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MSMEs, Heavy Industries Urged to Forge Connected Production Network

The government and the private sector need to work together to overcome challenges in operating MSME businesses, said President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing at the ceremony to mark the World MSME Day at the Myanmar International Convention Centre I (MICC I) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The President inaugurated the ceremony to mark the World MSME Day by applying digital technology.

Speaking on the occasion, the President highlighted that the private sector can overcome difficulties and can achieve success by working collectively through systems such as group efforts and cooperative models.

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The government must establish an interconnected supply chain network to foster mutual support among MSMEs.



President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing visits the exhibition booths displayed at the ceremony to mark the World MSME Day at the MICC I in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Thanlyin University of Cooperative, CIRDAP sign MoU

THE University of Cooperative and Management (Thanlyin) and the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), based in the People's Republic of Bangladesh, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on rural development and poverty reduction projects at a ceremony held at the university on 25 June.

In her address, Rector Dr Yi Yi Win stated, "This event marks a significant milestone for both organizations, reflecting our mutual trust, shared values, and our commitment to implementing goals related to education, research, capacity building, and sustainable development."

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43 solar water-pumping projects underway in 9 regions/states in 2026-2027

BUSINESS

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Seed potato imports spike amid surging quality demand

Twin storms barrel towards Japan; Myanmar citizens urged to stay alert

THE Myanmar Embassy to Japan issued an urgent safety advisory on 27 June, calling on Myanmar citizens to closely follow local emergency declarations as twin tropical storms close in on the country.

According to the Japan

Meteorological Agency, No 7 Typhoon Mekkhala has reached 120 kilometres north of Kumejima Island in Okinawa Prefecture at 9:50 am on 26 June with a movement of 20 kilometres per hour towards the north-east, while

SEE PAGE 2



The Japan Daily shows twin storms approaching Japan.

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NATIONAL

Weather

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

Issued at 7 pm Saturday 27 June 2026

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and the South Bay of Bengal. Weather has a few clouds to partly cloudy over the North Bay and Southwest Bay of Bengal and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 27 June 2026: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Mandalay, Magway and lower Sagaing regions and Kayah and Chin states, scattered in (northern and southern) Shan State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw and eastern Shan State and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions and Kachin and Rakhine states. The degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

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

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along the Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 25-30 miles per hour. Wave height will be about 7-9 feet off and along the Myanmar Coasts.

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 June 2026: One or two times of rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 June 2026: Isolated rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 June 2026: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 60 per cent. — DMH

EARTHQUAKE

A SLIGHT earthquake of magnitude 4.0(M) with its epicentre inside Myanmar (about 19 miles southeast of Maukmai), latitude 19.98°N, longitude 97.86°E, with a depth of seven kilometres, about 62 miles south-southeast of the Namsang Seismological Observatory was recorded at 1 hour 34 minutes 6 seconds MST on 27 June 2026. — DMH

Gold Market Rate as of 27 June 2026

THE price of one tical (16.329325 grammes) of gold with density of 19.25 grammes per cubic centimetre and above is K6,900,000, as established by the Mineral (Gold) Reference Price Determination Committee.

Twin storms barrel towards Japan; Myanmar citizens urged to stay alert

FROM PAGE 1

No 8 Typhoon Higos has approached southern Japan at 10:10 am on 26 June with a movement of 35 kilometres per hour towards the north, it said.

The storms will pass near the eastern Pacific Coast of Japan, including Tokyo and enter the inland region on 27 June, according to reports, the embassy added.

The storms will lead to torrential rains in most areas, with a risk of floods and landslides. The wind speed is expected to be 144 kilometres per hour in Amami and Okinawa, and the risk of landslides needs to be considered due to heavy rains, it said. Many flights were cancelled, as well as train and road travel, it elaborated.

Authorities have issued warnings in many areas to evacuate. Level 4 evacuation order was issued for about 2.23 million people from a total of 13 prefectures, and a Level 5 emergency warning was issued for 529 people in Kyoto Prefecture, it said. Torrential rains have continued, and damages are expected to increase due to strong winds, it said.

Myanmar nationals in Japan are urged to pay close attention to information released by local authorities and the JMA and evacuate to a safe area. Myanmar nationals will need to follow the directives of respective local authorities and spread this announcement to others nearby, said the embassy. — MT/ZS

Post-COVID Domestic Honey Demand Triples



This image depicts honey varieties on display at an exhibition.

AFTER the COVID-19 period, domestic honey consumption has risen nearly three times, and the trade of honey has been good, according to the Apiculture Division under the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary

Department.

The health benefits of honey and how it can support health have become widespread among the public during the COVID-19 period, and even all stocks were run out. The sale of hon-

ey has remained high even after the pandemic ended, and now the domestic consumption has risen about three times compared to the period before COVID-19.

“The domestic honey consumption has quite risen. People came to know how much honey can support the immunity during the pandemic, at that time. Many companies sold honey, even though all stocks ran out. Both infected and non-infected people consumed honey as a preventive measure. And after the pandemic, the sale of honey has been still high, and it has been about three times higher,” an official from the department told The Global New Light of My-

anmar (GNLM).

Myanmar produces 14 kinds of honey, including plum honey, sunflower honey, wild sunflower honey, sesame honey, Niger honey, multifloral honey, lychee honey, rubber honey, mustard honey and macadamia honey, of which plum honey, which tastes slightly sour, is the most favourite item in the domestic market.

The Apiculture Division operates nine regional beekeeping offices, with the Magway Region leading as the top honey producer. Widely used across the food, cosmetic, and traditional medicine industries, honey remains a highly consumed staple. — MT/ZS

Thanlyin University of Cooperative, CIRDP sign MoU

FROM PAGE 1

She believes the signing establishes a foundation for sustainable cooperation, mutual learning, and shared success.

CIRDAP Director-General Dr P Chandra Shekara stated that both organizations will conduct joint research and publish findings to benefit Thanlyin University and universities across CIRDAP's 15 member countries.



This image shows a group photo taken after the signing of the MoU.

Additionally, they plan to secure scholarships for Myanmar students.

The ceremony was attended by a CIRDAP delegation, the rector,

pro-rectors, and heads of the university's 14 departments. — MT/ZN

NATIONAL

MSMEs, Heavy Industries Urged to Forge...

FROM PAGE 1

Regarding raw materials, the President noted that as the country is agriculture-based, it is necessary to locally utilize available agricultural and livestock products. Instead of relying on imported raw materials, MSMEs have to use locally produced crops, forest products, and livestock products to be developed into value-added products.

He stressed that inputs such as fuel, electricity, fertilizers, and machinery parts for production should also be developed and managed through appropriate and innovative approaches.

He urged relevant ministries to place special emphasis on ensuring the supply of electricity and energy in order to reduce production costs as much as possible and further improve productivity.

With regard to monetary capital for MSME businesses, the President instructed officials to provide loans to genuine business people as soon as possible because the government has set up the MSME development fund.



President U Min Aung Hlaing delivers a speech at the ceremony to mark World MSME Day at MICC I in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

He emphasized that no matter how complete and well-developed the infrastructure, inputs, and financial resources may be, success will remain out of reach without skilled workers who know how to operate systematically. Therefore, capacity-building training programmes must be continuously provided to improve management skills and technical expertise.

The President underlined that regional and state governments and local agencies have to provide special attention,

support, and encouragement to ensure the sustainable development of MSME businesses based on the main agricultural and livestock raw materials produced in their respective areas, to enable the continuous and integrated supply chains of raw materials, and to ensure that quality and standards are met.

He outlined that everyone wishing to see the development of MSME businesses in the country needs to strive for the implementation of the One Region-One Product

financial flows in the production and service sectors. They should also continue to utilize e-commerce platforms in practice to access markets, so that their products can penetrate not only local markets but also the global market.

He pointed out that MSME businesses and heavy industries have to create a link to a robust production supply chain network.

The President presented honorary medals of outstanding grade-1 MSMEs to Healthy & Hap-

healthcare service (medium) from Shan State.

Vice-Presidents U Nyo Saw and Nan Ni Ni Aye, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Yi, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aung Lin Dwe and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Ye Win Oo presented honorary medals to relevant MSME businesses.

After the ceremony, they all watched a documentary video clip on development undertakings for MSMEs.

The President and party visited the exhibitions of MSME businesses where they viewed various items of foodstuffs, textiles, personal goods, fertilizers, agricultural machinery and others.

Data from the World Bank and the United Nations stated that approximately 90 per cent of businesses worldwide are MSMEs, accounting for 60 to 70 per cent of employment creation and about 50 per cent of global GDP. In Myanmar, around 90 per cent of businesses are MSMEs, contributing to about 70 per cent of employment generation. — MNA/TTA

Key points from the speech delivered by the President at the World MSME Day ceremony

1. MSME businesses and heavy industries have to create a link of a robust production supply chain network.
2. Everyone wishing to see development of MSME businesses in the country need to strive for implementation of the One Region-One Product scheme.
3. Officials need to provide loans to soonest actual business people as the government has set up the MSME development fund.

scheme.

The President urged MSME entrepreneurs to widely adopt digital payment systems in order to ensure fast and smooth

py foodstuff (micro) industry from Mandalay Region, Thallawady Co Ltd foodstuff (medium) industry from Yangon Region and Khaing Myitta Hospital

Nay Pyi Taw hosts strategic MSME dialogues to mark global day

THE knowledge-sharing discussions in conjunction with the World MSME Day was held yesterday at the Myanmar International Convention Centre I (MICC I) in Nay Pyi Taw, and the President of the Myanmar Computer Federation delivered a presentation on the topic “Digital Opportunities for Future Modern MSMEs,” followed by a panel discussion in a roundtable format.

The participants raised questions and the relevant officials answered respectively.

In the same evening, the ceremony to honour the organizations that supported to hold the World



Union Minister Dr Charlie Than speaks at the knowledge-sharing discussions at the mark of World MSME Day at MICC I in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

MSME Day event successfully took place, and Union Minister for Industry and MSME Development Dr Charlie Than, deputy ministers, relevant officials, and MSME entrepreneurs.

During the event, the Union minister delivered a speech marking World MSME Day, and present-

ed certificates of honour to UMFCCI, Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Network and Myanmar Food Processors and Exporters Association for their participation in holding the World MSME ceremony.

The deputy ministers

also presented certificates of honour to Myanmar Computer Federation, AYA Bank, Federation of Myanmar Engineering Societies, Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association, Nay Pyi Taw MSME Association and Myanmar Seafarers Federation. — MNA/KTZH

Supplies convoy reaches PutaO



Departmental personnel unload notebooks, textbooks, and stationery for basic education schools in PutaO District, Kachin State, on 26 June. PHOTO: DISTRICT IPRD

THREE vehicles carrying notebooks, textbooks, and school stationery for basic education schools in PutaO District, Kachin State, arrived in PutaO on 26 June via the Myitkyina-Sumprabum-PutaO Union Highway.

Staff from the relevant departments helped move the supplies to warehouses under the supervision of the Chairman of the District Management and Administration Committee. — District IPRD/MKKS

NATIONAL

MoC Dy Minister inspects Tiddim's departmental offices

DEPUTY Minister for Construction U Myo Myint, accompanied by members of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Committee for Chin State, inspected the reopening of government offices and the performance of civil servants in Tiddim Township, Chin State, on 26 June.

The deputy minister met with the staff serving duties at the departmental offices in Tiddim such as township municipal committee, Land Record Department, Myanmar Farming Development Bank, Department of Agriculture, Women's Vocational Training School (Tiddim), Training School for Development of Na-

tionalities Youth from Border Areas (Tiddim), District Rural Development Department, EPC, Cooperatives Department, District General Administrative Department and Township General Administrative offices.

During meetings with staff, he emphasized that civil servants must strictly comply with civil service rules and regulations and perform their duties in accordance with the relevant laws, rules and procedures to avoid mistakes. He also stressed the importance of coordinating with relevant organizations and following all prescribed procedures accurately when implementing work



Deputy Minister U Myo Myint and officials observe workplaces of government employees in Tiddim, Chin State, on 26 June.

requirements. He also urged staff to avoid any actions that could damage the image of the ministry and the government while interacting with the public. He also coordinated and addressed issues raised by the employees. He inspected the staff housing.

During the meeting with the town elders of Tiddim, he instructed them to work with the committee members and departmental officials in rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in Chin State, as well as in regional development measures. — MNA/KTZH

Shwe Kokko's illicit building demolished

AUTHORITIES have demolished another illegal seven-storey residential building in the Shwe Kokko area that was reportedly used for online fraud and illegal gambling activities.

A joint task force comprising relevant departments is continuing the systematic demolition of illegal structures linked to online scam operations in the KK Park and Shwe Kokko areas of Myawady Township, Kayin State.

Officials said the demolition is part of ongoing efforts to remove 77 identified buildings used for such activities. Of these, 57 are being demolished using heavy machinery, while the remaining 20 are being brought down through controlled explosions.

With the latest demolition, a total of 65 buildings have now been dismantled, while 12 remain pending further action. — MNA/MKKS



Images show the update before and after the demolition of the seven-storey scam hub.

Boat trips to view Taungthaman Lake scenery resume



This photo features boats found in Taungthaman Lake.

SINCE the water in Taungthaman Lake is full, sightseeing boat trips have resumed from 25 June, according to the Taungthaman Boat Association.

Water from the Ayeyawady River has begun

to flow into Taungthaman Lake, and as the water level has risen, boat owners in the association are resuming boating services.

Taungthaman Lake in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region, offers recreational boating ser-

vices with around 50 boats each year, and the boating fee ranges from K5,000 to K15,000 or more, depending on the type of trip.

Following a nearly six-year closure triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, U Bein Bridge and Taungthaman Lake officially reopened to visitors on 2 February 2026.

Connected to the Ayeyawady River, Taungthaman Lake frequently floods at the start of the monsoon season in mid-June, with rising waters often reaching the floorboards of U Bein Bridge. — ASH/MKKS

Barber trainees offer free haircuts to public

A youth-led charity in downtown Yangon is winning the hearts of locals by offering free haircuts twice a week to help residents cope with rising economic hardships.

At the corner of Maha Bandoola Road and 46th Street in Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region, young men and women from the Myanmar Barber Academy offer free haircuts to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 9 am to 3 pm, despite heavy rain.

With Yangon haircut prices averaging K2,500 to K3,000 for children and starting at K4,000 for adults, the trainees offer custom styles completely free of charge to people of all ages.

Far from a standard charity drive, the initiative serves as a live exhibition of the trainees' skills under direct instructor supervision.

The academy pairs an international-level curriculum with vital workplace

training in communication, social skills, business mindset, and career development.

Graduates receiving a certificate of completion receive continuous mentorship from the academy until they successfully launch their own professional barbershops. — TWA/MKKS



Myanmar Barber Academy (MBA) students providing free haircuts to downtown Yangon residents.

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NATIONAL

43 solar water-pumping projects underway in 9 regions/states in 2026-2027

DEPUTY Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Ye Tint Tun stated that 43 solar-powered water pumping projects are currently under implementation across nine regions and states, utilizing funds approved for the 2026-2027 financial year, during the 10th day of the Second Regular Session of the Third Amyotha Hluttaw on 25 June while responding to a starred question raised by Representative U Aung Kyaw Min from the Ayeyawady Region Constituency 4.

The deputy minister highlighted that since the



This image features solar water-pumping projects currently being implemented across regions and states.

2022-2023 financial year, the ministry has been utilizing both Union funds and regional/state funds to implement 14 solar irrigation projects and 42 solar-hybrid projects. Furthermore,

using the State Economic Promotion Fund, it has installed 374 individual solar tube wells in six regions and states, along with six solar water pumping projects.

To date, the ministry has accomplished 540 solar irrigation projects across 317 villages in 91 townships spanning 12 regions and states. Looking ahead, the ministry planned to expand these projects in the 2026-2027 financial year, including 91 new projects.

The government also provides support to farmers who wish to purchase high-quality solar water-pumping systems independently.

“We arrange to enable farmers to install these systems through instalments or with low-interest rates,” he added. — TWA/ZN

Power outages loom in regions amid vital grid upgrades



A power line running alongside a road in Loilem.

TO improve the reliability of power lines, ensure electrical safety during the rainy season, and provide a more stable electricity supply, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy will carry out maintenance on power lines and substations

network. As a result, the 230 kV Wahtaya-Hline-thaya, West Yangon University-Ywama and Ywama-Hline-thaya transmission lines will be shut down from 6 am to 6 pm on 27 and 28 June.

In southern Shan State, maintenance of electrical and control room equipment at the Wangon, Laikha and Mongkai substations, supplied by the 66 kV Loilem-Laikha-Mongkai transmission line, will require power to be suspended from 8 am to 3 pm on 27 June, affecting Loilem, Pinlaung and Laikha townships.

In Magway Region, work to connect the new 230/66/11 kV Aunglan Main Substation to the national grid will require the Taung-dwingyi-Shwedaung transmission line to be shut down from 6 am to 6 pm on 27 June and 4 July.

In Yangon Region, fibre optic cables will be replaced to upgrade the communication and protection systems of the main transmission

The ministry said the maintenance work may reduce transmission capacity in parts of Yangon, Ayeyawady and Magway regions. Load management measures will therefore be implemented, and temporary power outages may occur during periods of peak electricity demand. — TWA/KZL

Pipeline upgrade fortifies Pobbathiri water supply

THE water pipeline conveying water from Chaungmagyi Dam to Pobbathiri Township is being replaced with new, more durable OD 450 mm HDPE pipes to ensure a more reliable supply of drinking water for residents of Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw.

The pipeline replacement project, which commenced on 16 June, has installed approximately 3,000 feet of pipeline to date and is progressing rapidly, with completion targeted for the third week of July.

The previously in-



This photo features a new HDPE pipeline to be installed to replace the water supply system from the Chaungmagyi Dam.

stalled 16-inch PVC pipeline sustained damage in sections passing through Ottarathiri Township as a result of the 2025 Mandalay earthquake. The damaged

pipeline section in Ottarathiri Township, where internal water pressure is highest and pipe bursts occur frequently, is being replaced with approxi-

mately 9,000 feet of OD 450 mm HDPE pipe, which offers greater resistance to both high water pressure and the impacts of natural disasters.

Once the pipeline replacement project is completed, water transmission from Chaungmagyi Dam to Pobbathiri Township will become more efficient and reliable. By preventing pipeline leaks and external contamination, the upgraded system will enable the continuous supply of cleaner, higher-quality drinking water to residents. — TWA/TH

Sagu sparks green future by swapping smoke for alternative fuel

A public awareness workshop on energy-efficient stoves, along with a stove distribution ceremony organized by the Magway Region Dry Zone Greening Department, was held on the afternoon of 26 June in Minbu (Sagu) Township, Minbu District.

At the ceremony, Director U Myint Soe of the Magway Region Dry Zone Greening Department delivered a presentation on the department’s annual rural development activities aimed at making the dry zone greener, more resil-

ient to climate change, and environmentally sustainable. He also highlighted efforts to restore ecological balance, conserve the environment, and promote the use of alternative fuels.

Following the presentation, Director U My-

int Soe and departmental officials distributed free high-efficiency stoves, which can reduce fuel consumption by up to 40 per cent, to 553 households attending the awareness workshop. — Maung Maung (Minbu)/MKKS



Locals are seen with high-efficiency stoves. PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG (MINBU)

NATIONAL

Weekly Roundup

23 June

Myanmar to Chair BIMSTEC Secretariat Next Year

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Mr Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary-General of BIMSTEC, at the Presidential Palace Reception Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

President U Min Aung Hlaing grants interview to Phoenix

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing, during a State Visit to the People's Republic of China at the invitation of President Mr Xi Jinping of China, responded to the questions raised by Ms Liu Meixi of Phoenix TV from Phoenix News Agency on 19 June.

24 June

Union government holds meeting

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing delivered a speech at the Union government meeting at the President's Office in Nay Pyi Taw.

President breaks silence on key national issues

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing responded to the queries raised by local media from Myanmar on his State Visit to the People's Republic of China at the invitation of Chinese President Mr Xi Jinping.

25 June

Vice-President U Nyo Saw receives Indian Ambassador

Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Nyo Saw received a delegation led by Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Abhay Thakur at the Presidential Palace Reception Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

26 June

MSME Central Committee meets

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing, who chairs the MSME Development Central Committee, delivered a speech at the central committee meeting at the Ministry of Industry and MSME Development in Nay Pyi Taw.

Trees grown for the second time at national level

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing attended the second national-level monsoon tree-growing ceremony for 2026 near Tawwin Yadana Road in Dekkhinathiri Township.

Nay Pyi Taw Archway inspected

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing inspected the ongoing work at the construction site of Nay Pyi Taw Archway.

27 June

Food Policy Commission holds meeting

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing, who chairs the Food Policy Commission, delivered a speech at the Food Policy Commission meeting at the President's Office.

Border Central Committee meets

The Central Committee for the Implementation of Progress of Border Areas and National Races took place at the President's Office, with an address by President U Min Aung Hlaing, who chairs the Central Committee.

Motion tabled to review ASEAN Five-Point Statement

Dr Nanda Hla Myint from the Kalaw Constituency submitted a motion, urging the Union government to review the ASEAN Five-Point Statement, which undermines Myanmar's equality within ASEAN and is inconsistent with ASEAN's fundamental principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a member state, in addition to the non-alignment with ASEAN's fundamental principles and Myanmar's current actual political situation at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. — GNL/TTA

Arbitration Law must govern commercial disputes, says Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker

YANGON Region Hluttaw Speaker U Htay Aung stated that any commercial disputes arising in Myanmar must be resolved in accordance with the Arbitration Law (2016).

He made these remarks in his address at the introductory ceremony for the Certified Myanmar Arbitrators (CMA) and a mock arbitration tribunal event held at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon on 27 June.

"Increasing investment is key to a country's economic development, and efforts are being made to create a favourable investment ecosystem in the



This photo features the introductory ceremony of the Certified Myanmar Arbitrators (CMA) and the mock arbitration tribunal in progress.

country," U Htay Aung said. He added that it is therefore necessary for law students and those wishing to practise as arbitrators to have a sound understanding of arbitration law.

Myanmar's Arbitration Law was drafted based on the United

Nations New York Convention (1958) and was systematically enacted in line with other international arbitration rules.

Wunna Kyaw Htin Dr Maung Maung Thein, Chairman of the Certified Myanmar Arbitrators (CMA), stat-

ed that the system of resolving commercial disputes through arbitration has shown progress over the past year or so.

"I believe the public will rely more on arbitration in the future," Dr Maung Maung Thein said, sharing his views.

The Certified Myanmar Arbitrators (CMA) was established in September 2024, and according to records up to 12 June 2026, its membership has reached 31. To date, the organization has held two mock arbitration tribunals and has been continuously conducting arbitration support training courses to enhance the capacity of its members, according to reports. — TWA/TH

Aung San Stadium overhaul: Ageing structures slated for demolition, auction



A general view of Aung San Stadium.

PLANS are underway to demolish and auction old departmental buildings inside Aung San Stadium, officials said.

A coordination meeting on the demolition and auction process was held on 26 June at Ruby Hall, National Indoor Stadium (1), Thuwunna, Yangon.

Deputy Minister for Sports U Nyi Nyi, chairman of the Ministry of Sports auction committee, delivered the opening remarks. Officials from the Department of Sports and Physical Education

outlined the stadium's history, location and the condition of the buildings to be demolished.

The meeting also discussed forming working committees and sub-committees to oversee the demolition and auction of old buildings and sports-related structures, as well as the removal of shop stalls within the stadium compound. The deputy minister coordinated the necessary arrangements based on the proposals submitted. — TWA/KZL

5th YGN Intl Gems and Jewellery Fair 2026 set for 6-9 Aug

THE fifth Yangon International Gems and Jewellery Fair 2026 is scheduled to take place from 6 to 9 August at the Lotte Hotel, with 150 expo booths.

The Yangon Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association organized this four-day event to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the association. Those interested in the gems and jewellery business can register at the office of the association located at Orchid Condo (18th floor) in Ahlon Township, Yangon by 30 June or enquire about details via 09 26766656/57.

Furthermore, jewellery sketch design and jewellery finished product design competitions will also be held to commemorate the 10-year association milestone. Contest entry form will be accepted by 30 June.

Rough stones for the sketch design competition will be available for viewing via a Google Drive link https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16hKR3titA5b1RWz1DcIFWVQsvGN-J4n9u?usp=drive_link by 30 June, according to the competition organizing committee.

Submissions for sketch designs will be accepted from 18 to 21 July, and finished jewellery design pieces will be accepted on 21 July. A Gem Lab Certificate must be attached to the submissions. The list of winners will be announced on 25 July.

Finished Jewellery Design Competition prizes are K5 million for first prize, K4 million for second prize, and K3 million for third prize. Jewellery Sketch Design Competition prizes are K2.5 million for 1st prize, K1.5 million for second prize, and K1 million for third prize. Among the entries of the Jewellery Sketch Design Competition, 15 finalists will be displayed in the exhibition hall from 6 to 8 August. The entry with the most votes will receive the People's Choice Award, awarding K700,000.

Committees have been formed to ensure the successful holding of the exhibition; the association stated. — NN/KK

Seed potato imports spike amid surging quality demand

DOMESTIC shortages of high-quality, disease-free seed potato drive imports of 100 to 200 tonnes every year, according to the Naungtayar Potato Growers Association.

Myanmar primarily imports quality seed potatoes from the Netherlands, India and China to secure stable yields.

To systematically store seed potatoes and reduce imports, cold storage facilities are set up in Shan State. Consequently, import volume significantly dropped.

"Potato seed tuber production businesses do not yield 100 per cent success. About 200 of the seed potatoes are still imported. The fruitful result of seed tuber production from tissue cul-



A glimpse of potato seedlings.

ture will lower the import later," the association chairman stated.

Hopong and Naungtayar areas in southern Shan State, PyinOoLwin in Mandalay Region and Hsinbyukyun in Magway Region are the main po-

tato-producing areas. Of them, Naungtayar alone supplies approximately 400,000 tonnes of potatoes, flowing to the Yangon Bayintnaung Wholesale Market and commodity depots in Mandalay Region.

Marabel, Cardinal and Chinese potato varieties are commonly grown in the country. The production cost of seed potato accounts for 30 to 40 per cent of the total input of the potato cultivation. Therefore, farmers rarely work in seed potato production businesses.

Domestic potato output is consumed by the fresh market and absorbed by business-to-business channels like hotels, restaurants and processing industries. The potato farmers are facing mounting pressure to meet domestic consumption. The price is usually stable in the monsoon cultivation season. The potatoes are imported from China during the off-season. — TWA/KK

MESPEA announces fertilizer reference prices until 30 June

THE reference prices are set at K1200,000 per 50-kilogramme bag of urea fertilizer (large granular) and K115,000 per bag of di-ammonium phosphate from 21 to 30 June, according to Myanmar Fertilizer, Seed and Pesticide Entrepreneurs Association (MFSPEA).

The MFSPEA has not confirmed the reference price

for Complex 15 fertilizer. The prices may vary a bit depending on transport charges in other regions and states, as the aforementioned prices are set for the Yangon Region. Reference prices will be further announced as per rules and regulations. For overcharging, consumers can complain to the committee by dialling 067

410032 and 09 988539360. MFSPEA has already asked the member companies to stick to the reference prices.

At present, the Fertilizer Committee holds a quarterly meeting to ensure quality fertilizer for growers without facing shortages. Under the approval of the Fertilizer Technology Group, 12,297

fertilizer registrations have been granted after the 43rd meeting of the Fertilizer Committee. With individuals' consent, 2,088 registrations were voluntarily cancelled. The department revoked 2,867 registrations for expiration of validity, and 7,342 registrations are still under processing. — NN/KK

Regulator Slashes Domestic Fuel Price Caps



Fuel tankers are seen departing for distribution in regions and states.

FUEL price caps are dropping following retreating global oil prices.

The reference prices set for this week ending 2 June declined to K3,615 for Octane 92, K3,695 for Octane 95, K3,535 for diesel and K4,190 for premium diesel.

The reference prices set last week were K3,785 for Oc-

tane 92, K3,830 for Octane 95, K3,910 for diesel and K4,720 for premium diesel, showing a decrease of up to K530.

The price index set by Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), the pricing basis for many refined products in South-East Asia, influences the domestic fuel prices, according to the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Stor-

age and Distribution of Fuel Oil.

The committee is governing the market to ensure a stable price and secure supply. Under the guidance of the Supervisory Committee, the Petroleum Products Regulatory Department has been issuing daily reference wholesale prices to ensure price stability for energy consumers.

The committee is inspecting the fuel stations to see whether they are overcharging. Authorities are taking action against those retailers of fuel stations under the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law 2017 if they are found overcharging rather than the set reference rate.

As per the statement, 90 per cent of fuel oil in Myanmar is imported, while the remaining

10 per cent is produced locally. Domestic fuel prices are highly correlated with international prices. The State is steering the market to mitigate the loss experienced by the importers, sellers and energy consumers. Consequently, the government is trying to distribute the oil at a reasonable price compared to that of regional countries.

Some countries levied higher tax rates and hiked oil prices than Myanmar's. However, Malaysia's oil sector receives government subsidies, and the prices are about 60 per cent lower than those of Myanmar. Every country lays down different policy patterns to fix oil prices, the Supervisory Committee on Oil Import, Storage and Distribution of Fuel Oil stated. — NN/KK

OPINION

BOOKRACK POEM

Initiate efforts to establish special development zones

THE Government, during the period in which it is carrying out the responsibilities of the State, is striving to become one that can withstand scrutiny and be recognized for its credibility, and one that can effectively promote the interests of the State and its citizens. It is also making efforts to provide and fulfill the necessary requirements for comprehensive development across all regions and states, including agriculture, livestock breeding, education, ensuring safe and smooth transportation, and facilitating the accurate and efficient flow of goods and commodities.

The Head of State has adopted the plans that there is a goal and ongoing effort to implement Toungoo, Nay Pyi Taw, Yamethin, and Meiktila regions as special development zones. Through these

regions, efforts will continue so that other cities can also emerge as sequential special development areas. It is necessary for everyone to work together to ensure that Toungoo, Nay Pyi Taw, Yamethin, and Meiktila become model special development regions.

Being centrally located and forming part of the Midland region with the ability to connect accessibly to the upper, lower, eastern, and western parts of the country, these areas already possess favourable conditions and a strong foundation for success. Accordingly, the respective regional and state chief ministers and responsible officials must systematically implement measures to further strengthen development in the areas under their jurisdiction and authority.

The first special development zones to be established as pioneers for all parts of the nation will contribute to the overall development of the entire country. Based on the achievements and positive

While the Government is prioritizing and implementing measures for the benefit of the country and the people, citizens are also encouraged to work diligently and to have the willingness to work for themselves, their regions, and the State. Only through such cooperation and unity between the Government and the people will Toungoo, Nay Pyi Taw, Yamethin, and Meiktila regions - being developed as special development regions by the State - successfully emerge and prosper as special development areas.

outcomes gained from these zones, smoother implementation pathways will be created for future special development zones, enabling them to reach their development goals within a shorter period of time. Furthermore, as additional special development zones emerge, they will be interconnected, leading to the development of various regions. The people residing in these zones will also be able to benefit from the fruits of development, resulting in improved living standards and enhanced social well-being.

While the Government is prioritizing and implementing measures for the benefit of the country and the people, citizens are also encouraged to work diligently and to have the willingness to work for themselves, their regions, and the State. Only through such cooperation and unity between the Government and the people will Toungoo, Nay Pyi Taw, Yamethin, and Meiktila regions - being developed as special development regions by the State - successfully emerge and prosper as special development areas.



Book Title - Resilience Emotional Intelligence: The Work of Daniel Goleman, Jeffrey A Sonnenfeld, Shawn Achor and others.
 Translator - Kabawmyay Maung Maung
 Publishing House - Moe nae Myay
 Publication Date - February 2025 (1st Edition)
 Price - K8,000

Resilience Emotional Intelligence

THIS week's pick is a motivational book teaching how to create life by cultivating intelligence (agility) and developing perseverance.

The translator Kabawmyay Maung Maung, who wrote Dream Paradise (Eainmek Beikman), Coffee on the Wall, Mature Beauty and That Night Covered by Black Darkness, worked on this book. This is his fifth book, translating the works of Daniel Goleman, Jeffrey A Sonnenfeld, Shawn Achor & Diane L Coutu into the Myanmar Language.

This book will guide readers on how to survive daily barriers, work struggles, severe personal trauma or mental stress.

Furthermore, this book detailed the main personal traits needed to overcome the challenges and adversity. Readers can also explore methods on how to master their mind and brain to endure daily stress and restart their career.

The translator pointed out in this book that "facing adversity head-on is the most powerful decision, transforming blocks into

stepping stones towards success.

"Resilience is not just a character trait but a dynamic learned skill through self-discipline and adaptive habits that develop over time. Viewing life's challenges and adversities and responding to them can be considered a highly constructive psychological test.

Furthermore, the preface also states that "Today's world is an era that frequently faces various calamities such as competition, conflicts, terrorism, wars, and natural disasters. The Spectrum of Vulnerabilities includes everyday annoyances, operational disasters, major catastrophes and business failures. Therefore, greater resilience and the ability to recover from crises in an era defined by relentless uncertainty are absolute necessities and important capabilities."

Thus, resilience is not merely about endurance, tolerance and the ability to bounce back. It is the practice of responding to the demands of our external circumstances and mental pressures with psychological, emotional, and behavioural flexibility, and

through the method of adaptation and negotiation to move forward and thrive amid global or personal adversity. It is the process and outcome of successfully navigating and adjusting to difficult and challenging life experiences, he defined.

Chapter II, titled The Resilience Energy We All Must Have states that there are two ways to improve our resilience. One is self-talk, and the other is retraining your brain. If you face major losses, study and practice the good advice found in the HBR article "Building Resilience" by psychologist Martin Seligman in April 2011: Talk to Yourself, Give Yourself a Cognitive Intervention, Overcome Defeatist Attitude with a Positive Mindset, Challenge Feelings of Discouragement by Reframing Negative Outlook.

In summary, this book focuses on studying corporate downfalls and turnarounds and actionable lessons from resilient leaders who rose from the brink of failure. Thus, it will certainly enrich the knowledge of its readers with practical advice to build resilience.



Book Title - Akyint Tway Pyaung Yin Bawa Lae Pyaung Mal (Change Your Habits, Change Your Life)
 Translator - Myo Lwin (MBA)
 Publishing House - Thar Nge
 Publication Date - December 2024 (2nd Edition)
 Price - K7,000

Akyint Tway Pyaung Yin Bawa Lae Pyaung Mal (Change Your Habits, Change Your Life)

THIS week, we pick a book that has been described as "No matter where you are in life, this book will guide you to success." It is the Myanmar translation of Tom Corley's original book, Change Your Habits - Change Your Life, translated by U Myo Lwin (MBA), a regular writer for Thar Nge Publishing, under the title 'Akyint Twae Pyaung Yin Bawa Lae Pyaung Mal' (Change Your Habits, Change Your Life).

The original author, Tom Corley, firmly believes that success is not something reserved only for the wealthy or privileged. Through years of dedicated research on self-made millionaires, he identified the good habits that enable ordinary people to achieve extraordinary success and become millionaires.

Translator Saya Myo Lwin (MBA) writes... each individual has their own specific bad habits, which are also poor. If you can replace them with good habits, in other words, the rich habits, you can transform

your own life. It also urges eliminating the poor habits and adopting the rich habits. It needs to know what the good habits are before changing them. Daily habits drive over 40 per cent of our activities, thoughts, and decisions. Habits put you on autopilot. It can reduce the workload on the brain, and the brain naturally favours them. When we try to break a habit, the brain resists. Therefore, the book provides fascinating insights into how we can outsmart our brains and successfully change our habits.

The author Tom Corley says... No matter what you may believe, you can change the circumstances of your life. You can go from average to success, from mediocrity to wealth. Your past and present circumstances do not define you. Circumstances can be changed. But to change your circumstances, you need three things:

1. Daily growth (in skills and knowledge)
2. Focus

3. Persistence
 By using the habit-change strategies in this book, you will automatically acquire these three characteristics of success. Habits, by their very definition, are persistent routines. When you adopt good habits, they help you grow your skills and knowledge. They put success on autopilot. Each good habit you add to your life has a cumulative effect. They are like an investment in your individual success. The key is to get your personal Habit Seesaw tipping in the right direction, with your Rich Habits outweighing your Poor Habits.

The author presents his research data collected on the daily habits of 233 wealthy individuals and 128 poor individuals over five years. He also provides practical frameworks to help readers adapt.

The book carries five chapters: 1. Understanding Habits, 2. Types of Habits, 3. Creating Habits around Dreams and Goals, 4. Changing Your Habits, and 5. Case Studies.

A Book

By Min Min Zan

*There is no ship just like a book
To take us far away,
Across the seas and distant lands,
Where dreams and wonders stay.*

*There is no horse as swift and strong
As poetry's bright flight;
It carries us through time and space,
From morning until night.*

*This journey all can gladly take,
Without a fee or toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears the human soul!*

Flowers and butterflies

By Thu Lin Way,
Translated by Myint Zan

butterflies and flowers:
kisses are in abundance
pollens spread hither
and thither
'tis the flower world

If on the
"village" of "the stars"
butterflies were to rest
will they bloom?

ပန်းနဲ့လိပ်ပြာ

လိပ်ပြာနဲ့ပန်း
အနမ်းပြာ
ဝတ်မှုန်ကူးတဲ့ ပန်းကမ္ဘာ။
ကြယ်တို့ရွာ
လိပ်ပြာနား
ပန်းတွေပွင့်မှာလား။ ။
သုလင်းဝေ

What a Poet Means

By Hu Wo (Cuckoo's Song)

With a stylographic pen
And a leaf of palm,
He took his life in his hands.

The historical responsibility
Was taken nobly and dutifully
By an outstanding laureate.

Only with a stylograph
And an ink droplet
Can literature be poisoned to death?

If the responsibility of history
Is not assumed fully,
He will be an incompetent merely.

စာဆိုဟူသည်ကား
ကညစ်တစ်လက်
ပေတစ်ရွက်ဖြင့်
အသက်စေးခဲ့ကြသည်။

သမိုင်းပေးတာဝန်
မြတ်ကျေပွန်သည်
လူ့ချွန်စာဆိုတော်ပေတကား။

ကလောင်တစ်လက်
မင်တစ်ရွက်ဖြင့်
စာပျက်ပေပျက်အဆိပ်တက်၏။

သမိုင်းပေးတာဝန်
မကျေပွန်က
လူ့ချွန်လူညံသတ်ကား။
ခေါင်းနွယ်ဆွေ

NATIONAL Entertainment

Golden jubilee splendour: Mandalay Thein Zaw's Thabin Festival set for broadcast

THE M Channel TV and M Channel Myanmar YouTube Channel will broadcast a live show of Mandalay Thein Zaw's Golden Jubilee Thabin Festival. The festival will be on 27 and 28 June at the National Theatre (Yangon), and these channels will broadcast live. Moreover, Sithu Daw Tin Tin Mya, Academy Daw Cho Pyone, Mandalay Sein Tint Lwin, Director Nyein Min, Than Myat Soe and Maung Thein Win, as well as Soe Sanda Tun, May Thet Htar Swe, Wint Theingi, Khine Thazin Thin, Moe Pyae Pyae Maung, O Pyae Shin, Ei Ei Chun, Aye Aye Myint Aung, Thet Hmue Hay Thi, Khine Zar Thway, Nan Win (Nan Thabin), Chan Thar (Shwe Mann Thabin), Moe Win (San Pya Thabin) and Aung Zabu Thabin will perform at the festival. – Htun Htun/KTZH



Next-gen talent: 40 youths groomed for screen stardom



ACADEMY Swe Zin Htike has announced that only 40 young applicants - 20 males and 20 females - were selected from a total of 264 applicants for her acting course, and that they will be professionally trained to become the next generation of

standard actors.

The acting course has been designed with a structured curriculum aimed at transforming aspiring performers into industry-ready professional artistes.

"Out of the 264 people who applied for this acting course, we selected 20 men and 20 women trainees. The course is designed to develop them from enthusiastic beginners into professionals by equipping them with the necessary skills," she said.

In addition to the topic 'Acting for Camera', the training programme will cover character analysis and emotional understanding, voice control and clear diction for film performances, as well as professional ethics, discipline, and punctuality required in the film industry. – TWA/KTZH

Thukhamein Hlaing (AM) to host art exhibition in Yangon

FAMOUS song writer and poet Thukhamein Hlaing will hold his art exhibition titled Cloud and Poem.

The event is organized by the Art Bridge Gallery, and the venue is at 1A+1B/6, 4th floor, Ward 32, on Pinlon Road in Dagon Myothit (North) Township. The event will last from 27 June to 5 July.

It is the fourth solo exhibition of Saya Thukhamein Hlaing, and will feature 56 paintings. – Htun Htun/KTZH



Duo-star film set for screening in July

THE film 'Phwa Phet Taw', starring two Academy Award-winning actors, is scheduled to be released in cinemas this July.

Produced by Power King Film Production,

the movie is directed by Steel (Dwe Myitta) from a screenplay by Maung Myat Swe, based on a story by Dwe Myitta and Aung Khant Zaw (Saint Paul).

The cast compris-

es Academy Nay Toe, Academy Tun Tun, Shwe Thamee, Poe Kyar Phyu Khin, Kyal Phyu Shin Thant, Nay Ye, Zwe Naing Win, Htoo Char, and Daw Ei Ei Soe, among others. – Htun Htun/KTZH

Singer Nge Nge to release new MV marking birthday

RENOWNED for her signature style and powerhouse vocals, singer Nge Nge will mark her birthday milestone by dropping a highly anticipated new music video.

"I will release a new song in the coming days.

It came about because some people helped me produce it to mark my birthday. It's been a very long time since I last released a song. Some people have asked whether this means I'm making a comeback, but

that's not really the case," Nge Nge said.

Nge Nge was one of the leading female singers in Myanmar's music industry, particularly during the early era of Pop, R&B, and Hip-hop music. – TWA/KTZH



Suspense drama film awaits screening

THE movie 'Lat Hnyo Htoe Ywae Pan Wai Thi' is among the movies currently awaiting inclusion in the next batch of cinema schedules.

The film is a suspense drama centred on a heartbreaking love story. Jointly produced

by HD Production Team and Future Film Production, the movie features a screenplay by Mae Khine, adapted from Thoe Hsaung's original novel, with Win Lwin Htet directing.

The cast includes Alinn Young, Naw Phaw

Eh Htar, Yan Aung, Kyaw Ye Aung, Soe Myat Thuzar, Nay Myo Aung, Thu Htoo San, Min Thu, Bhone Theik, Min Taw Win, Ye Lwin Oo, Gu Gue, Kyaw Moe Paing, Aung Thiha, and U Zaw Hmine, among others. – Htun Htun/KTZH



MRTV-4 to air The Mirage series on 30 June

THE series The Mirage will be broadcast on MRTV-4 starting 30 June.

The Media Press Show was held at the Junction City Cinema 3 at 5 pm on 25 June, and the cast attended the event.

Supporting actor Daung Wai said, "It's a quite interesting series. While filming, I was really

frightened. We had to shoot a scene where I lay inside a coffin at a real grave site in Pindaya, beside a newly dug burial mound. The scene was even more frightening because I acted alongside the late actor Ko Chit Pu. During night shoots that ended around 10 pm, I felt as if someone was constantly follow-

ing me, and there was a persistent smell of decay. It felt like someone else was in my room when I returned to Yangon. I only felt relieved after visiting a monk, listening to sermons, and sharing merits."

The series produced by Pyone Maung, based on a story by Ham Sai (Say-Mann), with

screenplay by Thet Zun, Khine Zun Wint, and San Yu Maung. It is directed by Tin Htoo Aung (assistant director) and Kyaw Soe Thu. The cast are Thar Htet Nyan Zaw, Wai Shwe Yi, Su Pan Htwar, academy Aung Khine, Min Thu, Daung Wai and other artistes. – Htun Htun/KTZH

WORLD

Iran says US violated peace deal as both sides trade fire

Iran lashed out at the attacks after its Revolutionary Guards launched its own retaliatory strikes.

IRAN on Saturday accused the United States of violating the peace deal agreed to end the Middle East war, after Washington launched strikes on Iranian territory and Tehran responded with attacks on US targets in the Gulf.

The trading of fire, which came after Washington accused Tehran of attacking a cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz earlier in the week, raised questions about efforts to keep the crucial waterway open while both sides negotiate a broader, final deal.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) said the latest American strikes, against Iranian missile and drone storage sites and coastal radar positions, were a response to



Motorists ride past a giant banner depicting Iranian missiles and a sword at the Vanak Square in Tehran. **PHOTO: AFP**

“unwarranted aggression against commercial shipping by Iranian forces” that “clearly violated the ceasefire”.

But Iran lashed out at the attacks after its Revolutionary Guards launched

its own retaliatory strikes.

“These brutal attacks, which targeted Iranian coastal surveillance facilities, are a blatant violation” of the memorandum of understanding to end the war, the Iranian foreign

ministry said.

The Guards said they had struck US sites in the Gulf region in retaliation and that “if the aggression is repeated, our response will be broader than this”, according to a Telegram post by state TV.

Bahrain’s foreign ministry said the country was targeted by several Iranian drones early Saturday, condemning the attacks and accusing Tehran of “sabotaging peace efforts”.

On the US strikes, Iranian state television, citing a reporter in the southern city of Sirik, said an explosion was heard at a pier there late Friday. It quoted a military source saying a “projectile impact” in the area caused the blast. — AFP

Farmers fear drought as Italy’s longest river runs dry

SEAWATER is seeping into Italy’s longest river as the waterway starts to run dry in the heatwave, hitting a farming heartland that produces the milk for Parmesan cheese.

The Po River has never fallen this low so early in the year, raising fears of a devastating drought in July in this corner of northern Italy.

On the bank of one of its branches, farmer Federica Vidali looked anxiously at her sunflower field. The first bloom of the season has appeared, but part of the field is already dry and starting to crack.

One of the two canals that irrigate it has been shut because the seawater

would enter and damage the crops.

“We’re left with the water that others are willing to leave us. But we’re not second-division farmers!” Vidali told AFP.

The Po River’s flow has collapsed in a matter

of days, dropping below 300 cubic metres per second, compared with an average of around 1,500 in June, according to Aipo, the inter-regional river agency.

“It has never dropped so fast, so early,” said Stefano Calderoni of the Ital-

ian irrigation association (Anbi).

Sandbanks are multiplying, depths fall to barely one metre in places, and the river’s few remaining fishermen swelter in the heat.

“Before, we used to pass on the left; now the passage is to the right of the sandbank, and it’s very, very narrow,” said Daniela Cuoghi, a surveyor for Aipo.

The many Alpine lakes that feed the Po Valley, Italy’s agro-industrial heartland, are still about 60 per cent full. But farmers are drawing heavily from the waterways to irrigate fields parched by the heat. — AFP



Clam harvesters work in the shallow waters of the Po River Delta. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel, Lebanon, US sign withdrawal deal

ISRAEL, Lebanon and the United States are expected to sign a framework agreement in Washington soon over the withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of southern Lebanon, Israeli media reported on Friday.

The state-owned Kan TV News and Channel 12 News reported that the parties have agreed to implement a pilot programme in two areas in southern Lebanon, where Israeli forces will withdraw and Lebanese army forces will move in.

In the first phase, US forces will accompany the Lebanese forces to assist in the mission, the channels added.

The reports noted that the Israeli forces would withdraw within the “security zone” they held, not from beyond it, and that the agreement enshrines Israel’s continued military presence in southern Lebanon as long as Hezbollah is not disarmed. — Xinhua

German court jails car attacker for life

A German court on Friday sentenced a Saudi psychiatrist to life in prison for killing six people and wounding more than 300 when he drove a rented SUV through a crowded Christmas market in 2024.

Taleb Jawad al-Abdulmohsen, 51 — an anti-Islam activist and adherent of right-wing conspiracy theories — listened to the verdict from inside a bullet-proof glass box, his hands shackled. He was convicted of six counts of murder and 338 counts of attempted murder by the court in the eastern city of Magdeburg and showed no emotion as the verdict was read out.

Judges also found there was an “especially severe culpability” — a ruling usually reserved for the most vile, cruel or morally reprehensible crimes. — AFP

Venezuela places quake-hit La Guaira state under military control

VENEZUELAN National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez said Friday that La Guaira state, which was hard hit by Wednesday’s twin earthquakes, had been placed under military control to facilitate rescue efforts and ensure security.

“We want to tell everyone that La Guaira state is now fully militarized and fully under the control of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces,” Rodriguez said during a televised briefing.

Rodriguez said acting president Delcy Rodriguez had ordered the measure to ensure public safety, maintain internal order and facilitate rescue operations by Venezuelan emergency responders and international rescue teams.

He said the majority of rescue personnel were operating in Caraballeda, Macuto, Los Corales and Catia La Mar — areas that had been severely affected by the earthquakes. — Xinhua

ECONOMY WORLD

Saudi Arabia resumes oil shipments in Persian Gulf

Saudi Arabia has resumed exporting crude oil through its terminals in the Persian Gulf and through the Strait of Hormuz.

SAUDI state-owned oil and gas giant Saudi Aramco has resumed oil shipments from the Ras Tanura terminal on the Persian Gulf coast and hydrocarbon exports through the Strait of Hormuz, a source in the country's oil industry told Sputnik.

"Saudi Arabia has resumed exporting crude oil through its terminals in the Persian Gulf and through the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Aramco is operating oil shipments at the port of Ras Tanura, located on the coast of



The Ras Tanura terminal on the Persian Gulf coast. **PHOTO: SAUDI ARAMCO/FILE**

the Persian Gulf," the source confirmed.

The exact date operations resumed at the port is unclear, but there is no doubt that oil load-

ing is currently underway, the source added.

In support of this, several Saudi oil super-tankers recently arrived at the Ras Tanura port

to load crude from the kingdom's oil fields, according to data from the VesselFinder tracking platform.

Saudi Arabia halted all crude export shipments from Ras Tanura in March because of the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, relying instead on the Red Sea port of Yanbu for its oil exports.

On 28 February, the United States and Israel launched strikes on targets in Iran, causing damage and civilian casualties. — SPUTNIK

Ships crossing Hormuz use Oman passage despite Iran warnings



At least 42 commodity vessels — including tankers carrying oil, gas, and dry bulk such as fertilizers — crossed on Thursday, Kpler's tracking platform showed, down from a high of 57 on Wednesday. **PHOTO: VISUAL PURPOSE ONLY/KYODO**

TRAFFIC levels in the Strait of Hormuz fell back from Wednesday's high, but vessels continued to use a non-Iranian-approved passage, despite a ship being struck by a projectile, tracking platforms showed Friday.

At least 42 commodity vessels — including tankers carrying oil, gas, and dry bulk such as fertilizers — crossed on Thursday, Kpler's tracking plat-

form showed, down from a high of 57 on Wednesday.

Ten of those vessels entered the Gulf, while 32 exited. Half of the 42 vessels used a southern passageway hugging the coast of Oman.

Another 29 commodity vessels had already crossed the strait by Friday afternoon, 10 coming into the Gulf and 19 leaving, according to Kpler. — AFP

European economies suffer from heatwave

WHEN the mercury rises so do the costs for an economy as productivity melts and growth becomes lethargic, providing an additional challenge to Europe as it struggles with high energy prices.

"Extreme heat is emerging as a structur-

al economic risk, with Europe highly exposed," wrote the trade credit arm of European insurer Allianz as the continent swelters under its second heatwave of the year.

Europe has a number of weaknesses: an ageing population, dense urban

centres with many buildings not built for extreme heat, and just 19 per cent of households with air conditioning compared to 90 per cent in the United States, the analysts noted.

Heatwaves are becoming frequent as Europe warms faster than

other regions of the world, and many scientists consider human activity will cause more extreme weather events. "France is working in slow mode," recently observed Patrick Martin, head of Medef, France's main employers' organization. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Development Bank issues bond in Macao for the first time

THE New Development Bank (NDB) has successfully priced a three-year floating rate note worth US\$50 million at secured overnight financing rate plus 30 basis points in China's Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR).

This transaction marks the first time the NDB has issued a bond in the Macao SAR, representing a milestone in its efforts to diversify its funding sources and expand its presence across various markets, the bank said on Friday evening.

Headquartered in Shanghai, the NDB was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS member nations, and in other emerging market economies and developing countries, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development. — Xinhua

New Zealand outlines long-term tourism strategy

NEW Zealand on Thursday set out a long-term strategy to grow its tourism sector, aiming to double the value of tourism exports by 2034.

The Tourism Policy Statement outlines how central and local governments and industry will coordinate policy, investment, infrastructure and marketing to support growth while maintaining New Zealand's international competitiveness, Tourism and Hospitality Minister Louise Upston said in a statement.

Tourism is currently New Zealand's second-largest export earner and a key

source of regional jobs and income, Upston said. The minister said a "deliberate, planned approach" would focus on improving visitor experiences and delivering higher economic value and more jobs across communities, including through events and hospitality.

The government also announced five million NZ dollars (about US\$2.82 million) in funding for the third round of its Regional Tourism Boost, aimed at attracting more international visitors between spring 2026 and early summer 2027. — Xinhua



Tourists visit Glenorchy, New Zealand, 1 May 2017. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

American businesswoman Michele Kang buys French club Lyon

AMERICAN businesswoman Michele Kang has become the majority shareholder of French club Lyon, the Ligue 1 outfit's previous owners Eagle Football Group (EFG) announced on Friday.

Kang, who has run Lyon for the past year, has acquired 87.78 per cent of the club's share capital for a price of \$30 million, the group said in a statement. The purchased stake represents all of EFG's shares held by Eagle Bidco — the holding company which is under

judicial administration. "It is with immense pride and great honour that I announce the successful closing of the deal," Kang told reporters at a press conference at the club's headquarters, adding that they had received approval after French football's financial regulator had confirmed that Lyon would remain in the top flight. The 67-year-old, who already owns Lyon's women's team, had been interviewed on Tuesday by the regulator body and had presented her takeover plan to them. — AFP



Michele Kang was already the Lyon men's club president, minority shareholder and owner of the women's side. PHOTO: AFP

Hot spring resort town to introduce new lodging tax

HAKONE, a famous hot spring and resort town southwest of Tokyo, said Friday it is considering introducing a new lodging tax for people staying in hotels and other accommodations, possibly from April 2028.

The Hakone resort area in Kanagawa Prefecture is looking to introduce the accommodation tax as a local discretionary tax, with revenue not earmarked for any specific purpose, a first in the country.

Visitors will be taxed

350 yen (\$2) per night except for elementary school children and younger children, and students on school trips, with the aim of raising about 1.4 billion yen in annual revenue. The municipality will hold deliberations on the ordinance and consult with the internal affairs ministry.

Approximately 20 million people visit the region annually, with the town struggling to cover the costs of collecting trash and emergency services. — Kyodo

EU hits France's Sanofi with flu vaccine antitrust probe

THE European Commission announced Friday that it was opening an antitrust probe into French pharmaceutical group Sanofi on suspicion it breached the bloc's competition rules in promoting a flu vaccine.

The probe centres on how the firm marketed an enhanced flu vaccine, offered under the brand name Efluelda and designed to provide greater protection for people over 60.

The vaccine in question competes with one marketed by the Australian company CSL Seqirus under the brand name Fluad. "The commission is



Flu vaccines are a major business for French pharmaceutical group Sanofi. PHOTO: AFP

concerned that Sanofi pursued a misleading communication campaign to disparage Fluad by portraying it as inferior to Efluelda, going against national vac-

cination recommendations in several member states," a commission statement said.

The EU executive, acting as the bloc's com-

petition watchdog, said the campaign primarily targeted healthcare professionals in Germany and France, where Sanofi is considered to hold a dominant position.

Sanofi had revealed last September that it was being investigated by the EU over its practices in the hugely competitive flu vaccine sector.

Contacted by AFP, the group denied breaking EU rules. "Sanofi is confident that it has acted, and continues to act, in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including competition rules," a company spokeswoman said. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MSC ACE II VOY.NO. (SB625A)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MSC ACE II VOY.NO. (SB625A) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-6-2026 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 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 MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY S.A

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (177N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO WISDOM VOY.NO. (177N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-6-2026 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V XO LUCKY VOY.NO. (X2613E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XO LUCKY VOY.NO. (X2613E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-6-2026 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 SITC GUANGDONG VOY.NO. (2612S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SITC GUANGDONG VOY.NO. (2612S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-6-2026 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SITC CONTAINER LINE CO., LTD

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS DIGEST



A Long March-2D carrier rocket carrying Zhangheng 1-02 satellite, an electromagnetic monitoring satellite jointly developed by China and Italy, blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China on 14 June 2025. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

China, Central Asian nations build joint satellite disaster monitoring constellation

June 27

CHINA and several Central Asian countries are planning to develop a satellite constellation to share remote-sensing data and tackle common threats, such as earthquakes, agricultural pests and glacial floods.

The tech cooperation agreement was signed on Thursday at the ongoing 9th China-Eurasia Expo held in Urumqi, capital of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Called "Tianwu Constellation", the space-based monitoring network will comprise an initial system of five satellites, according to scientists involved in the project.

Tong Qingxi, a remote-sensing specialist with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said that China's Xinjiang, bordering several Central Asian countries, has similar geographic conditions and common geological threats to its neighbors, such as earthquakes, landslides, and floods caused by glacial melt. — Xinhua

JUNE 26

ROK's ex-first lady Kim Keon-hee handed 7-year prison sentence

KIM KEON-HEE, wife of former ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol, was sentenced to seven years in prison on corruption charges, including the sale of government posts, live footage showed Friday. The Seoul Central District Court handed down the sentence, saying Kim knowingly accepted luxury goods that are effectively unattainable for ordinary people.

The team led by independent counsel Min Joong-ki, which investigated corruption allegations involving the former presidential couple, had sought a 7.5-year prison sentence for Kim, accusing her of selling public offices in exchange for expensive jewellery and other luxury goods. The court also ordered her to pay a substantial fine and forfeit all the unlawfully obtained luxury goods as part of the ruling. — Xinhua

JUNE 25

Summer Davos closes in Dalian

THE 2026 Summer Davos forum drew to a close on Thursday in the northeastern Chinese city of Dalian, highlighting that innovation matters more than ever in an age of accelerating technological change and rising uncertainty, with China playing a pivotal role.

The event, also known as the World Economic Forum (WEF)'s 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, was held under the theme of "Innovating at Scale". Taking place from 23 to 25 June, it brought together over 1,700 participants from more than 90 countries and regions to discuss ways to scale innovation into better jobs, stronger economies and new growth opportunities. Across conference halls and sessions, discussions ranged from artificial intelligence and humanoid robotics to quantum technology, biomedicine, advanced manufacturing and green industries. — Xinhua

JUNE 24

YouTube settles teen's addiction lawsuit

YOUTUBE reached a confidential settlement with a 15-year-old American who accused the Google-owned platform and other social media networks of harming his mental health, three months after an unprecedented verdict in a similar case.

Google spokesman Jose Castaneda confirmed the deal, saying the company had "built YouTube responsibly" for more than a decade and that its "focus remains on building age-appropriate products and parental controls."

The agreement includes no admission of liability. Plaintiff's attorneys John Morgan and Emily Jeffcott said YouTube's "decision to resolve this case before having to face a jury speaks for itself", accusing social media executives of "strategizing for years to hook children early" through features like autoplay and infinite scroll. Instagram owner Meta, TikTok and Snapchat remain defendants in the case — the second of its kind in the United States — which is set to go to trial 27 July in Los Angeles. — AFP

JUNE 23

Top 10 emerging technologies for 2026 unveiled

AFTER years of software-first artificial intelligence (AI) development, the technologies with huge impact are moving off screens and into the physical systems that underpin modern economies — energy, medicine, food and materials, according to a report released on Tuesday.

The report, titled "Top 10 Emerging Technologies of 2026", was unveiled during the 2026 Summer Davos forum in northeast China's Dalian City.

Co-published by the World Economic Forum and research publisher Frontiers, the report identifies key technologies most likely to shape industry, policy and society over the next five years.

These technologies range from next-generation clean energy, advanced materials and biotechnology to AI and quantum technologies. — Xinhua

JUNE 22

Tributes paid to Lebanon conservationist

ACTIVISTS and campaign groups paid tribute to Lebanese environmentalist Mona Khalil who died from injuries sustained in an Israeli strike in the country's south.

Khalil, aged in her late seventies, was badly wounded in an Israeli strike on 4 June that hit her home in the village of Mansouri, around 10 kilometres (six miles) south of the coastal city of Tyre. She died on Friday.

Julien Jreissati, programme director at Greenpeace Middle East and North Africa, said Khalil had "dedicated decades of her life to protecting the sea turtles and coastline of Mansouri". Her loss is not only a loss for her family and community, but for the environmental movement in Lebanon and the region. — AFP

JUNE 21

Trump wishes Starmer well amid resignation

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP on Sunday said he wished UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer well amid reports he plans to resign.

"Keir Starmer will resign as Prime Minister of The United Kingdom," Trump wrote on Truth Social in a post that gave no evidence he had inside information. "I wish him well."

His post came as British media reported that the embattled Labour Party leader will resign in a matter of days.

Trump has slammed Starmer for not supporting the US-Israeli war against Iran, and in his post Sunday the president repeated criticism of the British premier on two issues: borders and fossil fuels. — AFP

SPORTS

Myanmar U15 to join FIFA youth festival

THE Myanmar U15 men's national team will compete in the FIFA U15 World Cup and Festival 2026, which will be held in Azerbaijan from 22 to 31 October.

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) has officially invited the Myanmar Football Federation to participate, and the MFF has confirmed its acceptance.

The tournament forms part of FIFA's youth development programme and will use a festival format. Matches will be played with eight players per side instead of the traditional 11 on a 68-metre by 50-metre pitch. Each match will consist of two 20-minute halves, with unlimited substitutions permitted.

The competition is open to players born in 2011 or 2012. In the qualification stage, 32 groups of six or seven teams will play in a round-robin format, with every team progressing to the tournament stage. Teams will then be divided into tiers based on their group standings and compete in knockout matches. Even after defeat, teams will continue playing classification matches, ensuring each side plays at least seven to 10 matches.

The MFF will select a provisional squad through nationwide scouting to identify talented young players from all regions and states. It will announce further details on scouting and player selection in due course.

The MFF has organized the Myanmar U15 League annually over the past three years in the Yangon, Mandalay, and Taunggyi zones. The 2026 league features more participating teams than last year as part of the federation's continued focus on youth development through leagues, football festivals, regional training centres, academies, and free youth coaching programmes.

The tournament is expected to provide valuable international experience for Myanmar's young players and serve as an important stepping stone towards future FIFA U17 World Cup competitions. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



Myanmar young footballers are seen in a match at the football for school programme. **PHOTO: MFF**

Team Zanaka ready for Asian Games esports events

MYANMAR national esports team (Team Zanaka), representing the country at the 20th Asian Games, will compete in five esports disciplines and aims to win medals for the nation, according to a press briefing held yesterday morning at the KBZ Life Insurance office in Bahan Township, Yangon.

The Myanmar national esports team (Team Zanaka) secured qualification for the Asian Games after successfully competing in regional qualifiers held in various countries. The team advanced to the top 12 in Asia, earning a place in the main tournament.

The 20th Asian Games, organized by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), the second-largest multi-sport event in the world after the Olympic Games will include esports as one of its disciplines. This marks Myanmar's first participation in esports at the



Officials from Myanmar Esports Federation are seen at the press briefing in Bahan Township, Yangon. **PHOTO: ZWE MARN**

Asian Games.

Myanmar will compete in five esports titles: Honour of Kings (HOK), PUBG Mobile (PUBGM), Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB), eFootball Mobile, and eFootball.

Speaking at the press briefing, Myanmar Esports Federation (MESF) President Dr Kaung Myat San said the team had successfully passed regional qualification tournaments against strong opponents from several countries

to reach the Asian Games stage.

He noted that the competition will be highly challenging, with strong teams expected from Mongolia, China, Pakistan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. He added that regardless of challenges, the team is committed to performing at its best and winning medals to raise the country's prestige.

The 20th Asian Games will be held in Aichi-Nagoya,

Japan, from 19 September to 4 October, featuring athletes from over 40 countries. A total of 33 medals will be awarded across 11 esports events.

The Myanmar Esports Federation said it is working to ensure Team Zanaka reaches peak tactical and mental condition in preparation for the competition and is fully focused on securing medal-winning performances for the country. — Thitsa (MNA)/KZL

Cape Verde extend World Cup fairytale, France roll on

CAPE Verde wrote another chapter in their fairytale debut World Cup campaign on Friday, battling into the knockout rounds for the first time to set up a dream showdown with Lionel Messi's Argentina.

The tiny Atlantic archipelago drew 0-0 with Saudi Arabia to clinch second place in Group H and advance to the last 32 where they will face defending champions Argentina at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium on 3 July.

"To us, nothing is impossible," Cape Verde coach Bubiستا told a press conference, his country's flag draped



Cape Verde players celebrate in Houston. **PHOTO: AFP**

around him.

Cape Verde's third consecutive draw saw them finish the group with three points, behind European champions Spain who made sure of top spot with a 1-0 de-

feat of Uruguay.

Two-time World Cup winners Uruguay, who were stunned by Cape Verde in a 2-2 draw last Sunday in their second game, were eliminated from the competition with

just two points.

Spain's win though came at a cost in a bruising encounter, with Jeremy Pino facing a potentially tournament-ending shoulder injury and Nico Williams suffering a muscle problem.

The Group H results brought further clarity to the knockout rounds, ensuring that England, Portugal, Ghana, Egypt and Paraguay would also advance.

Earlier Friday, France lit up the tournament with another dazzling attacking performance, swatting aside Norway 4-1 to clinch top spot in Group I. — AFP

Injured Australian pair Leckie, Italiano out of World Cup

INJURED Australian pair Mathew Leckie and Jacob Italiano were ruled out of the World Cup Friday ahead of their last-32 clash with Egypt, leaving the Socceroos to complete the tournament with 24 players. Striker Leckie, at a

fourth World Cup, hurt his hamstring in the Socceroos' 2-0 Group D loss to the United States and did not feature in their 0-0 draw with Paraguay on Thursday.

Right-back Italiano played against Türkiye and

the United States but injured his groin in training and also missed the Paraguay clash.

"Jacob Italiano and Mathew Leckie will unfortunately miss the remainder of the World Cup through injury," the Socceroos said

in a statement. "Everyone at Football Australia and the Socceroos would like to wish Jacob and Mathew all the best in their recovery and thank them for their contributions during the campaign." — AFP

World Cup fans get taste of American life — at the mall

ECUADOR and Germany fans experienced World Cup fever in an unusual place: the American Dream mall near MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. With no easy gathering spot outside the arena, supporters turned the giant shopping complex into a festive fan zone filled with flags, Latin music, games, food, and sponsor events. [The scene] felt especially American to visitors, who were used to a more direct street- or stadium-centred football culture. Fans from Quito and other cities mixed celebration with curiosity as they moved between luxury stores, mini golf, face painting, watch parties, and Coca-Cola activities. Some collected free drinks

and souvenirs, while others played games or posed for selfies in national colours. The mall's size and theme-park feel surprised many, especially those trying to navigate its layout on the way to the match.

For European supporters, the setting highlighted the scale and spectacle of the US World Cup experience. German fans described it as very different from home, where football gatherings are usually centred on pubs or stadiums rather than a vast shopping mall. Overall, the story shows how the World Cup atmosphere can adapt to local culture, turning an unlikely commercial space into a lively hub for international fans. — AFP



Ecuador and Germany fans experienced World Cup fever in an unusual place: the American Dream mall near MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. **PHOTO: INSTAGRAM**

New wave of anti-LGBTQ laws sweeps Africa

A string of west African countries have outlawed same-sex relations in recent months, further eroding LGBTQ rights on a continent where they were already under attack.

Of Africa's 54 countries, only about 20 do not currently criminalize same-sex relations.

Here is a look at the wave of anti-LGBTQ sentiment sweeping the continent and some of the forces driving it, from politicians playing to their homophobic base to the geopolitics of rejecting supposedly "Western values".

Uganda set the tone in 2023, adopting one of the world's harshest anti-LGBTQ laws, including the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality".—AFP

Amid depopulation, Buddhist priests aim for community revival

Head priest Yoshinobu Yasutake uses the Buddha's birthday festival to bridge gaps within an ageing, shrinking neighbourhood.

On a Sunday in April, Sairinji temple in Fukuoka in southwestern Japan was bustling with people celebrating Buddha's birthday. But the religious festivities were also a prime example of how Buddhists are trying to reinvigorate Japan's ageing, shrinking communities at the grassroots level. Couples, families, senior groups, and foreign visitors packed the Hana Matsuri festival in Yoshizuka, Hakata Ward. The temple grounds were lined with food stalls serving Asian cuisine, while the memorial hall was transformed into a gallery hosting an exhibition by local art students. In front of the main hall, students from Nepal and Sri Lanka performed songs. The neighbourhood features a Japa-

nese language school, and there are many students from other parts of Asia. "People riding by on their bicycles don't know where these students are from or what their culture is like," said Yoshinobu Yasutake, head priest. He said it was a great opportunity for everyone, as fellow residents, to learn about each other's backgrounds. "Please join us in celebrating the birth of the Buddha — everyone is welcome, regardless of age or nationality," he told attendees.

The current Hana Matsuri began in 2013 and helped build connections with people from the Buddhist nations of Myanmar and Vietnam. Having grown up in the region, Yasutake collaborated with the nearby shopping district, which has seen a decline in activ-



Photo shows the Hana Matsuri being held at Sairinji temple in Hakata Ward, Fukuoka, on 12 April. Many foreign visitors attended the festival. **PHOTO: KYODO**

ity amid depopulation. The result was a revitalization project that highlights Asian cultural elements.

With the help of government grants, the Yoshizuka Ichiba Little Asia Market, which promotes multiculturalism, was born in 2020. After hearing from Thai students who told him they wished to pay their respects to "a Buddha with a familiar face", Yasutake came up with the idea of installing a South-East Asian Buddhist statue in the shopping district.

With the support of

local business leaders, the Yoshizuka Mido prayer hall was constructed and a golden Buddhist statue crafted in Myanmar was enshrined in it. The hall serves as a spiritual haven where people from Vietnam and Myanmar gather. On some days, it is full to capacity. Although the shopping district has seen a string of store closures due to the ageing of shop owners among other factors, Yasutake remains committed to gaining regional support and fostering multiculturalism in the community. — Kyodo

The century-long journey of Flying Tigers pilot Jack Goodrich

AT 21, Jack Goodrich flew supply missions over the Hump to help keep China supplied during World War II, a dangerous air route across the Himalayas that claimed many lives. Now 102 and living in Pennsylvania, he still vividly remembers the risks, the hardship, and the kindness he experienced in China, especially in Kunming, where Chinese cooks served him simple meals he never forgot.

Goodrich says the war taught him how precious life is, since three of his childhood friends who also became pilots never



Visitors discuss with each other while viewing exhibits at the Flying Tigers Photo Exhibition in Shanghai, east China, 8 July 2025. **PHOTO: XINHUA/FILE**

returned home. He recalls flying through brutal weather, thin air, and enemy threat, often on oxygen at extreme altitude, and

says he came closest to death in a near-collision during monsoon season. Even so, he treasures the friendship he formed with

Chinese people during the war and after it.

After leaving China in 1945, he built a successful engineering career in the United States, but he continued supporting the Flying Tigers' legacy and returned to China over the years. He also helped a school in Kunming grow from a single house into a full campus. Despite today's tensions between the US and China, Goodrich believes peace and friendship matter more than conflict. His message is simple: believe in tomorrow and make it worthwhile.—Xinhua