

From The Editor

Continental ASEAN: The complex geopolitical landscapes requiring cross-border cooperation

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Trilateral cooperation between China, Thailand and Myanmar against transnational crimes was witnessed starting from February [3]. Thailand limited electricity, fuel, and internet access at five Myanmar sites which were confirmed to centers of cybercrimes. The central Myanmar government limited fuel to these sites, implemented stricter border management to hinder scam operators from fleeing Myanmar, and transferred the victims, primarily Chinese, to Thailand. This complex operation required reinforcing partnerships while adhering to the respective sovereignties and legal frameworks of the nations. Deeper cooperation

strategies and a potential expansion to include other willing nations to combat such illegal transnational enterprises are being further developed. On a larger scale, an urgent and strategic response to the burgeoning illicit economy in Myanmar, dominated by drug trade, human trafficking, and scam operations will be discussed in the ASEAN communities. Scam attempts in 2024 in Thailand alone included 168 million fraudulent calls and SMS messages with deceptive links focusing on gambling and money loan schemes, delivery and utility services, and exploiting government policies such as electricity bill reductions and digital wallet initiatives to deceive people [4] with financial losses suffered by victims in Thailand reaching approximately 80 billion Thai Baht [5].

Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Thailand and China, comprehensive knowledge and proven methodologies, focusing on pollution monitoring enhancement and ambitious reduction strategies that have already transformed Beijing's skyline from grey to clear, will be transferred to Bangkok. This collaboration will embrace a holistic approach integrating practical exchanges, training, and pilot project implementations in Bangkok [6].

During January to March, there were at least eight students from elementary and secondary schools in Buriram province in Northeastern Thailand were hospitalized due to severe respiratory inflammation and were found to have been using e-cigarettes for about two years. One of them died and one was intubated because of severe lung damage [7]. The government intensified its stance on e-cigarettes, with individuals caught with these illegal items facing up to five years in prison and substantial fines. Facing substantial penalties, those involved in selling, buying, importing, or using e-cigarettes risk severe repercussions. The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society blocked over 9,500 URLs related to vape sales. Using advanced social listening tools, the ministry removed numerous online ads, reinforcing a zero-tolerance policy [8].





The executive committee members and lecturers from the Royal College of Radiologists and the Radiological Society of Thailand participated the 23rd Asia Oceania Congress of Radiology (AOCR) on 23-26 January 2025, Chennai, India; held the 29th RCRT-61st RST Annual Scientific Meeting on 20-22 March 2025, Bangkok, Thailand; and joined the 74th Taiwan Radiological Congress (TRC) on 3-4 May 2025, Taipei, Taiwan.

On Friday 28 March, just a week after the 29th RCRT and the 61st Annual Scientific Meeting, a massive earthquake originating from Mandalay, where it killed more than 3,700 people and caused major damage, shook Myanmar and Thailand, mainly the northern and central parts. The SMS-based earthquake warning system failed to alert citizens promptly even though it was estimated that the tremors in Bangkok happened around 10 minutes after the epicenter. No injuries or fatalities were reported in Northern Thailand. In central Thailand, the new State Audit Office (SAO) building in Bangkok collapsed. At the time of the quake, 109 workers were present; 89 bodies have since been recovered, with seven still missing. Nine individuals sustained injuries, while four workers who were absent on the day the disaster struck had since returned home safely. Other buildings, including all bridges and underpasses reported cracks and peeling plaster, though their structural integrity remains intact. The collapsed SAO building set grim world records: the tallest building to fall in an earthquake and the furthest from an epicenter to suffer such a fate. It also showcased the vulnerability of Thailand's

infrastructure. Despite laws requiring seismic-resistant designs for tall buildings, the collapse suggested serious enforcement issues. Thai media highlighted the role of Italian-Thai's Chinese joint venture partner, the China Railway No. 10 company, which is involved in projects around the world. Evidence and testimony from experts suggested the building plan did not meet standards and codes. The police charged 17 Thai and Chinese companies' directors, contractors, nominees, engineers and architects with the felony of professional negligence causing death [9].

Between 4 and 10 May, Covid-19 cases were roughly double the number of influenza cases, rising from 14,680 to be 16,607 cases, with 6 deaths [10]. Despite their increased transmissibility, these strains seemingly caused mild symptoms and are treatable like other respiratory illnesses. However, the spike in cases and fatalities called for a vigilant public health response as medical experts closely monitor the trajectory of the virus.

Thailand reported 4 anthrax cases in Mukdahan, a province in the northeastern part of the country, and experienced its first anthrax-related death since 1994 on 30 April [11]. Thailand last reported 15 human anthrax cases in 2000 and two cases in 2017, without any death. The cases were from Don Tan, a district in Mukdahan located just across the Mekong River from Laos where 129 anthrax infections, including one related death, were reported last year. Laos's outbreak in 2024 and Vietnam's 13 cases reported in May 2023 underscored the porous nature of zoonotic disease transmission across the region [12].

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