

Myanmar to develop power control system using Russian technology

Myanmar will also work to adopt the most appropriate power generation mix based on the types of energy resources available in the country.



A power plant generating electricity in Myanmar.

Discussions are underway with the Russian Federation to establish a power control system using Russian technology to manage the transmission and distribution of electricity across Myanmar, according to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy. The discussion took place in Russia during a meeting between the Union Minister for Electricity and Energy and the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Power System Operator.

In Russia, electricity is generated from various energy sources and used in combination. The power generation mix is adjusted to meet hourly demand and is calculated to provide electricity at the lowest cost to consumers. Power is transmitted and distributed using a digital control system, which operates in real time to ensure a reliable and stable power supply. Myanmar will also work to adopt the most appropriate power generation mix based on the types of energy resources available in the country. By reducing transmission losses in power generation and distribution, more electricity can be delivered, and consumers will be able to pay less. Discussions were held to obtain technical assistance from the Russian Federation to develop such a power control system, and the Russian Federation will also provide support by inviting technicians and professionals from Myanmar for study and training. — ASH/TH

182 container vessels dock at Yangon Port in Q1

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A container vessel is seen berthing alongside the Yangon Port.

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A scene from the 41st Kason Banyan Water-Pouring Festival at the Shwedagon Pagoda.

Shwedagon Pagoda to host 43rd Maha Bodhi Banyan Water-pouring Festival

THE 43rd Maha Bodhi Banyan Water-Pouring Festival will be held at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon on 30 April (the full moon day of Kason), starting at 7 am, according to U Bo Thin, a member of the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees.

The opening ceremony of the Kason Banyan Water-Pouring Festival will take place at the Maha Bodhi banyan tree located at the southeast corner of the pagoda platform. It will be attended by Ovadacariya Sayadaws of the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees, members of the Board of Trustees, office

staff, and Buddhist religious associations.

In addition, arrangements will be made for pilgrims to pour water in reverence at the Bodhi banyan trees situated at the four corners of the platform, with assistance provided by members of the Buddhist religious associations and staff, according to the Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees.

“Well-wishers have arranged to serve pilgrims with charity foods on the occasion of the Maha Bodhi Banyan Water-Pouring Festival,” said U Bo Thin. — ASH/KNN

Domestic diesel supplied directly to farmers in Nay Pyi Taw at special rate

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the Nay Pyi Taw Council, is directly distributing domestically produced diesel at a special price to farmers at their worksites in Nay Pyi Taw.

At present, the programme aims to ease fuel shortages and ensure affordable access for farmers. Diesel is being sold at K10,000 per gallon on a

cash-on-delivery basis to villages that still require fuel for ploughing and the cultivation of summer paddy and oil crops in the 2025-2026 financial year.

The distribution began on 18 April and is being carried out across townships in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. The authorities plan to expand the programme to other regions and states in coordination with the respective governments. — ASH/KZL



Domestic diesel is directly distributed at a special rate to farmers at worksites.

MAI, Indonesia’s Perkasa Flight School to jointly conduct pilot course



An aircraft of MAI seen on the taxiway before taking off.

THE Myanmar Airways International (MAI) stated that it has a plan to cooperate with the Perkasa Flight School from Indonesia to conduct a cadet pilot programme as part of creating chances for the individuals wishing to be a pilot in the aviation sector.

The programme will com-

prise the ground school courses, the practical flight trainings and the simulator training measures in order for a trainee to have adequate knowledge and skills of pilot.

The Cadet Pilot Programme will provide a systematic pilot training programme, an internationally standardized

curriculum, and opportunities to progress toward becoming a pilot. In addition, trainees who demonstrate strong performance during the training period will be given priority consideration for appointment as pilots in accordance with MAI’s established recruitment rules and regulations. — Ko Htet/TTA

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News and Periodicals Enterprise



NATIONAL

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker meets town elders, local authorities in Tatkon Township

PYITHU Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Maung Maung Ohn, accompanied by Nay Pyi Taw Council Member U Aung Zeya and officials, met town elders, departmental officials, and village-tract administrators at the Township General Administration Department meeting hall in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning.

They watched the opening video titled “The New Political Landscape and the Bright Future of Myanmar”.

In his opening speech, U Maung Maung Ohn said that now is the time to make concerted efforts to ensure that the country emerges as a stable, peaceful, modern, and developed nation, and he urged the government, Hluttaw representatives, and all citizens, including ethnic nationalities across the country, to unite and work together in line with the new political landscape in Myanmar.

The responsible officials then provided clarifications on



Staff members of MRTV perform entertainment at auditorium of MRTV in Tatkon, yesterday.

the questions and issues raised by those attending the ceremony, and the Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw coordinated the discussion.

Afterwards, they visited the construction site of a new Buddhist Missionary Temple in the township, which was damaged by the Mandalay earthquake.

The Buddhist Missionary Temple in Tatkon was damaged and destroyed by the Mandalay earthquake on 28 March 2025. It is now being rebuilt as a two-storey reinforced concrete building with an elevator, funded by donations. The project is scheduled to take two years, and the stake-driven ceremony was held

on 16 December 2025.

In the afternoon, Deputy Speaker U Maung Maung Ohn, together with Union Minister for Information U Htein Lin, met staff at the Myanmar Radio and Television at its auditorium.

During the meeting, the Deputy Speaker called on staff of MRTV to disseminate

endeavours in the Hluttaw to the people through the media, and carry out their duties with renewed mindset and energy in line with the new political landscape.

In his speech, Union Minister U Htein Lin said that Myanmar Radio and Television is a department like a colourful garden, as its staff come from all ethnic groups. Civil servants must be loyal to the State. The media sector must make efforts to ensure that the public understands and participates in government activities, as it serves as the ears and eyes of both the government and the people. In implementing such projects, they must work together with a family spirit and cooperate to overcome challenges.

Afterwards, the Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw, and the Union minister organized a cash draw lot programme for employees and presented the prizes to the winners. — MNA/TH

Union Minister for Electricity and Energy returns from working visits to Russia and China



Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Ko Ko Lwin is seen after arriving at the Mandalay International Airport yesterday.

UNION Minister for Electricity and Energy U Ko Ko Lwin returned to Mandalay International Airport yesterday afternoon after paying working visits to the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China from 12 to 19 April, at the invitation of the Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation, Mr Anton Kobayakov, and the Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation, Mr S E Tsvilev.

During the visit, the Union Minister held meetings with State leaders and regional au-

thorities, as well as representatives from organizations related to the electric power and energy sector. They cordially exchanged views on promoting trilateral cooperation among Myanmar, Russia and China in enhancing energy security and sufficiency.

The discussions also focused on cooperation measures in the energy sector and resulted in the signing of agreements aimed at ensuring the long-term supply of petroleum and petroleum products for Myanmar. — MNA/KZL

182 container vessels dock at Yangon Port in Q1

A total of 182 container vessels arrived at the Yangon Port in the first quarter (from January to March) 2026, the Myanmar Port Authority announced.

The Yangon Port witnessed arrivals of 59 container vessels in March, 60 in February and 63 in January 2026. This month, 53 vessels are slated to call at the Yangon Port.

The Yangon Port handled 728 container vessels in 2025, 633 in 2024 and 629 in 2023. Thanks to the draft extension, the international ocean liners can access the inner port for now, according to the Myanmar Port Author-

ity’s statement on 22 June 2022.

After the new navigation channel (Kings Bank Channel) accessing the inner Yangon River was found, the draft extension work was accelerated. Afterwards, the port can now handle larger ships. The container vessel MV SITC Zhaoming (185.99-metre LOA, 35.25-metre Beam, 29,232 GRT and 2,698 TEUs) of Hong Kong-based SITC Shipping Line docked at the Asia World Port Terminal for the first time on 22 June, which is the largest ship that AWPT Port has handled. — NN/KK

NATIONAL

MoNREC Union Minister attends Songkran Festival 2026 in Yangon

THE Thai Songkran Festival 2026, hosted by the Embassy of Thailand in Yangon, was held at 5:30 pm yesterday at the residence of the Thai Ambassador on Pyay Road, Dagon Township, Yangon.

The ceremony was attended by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Hsan Oo and his wife, Union Minister for Hotels, Tourism and Culture U Maung Myint and his wife, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Aung Naing Thu and his wife, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ambassadors and chargés d'affaires ad interim from foreign embassies based in Yangon, United Nations resident representatives, and invited guests.

At the start of the event,



Union Minister U Hsan Oo beats the ceremonial gong at the Thai Songkran Festival 2026, hosted by the Embassy of Thailand in Yangon yesterday.

Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the Thai Embassy Mr Yordying

Sypasri, and officials, warmly welcomed Union Minister U

Hsan Oo, his wife, and the other attendees. Following this,

Mr Yordying Supasri extended greetings, which was succeeded by a speech from Mr Kallayana Vipattipumiirates, Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Subsequently, Union Minister U Hsan Oo delivered a speech and officially opened the ceremony by beating the ceremonial gong three times. The Union Ministers, the Thai Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, the Adviser to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the guests then took a group photograph.

Afterwards, they enjoyed cultural dance performances by Myanmar and Thai troupes and toured the stalls featuring traditional Thai food. — MNA/KZL

Necessary aid provided to strong wind victims in Bago Region

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Soe Win, together with Bago Region Chief Minister U Myo Swe Win, visited Gyobingauk and Zigon townships in Bago Region yesterday morning to make assistance to households affected by strong winds that struck on 17 April.

At a ceremony held at the General Administration Department hall in Gyobingauk Township, they provided cash assistance, rice subsidies and hygiene kits to affected households from wards and village-tracts in both townships. In Zigon Township, assistance was provided for 10 collapsed houses, 375 damaged houses and five monasteries, benefiting 1,554 people. In Gyobingauk Township, support covered 57



Union Minister Dr Soe Win encourages locals, whose households affected by strong winds, from Gyobingauk and Zigon townships in Bago Region.

collapsed houses, 639 damaged houses and eight monasteries,

benefiting 2,205 people.

During the visit, the Un-

ion Minister met affected residents and highlighted that

strong winds commonly occur between late March and early June, causing damage to homes, monasteries and schools each year.

He stressed the importance of disaster preparedness and ongoing public awareness measures being carried out in cooperation with relevant ministries and local authorities to reduce losses.

He also urged the public to remain vigilant against seasonal natural hazards such as strong winds, heavy rain, lightning and flash floods, and to take necessary preventive measures.

Total assistance provided for the affected areas, including previous support, amounted to K91.869 million for 67 households. — MNA/KZL

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NATIONAL

Union Construction Minister inspects expressway repairs, bridge works

UNION Minister for Construction U Myo Thant inspected the repair of roads and bridges damaged by the Mandalay earthquake along the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway (Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon section) and the reconstruction of the Swa Creek Bridge at milepost 165/1 during his inspection tour yesterday.

At the site, officials reported that the new bridge is being rebuilt with a design capable of withstanding earthquakes up to magnitude 8, incorporating soil improvement measures, geophysical surveys and modern construction techniques. Installation of steel plate girders and concreting works have been largely completed, with remaining tasks under way.

The Union Minister



Union Minister for Construction U Myo Thant inspects the repair of the Swa Creek Bridge on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway (Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon section).

stressed adherence to design standards and quality control, regular inspection of the temporary bailey bridge, and strict workplace safety measures.

He also inspected the completed works, including girder installation, concrete decking, elastomeric bearings for seismic resistance, and erosion control measures.

Roads and bridges damaged by the Mandalay earthquake on 28 March 2025 along the expressway have been repaired, including the Hmauk-khon Creek Bridge. The new Swa Creek Bridge (return lane) is scheduled for completion in June 2026, after which construction of the inbound bridge will continue, ensuring uninterrupted transport connectivity, according to reports. — MNA/KZL

MoEE sells locally produced diesel to farmers at K10,000 per gallon in Magway Region

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the Magway Region Government, is distributing locally produced diesel directly to farmers in Pwintbyu and Natmauk townships at a rate of K10,000 per gallon through a cash-on-delivery system.

Yesterday, a total of 20,569 gallons of locally produced diesel were distributed directly to farmers at five locations, at the rate of one gallon per acre for the remaining 20,569 acres of land used for summer paddy and oilseed cultivation in Pwintbyu Township.

In addition, 45 gallons of

locally produced diesel were distributed to farmers at a reasonable price at the Sayan-aing Village-tract in Natmauk Township for the remaining 45 acres of land used for summer paddy and oilseed cultivation.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy is distributing locally produced diesel directly to villages that have yet to plant summer paddy and oilseed crops in 2025—2026 financial year, at a rate of K10,000 per gallon under a cash-on-delivery system, to ease fuel shortages and ensure farmers have access to fuel at affordable prices. — Maung Khine Min (IPRD)/TH



The Ministry of Electricity and Energy sells locally produced diesel directly to farmers in Pwintbyu and Natmauk townships. PHOTO: MAUNG KHINE MIN (IPRD)

Electricity charging service provided to urban people in Myitkyina



Providing ceremony of solar panels and 1,800W power stations to Ward Administration Offices in progress in Myitkyina, Kachin State on 18 April 2026. PHOTO: KACHIN STATE IPRD

THE Kachin State Government is implementing a plan to reduce electricity and water shortages for residents during the two-week maintenance period of the Chipwenge Hydropower Plant, the state's main source of electricity.

Yesterday, electricity charging services were provided at the Electricity Supply Enterprise and Ward Administration Offices in Myitkyina.

Kachin State Chief Minister U Khet Htein Nan, along

with state ministers and departmental officials, inspected the provision of charging services for electric motorcycles, mobile phones, power banks, and rechargeable light bulbs, as well as the conditions of residents receiving services and charging electricity.

In addition, they visited urban neighbourhood administration offices to inspect the arrangements for charging electricity using generators at these offices, and held a cordial meeting with neighbour-

hood administrators, administrative members, auxiliary fire brigade members, and security teams.

Subsequently, the chief minister provided 18 8ft x 4ft sets of solar panels and 1,800W power stations to Ward Administration Offices. It was also reported that the chief minister coordinated with state-level departments to expand and adjust these electricity supply services based on public needs and usage. — Kachin State IPRD/TH

NATIONAL

Fertilizer sold at subsidized rates to farmers in Nay Pyi Taw

THE government is directly distributing fertilizers to farmers in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area at subsidized prices to support summer paddy cultivation in the 2025-2026 financial year.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in co-operation with the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, is ensuring that farmers can access quality fertilizers conveniently and at affordable prices. The programme aims to help farmers use agricultural inputs effectively and improve crop yields.

Sales began on 19 April at the Agricultural Technical Training Centre in Khayankaing

Village, Lewe Township, where Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Min Naung met farmers and urged them to properly use fertilizers to achieve targeted yields and contribute to domestic food security as well as increased rice exports.

Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development U Myo Zaw Thein explained the process for distribution of fertilizers to farmers in time.

Under the scheme, pearl fertilizer is being sold at K100,500 per bag through a cash payment system and delivered directly to farming sites. The authorities are prioritizing timely supply



Farmers carry the bags of fertilizers at the Agricultural Technical Training Centre in Khayankaing Village, Lewe Township.

based on cultivation needs, with an initial distribution covering 30 per cent of fertilizer requirements for remaining cultivation areas.

Officials also assured that the remaining demand will be met through two additional distribution phases to achieve full coverage. The programme is being implemented in coordination

with relevant local authorities following the ground inspection for needs of fertilizers.

In the afternoon, Union Minister U Min Naung inspected irrigation and drainage works in Zeyathiri Township aimed at reducing flooding during the rainy season. They coordinated with local farmers and departments to improve water flow and ac-

celerate drainage construction before the monsoon period.

Once completed, the drainage projects are expected to help prevent flooding in surrounding areas, including Pinlaung Road junction, while authorities continue to promote proper waste management in nearby communities. — MNA/KZL

Heatstroke prevention measures prepared at hospitals in DaikU Township

PEOPLE'S hospitals and station hospitals have made advance preparations to provide timely treatment for heat-related illnesses during the summer season in DaikU Township, Bago Region.

Under the instruction of the Regional Medical Services Department, DaikU Township Hospital and station hospitals, including Thongwa, Ayethukha, Phaungdawthi and Wagamani stations have set up special treatment wards for patients suffering from heatstroke and related conditions.

Necessary emergency medicines and cooling equipment have also been stocked, while medical teams are following established emergency



Awareness talks on heatstroke prevention in progress at the township people's hospital in DaikU, Bago Region. **PHOTO: KYAW KYAW (DAIKU)**

treatment guidelines to ensure effective patient care.

In turn, awareness talks on heatstroke prevention were conducted at the township hospital by Head of Township

Medical Services Department Dr Moe Moe Aye, targeting patient attendants and the public to improve understanding of heat-related health risks. — Kyaw Kyaw (DaikU)/KZL

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7 pm Sunday 19 April 2026)

BAY INFERENCE: The weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the South Andaman Sea, South Bay and Northwest Bay of Bengal and a few cloud over the North Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 20 APRIL 2026: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in upper Sagaing Region and Kachin and Shan states and isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, lower Sagaing and Taninthayi regions and Kayah, Kayin, Chin and Mon states. The degree of certainty is 80 per cent. The weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

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

STATE OF THE SEA: The sea will be slight to moderate in the Myanmar waters. The wave height will be about four to six feet off and along the Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Chin, Mon and Shan states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 APRIL 2026: Likelihood isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is 60 per cent.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 APRIL 2026: A few clouds.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20 APRIL 2026: Partly cloudy. — DMH

NATIONAL

LBVD bids to procure medicines



File photo shows that a veterinarian injects a pet.

THE Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, called for suppliers to submit an open tender for the procurement of medicines.

The department invited again suppliers for the submission of price proposals for the procurement of 13 types of veterinary medicines with the State Funds and 68 types of laboratory equipment, 22 types of operational equipment, two types of laboratory furniture, 16 types of office equipment, and 12 types of office furniture with Approved Capital Expenditures and 30 types of laboratory operational supplies, one type of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD Trivalent) vaccine for

cattle and buffalo, one type of Rabies vaccine with approved other capital expenditure and 155 types of laboratory chemicals and media with current expenditure.

Tender proposal forms can be obtained from 2 April, during office hours at the LBVD’s Administrative division, Procurement and Storage session at Office 36 in Nay Pyi Taw. Tender submission is by 23 April, with a one per cent PO cheque accepted. The date for the opening of tenders will be announced in due course.

Individuals can enquire about details of tendering at the Tender Accepting and Evaluating Committee of the LBVD at 067 3408177 and 09 773477884. — NN/KK

Public Notice

THE Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to curb corruption effectively.

The ACC used SMS on mobile phones to ask the public who sought services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via short code No “1111” for feedback, including the public feedback programme (PFP).

According to the PFP, the proper replies of the citizens via short code No “1111” will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed.

Therefore, the public should reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at short code “1111”. Such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

MTE sets log, timber sale in motion



A stacked display of Myanmar’s exquisite teak.

THE Export Marketing and Milling Department of the Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE), operated under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, called for tender to sell 350 tonnes of teak logs, 1,250 tonnes of hardwood logs and 70 tonnes of sawn teak timber.

Open tendering will be held on 5 May 2026 (9 am) at Taw Win Hall, Myanma Timber Enterprise in Insein Township, Yangon. An announcement will be made if the date changes.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and interested bidders can compete in bidding to buy necessary raw materials.

They can observe details of the open tender through the official website of the Myanma Timber Enterprise www.mte.gov.mm or by dialling 01 287430, 01 528771, and 01 528764. — NN/KK

Gold Market Rate as of 19 April 2026

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K7,100,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

Thanlyin Glass Factory puts scrap up for tender

MALARMYAING Public Company Limited’s Thanlyin Glass Factory, located in Phayagon Village tract in Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region, put scrap materials of the factory up for tender.

Interested parties may participate in the tender in pursuance of the company’s tender rules and regulations.

Registration and tender form collection, and tender deposit submission must be completed between 9 am and 3 pm on 24 April. The deadline

for submission of tender forms is 3 pm on 28 April. Successful tenders will be announced on 30 April 2026.

Interested individuals can enquire about tender details by dialling 09 976020040 during office hours. — NN/KK

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OPINION

ARTICLE

Join hands in overcoming challenges and difficulties

AT THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's oath-taking ceremony, the inauguration of the new government began with a speech delivered by the President. This address also serves to present the objectives, policies, and positions of the new government to the people through the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The entire population across the country has already seen and heard the President's speech through the media.

In his speech, it was stated that the new government will set and implement objectives aimed at strengthening a genuine and disciplined multiparty democratic system; building a Union based on democracy and federal principles; promoting the education and health sectors; developing MSMEs; increasing domestic and foreign investment; reducing poverty and improving the lives of farmers; enhancing socioeconomic conditions of the population; promoting

the use of renewable energy; expanding public transport; strengthening friendly relations with neighbouring countries; ensuring fairness and integrity in the courts; and upholding the rule of law.

Myanmar is endowed with strong potential for economic development in various sectors; however, it remains impoverished due to an inability to fully identify and utilize its available opportunities. In terms of its geographical location, geopolitics, geoeconomics, and natural resource endowment, the country faces both challenges and opportunities. The essential requirement is for the entire nation to work together with unity and coordinated effort.

sincere commitment, and they must also be imbued with a firm and resilient sense of national spirit in order to make sustained efforts. If a country truly wishes to develop, all of its citizens must genuinely work together.

Myanmar is endowed with strong potential for economic development in various sectors; however, it remains impoverished due to an inability to fully identify and utilize its available opportunities. In terms of its geographical location, geopolitics, geoeconomics, and natural resource endowment, the country faces both challenges and opportunities. The essential requirement is for the entire nation to work together with unity and coordinated effort.

As such, the new government is firmly committed to working hand in hand with the people in unity to overcome all challenges across various sectors. Accordingly, all citizens and ethnic nationalities have to join together with a single spirit and shared purpose to confront and overcome these challenges, and to make sustained and determined efforts toward the development of the nation.

From President U Min Aung Hlaing's First Speech: Paving the Way Towards a Better Future for Myanmar

By Soe Khant Lin

THE President, U Min Aung Hlaing, unveiled a comprehensive vision for the nation's future in his inaugural address. The speech touched on Political Restructuring and Federal Dynamics, Educational Reform and Human Capital Development, Public Health Infrastructure and Demographic Outcomes, Economic Revitalization and Market Orientation, Agrarian Welfare and Rural Development Imperatives, Gender Mainstreaming and Institutional Support, and Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience.

Political Restructuring and Federal Dynamics

The President articulated a comprehensive strategy for the consolidation of democratic institutions and the establishment of a Union predicated on the principles of democracy and federalism. The address emphasized a holistic approach encompassing peace-building, democratic transition, and national reconciliation. A significant aspect of this framework is the explicit emphasis on synergistic collaboration among all extant political parties, ethnic nationalities, and civil society organizations.

Based on these declarations, it is plausible to envision a trajectory where the Union achieves a complete cessation of hostilities, thereby creating an atmosphere of national tranquillity and security. Consequently, the citizenry is anticipated to substantially experience the inherent benefits of democratic governance and federal decentralization. Furthermore, this paradigm shift suggests a fortification of juridical integrity and the entrenchment of the rule of law. In the realm of external affairs, the policy direction implies a recalibration of diplomatic engagement to enhance bilateral and multilateral relations, thereby positioning the Republic of the

Union of Myanmar as a commensurate actor on the global stage.

Educational Reform and Human Capital Development

The administration's policy agenda emphasizes the fundamental and mandatory enhancement of the national education sector. The primary objective is to provide internationally recognized pedagogy for the youth demographic, ensuring equitable access regardless of geographic or regional disparities. Special provisions and strategic interventions are outlined for states and regions with educational deficiencies, with a specific mandate to implement a standardized KG+9 curriculum framework.

The logical corollary of such a policy is the attenuation of inter-regional educational inequality, fostering a homogenous standard of academic attainment across the Union. This is projected to yield a significant demographic dividend characterized by a proliferation of an erudite and skilled youth cohort, thereby augmenting the nation's competitive standing in the global knowledge economy.

Moreover, the proposed curricular integration of vocational disciplines, including industrial arts, agriculture, and animal husbandry, at the basic and middle school tiers, coupled with the proliferation of technical and agricultural high schools, addresses the exigencies of the labour market. The subsequent elevation of select agricultural and livestock institutes to tertiary status, alongside the expansion of polytechnic universities, is anticipated to engender a generation of adept professionals equipped with both theoretical acumen and applied technical proficiency, thereby ensuring socio-economic resilience and livelihood security.

Public Health Infrastructure and Demographic Outcomes

The policy pronouncements regarding the health sector prioritize a foundational overhaul of care delivery systems, premised on the principle that a robust citizenry constitutes a vital national asset. The administration has committed to the formulation and execution of efficacious policies aimed at enhancing national fitness and elevating health standards. The operational emphasis rests upon the delivery of direct,



President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing delivers an address at the affirmation ceremony at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 10 April 2026. PHOTO: MNA

tangible healthcare benefits that are universally accessible, thereby mitigating the urban-rural healthcare divide.

The implementation of such inclusive health policies portends a discernible improvement in the quality of care available to the populace of Myanmar. By ensuring parity in access to medical

services across all geographical loci, the state anticipates an amelioration in public health indices, most notably an upward trend in national life expectancy projections. This approach aligns with global health governance standards aimed at achieving Universal Health Coverage.

Economic Revitalization and Market Orientation

In addressing macroeconomic stabilization and growth, the President identified the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as a pivotal catalyst for economic resurgence. The strategy involves a critical review and streamlining of bureaucratic procedures and regulatory frameworks to incentivize both foreign direct investment (FDI) and domestic capital formation. The policy is designed to mitigate extant economic pressures, including inflationary trends, commodity price volatility, and structural unemployment.

The anticipated outcome is a flourishing MSME landscape, which is expected to alleviate immediate subsistence pressures

on the populace. The anticipated influx of international investment capital is projected to augment the gross domestic product (GDP) and stabilize the national revenue stream. By calibrating the

Agrarian Welfare and Rural Development Imperatives

The address placed significant emphasis on poverty alleviation and the elevation of the agrarian class as a cardinal priority. Acknowledging that approximately 70 per cent of the national population resides in rural areas and is predominantly reliant upon agricultural and livestock sectors for subsistence, the policy directive mandates targeted interventions for rural socio-economic advancement. The explicit objective is the amelioration of living standards for the farming community and the holistic development of rural infrastructure. The successful execution of these initiatives is projected to catalyze substantial improvements in the rural socioeconomic fabric, thereby contributing to the overarching national development agenda.

Gender Mainstreaming and Institutional Support

Recognizing the demographic composition wherein women comprise approximately 53 per cent of the population (exceeding

talent, thereby accelerating national progress through inclusive policy frameworks.

Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience

In the context of escalating global climate volatility and the increasing frequency of natural disasters, the address underscored the critical importance of natural resource conservation. The President catalogued Myanmar's abundant endowment of forests, watersheds, lacustrine systems, and biodiversity. The policy framework recognizes that the preservation of these ecological assets is imperative for both human and zoological survival amidst the challenges of global warming and climate perturbation. The strategy advocates for the mitigation of deforestation and carbon emissions through the adoption and utilization of renewable energy sources that ensure minimal environmental degradation. Consequently, the conservation of these natural resources is expected to enhance the nation's resilience to envi-

“To enhance and amplify the efficacy of female participation across all sectors, the establishment of a dedicated Ministry of Women's Affairs was announced. This institutional intervention is intended to cultivate and harness the potential of exceptional female talent, thereby accelerating national progress through inclusive policy frameworks.”

economic system to align with the unique structural realities of the Myanmar market, the state endeavours to establish a sustainable, long-term economic equilibrium, thereby stabilizing the vocational and subsistence pathways of the broader population. This framework suggests a pragmatic, albeit state-guided, transition toward market-oriented mechanisms.

51 million total), the President acknowledged the historical contributions of Myanmar women as scholars, professionals, and achievers. To enhance and amplify the efficacy of female participation across all sectors, the establishment of a dedicated Ministry of Women's Affairs was announced. This institutional intervention is intended to cultivate and harness the potential of exceptional female

ronmental shocks and foster a trajectory towards a verdant and ecologically sustainable state.

In summary, the President's address presents a comprehensive and ambitious vision for Myanmar's future. The policies outlined hold the potential to bring significant improvements across various sectors.



A ceremony to hear President U Min Aung Hlaing's address and to administer the oath of affirmation was held in the hall of the Presidential Palace Reception Hall on 10 April 2026. PHOTO: MNA

SCI/TECH:
WORLD

Blue Origin set to launch rocket with reusable booster for first time



This Blue Origin handout photo obtained on 17 April 2026, shows Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket at Launch Complex 36 at the Kennedy Space Centre at Cape Canaveral, Florida, on 12 April 2026. **PHOTO: / BLUE ORIGIN / AFP**

The company has launched the New Glenn twice before, but only with new rocket boosters.

BLUE Origin, the US space company of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, on Sunday will reuse a booster for the first time to launch its massive New Glenn rocket.

The novel approach comes amid fierce competition between Bezos's firm and fellow tech titan Elon Musk's SpaceX, and a successful outing Sunday could up the pace and lower the cost of future Blue Origin launches.

At nearly 100 metres (about 328 feet) tall, the New Glenn is slated for liftoff from Florida's Cape Canaveral sometime between 6:45 am (1045 GMT) and 8:45 am. It will carry a communications satellite for the company AST SpaceMobile.

The company has launched the New Glenn twice before, but only with new rocket boosters.

It has launched its far smaller New Shepard rocket, primarily used for suborbital space tourism, with reused components before in a less technically challenging operation. In November, Blue Origin recovered a New Glenn booster for the first time, succeeding in the complex technical challenge that culminated with a controlled vertical landing on a barge in the Atlantic Ocean.

A previous attempt in January 2025 to recover the booster was unsuccessful after its engines failed to reignite during descent. — AFP

China to carry out intensive space missions in 2026: CNSA

CHINA will carry out intensive space missions in 2026, including Tianwen-2's close approach and observation of its target asteroid, an official of the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said on Friday.

The country will also conduct crewed missions including Shenzhou-23, conduct flight verification tests of multiple reusable rockets, and promote high-quality development in the commercial space sector, said Liu Yunfeng, deputy director of the CNSA's system engineering department, at a press conference on the upcoming Space Day of China.

Looking back at the past year, China has made steady strides in space exploration. In 2025, the country conducted 92 space launch missions, a 35 per cent increase compared with 2024, Liu said.

The Tianwen-2 probe was successfully launched and has entered the transfer orbit toward asteroid 2016HO3, embarking on China's first asteroid exploration and sample-return mission. Meanwhile, the Tianwen-1 mission continued global and regional surveys of Mars, with 3.5 terabytes of scientific data now publicly available to scientists worldwide. — Xinhua

10 Mexican environmentalists assassinated in 2025: NGO

A defender of Mexican jaguars who survived an assassination attempt in March was described on Thursday as a 'living miracle' during the presentation of a report that documented the killing of 10 activists in the country in 2025.

The drug war violence convulsing Mexico also takes a toll on environmental activists, many from indigenous communities. The country is considered "megadiverse" for its variety of species and ecosystems.

Speaking at the press conference for the Mexican Centre for Environmental Law (CEMDA) where the report was released, the activist and journalist Erik Saracho recounted the armed attack he survived last 11 March at his home in the western Mexican state of Nayarit.

"I told the hitman 'good morning,'" he recalled, "and at that moment he opened fire with a pistol." — AFP

Hollywood, Silicon Valley turn out for the 'Oscars of Science'



Israeli actress Gal Gadot attends the 12th Breakthrough Prize Ceremony at Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California on 18 April 2026. **PHOTO: LISA O'CONNOR / AFP**

BIG names from the worlds of film, technology, music and sports gathered on Saturday in Santa Monica, California for the Breakthrough Prizes, popularly known as the "Oscars of Science".

The awards, co-founded

by philanthropists and tech entrepreneurs, recognize the research achievements of leading scientists around the world in three broad categories: Life Sciences, Fundamental Physics and Mathematics.

"These are some of the most heroic and inspiring people we get in the world," actor Edward Norton told AFP.

According to the "American History X" star, it was important to turn out and "to highlight what this kind of work contributes to all of us".

"The United States has the most anti-science administration in US history," the actor said. "It's always important, but if it was ever especially important, the moment is now."

In the last year, the Trump administration has slashed funding for science, halting projects and devastating workforces. — AFP

Japan extends financial support to teach foreigners local rules

THE Japanese government has begun financially supporting municipalities' efforts to help foreign residents better understand local community rules, as part of a broader government push to promote "well-ordered" coexistence with foreigners.

Beginning in fiscal 2026 from April, the government will cover part of the costs of initiatives aimed at encouraging the integration of foreign residents into local communities, including programmes teaching garbage separation rules and Japanese language as well as promoting participation in neighbourhood

associations, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said.

Until now, the government support had covered projects aimed at informing foreign residents about national systems such as taxes and social insurance, but did not extend to local rules specific to each community.

The development comes as Japan has seen an increase in foreign residents and the government of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is seeking to expand support for them while addressing local unease surrounding rule-breakers. — Kyodo



A child with foreign roots reads a Japanese book while learning the language on 28 January 2026, in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO**

How France fell for reimagined 19th-century workers' canteens

BOUILLON restaurants — traditional low-cost French eateries — are booming across France, with 253 openings in four years, rivaling fast food on price while surpassing it in quality. [web:previous] Created in the 1850s by butcher Adolphe-Baptiste Duval to feed workers hearty meals, these high-volume spots once dominated Paris with 250 outlets by 1900.

The revival counters modern brasserie prices and fast-food trends. Bouillon Chartier, resurrected in 2005, modernized classics like beef bourguignon

with macaroni, offering starter-main-dessert under €20. "It's French-style fast food — a full dish cheaper than a McDonald's sandwich," says Christophe Joulie.

Even Michelin-starred chef Thierry Marx joined, opening a suburban bouillon. "An hour's minimum wage once bought a bistro meal; now it's fast food — or bouillon," he notes. Restaurateurs like Enguerran Lavaud emphasize intergenerational appeal, no reservations, paper tablecloths, and €1 starters like leek vinaigrette. — AFP



A staff member puts the finishing touches to the exhibition 'Queen Elizabeth II: Her Life in Style' which is opening in London's Buckingham Palace. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

British royals choose historian to write queen biography

Official royal biographies can sometimes reveal unexpected details about the subject's life.

BRITAIN'S royal family said Sunday that historian Anna Keay would write an official biography of queen Elizabeth II, who died in September 2022 after over 70 years on the throne.

King Charles III had wanted a woman to write the definitive account of his mother's

life, according to British media.

Keay, best known for her work chronicling Britain's Republican period between 1649 and 1660, said receiving the job was a "profound honour". She will have access to Elizabeth's personal and official papers held in the Royal Archives, Buckingham

Palace said in a statement. She will also be able to talk to members of the royal family and the queen's friends and household staff, the palace added. Keay described Elizabeth as "an extraordinary woman, whose life spanned a century of great change". — AFP

From Armin van Buuren to Mochakk, electronic music dominates Coachella

COACHELLA 2026 in Indio, California, traditionally rock-focused, dedicated nearly half its lineup to electronic artists — from Fatboy Slim to rising stars like Australia's Ninajirachi — headlined by Sabrina Carpenter, Justin Bieber, and Karol G. This shift reflects post-COVID electronic music's

surge in accessibility and pop crossovers.

Swedish DJ Adam Beyer noted its visibility across genres, while Armin van Buuren highlighted how electronic elements now permeate all music, blurring genre lines for younger audiences drawn to mood and energy. Festivalgoer John Good praised the "rave after rave" vibe at Nine Inch Nails and Boys Noize's joint set.

Highlights included Anyma's immersive "ÆDEN" premiere on the main stage (delayed by winds), Beyer with trance legend van Buuren, Brazilian DJ Mochakk's genre-blending debut influenced by MPB and Tropicalia, and Spanish duo MESTIZA's techno-flamenco with dancers. "The genre has no borders," said Belah of MESTIZA, crediting its evolution for Coachella's diverse Sahara tent lineup. DJs emphasized immersive, unpredictable sets blending old and new, thriving in festival settings that prioritize physical, emotional experiences over rigid categories. — AFP



Festival-goers line up to get inside the activation booth of US social media service Pinterest during the 2026 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at Empire Polo Club on 10 April 2026 in Indio, California. **PHOTO: VALERIE MACON /AFP**

ECONOMY WORLD

As Iran war strains ties with Trump's US, UK looks to Europe

Starmer's administration is preparing an EU "reset" bill that will give ministers powers to align UK standards with EU single market rules.

BRITAIN'S government is set to announce legislation next month to move the country closer to the European Union, as the Iran war sours the UK's so-called special relationship with the United States.

President Donald Trump's unpredictability and stream of insults towards America's historic ally is adding impetus to Prime Minister Keir Starmer's bid to deepen ties with the 27-nation bloc, a decade after Britons narrowly voted to leave the EU.

"We have a government that is already eager to move closer towards the EU, and the events in Iran provide an opportunity to speed up that process," Evie Aspinall, director of the British Foreign Policy Group think-tank, told AFP.

Starmer's administration is preparing an EU "reset" bill that will give ministers powers to align UK standards with EU single market rules as they evolve — something called "dynamic alignment". — AFP



President Donald Trump's unpredictability and stream of insults towards America's historic ally is adding impetus to Prime Minister Keir Starmer's bid to deepen ties with the 27-nation bloc. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

Iraq fish die-off leaves farmers mourning lost livelihoods

ON the banks of Iraq's Tigris River, Haidar Kazem mourned 300 tonnes of the fish he had carefully raised in ponds wiped out by a flood of polluted water.

Water supplies in Iraq, the eastern half of what is known as the region's fertile crescent and which the United Nations ranks among the countries most affected by climate change, are in a dire state.

"In just two hours, my entire project was gone — fish I had spent a year-and-a-half raising. I am back to zero," the 43-year-old fish farmer told AFP.

Earlier this month, after yet

another very dry season, a brief spate of rain led authorities to open the gates of the Hamrin Dam, sending water into the Diyala, a tributary that is choked with untreated sewage.

The flood then swept the contaminated water into the larger Tigris, and the pollution was so severe that it was visible in satellite images.

Images from Copernicus Sentinel analysed by AFP show that, following the late-March rainfall, a noticeably dark stream flows from Diyala to the Tigris throughout the period from 28 March to 12 April. — AFP



Fish farmers clean tanks of dead fish in southern Iraq. **PHOTO: AFP**

Middle East conflict, tariffs bring new cost pressures to US consumers

ESCALATING tariffs and renewed conflict in the Middle East are rippling through the

largest US port complex, driving up shipping costs at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long

Beach and pushing prices higher across the US economy, port officials have said.

"What happens in the supply chain doesn't stay in the supply chain," Port of Long Beach CEO Noel Hacegaba said at a press briefing Wednesday. "It shows up in the prices people pay every day." Executives at the Port of Long Beach warned that disruptions linked to tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, combined with US President Donald Trump's tariffs, have made global trade routes more costly and less reliable, affecting port operations and the roughly 3 million US jobs tied to port activity. — Xinhua



Port of Long Beach faced a 5.2 per cent year-on-year decline in container volumes last month. **PHOTO: AFP**

IMF chief says 'tough road' to economic stability for Venezuela

VENEZUELA faces a difficult path towards economic stability, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said Friday, a day after the fund restored ties with the South American country.

The resumption of formal contact potentially paves the way for acting President Delcy Rodriguez's administration to regain access to financing from the Washington-based lender.

Relations have been frozen since 2019, and on Thursday the World Bank too said it would restart engagement with Venezuela's government. — AFP

China’s home-cleaning robot service grabs overseas attention

WHEN customers book a house-cleaning service via an online service platform in south China’s Shenzhen, they are greeted by a dual team: a professional cleaner and a robot. The cleaner handles complex and judgment-driven work, while the robot performs structured tasks such as wiping tables, picking up debris, tying up garbage bags, and even assisting the cleaner in folding bedsheets.

The newly-emerged home-cleaning model has drawn attention from the overseas tech community and sparked discussions on social media.

The robots are developed by

X Square Robot, an embodied intelligence company based in Shenzhen, which has teamed up with household service platform 58.com to pilot the home-cleaning robot service.

“The future of home cleaning just landed in Shenzhen and it is walking right into your living room,” said Robohub, an X account tracking robotics trends globally.

“It’s happening: Humanoid Robots are officially joining house cleaning crews in real homes,” CyberRobo posted, emphasizing that robots are not replacing human cleaners. “It’s true teamwork.” — Xinhua



Different models of robots are displayed at Pudu Robotics in Nanshan District of Shenzhen, south China’s Guangdong Province, 27 March 2026. **PHOTO: LIU MENGQI/XINHUA**

Suzuki producing biogas auto fuel from cow dung in India

JAPAN’S Suzuki Motor Corp. has been producing biogas for use as vehicle fuel from cow dung in India, a key market for its cars, aiming to promote decarbonization while boosting

local dairy farmers’ income.

In mid-March, the Japanese automaker unveiled a biogas plant to reporters in Bhukhala in the western Indian state of Gujarat, where cow dung is

fermented for about a month in a large tank. The generated gas is refined into fuel and supplied to nearby residents at a refueling station next to the plant. The leftover residue is sold as organic fertilizer.

Some 300 million cattle, regarded as sacred in Hinduism, are raised in India. Biogas can be used as fuel for compressed natural gas-powered vehicles, which emit less carbon dioxide than gasoline-powered cars and currently account for around a fifth of India’s auto market.

Using cow dung also helps reduce methane emissions, which are a major cause of global warming. Otherwise, these emissions would be released from the waste. — Kyodo



This photo taken on 19 March 2026, shows a refueling station adjacent to a biogas plant in the state of Gujarat in India. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Maldives orders 33-pct staff cut at state-owned companies

THE Maldivian Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises has ordered government-owned companies to reduce their workforce by 33 per cent, state-owned PSM News reported on Sunday.

PSM News reported that the directive has already been sent to the Privatization and Corporatization Board.

The ministry said the decision aims to cut operating costs and strengthen controls on government spending.

The measures are essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of state-owned companies and align their operations with the government’s public finance and operational policies, it noted. — Xinhua

Global oil shocks may hit US growth, India’s impact likely limited

SLOWDOWN in the US economy amid rising geopolitical tensions and energy shocks has raised concerns with limited but notable implications for India, noted a report by SBI research.

The report has flagged concerns over a potential slowdown in the US economy amid rising geopolitical tensions and energy shocks, but noted that “this time may be different” compared to past recessionary

cycles, with limited but notable implications for India.

According to the report, historical trends suggest that every major global oil shock has typically been followed by a recession in the United States. Episodes such as the 1973 oil embargo, the 1979 Iran crisis, the Gulf War, and the 2008 global financial crisis all saw sharp spikes in crude prices preceding economic contractions in the US. — ANI

Sri Lanka fines 80 buses for overcharging passengers

SRI Lanka’s National Transport Commission (NTC) has fined 80 buses for overcharging passengers during the Sinhala and Tamil New Year period, the country’s most popular holiday, an official said on Sunday.

Rohana Wattage, head of the NTC’s mobile bus inspection unit, told journalists that officials inspected 680 buses between 8 and 18 April and found that 80 buses had charged passengers above approved fares. Wattage said officials refunded the excess fares to passengers and imposed fines on the bus operators concerned.

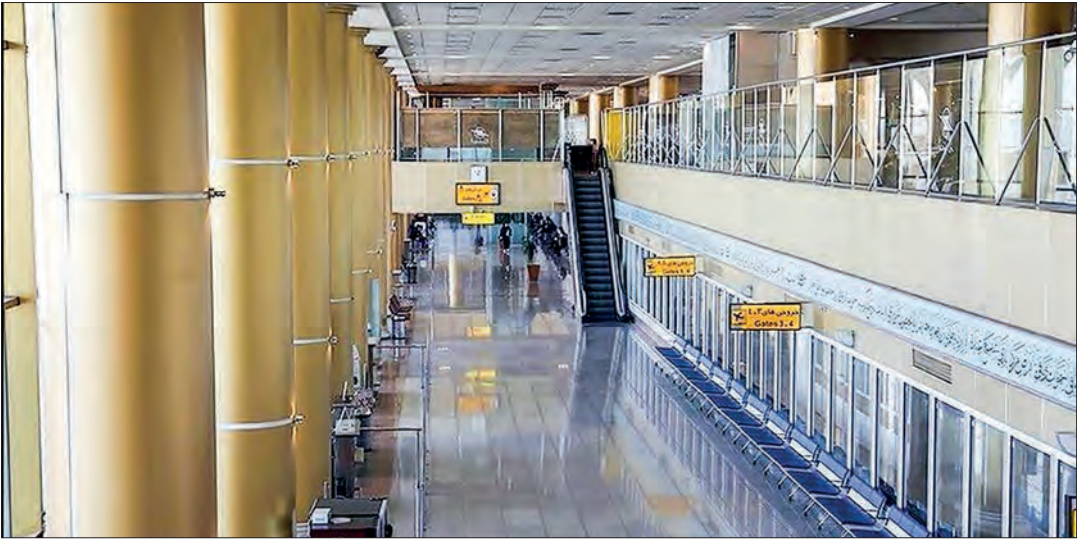
He said officials inspected nearly 150 buses on 18 April alone and found that 12 had overcharged passengers. — Xinhua

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Iran to resume international flights from Mashhad airport on Monday

Iranian airports have been closed since the outbreak of war.



A view of the Mashhad airport in Iran. The Iran’s Civil Aviation Organization had said that the country will resume international flights from Mashhad airport from 20 April 2026. **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

IRAN will resume international flights on Monday from Mashhad airport in the country’s northeast, its civil aviation authority said. “Permission to operate international passenger flights at Mashhad Airport has been issued, starting tomorrow,” state TV said, quoting the Civil Aviation Organization.

The organization later said

travellers can now “purchase tickets for international routes to and from Mashhad Airport”, according to the official IRNA news agency.

Iranian airports have been closed since the outbreak of war with Israel and the United States on 28 February.

The Civil Aviation Organization had said earlier that it

would start a phased reopening of Iran’s airspace, beginning with transit flights, followed by operations from eastern airports.

Airports in Tehran — Imam Khomeini and Mehrabad airports — are expected to reopen in the third phase, with western airports resuming operations in the final phase. — AFP

France’s Macron to meet with Lebanon’s PM in Paris

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron will on Tuesday meet with Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam in Paris, his office announced, amidst a fragile 10-day truce between Israel and Iran-backed militant group

Hezbollah. The visit highlights Macron’s commitment to seeing “full and complete respect for the ceasefire in Lebanon” as well as France’s support for Lebanon’s “territorial integrity”, the president’s office said

on Sunday.

Israel and Lebanon on Thursday agreed to a 10-day ceasefire to give time to negotiate an end to six weeks of fighting between Israel and the Iran-backed group. — AFP

Trump says US delegation going to Pakistan Monday for Iran negotiations

PRESIDENT Donald Trump said US negotiators will be in Pakistan Monday to resume talks on ending the war with Iran, as he again threatened to destroy its power plants and bridges if no deal is reached.

In a social media post Sunday, Trump also accused Iran

of violating the countries’ two-week ceasefire with attacks Saturday in the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump said he was offering Iran “a reasonable deal” and if Tehran says no “the United States is going to knock out every single Power Plant, and every single Bridge, in Iran.

NO MORE MR. NICE GUY!” — AFP

A police officer stands guard at a closed road leading to the Serena Hotel in the Red Zone area of Islamabad, 19 April. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Central Asia leads global rare metals competition

CENTRAL Asia is emerging as a significant force in the global competition for rare metals, Uzbek Deputy Foreign Minister Muzaffar Madrakhimov said Saturday at the fifth Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

Madrakhimov noted that expanding cooperation in innovation and technology, particularly in the processing of critical minerals, has become a strategic priority for the region. These joint efforts are expected to bolster the standing of Central Asian nations within the evolving global framework of resource security and technological sovereignty, he said.

He added that the combined GDP of Central Asian countries has doubled over the past decade, surging from US\$250 billion to more than \$500 billion. — Xinhua

Iran retains 70% of pre-war missile stockpiles

IRAN still retains roughly 70 per cent of its pre-war ballistic missile stockpiles and about 60 per cent of its missile launchers after weeks of war, enough to threaten shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, The New York Times reported on Saturday, citing US officials.

US military and intelligence officials also estimate that Iran retains about 40 per cent of its attack drone arsenal, the report added.

According to the report, Iran is working to retrieve missile stockpiles buried under debris from strikes on bunkers and depots. Once recovery efforts are completed, US officials estimate that Iran could regain up to 70 per cent of its pre-war missile inventory. — Xinhua

Bulgaria holds parliamentary election

BULGARIANS went to the polls on Sunday to vote in the country’s early parliamentary election, the eighth vote for the legislature in five years.

Nearly 6.6 million voters are eligible to elect 240 lawmakers among more than 4,700 candidates from 14 political parties and 10 coalitions, as well as one independent candidate, according to the Central Election Commission.

The commission said that the polling stations in the country opened nationwide at 7 am local time (0400 GMT) and are due to close at 8 pm (1700 GMT).

Meanwhile, polling stations in 55 countries and regions are available for Bulgarians living abroad to cast their ballots. — Xinhua



SPORTS

Myanmar athletics team wins four medals at Singapore Open

THE Myanmar national athletics team, which competed in the 86th Singapore Open Track and Field Championships 2026 held in Singapore from 13 to 17 April, has returned home after winning one gold, two silver and one bronze medals.

The team, comprising four athletes who competed in four events, arrived back at Yangon International Airport at 10.30 pm yesterday. They were warmly welcomed back by officials from the Myanmar Olympic Committee and the Myanmar Athletics Federation.

In the competition, Chit Min



Victorious Myanmar athletics team arrives back at Yangon International Airport on 18 April.

Aung secured a bronze medal in the men's javelin throw

with a distance of 63.22 metres among 15 participants. In the

men's 1,500 metres, Ye Yint Aung won a silver medal with a

time of 3:58.63 minutes, behind an Indonesian athlete who took gold in 3:54.34 minutes, whilst a Singaporean athlete finished third.

In the women's 10,000-metre race walk, Zin May Htet won the gold medal with a time of 54:32.64, setting a new record. In the men's 10,000-metre race walk, Naing Lin Tun claimed a silver medal with a time of 49:39.16.

The Myanmar Ambassador to Singapore, Dr Zaw Min Aung, also attended the event to encourage the athletes and present awards. — Bala/KZL

'Pure joy' for Matarazzo after Copa del Rey triumph

REAL Sociedad coach Pellegrino Matarazzo was elated after his side defeated Atletico Madrid to win the Copa del Rey on Saturday, making him the first American coach to claim a major trophy with a club from Europe's top five leagues.

La Real triumphed 4-3 in the shoot-out following a pulsating 2-2 draw after extra-time, to win the trophy for only the fourth time in the club's history.

When Matarazzo was appointed in December the

Basque team were hovering above the relegation zone, but he has driven them up the table and now to cup glory.

"It's probably the first (major trophy) for an Italian-American," said Matarazzo, a New Jersey native born to Italian immigrant parents.

Matarazzo said it was not until Pablo Marin's decisive penalty in the shoot-out hit the back of the net that he could really begin to take anything in. — AFP



Real Sociedad defeated Atletico Madrid on penalties to claim the Copa del Rey trophy on Saturday in Seville. PHOTO: AFP

Arteta tells Arsenal to 'go again' in pursuit of Premier League title

MIKEL Arteta said Arsenal remain "convinced" they will end a 22-year wait to win the Premier League despite losing 2-1 to Manchester City in a potentially decisive clash in the title race on Sunday.

The Gunners still hold a three-point lead at the top of the table, but City have a game in hand and the momentum on their side.

Arsenal have now lost four consecutive games in domestic competitions to already miss the chance to end a six-year trophy drought in the League Cup and FA Cup.

History could be set to repeat itself as Arteta's men also blew leads over City in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 campaigns before finishing second.

Arteta, though, insisted his players' belief is not shaken after a much-improved performance at the Etihad Stadium.

"I believe today, I believe on Wednesday, I believed a week ago because I see them every



Manchester City's Norwegian striker (9) Erling Haaland (L) and Arsenal's Brazilian defender (6) Gabriel Magalhaes (centre R) go head to head during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Arsenal at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on 19 April 2026. PHOTO: DARREN STAPLES / AFP

day and I know the level that we have," said Arteta.

"But today, if they need to be more convinced, I think they are now more convinced. We are talking about it in the dressing room.

"It's a new league now. We have three points of advantage, they have the game in hand.

"Everything is still to play for. We know how much we want it and we are not going to stop!"

Arsenal have on paper an easier run-in than City, but have the extra complication of being the only English side still alive in the Champions League. — AFP

Rybakina outclasses Muchova to win Stuttgart WTA title

AUSTRALIAN Open champion Elena Rybakina picked up her second title of the year as she outclassed Karolina Muchova 7-5, 6-1 to win the WTA Stuttgart indoor clay-court tournament on Sunday.

Top seed Rybakina, 26, snatched a tight opening set with two breaks against her seventh-seeded Czech opponent after 53 minutes on court in Germany.

The Kazakh never looked back in the second set rushing to a 5-0 lead as Muchova struggled with her serve, sealing victory and the 13th title of her career after 1hr 18 min.

Rybakina, who finished runner-up at Indian Wells last month, regained the title she won two years ago and drives off with a second Porsche sports car — the coveted

prize awarded to the champion in Stuttgart.

Muchova had lead Rybakina 2-1 in previous meetings heading into the title match having won their most recent clash on hard court in Brisbane in January. Rybakina had a relatively smooth run this week dropping only one set and dispatching her toughest opponent world number six Mirra Andreeva by the same score on Saturday. — AFP



Iran says final deal still far off as Hormuz Strait shuttered

Speaker of the Iranian parliament said that there had been “progress” with Washington “but there are many gaps and some fundamental points remain”.

THE Strait of Hormuz remained closed on Sunday in the stand-off between Iran and the United States, with Iran’s powerful speaker of parliament signalling a final peace deal was “far” off despite movement in negotiations. As mediation efforts continued following high-level talks in Pakistan that failed to reach a deal, Iran said it would not reopen the crucial maritime trade route until the United States ended its blockade of Iranian ports.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of the Iranian parliament, said in a televised address on Saturday night that there had been “progress” with Washington “but there are many gaps and some fundamental points remain”.

“We are still far from the final discussion,” said Ghalibaf, one of Tehran’s senior negotiators in the talks aimed at ending the war launched by Israel and the United States against the Islamic republic.

A two-week ceasefire is set to end on Wednesday unless it is renewed. — AFP



In this handout picture provided by the Islamic Consultative Assembly News Agency (ICANA), Iran’s Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, dressed in an IRGC uniform, chairs a session in Tehran on 1 February 2026. **PHOTO: ISLAMIC CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY (ICANA)/AFP/FILE**

Egypt launches 27-bln-USD urban development project in New Cairo

EGYPT on Saturday launched the “The Spine” urban development project in New Cairo, with investments exceeding 1.4 trillion Egyptian pounds (about US\$27 billion), according to a cabinet statement.

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly

called the project “global by all standards,” saying that it would deliver “a real leap in urban development and economic growth in Egypt.”

Madbouly noted that the project, consisting of 165 residential, administrative, and hotel towers, will create about

155,000 job opportunities and yield tax returns exceeding 800 billion Egyptian pounds. He said the project also carries broader economic, social, and tourism benefits, including stimulating local industries and adding more than 3,500 hotel rooms. — Xinhua



This photo taken on 5 October 2025 shows a view of the Central Business District (CBD) project in the new administrative capital on the outskirts of Cairo, Egypt. **PHOTO: LI BINGHONG/XINHUA/FILE**

Robot beats half-marathon human record

UNITREE Robotics announced on Sunday that its H1 humanoid robot autonomously completed a 1.9-kilometre winding course in 4 minutes and 13 seconds in the Beijing humanoid robot half marathon qualifying round, breaking the human 1,500-metre world record on a proportional calculation.

“The result in the qualifying session, when compared at a constant pace, is equivalent to surpassing the human world record in the 1,500 metres race. Recently, the robot’s peak speed in the 100-metre test run even reached 10 metres per second,” said Huang Jiawei, marketing director of Unitree Robotics.

According to the official website of World Athletics, the men’s outdoor world record for 1,500 metres is 3 minutes and 26 seconds, set in 1998.

Over 100 robot teams competed on the same track in the Beijing humanoid robot half marathon qualifying round held on Thursday, which determined the starting order for the official half marathon on Sunday. Unitree Robotics also sent its robot team to the event. — Xinhua