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The Global NEW LIGHT of MYANMAR

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# President U Min Aung Hlaing leaves Russian Federation for Republic of Belarus

The high-level Myanmar delegation led by President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing, who had completed the official visit to the Russian Federation at the invitation of President of the Russian Federation Mr Vladimir Putin, left Vnukovo International Airport in Moscow at 8 am local standard time yesterday for Minsk in Belarus to pay an official visit to the Republic of Belarus at the invitation of Belarusian President Mr Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The President of Myanmar and entourage were seen off at the airport by Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Andrey Rudenko, and officials with the Guard of Honour of the Russian Federation.

The President took the salute of the Guard of Honour, which played the national anthems of Myanmar and Russia. The President left for Belarus by special aircraft.

At 9:45 am local standard time, the high-level Myanmar delegation led by the President arrived at Minsk International Airport of Belarus. They were warmly welcomed by Deputy Prime Minister Mr Viktor Karankievch of Belarus, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Sergey Lukashevich and officials of the Belarusian Cabinet, the Belarusian Ambassador to Myanmar, Myanmar Ambassador to Belarus U Maung Maung Soe and officials.

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President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing returns the fareware salute from the Guard of Honour of the Russian Federation at Vnukovo International Airport in Moscow before leaving for Belarus.

## PJ Passport Extension Completed Within a Day, Says Myanmar Embassy in S'pore

THE Myanmar Embassy in Singapore has announced that individuals looking to extend their PJ passports (passports for employment) or change their current passports to PJ with less than 14 months of validity can complete the process within a day after scheduling an appointment. This initiative is aimed at ensuring a smooth extension of residency permits. Monks holding a PR passport (religious passport) with less than 12 months of validity do not need to make an appointment and can receive their service within a day.

Applicants for passport extension at the Myanmar Embassy in Singapore.

For those with PE (student passport), PT (dependent passport), and PS (seafarer passport), appointments via WhatsApp are not necessary. However, applicants must submit the required documents corresponding to their passport types to the embassy's email: consular.mm@mesingapore.org.sg, starting from 19 August. Those who have already received approval from the relevant ministry for a passport extension will find announcements on the embassy's Facebook page and website. Additionally, services for applying for newborn passports, lost or damaged passports, and approval letters can be accessed through walk-in services, provided all necessary documents are submitted without the need for an appointment. Applicants seeking leave approval can visit the embassy between 2 pm and 4 pm daily, while other services are available before noon, according to the embassy. — MT/ZS

## Myanmar workers in Thailand can now transfer money to KBZPay via TrueMoney

MYANMAR workers in Thailand can now easily transfer money to their families back home using KBZPay through the TrueMoney Wallet. This service

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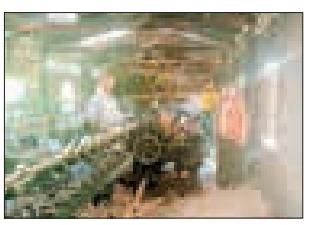
A TrueMoney Wallet launch poster.

NATIONAL PAGE 10

Construction of 2,400-gallon elevated water tank inspected in Yenangyoung



NATIONAL PAGE 12

MSY Village Project inspected in Wundwin

# NATIONAL

## Defence Services C-in-C holds meetings with Thai Chief of Defence Forces, Thai Minister of Defence

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services General Ye Win Oo, currently in Bangkok, Thailand, to attend the 9th Thailand- Myanmar High Level Committee Meeting, was welcomed by Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces General Ukris Boontanondha on the morning of 19 August.

Myanmar Defence Services Commander-in-Chief General Ye Win Oo and Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces General Ukris Boontanondha inspect the Guard of Honour in Bangkok on 19 August 2026.

The ceremony was also attended by Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Ko Ko Oo, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and Myanmar Military Attaché (Army, Navy and Air) Brig-Gen Win Thu Lin. The Thai Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces was accompanied by Deputy Chief of Defence Forces for the Royal Thai Armed Forces Air Chief Marshal Seksun Chaiyamert and senior military officers.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and the Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces took the salute of the Guard of Honour and inspected it.

At the office of the Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, they held a meeting. At the meeting, they focused on the long-lasting history of Myanmar and Thailand as good neighbours, implementation of the agreements between the two countries, improvement of cooperation, maintenance of the border region peace and stability as essential needs for both countries to develop border trade between the two countries, control of illegal trade in border regions, dismentaling buildings of online scams and gambling hubs by Myanmar in Kyaukkhet and Shwe Kokko areas at the border region of both countries, efforts of Myanmar to root out the online scams and gambling as a national duty, the efforts of Myanmar to eradicate drug trafficking as a national duty in accord with the guidance of the President, potentials for jointly controlling the cross-border crimes and arms smuggling activities, cooperation of Myanmar in ASEAN, Tatmadaw's efforts to safeguard Our Three Main National Causes as the national duty under the leadership of the government, exchange of trainees for training, sports contingents and cultural troupes between the two countries and two armed forces, reciprocal visits of relevant positions between the two armed forces, and strengthening friendly relations and cooperation between the two armed forces.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services also called on Minister of Defence of Thailand Lt-Gen (Retd) Adul Boonthamcharoen at the latter's office in Bangkok on 19 August.

At the reception hall of the office, they held a meeting on efforts to strengthen the existing friendly ties and cooperation between the two countries and the two armed forces, the situation regarding the decisive actions, investigations, and legal crackdowns being carried out against perpetrators and individuals involved in online fraud and gambling operations, in collaboration with international organizations and neighbouring countries, ongoing cooperation under the Myanmar-Thailand-Laos trilateral Joint Plan of Action: Clear Sky Strategy (2024-2030) regarding the prevention of transboundary forest fires and haze pollution, expressions of gratitude for providing necessary assistance and conducting training programmes for forest fire monitoring, transboundary water quality cooperation, further collaboration on maintaining peace, stability, and the rule of law in bilateral border areas, combatting illicit goods trafficking and counter-terrorism and exchange of information, as well as the prospects for elevating bilateral cooperation across all sectors.

After the meeting, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and the Thai Minister of Defence exchanged commemorative gifts. — MNA/TTA

## Heavy Rainfall Warning No 51

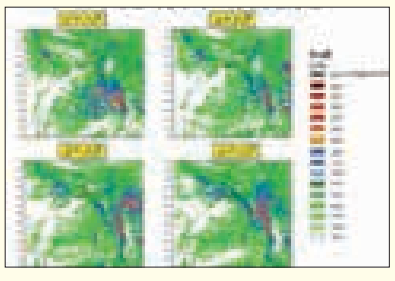
Issued at 8 am MST on 20 August 2026

ACCORDING to the observations at 6:30 am MST today, due to the strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and the South Bay of Bengal, the clouds moving from the easterly and the strong development of 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 regionally heavy falls in Taninthayi Region and Kayin and Mon States and isolated heavy falls in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, and Ayeyawady Regions and Kayah, Rakhine, and Shan States during this morning to 24 August 2026.

Squalls with rough seas are likely at time off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 30 miles per hour. Wave height will be about 9-11 feet off and along the Myanmar Coasts.

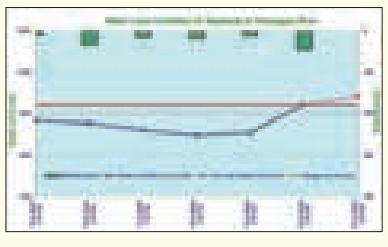
**Advisory**

People should be aware of the strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and the South Bay of Bengal, the clouds moving from the easterly and the strong development of the convective clouds 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



## Flood Bulletin

Issued at 7 pm MST on 20 August 2026



ACCORDING to the 6:30 am MST observation today, the water level of Thaungyin River at Myawady has exceeded by about one inch above its danger level. It may rise about two feet during the next one day and may remain above its danger level.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Myawady Township, to take precaution measure. — DMH

## Times City to host 8th Thadingyut jewellery expo

THE eighth Thadingyut jewellery exhibition is scheduled to take place at Times City in Yangon in October. The three-day event will be held at Times City, Jewellery Mall, from 10 am to 5 pm, from 16 to 18 October.

Jewellery and rare gemstones, which are produced in Myanmar, will be displayed at the event, with many celebrities attending. It will bring an opportunity to those who love gems and jewellery to explore a wide array of jewellery and gemstones in a single place. — TWA/ZS

This image illustrates a promotional poster for the eighth Times City jewellery exhibition.

# NATIONAL

# President U Min Aung Hlaing receives Prime Minister of Belarus in Minsk

Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus Mr Alexander Turchin paid a courtesy call on President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing, who is currently on an official visit to the Republic of Belarus, at the President Hotel in Minsk at 10:45 am local time yesterday.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister of Belarus warmly welcomed President U Min Aung Hlaing on his official visit to the Republic of Belarus. In his welcoming remarks, the Prime Minister highlighted the close personal friendship between President U Min Aung Hlaing and the President of Belarus, their shared commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and friendship, the ongoing implementation of the Myanmar-Belarus Cooperation Roadmap (2026-2028), and his confidence that discussions during the visit would further advance bilateral cooperation and contribute to the success of the official visit.

In response, the President expressed his deep gratitude to Belarus for the warm and hospitable welcome extended to the high-level Myanmar delegation, remarked on the cool and pleasant weather experienced upon arrival in Minsk, expressed confidence that his visit would lead to successful discussions across various sectors and further strengthen bilateral friendship and cooperation, and, highlighting Myanmar's role as an ASEAN member, reaffirmed Myanmar's position as a close and trusted friend of Belarus in Southeast Asia and its commitment to further strengthening friendship and multifaceted cooperation between the two countries.

Prime Minister of the Republic of the Belarus Mr Alexander Turchin pays a courtesy call on President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing in Minsk, Belarus, on 20 August 2026.

The President and the Prime Minister of Belarus held cordial discussions on expanding multi-sectoral cooperation between the two countries, particularly in agriculture, livestock, trade and investment. — MNA/TH

# President U Min Aung Hlaing leaves Russian Federation for Republic of ...

FROM PAGE 1

At the airport, the Guard of Honour of the Republic of Belarus accorded a ceremonial welcome to President U Min Aung Hlaing in accordance with the tradition of welcoming Heads of State making state-level goodwill visits.

The President laid a wreath to pay tribute at the Victory Monument in Minsk where the Guard of Honour of Belarus played the national anthems of Myanmar and Belarus.

After taking the salute of the Guard of Honour, the President cordially greeted officials.

The Victory Monument was built as a historic landmark in Minsk in 1954, dedicated to soldiers of Soviet and Belarusian guerrillas who sacrificed their lives for their country while fighting Nazi invaders in World War II. The lasting peace flame is being lit at the foot of the 38-metre-high monument dedicated to the fallen soldiers. The monument is a location where international diplomats and State leaders pay tribute. — MNA/TTA

# Myanmar reaffirms commitment to equal rights, opportunities for persons with disabilities

THE National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held its first meeting of 2026 yesterday afternoon at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw, with Committee Chair and Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Nan Ni Ni Aye delivering the opening remarks.

In her address, the Vice-President said persons with disabilities are an important part of society and should have equal rights and opportunities. She stressed the need to fully implement laws, rules and policies concerning persons with disabilities and to ensure equal access to education, healthcare, employment and transport.

The 1/2026 meeting of the National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is underway in Nay Pyi Taw, chaired by Vice-President Nan Ni Ni Aye.

She called for greater public awareness of the rights, needs and available support services for persons with different types of disabilities, while also urging efforts to eliminate discrimination and mockery against persons with disabilities and promote a human-rights-based approach.

The Vice-President emphasized the importance of accessibility in public facilities and called on ministries and committees responsible for development affairs to prioritize accessibility measures in accordance with the Myanmar National Building Code. She also highlighted government efforts to provide education and care for persons with disabilities, noting that nine schools are being operated by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and that a new school for children with disabilities has recently been opened in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw.

She further called for cooperation between the government and private sector to create employment opportunities suited to the abilities of persons with different disabilities and to promote their participation in business, community life, culture, sports and the arts.

In the healthcare sector, she said persons with disabilities should receive priority services at hospitals and clinics, including emergency care, laboratory tests and diagnostic imaging. She also stressed the need to include persons with disabilities in disaster risk

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# NATIONAL

## Myanmar Offers Belarusian Enterprises Direct Springboard into ASEAN and Asian Markets

Entrepreneurs and business enterprises from Belarus are invited to collaborate through technology transfers and investments across the entire value chain, from farming to food processing.

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing speaks on the occasion of the Myanmar-Belarus Business Forum in Minsk, Belarus, on 20 August 2026.

The time has arrived to strategically expand and implement economic cooperation based on the strong historical friendship between Myanmar and Belarus, said President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing at the Myanmar-Belarus Business Forum at the President Hotel in Minsk at 11 am local standard time yesterday.

At the ceremony, Belarusian Prime Minister Mr Alexander Turchin stated that he warmly welcomed President U Min Aung Hlaing and the Myanmar delegation to the Republic of Belarus. It is an immense honour and pleasure to inaugurate today's Belarus-Myanmar Business Forum, which clearly demonstrates the positive momentum in relations between our two countries. He explained friendly relations between Heads of State of both countries, promotion of cooperation, plans to enhance investment and cooperation between the two countries, cooperation in industrial production, and promotion of cooperation in the unlimited legal environment for textile, personal good industries, agriculture and foodstuff, health and medicine, advanced technology science and nurturing human resources, and investment sectors and creation of finance and transport infrastructure.

Speaking on the occasion, the President of Myanmar said that the bilateral relations have reached their 'closest' and 'highest' levels. Even amidst today's heightened global geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges, Myanmar-Belarus relations have grown increasingly robust through mutual trust. They have affirmed a steadfast commitment to further elevating and advancing these ties in the future. The time has arrived to strategically expand and implement economic cooperation based on the strong historical friendship between Myanmar and Belarus.

To promote investment and enhance cooperation between Myanmar and Belarus, a Memorandum of Understanding on Investment Promotion was signed on 28 November 2025. Furthermore, efforts are currently underway to conclude the Agreement on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments between the two countries as expeditiously as possible.

Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding across trade, economic, science and technology, and cultural cooperation have already been signed, including Memoranda of Understanding on Science and Technology Cooperation and Cooperation in Customs Affairs, as well as Export Credit Framework Agreements, all of which will support bilateral economic cooperation.

To strategically advance comprehensive, multisectoral cooperation, including mutual investments, the Myanmar-Belarus Cooperation Promotion Roadmap (2026-2028) has been drafted, ratified, and signed. In addition to initiatives aimed at boosting investment, trade, and economic cooperation, this roadmap incorporates detailed plans for collaboration across various sectors, such as industry, agriculture, health, banking, education, and tourism.

To facilitate the successful transition of Myanmar's agricultural sector towards a Smart Agriculture system, entrepreneurs and business enterprises from Belarus are invited to collaborate through technology transfers and investments across the entire value chain, from farming to food processing.

There are strong prospects for importing and deploying Belarus's high-quality agricultural machinery, equipment, and heavy machinery in Myanmar, and investments are welcomed for joint domestic manufacturing ventures. As another opportunity, the government encourages local production of consumer goods, dairy and dairy products, pharmaceuticals, and medical supplies.

Investments are welcomed in logistics operations and commercial projects such as modern warehouses, cold-storage facilities, and cargo-transport infrastructure. Likewise, the government is encouraging and inviting private investments to achieve domestic power sufficiency, with a particular emphasis on power generation projects utilizing hydropower, solar, wind, and biomass energy.

Myanmar is endowed with four major rivers—the Ayeyawady, Thanlwin, Chindwin, and Sittoung—along with more than 1,000 tributaries and streams. Coupled with an annual rainfall of 2,000 mm to 5,000 mm, the country holds a hydropower potential of up to 100 gigawatts, with 40 to 50 GW viable for commercial development. Furthermore, Magway, Mandalay, and Sagaing Regions possess the potential to generate up to 51,973.8 terawatt-hours (TWh) of solar power annually.

Myanmar's Tikyit, Namma, and Mawlaik regions are abundant in coal deposits. By utilizing advanced, eco-friendly technologies with minimal environmental impact, coal-fired power plants can be constructed to ensure national power sufficiency. Therefore, Belarusian entrepreneurs and enterprises are cordially invited to invest in power generation projects.

Located in central Myanmar near PyinOoLwin, the 4,047-hectare Yadanabon Cyber City is operational. With all-weather road access and an international-standard airport capable of accommodating jet aircraft, seamless travel for international flights is well facilitated.

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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

## President U Min Aung Hlaing visits Grodno Azot Fertilizer Plant in Belarus

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing, who is on an official visit to Minsk, Belarus, and members of his delegation travelled by helicopter from Minsk to Grodno yesterday to visit the Grodno Azot fertilizer plant.

During the journey, the President and delegation observed Belarus' agricultural activities, transport infrastructure and regional development from the air.

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing views exhibits on display at the Grodno Azot Fertilizer Plant in Belarus on 20 August 2026.

Upon arrival at Grodno Airport, they were warmly welcomed by Grodno Regional Governor Mr Yuri Khadzhimuratovich and government officials. The delegation then proceeded by road to the Grodno Azot fertilizer plant, where they were welcomed by the plant's Secretary-General Mr Lyashenko Igor Vasilyevich and senior officials.

The President and delegation attended a luncheon hosted by the head of Grodno Region at the plant's reception hall. Following the luncheon, the President and the regional head exchanged commemorative gifts.

At a briefing, plant officials presented the history and operations of Grodno Azot, its production capacity, technical training programmes and the range of fertilizers and other products manufactured by the plant. They also explained the plant's role in supporting Belarus' domestic agricultural sector and food security, as well as its fertilizer exports to international markets.

Officials further briefed the President on efforts to export fertilizers to Myanmar, along with the production and marketing of nylon yarn and other related products.

The President asked questions and held discussions on matters of interest following the briefing. He then signed the plant's visitors' book and viewed a scale model of the fertilizer production facility.

The President and delegation subsequently toured the plant by vehicle and received further explanations from officials regarding its operations before departing Grodno Airport.

Grodno Azot, located in Grodno, Belarus, has been operating since 1963 and is a major state-owned producer of nitrogen-based fertilizers and chemicals. The plant primarily produces ammonia, urea and various nitrogen fertilizers, supplying Belarus' agricultural sector and exporting its products to numerous countries. — MNA/ST

## Myanmar Offers Belarusian Enterprises Direct Springboard into ASEAN and Asian Markets

FROM PAGE 4

Interested investors from Belarus are warmly invited to invest in the digitalization of government services, telecommunications technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications, digital payment systems, and the development of an innovation-driven business ecosystem.

Depending on the nature of the business and the regional strengths of the respective States and Regions, not only industrial zones and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) but also integrated agricultural zones and industrial projects can be established. Regarding Special Economic Zones, Myanmar has established SEZs in Thilawa, Dawei, and Kyaukpyu.

The Thilawa Special Economic Zone is currently the most successful SEZ. With its logistical advantages in international connectivity and comprehensive infrastructure, it serves as the optimal choice for export-oriented operations and manufacturing industries. In addition, in the Dawei Special Economic Zone, which is currently being initiated through cooperation between Myanmar and Russia, Belarus is invited to undertake heavy manufacturing operations, including the production of tyres, heavy machinery, and heavy commercial vehicles.

Investments are welcomed in mineral extraction and refining operations within the Taninthayi Region. Furthermore, as the region offers an advantageous investment environment for tourism, he invite investors to participate in hotel and tourism development projects.

As Myanmar actively participates in economic cooperation under ASEAN+1 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), it enjoys market access to relevant member states alongside tariff reductions and exemptions on Myanmar's exports. Belarusian enterprises can gain access to the ASEAN regional and broader Asian markets by investing in Myanmar. In turn, products manufactured in Myanmar can gain access through Belarus to the expansive market of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states, creating a win-win scenario.

As prominent business organizations and entrepreneurs from both countries are in attendance, Belarusian business leaders are cordially invited to assess Myanmar's investment opportunities and develop mutually rewarding, long-term collaborative projects.

After the ceremony, the President and party viewed the booths where Myanmar's products are displayed.

The forum was also attended by Union ministers and officials who accompanied the President, the Myanmar Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus, the Belarusian Ambassador to Myanmar, officials of the Belarusian Cabinet, the patron and party of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, businesspeople from the two countries and guests. — MNA/TTA

DIPLOMACY

## Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim

The UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim calls on Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aung Lin Dwe.

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker U Aung Lin Dwe received UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim Ms Gwyn Lewis at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting room in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

They discussed cooperation between the Amyotha Hluttaw and the UN in accordance with existing laws and procedures to ensure the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people. They also discussed prospects for achieving positive outcomes for the people through constructive cooperation with UN agencies, as well as ways to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation.

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker Jeng Phang Naw Taung, representatives from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Yangon and officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw Office also attended the meeting. — MNA/KTZH

# NATIONAL

## Myanmar, Thailand Hold 9th High-Level Committee Meeting to Strengthen Bilateral Military Cooperation

The ninth Thailand-Myanmar High-Level Committee Meeting in progress in Thailand on 20 August 2026, attended by the Myanmar delegation led by Defence Services Commander-in-Chief General Ye Win Oo.

THE 9th Thailand-Myanmar High-Level Committee (HLC) Meeting was held yesterday at the Grand Ballroom of the Chatrium Grand Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand, with senior military officers from both countries in attendance.

The Myanmar delegation was led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Ye Win Oo, while the Thai side was led by Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces General Ukris Boontanondha. Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Ko Ko Oo and senior officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and the Royal Thai Armed Forces also attended.

In his opening remarks, General Ukris Boontanondha said the HLC serves as the highest-level mechanism for cooperation between the two armed forces and plays an important role in strengthening their longstanding friendship and close relations. He highlighted the shared objectives of maintaining peace, stability and security along the two countries' border areas and promoting better livelihoods, prosperity and sustainable development for their peoples.

General Ye Win Oo said the meeting aimed to enhance cooperation between the two armed forces, establish guidelines for military cooperation in addressing security issues along the border, and coordinate the continued work of the Regional Border Committee (RBC) and Township Border Committee (TBC). He also emphasized cooperation in maintaining peace, stability, security and socioeconomic development in Myanmar-Thailand border areas.

The meeting reviewed the outcomes of the 38th Regional Border Committee meeting held in Kengtung from 29 June to 1 July, as well as issues discussed by the Joint Secretariat Meeting. The two sides also discussed continued cooperation and regular exchanges between their armed forces.

During the HLC meeting, the two sides discussed a wide range of issues, including reciprocal goodwill visits, military meetings and exchanges, agricultural cooperation, education and training, counterterrorism, military cultural exchanges, military medical cooperation, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Other areas included border stability and rule of law, narcotics control, combating online crime, maritime security and safety, prevention of transboundary forest fires and haze pollution, flood early-warning systems, and cooperation to address pollution in boundary rivers and waterways.

The two HLC chairmen approved the matters discussed at the meeting and signed and exchanged the agreements reached at the 9th Thailand-Myanmar HLC Meeting. Commemorative insignia were also exchanged. The Thai Chief of Defence Services additionally handed over two sets of air-pollution monitoring equipment to the Myanmar Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

The Joint Secretariat Meeting for the 9th Thailand-Myanmar HLC was held in Bangkok from 16 to 19 August. The 10th Thailand-Myanmar High-Level Committee Meeting is scheduled to be hosted by Myanmar in 2027. — MNA/ST

## Yangon Police intensify area-based crime prevention operations

A female traffic police officer performs traffic control duties at a pedestrian crossing in Yangon.

POLICE personnel from township police stations across Yangon Region, in cooperation with traffic police and local administrative authorities, carried out area-based operations yesterday to strengthen the rule of law and reduce crime, according to reports.

As part of the operations, police officers from Insein, Kyimyindine, Hlinethaya (East), Hmawby and Dagon Myothit (North) townships, together with relevant departmental officials and personnel from police outposts, conducted public awareness activities on crime prevention. Meanwhile, members of the Kyauktada and Kamayut Township Traffic Police Units conducted road safety awareness campaigns at pedestrian crossings along the roads to promote pedestrian safety.

In the previous evening, police officers from Kyimyindine and Dagon Myothit (North) townships conducted patrols and checked household guest registration records as part of efforts to maintain law and order and reduce crime. — Aung Thu/MKKS

## Myanmar reaffirms commitment to equal rights, opportunities for persons with disabilities

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reduction and emergency preparedness measures, as they are particularly vulnerable during natural disasters.

During the meeting, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Soe Win, who is also Vice-Chairman 1 of the committee, reported on measures undertaken to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, while Deputy Minister Dr Thant Zaw Lwin reported on progress in implementing decisions from previous committee meetings.

Committee members and representatives of disability organizations then discussed ongoing activities, plans and measures needed to further protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. The Vice-President provided additional instructions and coordination before delivering closing remarks and concluding the meeting. – MNA/ST

## Thai Chief of Defence Forces hosts dinner for Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation

Defence Services Commander-in-Chief General Ye Win Oo speaks at the dinner hosted by the Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces.

CHIEF of Defence Forces General Ukris Boontanondha of the Royal Thai Armed Forces hosted a dinner in honour of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Ye Win Oo and party, who attended the 9th Thailand-Myanmar High-Level Committee Meeting yesterday evening.

The two chiefs of armed forces extended greetings at the dinner. After the dinner, the Defence Services Commander-in-Chief and his wife exchanged commemorative gifts with the Thai General and his wife.

General Ye Win Oo and his wife presented cash awards and flower baskets to artistes who performed songs and entertainment at the dinner.

Also present at the dinner were Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Ko Ko Oo and his wife, senior Tatmadaw officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives and officials. — MNA/TTA

# NATIONAL

HLUTTAW

## Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker meets Speaker and representatives of Yangon Region Hluttaw

PYITHU Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and Myanmar Parliamentary Union (MPU) Member U Maung Maung Ohn met the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and representatives of the Yangon Region Hluttaw yesterday at the Nawarat Hall of the Yangon Region Hluttaw Office.

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Maung Maung Ohn speaks at the meeting with the Speaker and MPs from the Yangon Region Hluttaw in Yangon.

Meeting attendees watched a documentary highlighting the Union-level Hluttaws, Myanmar's new political landscape and the country's promising future. Following the screening, U Maung Maung Ohn delivered the opening remarks, while Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Htay Aung discussed key regional Hluttaw affairs.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker urged parliamentary representatives to collaborate across the executive, legislative and judicial branches following free and fair elections to advance national development alongside the public while stressing that legislators should raise questions and submit motions in the Yangon Region Hluttaw that directly address the needs of local constituents. He also highlighted the importance of amending, supplementing or enacting laws in line with current affairs, noting that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has recently enacted new legislation to combat online fraud, while stressing the need for inter-parliamentary cooperation to deliver tangible benefits to the region and calling for ongoing capacity-building initiatives for both representatives and Hluttaw staff.

Additionally, the Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker presented commemorative gifts to the Yangon Region Hluttaw Office, toured the regional Hluttaw assembly hall, and warmly greeted the attending regional lawmakers, Defence Services personnel representatives and Hluttaw staff. — MNA/TH

## Myanmar workers in Thailand can now ...

FROM PAGE 1

allows users to send funds directly from their TrueMoney Wallet in Thailand to KBZPay accounts or KBZ Bank accounts in Myanmar in a secure and cost-effective manner.

Senders can conveniently top up their wallets at over 14,000 7-Eleven stores throughout Thailand. The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The collaboration marks a significant step in strengthening digital financial connectivity between the two countries. KBZ is committed to better serving the daily financial needs of Myanmar nationals, particularly migrant workers and their families, by providing secure and convenient financial services. We believe this is a crucial step towards promoting 100 per cent financial inclusion and enhancing regional payment connectivity," said KBZ Bank Chief Executive Officer U Zaw Lin Aung.

TrueMoney has also outlined plans to extend similar reliable financial services to other countries with large populations of Myanmar migrants, including Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea, as part of its broader international expansion strategy. — ASH/KK

## Kehsi inspects spring water supply project

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, conducted a field inspection yesterday to review the progress of an ongoing spring water supply project in Nayok Village, Kehsi Township.

Officials inspect an ongoing spring water supply project in Kehsi Township in southern Shan State.

Kehsi Township Department of Rural Development Staff Officer (Technology) Daw Theingi Win and engineering staff inspected the construction of a one mile and two furlongs long spring water supply system from the source to Nayok Village. She also met representatives of the tender-winning company, urging them to complete the project on schedule in line with prescribed standards and specifications, while providing necessary coordination for issues raised by residents.

The spring water supply project is being executed during the 2026-2027 financial year with K59.75 million in Union funds under the supervision and technical support of the department's engineering staff. Work commenced in the first week of August, and construction is currently 35 per cent complete. Upon full completion, the system will ensure year-round access to clean drinking water for rural residents. — Cho Than Nyunt (Rural)

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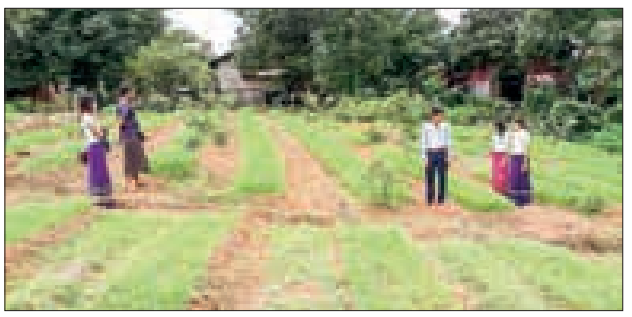
## On-site inspection of MSY Village Project activities in Kyain-Seikkyi



Officials oversee an agricultural project in Kyain-Seikkyi Township, Kayin State.

OFFICIALS from the Kyain-Seikkyi District Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development of Kayin State, conducted an on-site inspection on the morning of 19 August to review the progress of the Mya Sein Yaung (MSY) Village Project in Kyakhatchaung, Hlutshan, and Myohoung villages, which aims to create employment opportunities and boost household income.

During the visit, U Min Wai Phyo, Head of the Kyain-Seikkyi District Department of Rural Development, accompanied by project staff, met the respective village project committees. The team inspected the implementation of project activities, verified that accounting forms were systematically maintained, and ensured that operations aligned with the project manual guidelines, while providing necessary instructions.

According to U Saw Tun Aye, Staff Officer (Technology) of the Kyain-Seikkyi District Department of Rural Development, the Mya Sein Yaung Village Project has disbursed loans to community members as follows: K53 million to 138 members in Kyakhatchaung Village; K60.9 million to 153 members in Myohaung Village, and K51 million to 24 members in Hlutshan Village. — Ko Ko Soe (Rural)

# OPINION

## Responsibly hand over archaeological artefacts to the State

Myanmar is a country with a long and rich history spanning from the Stone Age and Bronze Age through the Iron Age and subsequent periods, and it is home to numerous valuable historical and cultural heritage objects. These ancient cultural heritage items are historical evidence closely associated with the dignity and identity of the nation, making their preservation for future generations of great importance.

An object is classified as an archaeological artefact if it is more than 100 years old, can provide evidence of a particular historical period, and possesses a combination of factors such as historical use, craftsmanship, rarity and historical value. Archaeological artefacts are often associated with ancient sites and may be unearthed as a result of natural erosion, farming, excavation, road construction and other activities. When such objects are discovered, some people may sell them illegally for financial gain, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Such unauthorized excavation and sale constitute a criminal offence. In fact, these objects must be handed over to the relevant authorities.

At present, a total of 1,173 archaeological artefacts, including gold decorative fragments, gold coins, stone beads, stone bead fragments, bronze objects, bronze alloy plates and earthenware from the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Pyu era, Bagan era, Thayawady era and MraukU era, have been discovered and handed over to the State. By responsibly handing over archaeological artefacts to the relevant authorities, people can help prevent the illegal trafficking and removal of Myanmar's cultural heritage abroad, while also ensuring that future generations can study the historical national heritage associated with their own country.

When archaeological artefacts discovered in such circumstances are handed over to the State, rewards are provided based on their type and value. For gold artefacts, in addition to their market value, a reward equivalent to 80 per cent of the market value is provided. For bronze artefacts, an additional reward ranging from 40 to 80 per cent of their market value is provided. For Bagan-era artefacts, an additional reward equivalent to 70 per cent of their market value is provided, while an additional reward ranging from 40 to 70 per cent of their market value is provided for artefacts from other historical periods.

At present, a total of 1,173 archaeological artefacts, including gold decorative fragments, gold coins, stone beads, stone bead fragments, bronze objects, bronze alloy plates and earthenware from the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Pyu era, Bagan era, Thayawady era and MraukU era, have been discovered and handed over to the State. By responsibly handing over archaeological artefacts to the relevant authorities, people can help prevent the illegal trafficking and removal of Myanmar's cultural heritage abroad, while also ensuring that future generations can study the historical national heritage associated with their own country.

Therefore, the public is urged to actively cooperate in safeguarding the country's historical heritage and ensuring that its valuable historical evidence is not lost by promptly reporting and handing over any archaeological artefacts they discover to the relevant authorities.

# ARTICLE

# More Than a Meal: Lahpet Thoke, Yei-Nway-Gyan and the Heart of Myanmar Hospitality

By Moon Cherry K

ON a rainy afternoon in Myanmar, few things feel more familiar than a plate of Lahpet Thoke (tea leaf salad) beside a steaming cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan (plain tea). As rain taps against the windows, family members, friends or guests may gather around a table, sharing stories, laughter and a little fermented tea leaf salad. The combination is simple, yet deeply meaningful. For many Myanmar people, Lahpet and Yei-Nway-Gyan are more than food and drink. Together, they are part of a tradition of welcome, friendship and community.

### A Pair That Belongs Together

Myanmar has a traditional saying that praises the best of nature: "The king of fruits is mango; among meats, pork; and among leaves, Lahpet." The saying reflects the special place tea leaves have held in Myanmar society for generations. Lahpet, or fermented tea leaves, is not simply an ingredient. It is part of a cultural tradition in which food, conversation and hospitality come together.

Lahpet Thoke, the well-known Myanmar tea-leaf salad, may look simple, but its flavours tell a richer story. A traditional version may include fermented tea leaves, shredded cabbage or romaine, tomatoes, fried garlic, roasted peanuts, toasted sesame seeds and crispy yellow split peas. These are combined with peanut oil, lime juice, fish sauce and fresh chillies, creating a lively mixture of sour, salty, bitter and spicy flavours with a satisfying crunch. Recipes vary from household to household, making Lahpet Thoke both a shared tradition and a personal taste of home.

Besides the salad, Yei-Nway-Gyan provides a very different experience. Hot water is poured over dried tea leaves and allowed to brew, producing a warm, fragrant drink whose strength can be adjusted according to taste. Tea grown in places such as Namhsan, Ywangan and Pinlaung is well known, with different varieties offering their own distinctive aromas and flavours.

Yet their importance cannot be measured by taste alone. Lahpet brings people to the table; Yei-Nway-Gyan encourages them to stay.

### Where Hospitality Begins

In a traditional Myanmar home, offering a guest a cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan is a simple gesture, but its meaning goes much deeper: you are welcome here; sit down and stay awhile.

A plate of lahpet may appear alongside it, inviting everyone to share. There does not need to be a formal invitation or special occasion. A visitor can sit down, have a cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan and become part of the conversation. A short visit may become an hour of talking. An old friendship may be renewed. A stranger may leave feeling a little less like a stranger.

This spirit of sharing extends beyond the home. At donation ceremonies, weddings, community gatherings and other social occasions, Lahpet is often served to family members, friends and guests. Yei-Nway-Gyan is also offered as people gather, rest and talk. They exchange news, share memories and discuss matters affecting their families and communities.

In these moments, neither the food nor the drink stands alone. Lahpet and Yei-Nway-Gyan become part of the social fabric, creating a space where people connect.

### From the Home to the Tea Shop

Myanmar tea shops offer perhaps the most familiar everyday example of this culture. In a traditional tea shop, customers may sit with a cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan, enjoy lahpet or other simple snacks, and spend time talking with friends. Some come to meet others; some read or discuss the day's news; others simply enjoy a quiet moment.

The tea shop is therefore more than a place to drink tea. It is a small meeting place where ordinary moments become part of daily life. While Yei-Nway-Gyan is traditionally served free of charge in many tea shops, some restaurants and hotels charge for tea depending on the variety and quality served.

There are practical benefits to the food as well. Yei-Nway-Gyan naturally contains compounds with antioxidant properties, while vegetables, peanuts, sesame seeds and other ingredients commonly used in Lahpet Thoke can provide fibre, protein, healthy fats and other nutrients. The amounts of oil, salt and fish sauce can vary, however, so Lahpet Thoke is best enjoyed as part of a balanced diet. But perhaps the most valuable nourishment offered by this tradition cannot be measured on a nutrition label.

It is found in conversation. Older generations pass stories to younger ones over cups of Yei-Nway-Gyan. Friends catch up after a long absence. Families sit together after a busy day. A guest who arrives as a stranger may leave feeling like a friend. In this way, a simple plate of Lahpet and a cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan can carry something far greater than their ingredients.

### A Taste of Home, A Welcome to the World

For younger generations growing up in a rapidly changing world, understanding lahpet and tea culture can also be a way of understanding where they come from. They can learn where tea is grown, how the leaves are harvested and prepared, how recipes differ from one family to another, and why offering tea to a guest carries such meaning. Preserving a tradition does not require turning back the clock. Sometimes, it simply means continuing to share what previous generations taught us.

For international visitors, this tradition offers a gentle introduction to Myanmar. A visitor tasting Lahpet Thoke may first notice its unusual combination of flavours and textures, perhaps followed by the warmth of a cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan. But beyond the taste is a story: a story about a culture where food is often shared, guests are welcomed, and conversations can begin with something as simple as Yei-Nway-Gyan.

In this sense, lahpet and Yei-Nway-Gyan are more than culinary traditions. They are quiet ambassadors of Myanmar hospitality. One is eaten; the other is sipped. But together, they communicate a message that needs no translation: come, sit down, share, and stay awhile.

And perhaps that is why the combination feels especially comforting during the rainy season. When the sky is grey and rain falls outside, a plate of crunchy Lahpet Thoke beside a steaming cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan can bring a quiet sense of home. For someone who grew up with these flavours, it may awaken memories of family, friendship and familiar voices. For a visitor, it can offer a small but genuine window into Myanmar life.

Sometimes, a culture does not need to be explained in a museum or written in a history book. Sometimes, it can simply be placed on a table, with a plate of Lahpet, a warm cup of Yei-Nway-Gyan and an invitation to sit down.

# Catch your breath: The Art of Slowing Down

By Lynn Lynn Myat Oo

I used to think I was just staying productive, but looking back, I was really just moving fast for the sake of it.

It's easy to get caught up in that daily hustle where every minute feels like a deadline, and every task feels like an emergency. You don't even question the speed – you just keep your head down and keep moving.

It wasn't until a quiet evening at the park that I finally saw how absurd it all was.

I was sprinting down the paved trail, pushing my lungs to their absolute limits. Sweat dripped down my forehead, my heart hammered against my ribs, and my legs felt heavy. Finally exhausted, I pulled up near a bench, bent over with my hands on my knees, and gasped for air.

While I was standing there, in a desperate attempt to catch my breath, a young child approached me, looking at me with pure curiosity.

"Are you an athlete?" the child asked, tilting their head. "Are you training for a big race, or are you in a competition?"

I blinked, still breathing heavily, and looked down at them. "No," I managed to say. "I'm not an athlete. And there's no race."

The child nodded innocently and wandered off to play, completely unaware of the mental lightning bolt they had just delivered. As I stood there alone in the fading evening light, the child's question echoed in my mind. If I am not an athlete, and if there is no race... why on earth was I running so hard?

That simple question shattered a subtle illusion I had carried for years. It wasn't just about my evening jog; it was a mirror reflecting how I was living my entire life. I had been sprinting through my days, hurrying through tasks, constantly checking off boxes, stressing over the next horizon, as if an invisible referee were holding a stopwatch over my head.

Why do we rush through life when there is no finish line waiting for us?

We hurry to answer emails, rush to finish meals, and scramble towards goals simply out of habit. We treat existence like a competitive sport, forgetting that life isn't a 100-metre dash – it's a walk through a garden. When you sprint through a garden, you don't reach the end any richer; you just miss the flowers.

Slowing down isn't about laziness or giving up on ambition. It is an intentional choice to actually inhabit your own life. It means taking the time to taste your meal, to listen fully when someone speaks, and to let your lungs fill with air without feeling like you need to earn your next breath.

Now, I try to catch myself when the old habit creeps back in. I notice it when I'm practically sprinting on my morning commute to work, dodging people on the sidewalk for no real reason. I notice it when I'm having my lunch, barely tasting the food because my mind is already three tasks ahead.

I feel it most when I'm standing at the bus stop, heart pounding with impatience, wishing the bus would hurry up. But deep down, I know my anxious heart won't make the bus arrive a single second faster. All the stressing in the world won't change the schedule.

All we can actually do is wait.

So now, when I catch myself rushing for no reason, I take a breath and remind myself: Slow down. Stop running races that don't exist. Learn to wait for the bus, wait for your timing, and wait for the moment that is truly yours to shine.

The next time you find yourself rushing frantically through your day, stop and ask yourself the child's question: What race am I actually running? If the answer is "none," take a deep breath, ease your posture, and slow your pace. There is no medal for finishing life first."

# NATIONAL

## U Aung Min Oo presents Credentials to President of Federal Republic of Somalia

Ambassador U Aung Min Oo is pictured alongside the Somalian President at the ceremony on 19 August 2026.

U Aung Min Oo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Federal Republic of Somalia, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, PhD, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, on 19 August 2026 at Villa Somalia in Mogadishu. — MNA

## Tatmadaw columns arrest 23 telecom fraudsters in Shan State (South)

THE Government is taking measures to combat online fraud and gambling, which threaten global socioeconomic stability and national security. Action is being taken against those operating in border areas, as well as those committing such offences domestically. As part of these efforts, Tatmadaw columns arrested 23 Chinese nationals involved in online gambling in Kehsi Township, Shan State (South).

According to residents, people involved in online gambling had been operating from temporary structures in the area. Tatmadaw troops conducting security operations intensified their investigations and operations against such activities.

Yesterday morning, 10 Chinese nationals who had illegally crossed the border into Myanmar to operate online gambling businesses were arrested at a location about 9,900 metres north of Wamphun village and 2,900 metres north-east of Ponlon village in Kehsi Township.

The troops seized two temporary shelters, a workshop shelter, a kitchen shelter, four Starlink sets, 26 mobile phones, two tablets, a laptop, eight network extension boxes, 12 Wi-Fi devices, four cash machines, a large generator, two refrigerators and related equipment.

The security operations continued, resulting in the arrest of six more Chinese nationals about 3,000 metres north-west of Ponlon village and seven others about 3,900 metres north of Ponlon village. The total number of Chinese nationals arrested in connection with online gambling activities therefore reached 23.

Following the completion of investigations, legal action will be taken against the arrested individuals in accordance with existing laws, while the seized equipment will be dealt with in accordance with procedures. Authorities will also systematically demolish illegally constructed residential and commercial structures and continue efforts to eradicate online gambling and fraud activities in the area. — MNA/MKKS

This map with an inset reveals the crackdown on telecom fraud, arresting 23 scammers in southern Shan State.

## Construction of 2,400-gallon elevated water tank inspected in Yenangyoung

OFFICIALS conducted a field inspection yesterday of the construction progress of a 2,400-gallon elevated water tank in Kyigyi Village, Yenangyoung Township, Magway Region, being implemented by the Department of Rural Development of Yenangyoung Township under the Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, with Union funds for the 2026-2027 financial year.

Daw May Thet Naing, District Head of the Department of Rural Development of Chauk District, U Aye Tun Min, Township Head of the Department of Rural Development of Yenangyoung Township, and staff, together with company officials and members of the Village Water Supply Committee, inspected the construction progress of the 2,400-gallon elevated water tank in Kyigyi Village. The district head instructed those concerned to carry out the works in compliance with the prescribed standards and complete them on time.

This image displays the construction site of the elevated water tank.

In Kyigyi Village, the construction of a 2,400-gallon elevated water tank, installation of a 6.96 kW solar-powered water pumping system, and construction of a 120-foot-long fence are being implemented during the current financial year with an approved Union fund of K48.376 million by Zenith Creative Construction Co Ltd. The project commenced in the fourth week of June 2026, and 62 per cent has reportedly been completed. — Naw Lu (DRD)

## Kyaukpadaung opens organic fertilizer production course

Officials attend the opening event for the vocational training course in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region.

THE Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, Kyaukpadaung Township, NyaungU District, Mandalay Region, in cooperation with the Township Department of Agriculture, held the opening ceremony of a free vocational training course on organic fertilizer production at the township department meeting hall on 18 August.

NyaungU District Department of Rural Development Head U Han Myint Tun delivered opening remarks, stating that vocational training courses are conducted annually to improve the socioeconomic conditions of rural residents.

Kyaukpadaung Township Department Head Daw Aye Aye Thet urged trainees to actively learn organic fertilizer production techniques and apply them effectively in their farming activities. Course instructors from the Department of Agriculture detailed the subjects to be taught before officials distributed agricultural training materials to the trainees.

A total of 20 trainees from villages across Kyaukpadaung Township are attending the course. During the three-day free training from 18 to 20 August, skilled instructors provided theoretical and practical lessons on making EM solution and compost, producing and using vermicompost, modern agricultural techniques, scientific farming methods, and practices for increasing crop yields. — Karan (Rural)

# NATIONAL

## Thazi and Pyawbwe to build 2 railway flyovers

TO improve transport connectivity, two railway flyovers are planned to be constructed in Thazi and Pyawbwe townships in Mandalay Region, according to the Ministry of Construction.

An initial proposed site for the construction of the two railway flyovers.

The railway flyovers in Thazi Township will be constructed between mileposts 13/0 and 13/1 along the Meiktila-Taunggyi-Kengtung-Tachilek Union Highway (AH2), while the flyover in Pyawbwe Township will be built between mileposts 285/7 and 286/0 along the Yangon-Toungoo-Mandalay Union Highway (AH1) in central Pyawbwe. Preliminary surveys and measurements have already begun at the proposed flyovers sites. — ASH/KZL

## THB100,000 condolence payment for family of Myanmar worker who died in Thailand

The condolence money being transferred to the worker's wife at the Labour Attaché Office.

A Thai employer gave the family of a late Myanmar migrant worker condolence money worth THB100,000, according to the Labour Attaché Office.

U Nay Zar Kyaw died in a workplace accident in Thailand's Chonburi District on 25 July this year. For his death, the employer expressed sadness and condolences to the family and gave the money on 17 August at the office.

The Labour Attaché Office said it will proceed by obtaining the government's social security benefits fully, on behalf of the worker's family. — MT/ZS

## MRCS Aids 195 Flood-Hit Households in Sagaing

THE Myanmar Red Cross Society provided 195 sheets of tarpaulins, 195 family hygiene kits, and two temporary tents to 195 flood-affected households in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region, facing difficulties due to flooding.

With support from partner organizations, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Myanmar Red Cross Society is carrying out flood relief operations. — ASH/MKKS

The Myanmar Red Cross Society assists flood-stricken households in Sagaing Township facing difficulties due to flooding.

## Literary Lifetime Achievement Award-winning writer Maung Swe Thet passes away

RENOWNED veteran writer and National Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement winner Maung Swe Thet (Colonel Nyunt Swe, Retd) passed away in Yangon on at approximately 4 pm 19 August 2026 at 91.

Writer Maung Swe Thet.

Maung Swe Thet, whose real name was U Nyunt Swe, was born in Sagaing Region in October 1935 to writer Ngwe Soe (U Ngwe Hsaing) and Daw Hsint. He joined the military as an cadet in March 1954. During his service in the Tatmadaw, he successively held various ranks and positions, ultimately serving as Deputy Commander of a military command.

Following his military service, he continued to serve in government positions, including Managing Director at the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Ambassador to Thailand, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Member of the Union Civil Service Board (at deputy-minister level), before retiring in 2006.

He entered the literary field around 1951-1952, writing military memoirs, non-fiction, fiction and novels. Under pen names including 'Maung Swe Thet', he published numerous short stories and articles in various publications, including Myawady Magazine and many other journals. Over the course of his literary career, he published 14 books.

He also contributed to public service as an in-house consultant at Popular Journal and served first as Vice-Chairman and later as Chairman of the Myanmar Libraries Foundation.

In recognition of his distinguished public service and literary contributions, he was awarded the title of Wunna Kyaw Htin, the Excellent Performance in the Administrative Field (First Class) and the Excellent Performance in the Social Field (First Class). He also received the Sayawun Tin Shwe Literary Award, Tun Foundation Literary Award, Pakokku U Ohn Pe Lifetime Literary Award and the 2023 National Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Reflecting on receiving the National Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement, he once remarked: "As a writer, knowing that people read what you write brings deep joy and fulfilment. Knowing how much benefit it brings to the reader makes that joy even greater"— a sentiment that reflected his lifelong dedication to literature.

Writer Maung Swe Thet is survived by his wife, writer Ma Thet Swe (Thayet), three children, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. — TWA/TH

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
## BUSINESS

# MTSH completes 3.37 MW solar pilot project at Thilawa SEZ

MTSH Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Co Ltd has announced the successful completion and official opening of a 3.37 MW Solar Energy Pilot Project, the company notified on 19 August.

This image captures the Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

The project was carried out by Thilawa Property Development Limited (TPD), a subsidiary of MTSH, within the Residential & Commercial Area (R&C) of Thilawa Special Economic Zone (Zone A). The pilot project was completed in early 2026 and officially inaugurated on 31 July.

The solar facility is expected to generate approximately 4.73 million kilowatt-hours annually. Of the total output, 2.685 MW (79.67 per cent) will be supplied to industrial users within the SEZ, while 0.688 MW (20.42 per cent) will be distributed through a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) to hotels, tenants, and businesses in the R&C area through an on-grid and hybrid operating model under long-term power purchase agreements.

The project is designated for solar generation, battery storage, and electricity distribution within Thilawa Garden City's R&C area. It is also intended to serve as a model for future solar energy deployment at the SEZ and surrounding industrial facilities. — NN/KK

# Trading Amount and Forex Rate in the Market on 20 August 2026

| | US$ | Chinese yuan | Thai baht | Indian rupee |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exchange rates | 3,660.90~3664.90 | 557.70~557.90 | 125.40~125.60 | 43.60 |
| Trading amount in the market | 9,135,364.42 | 14,268,146.80 | 77,498,371.46 | - |

THE foreign currency volume traded in the market was for the import of edible oil, fuel oil, pharmaceutical and pharmaceutical raw materials, industrial raw materials, consumer goods, car/motorcycle spare parts, construction materials, fertilizers, electronic equipment, and agricultural equipment. The revenue from the CMP sector was sold to the edible oil sector. — MNA

# Applications open for Batch 5 of Farm Machinery Training

THE Agricultural Mechanization Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will conduct Farm Machinery Training (Batch 5) free of charge on 12 October at the Agricultural Mechanization Training School in Meiktila.

Applicants must have passed Grade 10 (former curriculum) or Grade 12 (new curriculum) or have passed the Government Technical High School. They must be unmarried male citizens and between 17 and 25 years old as of the training start date. They must be physically fit and genuinely interested in agricultural machinery.

Applicants who meet the criteria will be required to sit for an interview. Successful candidates will be admitted to the one-year training programme. The department will cover accommodation, while trainees are responsible for their own monthly meals and textbook expenses.

Application forms will be available starting on 24 August at the respective department in the districts and townships across various regions and states. Completed applications, along with the required documents and a commitment letter, must be submitted to the office where the form was obtained by 5 October.

Those who have passed the government technical high school course in automotive technology or manufacturing engineering and also excel in this training are eligible for admission to the first-year course in Agricultural Mechanization Technology at government technical colleges and institutes.

Individuals can enquire about details through the department (head office) at 067 3431246, or the Training School in Meiktila at 09 458149471. — NN/KK

# Tenders invited for riverbank, waterway works in Nay Pyi Taw, 5 regions

THE Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems (DWIR) under the Ministry of Transport has invited a second-round tender for riverbank protection and waterway improvement projects in Nay Pyi Taw and five regions.

The projects will be carried out in Nay Pyi Taw, Ayeyawady, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, and Sagaing regions with the Union Capital Fund for the 2026-2027 financial year. The first call for tenders was advertised in state-owned newspapers on 4 August.

Tender forms are available from 19 August at the department, located at 400, Lower Pazundaung Road, Pazundaung Township, Yangon. The submission deadline is 3:30 pm on 1 September. Bids will be opened at 10 am on 4 September. Individuals can enquire about tender details and tender rules at 09 880004975. — NN/KK

# MSY Village Project inspected in Wundwin

THE Wundwin Township Rural Development Department in Meiktila District, Mandalay Region, conducted a field inspection yesterday to inspect the successful development of income-generating businesses in Kalaywa Village with the Mya Sein Yaung (MSY) Village Project Fund, aiming to enable rural residents to operate small businesses independently and to obtain low-interest financial resources.

Officials inspect an Emerald Green village project in Wundwin Township.

U Aung Ko Ko Oo, Head of the Wundwin Township Rural Development Department, and the staff in charge of the township project met members of the MSY Village Project and reviewed the agricultural activities.

Township Head U Aung Ko Ko Oo checked the success of livestock and trading activities, enquired whether the monthly financial statements were complete and coordinated the necessary measures.

In the village, 52 farmers were given K40.19 million, 24 farmers K17.21 million, and five farmers K3.7 million. A total of 81 members and associates were provided with K61.1 million in non-returnable working capital loans at a low interest rate, and the MSY village project is currently underway, stated U Aung Ko Ko Oo, Township Head from the Wundwin Township Rural Development Department. — Aung Ye Kyaw

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# Walmart profits top estimates despite slower US sales growth

WALMART reported lower second-quarter profits Thursday but still topped analyst expectations as new US drug price caps and investments in attracting inflation-strapped customers weighed on results.

Profits were $6.4 billion, down 9.4 per cent from the year-ago quarter. US comparable sales, a closely watched benchmark, grew by 2.6 per cent compared with 4.1 per cent in the first quarter.

Revenues in the quarter were $187.9 billion, up 5.9 per cent from the year-ago period as Walmart raised its full-year profit and sales forecast.

The results were lifted by US tariff refunds but Walmart said the boost was partially offset by price cuts.

Walmart cited a negative effect on US sales from a price cap on 10 top-selling pharmaceutical products that went into effect 1 January.

Operating income growth came in "at the top end of our expectations", Walmart said, adding that "our outlook reflects the continued prioritization of remaining tariff refunds into price investments". — AFP

Retail giant Walmart reports quarterly financial performance amidst changing consumer market conditions. **PHOTO: AFP**

# Some of Meta's safety tools were 'designed to fail': witness

A former employee testified on Wednesday that some of Meta's safety tools for Facebook and Instagram were "designed to fail", contradicting the company's defence strategy in a landmark trial in California.

For a second day, Meta is fending off accusations by a coalition of US states that it deliberately designed its products to hook children and gather their data while misleading the public.

A loss for the social media giant could see it slapped with a $200 billion penalty, force fundamental changes to its business model and send shockwaves through the industry. — AFP

# Foreign visitors to Japan hit 3.44M in July

THE number of foreign visitors to Japan in July inched up 0.1 per cent from a year earlier to 3.44 million, a record for the month, government estimates showed Wednesday, with travel demand remaining strong amid the summer holiday season in the northern hemisphere.

The number of foreign visitors to Japan in July inched up 0.1 per cent from a year earlier to 3.44 million. **PHOTO: KYODO/FILE**

By country and region, South Korea topped the list with 894,700 visitors, up 31.9 per cent, followed by Taiwan with 763,800, a 26.4 per cent increase and a new monthly record, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization.

The number of visitors from China, meanwhile, plunged 56.1 per cent from a year earlier to 428,200, as bilateral ties between the Asian neighbours remain soured.

The organization said 17 markets, including South Korea, Indonesia and Mexico, set new visitor records for July.

Last year, visitor numbers from Hong Kong and South Korea were affected in July by a rumor that Japan would suffer a devastating natural disaster that month.

Japan Tourism Agency Commissioner Norio Kimura said at a press conference that the increasing diversification of visitors to Japan and the growth in spending on accommodation and other areas suggests that "the inbound tourism market as a whole will generally remain steady". — Kyodo

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**
**M.V XO LUCKY VOY.NO. (X2617E)**

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V XO LUCKY VOY.NO. (X2617E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-8-2026** 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 TI2 LOGISTICS PTE LTD**

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**
**M.V AZURE DOLPHIN VOY.NO. (062026)**

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V AZURE DOLPHIN VOY.NO. (062026)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **21-8-2026** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: **2301928**

**Shipping Agency Department**
**Myanma Port Authority**

Agent For:

**M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD**

**PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING**

The manufacture of Shanghai E-Tong Chemical Co.,Ltd have registered the following product in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributer name "YONTA MYANMAR CO.,LTD", to new distributor name "Agro Green Land Chemical Co.,Ltd". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Agro Green Land Chemical Co.,Ltd. Ph-09401573814

| Sr. | Trade Name | Active Ingredient | Registration No. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | E-T Gold Fit 30 EC | Pretilachlor 30% EC | F2019-2071 |

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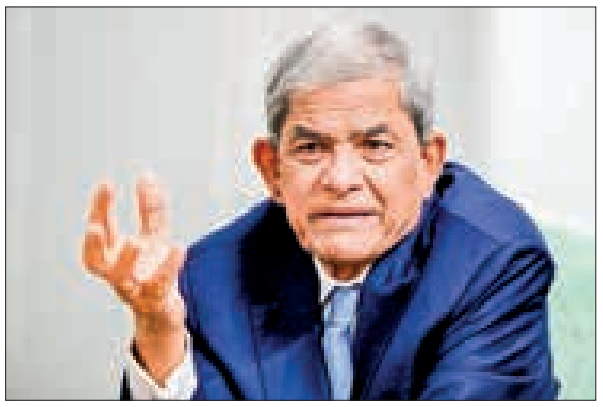
# ROLLING UPDATES
## WORLD

# BNP's Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir elected as 23rd President of Bangladesh

*Parliamentarians cast ballots under Chief Election Commissioner supervision to elect leadership.*

FORMER Secretary General of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was on Thursday elected as the country's 23rd President, securing 255 votes in the presidential election held at the Jatiya Sangsad, the country's Parliament.

Alamgir defeated Oli Ahmed, the candidate backed by the 11-party opposition alliance led by the far-right Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and the country's first major student-led political party, National Citizen Party (NCP), who received 88 votes.



Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) general secretary Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir speaks during an interview with AFP in Dhaka on 21 August 2024. **PHOTO: AFP/ FILE**

A total of 343 members of Parliament cast their votes in the election, which was held from 2 pm to 5 pm (local time) under the supervision of Chief Election Commissioner ASM Nasir Uddin. The Chief Election Commissioner later announced the results declaring Alamgir as the newly elected President.

The election marked the first time in 35 years that more than one candidate contested the Bangladeshi presidential election. In previous polls, opposition parties had not fielded candidates, leaving only a single candidate in the race.

Alamgir's election came after he was nominated by the BNP as its presidential candidate last week. Following his nomination, he resigned as BNP Secretary General and as a member of the party's National Standing Committee. — ANI

# Seoul backs Donald Trump North Korea dialogue

SOUTH Korean President Lee Jaemyung has voiced strong support for US President Donald Trump's decision to scale back joint military exercises, describing the move as a significant step towards establishing a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

In a post on social media platform X, Lee praised Trump's efforts to create conditions for dialogue with North Korea, even as the United States remains heavily engaged in its conflict with Iran.

A launch vehicle of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system at a US military base in Seongj, South Korea. **PHOTO: YONHAP /AFP**

"We empathize with President Trump's will and efforts to create dialogue conditions for establishing a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, even through the reduction of this year's ROK-US combined exercises and field training exercises," Lee wrote. "I hope that this decision by President Trump will lead to the establishment of a stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, through building trust between the North and the US and resuming dialogue."

Trump has previously stated that he has a good relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and does not support conducting large-scale military exercises that he said send a "totally inappropriate and hostile" signal to Pyongyang. — SPUTNIK

# France recalls rare disease drug after deaths

A drug called Tavneos used to treat rare autoimmune diseases will be pulled from the shelves in France, the country's medicine watchdog said Wednesday, after it was linked to 20 deaths in Japan.

"The recall of all batches available in France will begin on 19 August," France's medicine safety agency ANSM said in a statement.

The agency noted that the European Commission revoked the drug's marketing authorisation earlier this month because "the benefits are no longer proven to outweigh its risks".

Tavneos is made by the US biotech firm Amgen and is sold by different partner pharmaceutical companies around the world. — AFP

Tavneos is made by the US biotech firm Amgen and is sold by different partner pharmaceutical companies around the world. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sweden reports rare measles outbreak following music festival

SWEDEN'S Public Health Agency said Wednesday it had recorded 21 cases of measles connected to a folk music festival in the country's north.

The agency said the cases were reported in several regions but all connected to the music festival Urkult, which was held in the north of Sweden in late July and early August. A majority of those affected were under the age of 18 and most of the cases involved people who had not been vaccinated. – AFP

### US launches crushing economic Iran operation

US President Donald Trump has announced the start of the "most crushing economic operation" in history against Iran over the latter's alleged refusal to reach a deal with the United States. "No one has given the Islamic Republic of Iran a greater opportunity to make a Deal than me. TRAGICALLY, for them, they have failed to take it. Therefore, today, I am announcing the MOST CRUSHING ECONOMIC OPERATION EVER TAKEN AGAINST ANY COUNTRY!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

On Tuesday, Trump said that Washington was not holding and did not plan to hold any talks with Tehran.

Overnight into 18 June, Tehran and Washington signed a memorandum to end the conflict that began on 28 February. However, on 8 July, Trump announced that the ceasefire was no longer in effect, and US forces have since carried out several series of strikes on Iran. – SPUTNIK

# SPORTS

## Tottenham Hotspur eyes Manchester City forward pair

TOTTENHAM Hotspur are in talks with Manchester City to sign forwards Savinho and Omar Marmoush from their Premier League rivals, British media outlets reported Thursday.

Spurs were first linked with Brazilian winger Savinho back in 2025, when the 22-year-old opted to stay at the Etihad Stadium.

But the BBC and Sky Sports said Savinho, who made just seven Premier League starts last season, was now ready to leave City after joining from French club Troyes — part of City Football Group — for £30 million ($41 million) in 2024.

Marmoush, a £59 million signing from Eintracht Frankfurt in 2025, fell out of favour under former manager Pep Guardiola last term and the 27-year-old managed eight goals in 36 appearances in all competitions.

Tottenham boss Roberto De Zerbi has revamped the north London club's midfield during the summer transfer window, signing Mateus Fernandes from West Ham and Sandro Tonali from Newcastle for an estimated combined fee of £185 million.

But De Zerbi also wants to bolster Spurs' attack after they narrowly avoided relegation last season when they finished 17th, scoring just 48 goals in 38 games. — AFP

Savinho and Omar Marmoush endured reduced playing time at Manchester City last season. **PHOTO: AFP**

## YTU, KMD College win Varsity Esports Championship 2026 titles

Images show the KMD College team receiving the championship award (L) and the YTU team receiving the championship award. **PHOTO: ZWE MANN**

THE Varsity Esports Championship 2026 Season 1, jointly organized by the Myanmar Esports Federation (MESF) and PUBG MOBILE, was held at Sedona Hotel in Yangon yesterday, with Yangon Technological University (YTU) and KMD College winning the PUBG MOBILE and Mobile Legends events, respectively.

The Offline PUBG MOBILE Grand Final featured 16 university and college teams that advanced from the preliminary competition held at Yangon University on 25 and 26 July. YTU won the championship with 70 points.

KMD College had earlier won the Mobile Legends championship after competing against 16 teams at Yangon University.

MESF Vice-President U Kyaw Htet Lin presented trophies to the winning teams. He said the Varsity League, launched with support from the PUBG MOBILE developer, would help raise the standard of university esports in Myanmar and provide students with opportunities to develop their competitive skills and bring honour to their institutions. — Thitsa (MNA)/KZL

## Kayin State clinches overall Lethwei title

KAYIN State won the overall championship trophy at the 2026 Inter-State and Region Traditional Lethwei Championships, held at Theinbyu Lethwei Gymnasium in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region, yesterday.

The finals featured men's novice and Grade C bouts in the 51, 54, 57, 60, 63.5 and 67-kilogramme categories, as well as women's bouts in the 48, 51, 54 and 57-kilogramme categories.

Kayin State won the women's overall trophy with two gold and one silver medal, while Bago Region claimed the men's novice trophy with two gold and three silver medals.

Kayin State also secured the men's Grade C trophy with three gold, two silver and one bronze medal. With a combined haul of six gold, six silver and three bronze medals, Kayin State claimed the overall championship trophy. — Bala/KZL

## Arsenal target defender transfer deal

MIKEL Arteta has confirmed Arsenal want to sign a defender and are "active" in the transfer market after reports the Premier League champions have agreed to a deal for Aston Villa centre-back Ezri Konsa.

Arteta has been chasing a defender since the end of last season and appears set to land England star Konsa.

The Gunners had a bid for Konsa rejected earlier in the transfer window and briefly switched their attention to Bayer Leverkusen defender Jarell Quansah.

But having improved their offer for Konsa to around £50 million ($68 million), Arsenal are reportedly on the brink of sealing a deal for the 28-year-old.

With William Saliba sidelined for an "extended period" by a back problem and Jurrien Timber recovering from a groin injury, Konsa would slot into the heart of Arsenal's defence alongside Gabriel Magalhaes. — AFP

## Flick hails Rodri signing ahead of Barcelona's La Liga opener

Barcelona's players celebrate after Barcelona won the 61st Joan Gamper Trophy football match between FC Barcelona and Al Ahly FC in Barcelona, Spain, 19 August 2026. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

BARCELONA coach Hansi Flick hailed the signing of Spain midfielder Rodri as the club completed its preseason preparations with a 2-1 win over Egyptian side Al-Ahly in the Joan Gamper Trophy on Wednesday.

Rodri signed a four-year contract with Barcelona on Tuesday after leaving Manchester City, having rejected an offer from Real Madrid.

Speaking to Barcelona's official channels before Wednesday's match at the Camp Nou, Flick said the 30-year-old would be an important addition to his squad.

"It's a great opportunity for us to have Rodri. We were all 100 per cent convinced about signing him because he's a fantastic player," Flick said.

The German described Rodri as the "best No 6" in the world and praised his ability to dictate play while contributing defensively. — Xinhua

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# WORLD

## Tesla integrates Chinese Doubao AI model for in-vehicle systems

US automaker Tesla has integrated Doubao, a large language model developed by technology firm ByteDance, into its electric vehicles sold in the Chinese mainland, according to Tesla China.

The onboard intelligent voice system, activated by a long press of the voice button on the steering wheel, offers a range of features such as casual conversation, singing, debate comprehension, storytelling, English dialogue coaching, and character role-play. It also allows users to randomly switch between four vocal timbres and five operating modes.

Equipped with the integrated Doubao real-time dialogue model and an end-to-end voice interaction framework, the in-vehicle infotainment system has transcended the conventional "question-and-answer" walkie-talkie model, delivering a more natural, fluid, and initiative-taking interactive experience.

Experts noted a growing number of Chinese open-source large models are moving from individual breakthroughs to collective advances, offering new approaches to the global development of AI. — Xinhua

People visit the booth of TESLA at the Smart Vehicle Chain area of the third China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE) in Beijing, capital of China, 19 July 2025. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

## Putin lauds nuclear energy as cornerstone of Russian achievement

*Nuclear energy represents pride through advanced science technology and skilled professionals.*

Today, nuclear energy is a source of pride for Russia, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

Putin convened a meeting on the development of nuclear energy. On Thursday, the Russian nuclear industry marks the 81st anniversary of its founding.

"Today, nuclear energy - with its powerful concentration of science, technology, advanced materials, industrial and construction solutions, and unique professionals - is, without exaggeration, a source of pride for our country," Putin said during the meeting.

Heavy crane installs key reactor component at Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant in Türkiye, constructed by Russia's Rosatom. **PHOTO: ATOMIC ENERGY 2.0**

### Other Key Statements

Russia upholds traditionally high standards of safety and reliability at its nuclear power plants.

Russia plans to bring about 30 GW of nuclear generating capacity online, including small modular nuclear power plants. — SPUTNIK

## Trump says will meet North Korea's Kim later this year

US President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he would meet Kim Jong Un later this year, seeking to revive the bond he claims to have forged with the leader of nuclear-armed North Korea in his first term.

Trump told reporters at the White House it was important to "get along" with Kim, adding in an unusually precise assessment that Pyongyang now had 57 "very powerful" nuclear weapons.

But Trump's sudden focus on Kim and his scaling back of joint US-South Korean military drills have alarmed Asian allies — while sparking speculation that he is seeking a foreign policy win as his Iran war stalls.

"Yeah, I will be," Trump said during a tour of a new helipad at the White House, when asked if he planned to meet Kim later in 2026.

Trump defended planning to meet the North Korean leader even as he wages a war with Iran that he has justified on the grounds of preventing Tehran from getting a nuclear bomb. — AFP

## South Korea sends Arctic container ship

SOUTH Korea plans its first trial voyage through the Arctic this week as Middle East conflict disrupts global shipping, Seoul's oceans ministry said Thursday, while environmental groups warn the route could accelerate melting of polar ice. Global shipping has been heavily disrupted by war in the Middle East, sparked by US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February — prompting shipping companies and governments to explore alternative routes.

The container ship will sail to Europe via the Arctic, testing whether a route opened by melting sea ice can be commercially viable.

"The ship will depart from Busan and sail to Felixstowe in Britain, Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Gdansk in Poland before returning, with the entire voyage expected to take around 45 days," the spokesman said. — AFP

## Houthis plan strategic strait coast seizure

A Yemeni minister has warned the country's Houthi rebels are plotting to seize land along the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which would allow them to further threaten the vital shipping artery.

Three Houthi military sources and a spokesman for the Yemeni government forces battling them near the waterway also told AFP the rebels are planning to advance south from their current territory.

Such an assault, if successful, could cement Houthi control over one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, which the Iran-backed rebels have disrupted with attacks on passing vessels since the Gaza war broke out in 2023. It would also extend the hold of Tehran and its allies to a second vital waterway in the Middle East, after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz in its war with the United States. — AFP

## Liberia to receive first US deportees batch

LIBERIA is set to receive the first batch of a total of 1,200 third-country nationals to be deported to the West African country by the United States under an agreement between the two countries reached last year.

The first batch of 20 US deportees is expected to arrive in Monrovia, the Liberian capital, on Thursday and will be received by government officials at Roberts International Airport, according to an official statement issued Tuesday.

Under the arrangement, those to be transferred from the United States to Liberia will include citizens of African and Western Hemisphere countries who are medically cleared to travel, some of whom may wish to seek asylum, the statement said. — Xinhua