosts about 1,600 Japanese business operations, will work to deepen bilateral economic ties.

He also expressed condolences and solidarity on behalf of the Mexican government and people over the recent magnitude-7.1 earthquake in Kumamoto Prefecture. — Kyodo



Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi (L) and his Mexican counterpart Roberto Velasco shake hands as they meet in Mexico on 3 August 2026. (Photo courtesy of Japan's Foreign Ministry) **PHOTO: KYODO**

Adverse weather in central Sri Lanka kills at least 6

At least six people have died due to adverse weather conditions currently affecting Sabaragamuwa Province and Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts in central Sri Lanka, local police said Tuesday. In one landslide incident triggered by heavy rainfall in Hatton, Central Province, four individuals died after a mound of earth collapsed onto a house. Earlier, Nuwara Eliya District Secretary Thushari Tennakoon said that a total of 2,331 individuals from 581 families in the

district have been affected by the prevailing adverse weather conditions.

Meanwhile, 1,734 people have been relocated to seven safety centres established in the district.

Several areas in central Sri Lanka are currently experiencing heavy rainfall, causing risks of floods and landslides. The country's National Building Research Organization has previously issued level-3 landslide warnings to parts of Kandy and Nuwara Eliya districts. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Wang Xinyu bows out of National Bank Open first round

CHINA'S Wang Xinyu squandered a one-set lead as Australia's Daria Kasatkina rallied to win 1-6, 7-6 (5), 7-5 in the first round of the National Bank Open in Toronto on Monday.

Wang, ranked No 41 in the world, dominated the opening set and led 4-1 in the second before Kasatkina, ranked No 61, fought back to force a tiebreak, winning it 7-5 to level the match.

Kasatkina carried that momentum into the deciding set, breaking serve late before closing out the match 7-5. She will face second seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan in the second round.

Also on Monday, China's Zhang Shuai defeated Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva 6-4, 6-1 to advance to the second round. Putintseva had won seven of their previous nine meetings,

but Zhang controlled the match to secure a straight-sets victory.

Zhang, 37, will next face Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko. — Xinhua



Wang Xinyu of China returns the ball during the first round of the women's singles match between Wang Xinyu of China and Daria Kasatkina of Australia at the 2026 National Bank Open tennis tournament in Toronto, Canada, 3 August 2026. PHOTO: XINHUA

Myanmar thrash Laos 7-2 in ASEAN Cup



The Group B match in action yesterday, attended by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Aung Naing Thu and officials.

MYANMAR'S men's national football team defeated Laos 7-2 in their Group B match of the ASEAN Championship Hyundai Cup 2026 at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on Tuesday.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Aung Naing

Thu, officials, football authorities and fans watched the match, which was organized by the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF).

After the match, officials presented awards to the Myanmar team's management, coaching

staff and players.

Myanmar are in Group B alongside Malaysia, the Philippines, Laos and Thailand. The team have earned six points from three matches and will face Thailand on 8 August. — Zwe Htet Ko (IPRD)/KZL

Getafe signs Georgigian central defender Saba Sazonov

GEORGIA international centre-back Saba Sazonov has joined Getafe for the 2026-27 season, the Madrid-based club confirmed on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old arrives on a free transfer and has signed a contract through June 2027, with the option of an additional year, according to Getafe's official website.

Sazonov began his career with Zenit Saint Petersburg and has also played for Dynamo Moscow and Italian side Torino, for which he made 13 first-team appearances. However, a knee ligament injury halted his progress, leaving him with just two minutes of first-team football over the past two years. — Xinhua

2026 Inter-Ministry Futsal Tournery continues

THE group-stage matches of the 2026 Inter-Ministry Futsal Tournament continued at the Wunna Theikdhi Futsal Gymnasium in Nay Pyi Taw, with several ministries securing victories.

In the latest matches, the Ministry of Hotels, Tourism and Culture defeated the Ministry of Health 16-0, while the Ministry of Sports beat the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irri-

gation 5-4. The Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Education also recorded wins against their respective opponents.

More group-stage matches will be played on 5 August, with spectators allowed to watch the games free of charge. — MNA/KZL



This image captures the match between the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Border Affairs.

Man Utd sign reported record £20M sponsorship deal for training kit

MANCHESTER United announced a new training kit sponsorship deal with Betway on Tuesday, reportedly worth a record £20 million (\$26 million) per year.

Betway's logo will feature prominently on the training kit for United's men's and women's teams, as well as around Old Trafford.

United went without a training kit sponsor last season after the expiry of their agreement with

Tezos in June 2025.

Their return to the Champions League this season has allowed them to secure a more lucrative deal, reportedly the biggest in the world for a club's training kit.

The deal comes into effect at the same time as new Premier League regulations that prevent gambling companies from appearing on the front of matchday shirts from next season.

Announcing the Be-

tway partnership, United's chief business officer Marc Armstrong said:



An aerial view shows Old Trafford stadium, home ground of Manchester United Football Club, in Manchester, north west England, on 23 May 2025. PHOTO: AFP

"We are delighted to welcome Betway as official principal partner. — AFP

Villarreal signs veteran goalkeeper Gulacsi from Leipzig

VILLARREAL has signed veteran Hungary goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi from RB Leipzig, the Spanish club's first arrival of the summer transfer window.

The 36-year-old has signed a two-year contract after Villarreal reportedly paid about 1 million euros (US\$1.2 million) to Leipzig for his transfer.

Gulacsi leaves Leipzig after making 362 appearances across 11 seasons following his move from Red Bull Salzburg in 2015. He began

his professional career at Liverpool but did not make a senior appearance for the Premier League club, spending time on loan at Tranmere Rovers and Hull City.

He arrives after Villarreal saw Diego Conde join Real Betis and Arnau Tenas move to Mallorca this summer. Gulacsi is expected to compete with Luiz Junior for the No 1 spot as Villarreal returns to the UEFA Champions League after finishing third in La Liga last season. — Xinhua



Heat kills 19 in South Korea this summer: government agency

SOUTH Korea's summer heat has killed 19 people so far this year, a government health agency said on Tuesday, as the nation swelters in a wave of searing weather.

A total of 2,221 people had suffered heat-related illnesses between 15 May and 3 August, of whom 19 died, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said.

President Lee Jae Myung earlier asked au-

thorities to boost support for those affected by the ongoing record heatwave.

The whole of Seoul also remained under the highest-level heat alert on Tuesday, issued when the heat index is forecast to reach 38C or temperatures are expected to climb to 39C or higher. "Extreme, life-threatening heat is forecast," the weather agency said in a statement earlier on Tuesday. — AFP

South-East Asia braces for hot, dry conditions, heightened haze risk as El Niño strengthens



The city skyline is enveloped in pollution haze in Jakarta on 7 May 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**

SOUTH-EAST Asia is expected to face hotter and drier conditions in the coming months, with an increased risk of fires and transboundary haze, as strengthening El Niño conditions reduce rainfall, the ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Centre said here Tuesday.

"El Niño conditions tend to lead to an increased chance of below-normal rainfall for much of the southern ASEAN region during August-October," the centre said in its latest seasonal outlook, adding that El Niño conditions

are now present and predicted to continue strengthening over the next few months.

According to the centre, the Southwest Monsoon is expected to persist through most of the August-October period, with prevailing winds blowing mainly from the southeast or southwest.

With the monsoon rain band remaining north of the equator, the southern ASEAN region is likely to continue experiencing dry conditions, while wetter weather is expected in northern ASEAN. — Xinhua

China unveils safety standard for autonomous driving systems

China has released a mandatory national standard regarding safety requirements for autonomous driving systems, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) said on Tuesday.

The standard, approved by the State Administration for Market Regulation and the National Standardization Administration, is scheduled to take effect on 1 July 2027.

It applies to M- and N-category vehicles equipped with Level 3 and Level 4 autonomous driving systems, but does not cover automated parking systems, the MIIT said.

The standard requires vehicle manufacturers to improve safety assurance mechanisms throughout the product life cycle and carry out simulation, field and road tests during the development and verifica-



A Pony.ai's self-driving taxi is pictured in Nanshan District of Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province, 28 March 2026. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

tion of autonomous driving systems, according to the MIIT.

It also calls for stronger capabilities in performing dynamic driving tasks, while specifying requirements for human-machine interaction and user noti-

fication to prevent misuse and abuse. For Level 3 systems, vehicles must be able to monitor drivers' readiness to take over control.

Looking ahead, the ministry said that it will strengthen market access management for intelligent

connected vehicle products, improve testing methods for autonomous driving systems, and build a sound regulatory mechanism for intelligent connected vehicles to ensure the sector's high-quality development. — Xinhua

Qatar says US-Iran mediation efforts ongoing, draft agreement under discussion

QATAR confirmed on Tuesday that mediation efforts between the United States and Iran remain underway, with draft language for a possible agreement continuing to be exchanged between the two sides as regional mediators work to prevent further escalation.

"We can confirm that the efforts are still ongoing with all the parties," said Majed Al Ansari, adviser to Qatar's prime minister and spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during a weekly press briefing.

"We are looking towards diplomatic resolution as we are speaking right now," Al Ansari said,

noting that the talks had reached "very progressive stages". The official said Qatar, Pakistan, and Oman

were coordinating closely to facilitate indirect contacts between Washington and Tehran.

"Everybody in the region is working in tandem in order to avoid escalation," he said. "The mediators, Qatar, Pakistan, and now Oman, are all working together on that issue."

Asked about the Strait of Hormuz, Al Ansari said Qatar's immediate priority was "avoiding escalation, reopening the strait and reopening the door for diplomacy between the parties". — Xinhua



Vessels transiting through the Gulf of Oman are pictured off the coast of Muscat on 25 July 2026. **PHOTO: AFP**