

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

New Year greetings extended by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on New Year's occasion on 1 January 2025

ON this occasion of the New Year 2025, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all national brethren residing within Myanmar. May you all be blessed with good health, peace of mind, and the fulfilment of your aspirations.

Since the assumption of the State's responsibilities, the State Administration Council has envisioned the path forward for the nation by setting visions, roadmaps and objectives. Through our steadfast efforts, we are now witnessing significant achievements in working towards our goals. This has been possible thanks to our people's active and cooperative support. While the journey ahead may bring challenges, difficulties, and obstacles, I firmly believe that we can overcome them through the united strength and collective efforts of all of us.

Those who wish ill upon our citizens have targeted various aspects of urban and rural security and economic sectors throughout 2024, aiming to disrupt and destroy them. These actions stem from ignorant individuals whose deeds harm their communities and regions. They exploit noble values such as ethnicity, equality, and democracy, using them as a pretext for terror acts that ultimately degrade their people and areas. We must work together to prevent and put a stop to such actions.

We successfully enumerated the population and housing census in 2024. Moreover, we successfully hosted the Fifth Nation-



al Sports Festival, laying a strong foundation for elevating the country's sports standards. We have also made significant progress in the nation's development to a certain extent. These achievements were made possible due to the dedicated efforts of those who have been working selflessly and courageously for peace and stability of the State, defence, non-disintegration of the Union, the rule of law, and strengthening of democracy. I would like to express my deep respect and honour to the heroic Tatmadaw members, Myanmar Police Force members, people's militia, war veterans, civil servants and all citizens who sacrificed their lives and limbs. These acts will remain as part of our historical records

and serve as a testament to the enduring patriotism and unity of our people. In our country, armed conflict remains a challenge. My aim is solely to resolve these conflicts for the benefit of the nation and the people, fostering a stable and peaceful environment. This must be achieved through political means that the people desire, including dialogue and negotiation. These approaches can establish peace and stability, while also improving economic and social conditions. However, while the leaders of armed groups often claim to pursue democracy under various pretexts, in reality, they are driven by self-interest and continue to perpetrate armed conflicts. Similarly, some ethnic leaders, though speaking of

federal rights and ethnic rights, turn a blind eye to the essence of democracy and work towards the disintegration of the Union. It is important to carefully balance what is desirable and feasible and to act per democratic principles for the benefit of the Union. The inability to resolve armed conflicts in our country is partly due to the differing paths taken with various common objectives. To address these issues, we all need to move forward resolutely along the path to democracy through firm spirit. I would also like to urge our people to encourage armed groups to join the democratic path.

In this world, for a nation or a people to survive and thrive, it is essential to possess the ability to

defend themselves and to continuously enhance their capabilities. If we cannot sustain our lives and our stability through our efforts, it could lead to a weakened sovereignty of the nation and potentially result in subjugation by others. To remain steadfast as an independent nation and to avoid becoming subordinate to others, all citizens of the country must unite in solidarity. In times when the nation faces threats, Tatmadaw, which bears the primary responsibility for national defence, and the people must work together firmly. With patriotism, unity, and unwavering courage, we must protect the nation with determination and strive for its long-term stability and development.

As for me, I am striving to successfully organize a free and fair election, which is the ultimate goal of the State Administration Council. Efforts are also being made to bring the nation back onto the correct democratic path. Therefore, I urge our citizens to unite and actively participate in ensuring the success of the election based on the patriotism and national spirit demonstrated in 2024. Let us all work together so that 2025 becomes a year of victory for the people, reaching the democratic goal all citizens aspire to, and make this a testament to our collective efforts.

I wish all my fellow national brethren of Myanmar to nurture mutual kindness and work together for the benefit of the nation and our people. Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

OPINION

Initiate peace for the entire nation through united strength

PAGE 8

NATIONAL **PAGE 6**

Nay Pyi Taw welcomes New Year with large crowds

BUSINESS **PAGE 11**

Yangon Port handles 633 container vessels in 2024

NATIONAL

Communities Urged to Unite Against Armed Groups to Safeguard Peace and Security

RESIDENTS must work together to prevent the presence of armed groups in order to reduce acts of terror, as these groups undermine peace and stability in the region and threaten residents' security.

(Excerpt from the speech given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the meeting with members of the Kayah State government, state-level departmental officials, town elders and locals on 4 September 2024.)

State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa delivers the following New Year message:



TODAY marks the auspicious beginning of 2025, as the old year 2024 ends. May all the people of Myanmar and the world be free from all calamities, dangers, and evils as they enter this new year filled with blessings. May they attain all their desired wisdom, wealth, fame, and

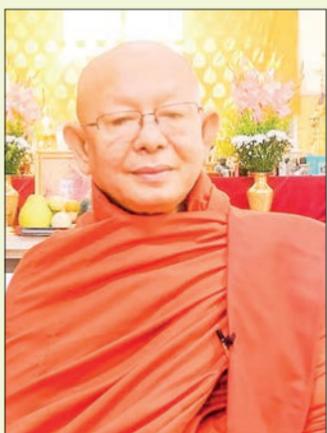
good friends.

“To seek wisdom, humbly learn from those who know. With steadfast effort, wealth is earned. Truthful words bring fame. By giving generously with a loving heart, one gains true friends”.

According to Buddha’s words and the wisdom enshrined in the Magadeva

Linka, let us seek wisdom from wise. With unwavering effort, let us build our lives. Honest words and a generous heart will bring us both fame and friendship. In the new year, may all the people of the world be physically and mentally well and free from all kinds of clamity.

New Year’s Message for 2025 from Presiding Sayadaw of the Nanda Aungmyay Monastery Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Aggamaha Kammathanacariya Dr Bhaddanta Nimala (PhD Buddhism)



be able to overcome the period of great catastrophe by nurturing love and affection.

The Dhamma, the most precious gem in the world, blossomed for the well-being of all beings. This is true. Because of this truth, may all the people of the world and all the people of Myanmar be able to overcome the period of femine by performing charity.

The Sangha, the most noble gem in the world, has flourished as a sacred refuge for the benefit of all beings. This is true. Because of this truth, may all the people of the world and all the people of Myanmar be able to overcome the period of pestilence by seeking wisdom.

With these truthful words, may all the people of the world, especially those in Myanmar, be blessed with peace of mind, good health, and prosperity like the rising tides. May they flourish and thrive in the New Year.

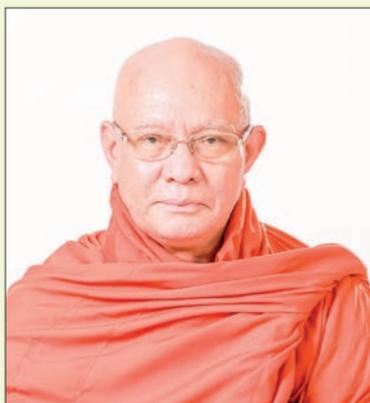
TODAY is the New Year’s Day of 2025 which is celebrated worldwide. From now on, on this New Year’s Day, may all the people of the world, including the Sangha and the laypeople of Myanmar, be healthy, prosperous, and filled with happiness and prosperity in the new year.

The Buddha, the most precious gem in the world, enlightened for the benefit of all beings. This is true. Because of this truth, may all the people of the world and all the people of Myanmar

New Year Wish from Dr Bhaddanta Saddhamma Kittisara (Aung San Sayadaw)

IT is an auspicious occasion changing to 2025 from 2024. May all the Myanmar citizens and people living in the world be in good health, and prosperous. I also wish all the people to be the significant and powerful ones in carrying out the measures for the sake of religion, race, and country. May all the people of the world be able to eradicate negative thoughts, and keep positive mindsets and thoughts in the new year.

May all the people possess seven treasures of Buddha teachings because all should follow these seven treasures: Saddha (faith), Sila (morality), Suta (learning), Caga (generosity), Pannya (wisdom), Hiri (moral shame), and Ottappa (moral dread). I also



extended my best wishes for all people to possess good things and uphold these seven treasures on the New Year occasion.

Saddha means belief. People do what they believe in. Therefore, all human beings have their own Kamma (action or deed). If they do good things, they can have good things. If they do bad things, they can have bad things, If they say positive words, they can have good things. If they say bad words, they can have bad things. If they think positive side, they can have good things, and if they think negative side, they can have negative things. Therefore, we extend our Metta to all according to Kamma and the law of Kamma. May all Myanmar people and those who living in the world do good things, say positive words, and think the positive things. If they have a positive mindset in their actions, words and thoughts, there might be no negative consequences in the whole world, but positive consequences.

Similarly, no one can be rescued from their Kamma and the consequences of their actions. Check your thoughts from the daytime to nighttime. All know

themselves how they think or attempt to do something regarding the action, word and thought. If they think negative cases, they can get negative things. The negative things never offer a peaceful mindset. When the year is changing into a new one, I wish all the Myanmar people and people living in the world not to think, do or say negative things.

The value of humans begins is tolerance and forgiveness. If everyone possesses the seven treasures — Saddha (faith), Sila (morality), Suta (learning), Caga (generosity), Pannya (wisdom), Hiri (moral shame), and Ottappa (moral dread) – along with tolerance and forgiveness, they can enjoy their lives as human beings, ultimately leading to Nibbana. If all follow the Buddha’s teachings, they can have good benefits in their lives, the celestial realm and Nibbana. May all have perfection in Loki (mundane) and Lokuttara (supramundane), and avoid the rebirth in hell. May all reach Nibbana where there is no Santisukha, Saddha, Jati (birth), Jara (old age), Vyadhi (illness), Marana (death) and Dukkha (suffering).

NATIONAL

THE fellow citizens need cohesion, unity and discipline. They are necessary to exert efforts not to lose sight of the main goal and not to deviate from the path, regardless of any kind of incitement by the unscrupulous elements.

[An excerpt from the radio speech delivered by Bogyoke Aung San on 1 January 1947]



Inlay Lake. PHOTO BY MYO MIN HTIKE (IPRD)

Five National Objectives for 77th Anniversary of Independence Day 2025

1. To address armed conflicts and differing perspectives lawfully, ensuring non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
2. To safeguard the State with unity and strength of all citizens, guided by the spirit of the Union
3. To conduct a free, fair, and credible general election to establish a genuine, disciplined democratic system
4. To promote balanced development across all sectors of the Union through the collective strength of the entire people
5. To collectively advance politics, the economy, defence, national identity, and spirit with perseverance, diligence, and dedication, guided by the motto: "Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal"

Myanmar's 2024 Census Provisional Results: Population at 51.3M

THE event to announce the preliminary population and household census results for 2024 was held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II (MICC II) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The ceremony began with the screening of a video clip about the 2024 census and household registration data.

Consequently, Central Census Commission Chairman and Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Myint Kyaing gave a speech, stating that the census project was carried out from 1 to 15 October 2024, with a planned timeline, step-by-step.

The preliminary results will be released in detail before the end of 2025. Some areas were inaccessible due to security and transport conditions during the census. In those areas, the population was estimated using census data, remote sensing technology, international expert estimates, and departmental records. Thus, the total popu-



Union Minister U Myint Kyaing speaks on the occasion to announce the preliminary census results yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.



lation of Myanmar as per the 2024 census is announced to be 51,316,756, including 32,191,407 from the census and 19,125,349 from estimated data. Among them, 15,105,215 males and 17,086,192 females are recorded, with a gender ratio of 46.9 per cent males and 53.1 per cent

females.

The most populous region is Yangon with 14.4 per cent of the population, and the least populous region is Kayah State with 0.6 per cent. Tracing Myanmar's population growth, there were only 7.7 million in 1891, 10.5 million in 1901, 28.9 million

in 1973, and 35.3 million in 1983. However, there were 51.5 million in 2014 and 51.3 million in 2024, including estimates for inaccessible regions. The digits show a slight decline over the past decade. Population changes are due to birth rates, death rates, and migration.

After the event, local and foreign news media interviewed the Union minister and relevant officials regarding the population and household census. The census data are available on the Department of Population's website at www.dop.gov.mm. — MNA/KTZH

NATIONAL

Residents Urged to Prioritize Public Safety Amid Armed Terrorist Threats

ARMED terrorists have been launching attacks by using residential homes and administrative buildings in towns and villages as cover, where they have forcibly settled. They aim to shield themselves from Tatmadaw counterattacks while also persuading temporarily displaced persons to return to their native areas and recruiting new members. That enables terrorists to use civilians as human shields. Tatmadaw is committed to safeguarding the sovereignty of the State and will respond to these threats based on intelligence and prevailing conditions. Therefore, residents in areas where terrorists have taken control must prioritize their safety and protect themselves from being exploited by these groups.

(Excerpt from guidance given by Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to Shan State cabinet members and state-level departmental officials on 3 September 2024)

New Year wish from International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University Rector Aggamahapandita Dr Bhaddanta Chekinda

BEING a son of Buddha, I would like to say “Thebbay Thatta Kammatthaka” (all possess the consequences of their deeds) during the New Year occasion.

All the beings are running in a circle of lives depending on their deeds. One becomes a good person for their wholesome Kamma, and one becomes a bad person for their unwholesome Kamma.

Kamma is not the action created for one by others. Your actions, words and thoughts are your fate or predestination. As long as one has positive actions, words and thoughts, he or she might have a wholesome predestination. Otherwise, their Kamma might be unwholesome.

The results of good luck and bad luck are different.

During the New Year occasion, one should think to do better and try

hard for themselves and also for others. All should try to do better things, say positive words, and think the positive thoughts for themselves and others.

All especially say or think depending on their thoughts. If all usually say and do good things, it becomes their habits as their actions and thoughts will significantly change into good ones. If not, they are on the runway of negative consequences.

Therefore, during this New Year occasion,

I extend by Metta (loving-kindness) to all living things, the whole nation, country, world and unaversive.

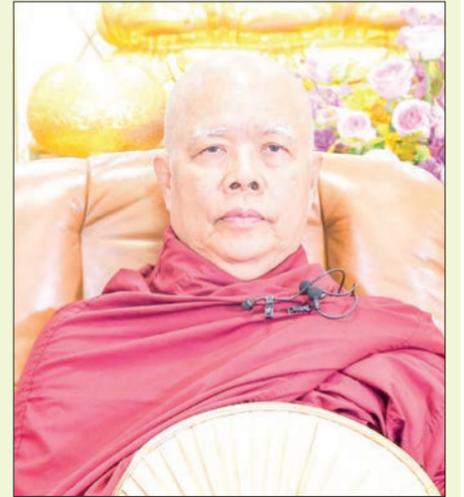
That Metta comes from Karuna, and the mindset of Metta is from Mudita. The mindset of Metta is to do your duty and share Metta with all living things despite the living things have

their predestination. It is based on Upekkha (equanimity).

If one has Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha, and does good things, says positive words, and thinks constructively, such doings can be supportive causes for his or her surroundings to do, say and think optimistic things.

If one extends Metta, another can receive it if he or she accepts it. If one extends Karuna, another can receive it if he or she accepts it. If one extends Mudita, another can receive it if he or she accepts it. Therefore, Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha are the things that the noble person upholds, and they protect the world and make the world peaceful.

Therefore, “Thebbay Thatta Kammatthaka”, all should do, say and think wholesomely, cultivating Metta, Karuna,



Mudita and Upekkha in mind. May all people do, say and think positive things for the whole nation and world. May all be in good health and build a peaceful world.

New Year wishes from Young Men’s Buddhist Association (Central) and Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central)

U Ye Htun Chairman
Young Men’s Buddhist Association (Central)



AS the year 2024 comes to a close and the transition to 2025 begins, we extend heartfelt New Year wishes to all citizens of Myanmar, including monks,

laypeople, and people across the world. May you all experience peace of mind, good health and prosperity.

We strongly urge all citizens to work together in line with the roadmap and nine objectives set forth by the government, to ensure stability and progress for Myanmar. With the motto, the Young Men’s Buddhist Association (YMBA) is committed to collaborating with others for the country’s development.

Starting from the beginning of 2025, we encourage all Myanmar citizens to join hands in unity for peace, prosperity and development. We send our warm wishes for a peaceful and prosperous year ahead and hope for the continued well-being of our nation.

U Wunna Chairman
Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central)



TODAY marks the transition from the year 2024 to the year 2025 in the Christian calendar. On 1 January 2025, the Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central) extends heartfelt New Year wishes to all ethnic brothers and sisters, citizens of My-

anmar and people around the world. We wish for peace of mind, good health and a fulfilling life for everyone. May you all enjoy a peaceful and prosperous life.

We, the Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central), reaffirm our commitment to carrying out activities that benefit the public following our four key religious principles. These include providing assistance to regions affected by natural disasters, offering free eye surgeries, organizing blood donation drives and establishing free vocation-

al training courses. We also continue to hold traditional religious festivals, embodying our motto of “Working Together for Peace”.

Unity is strength and we encourage all ethnic groups, citizens and communities residing in Myanmar to remain loyal to our great nation, contribute to its welfare, protect it and unite for peace. We wish for Myanmar to remain peaceful and prosperous and we send our heartfelt wishes for continued peace and harmony throughout the country in the new year.

NATIONAL

**U Zaw Zaw Naing (Hinduism)
Vice-Chairman
Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central)**

MAY the love of the Lord Buddha bring prosperity, development and peace to the great nation of Myanmar. By the grace of Lord Maha Pannā, may Myanmar be free from internal and external conflicts and become a prosperous and developed country.

As we transition from 2024 to 2025, we wish for the health, well-being and fulfilment of all Myanmar citizens residing within the country. May all the people be able to overcome difficulties and challenges. If we are united and work hard, we will be able to overcome challenges and Myanmar will become a prosperous country.

As we move into the new year, let us send our best wishes filled with love and compassion. Myanmar must continue to be a country blessed with love and compassion as it has always been known for its kindness. Let us clear away negativity and



differing opinions in this coming year. With new thoughts and perspectives, we must strive to make Myanmar a prosperous and flourishing nation.

**U Thomas (Christian)
Vice-Chairman
Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central)**

SHALOM (Peace be upon you),

As we transition from the year 2024 to the new year 2025, I am truly honoured and delighted to have the opportunity to speak as the second vice-chairman of the Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central) of Myanmar as a Christian.

In the Union of Myanmar, various ethnic groups live together in harmony, regardless of their race, religion or social status. They coexist peacefully and are united in their shared commitment to building a better future.

As a member of the Interfaith Friendship Organization, we are working diligently within our capacities to contribute to the peaceful and harmonious development of the entire nation.

With the arrival of the new year, I wish all citizens of Myanmar continued progress, peace, health and happiness.



May we all be blessed with prosperity and joy in the year ahead.

May the Eternal Lord bless everyone abundantly.

**U Aung Zaw Win (Islam)
Vice-Chairman
Interfaith Friendship Organization (Central)**



Mingalaba,

As we bid farewell to the year 2024 and welcome the new year of 2025, I, on behalf of the Muslim community, send heartfelt prayers for the health, happiness and peace of all citizens of Myanmar and the world. May we all be blessed with good health and harmony, free from hardships and struggles.

In Myanmar, people from diverse ethnicities live together harmoniously, living in the same land and drinking from the same rivers. Despite differences in

religion, ethnicity and beliefs, we stand united with a spirit of brotherhood, national unity and a sense of belonging. Each individual's faith and ideology are respected and we live together with love, affection and peace. We are also grounded in mutual respect and compassion. This is the essence of Myanmar.

As members of the Interfaith Friendship and Unity Organization, we, as Muslims, also contribute our efforts toward realizing a peaceful and prosperous nation. We are committed to working together in

our respective fields to ensure the stability and well-being of our country.

With the passing of the old year and the arrival of the new one, I pray for the cleansing of all negativity and challenges. May our country be able to continue its journey toward peace, progress and the establishment of a democratic state where every citizen contributes to the common good. May everyone's wishes and desires be fulfilled in the coming year.

May peace and prosperity prevail for all.

New Year wishes from officials of literary, film and oil dealers' associations for New Year 2025

Dr Tin Tun Oo (Chairman, Myanmar Press Council)

I extend my best wishes to everyone around the world, and all citizens of every nation, for a blessed and prosperous New Year in 2025. May all of you enjoy good health, mental well-being, safety, and the fulfilment of your aspirations, with your actions harmonizing with your intentions.

The Myanmar Press Council aims to establish the media sector as

a fully functioning Fourth Pillar of the nation, striving for a more developed and progressive media landscape. Efforts will be made to contribute as much as possible through the media sector to the benefit of the country and its people.

May the entire Republic of the Union of Myanmar be a stable, peaceful, prosperous, and developed nation. I wish



for the Union to endure eternally with steadfast strength.

U Kyi Soe Tun (Chairman, Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization)

I would like to start by wishing that the year 2025 will be a prosperous and auspicious one for everyone. We have all overcome various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, we have reached a significant and appropriate milestone. On this journey, I hope that the film industry and the public can move forward together in unity, working for the good of our country.

May everyone continue to advance in harmony, with good health, happiness, and strength.

Motion pictures depend on the audience. It is the presence of the audience that makes cinema what it is. To welcome the audience and make films accessible to them, we build cinemas and present films. What is most important is the audience. I wish for all our supportive audi-

ences to enjoy films with happiness, good health, and unity. May all the people enjoy good health and peace of mind in the New year.



see page 7

NATIONAL

Nay Pyi Taw welcomes New Year with large crowds



Photos show fireworks lighting up the the sky as Nay Pyi Taw rings in the New Year (left), with a lively crowd joyously enjoying the music concert at the New Year Countdown event.

THE New Year music concert was organized yesterday at Wunna Theikdi Training Grounds 1 and 2 in Nay Pyi Taw to celebrate the New Year, and the sites were crowded with visitors to welcome the year 2025.

The concert included sing-

ing sessions of famous singers to the accompaniment of the band and DJs, and all the people participated in a countdown to shout Happy New Year in unison at midnight.

The sites are decorated with photo booths for those who like

taking photographs and playgrounds for the children.

The New Year Countdown Live Show and funfair were organized on 30 December at Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Park. All the places in the park were decorated with colourful light

bulbs beautifully.

Over 20 food, souvenirs, and local product stalls were established, and food was sold at affordable prices.

The New Year Countdown Live Show and funfair included performances of famous singers

and dancers who participated in the concert to the accompaniment of the Art Robots Band and DJs.

At midnight, they all chanted Happy New Year after doing a new year countdown. — MNA/KTZH

Mandalay residents celebrate New Year 2025



Eventgoers browse the stalls at yesterday's countdown in Mandalay.

MAJOR cities in Myanmar including Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay celebrated the arrival of the year 2025 with joy and excitement. As 2024 ended, people in Mandalay gathered in the city to celebrate the New Year with events, music and entertainment.

The celebration began in the evening with families and friends coming together to enjoy the festivities. The main event took place at the junction of 26th and 66th streets (corner of Mandalay Palace Moat) where stages were set up for live performances by famous artists.

The event is filled with music, colourful lights and a lively atmosphere.

Ko Hla Myint Thein, an attendee said, "I came to join

the celebrations. I've been waiting for the countdown and am excited to welcome the New Year with my family. I want to thank the organizers for such a beautiful event with lights and performances".

The event features modern pop music and DJ performances, adding to the night's excitement. Food stalls were set up and parking arrangements were made to ensure everyone could enjoy the celebration.

As midnight approached, people eagerly counted down to the New Year. At midnight, they chanted "Happy New Year" together, lighting fireworks to celebrate the arrival of 2025. — Maung Aye Chan/KZL



This image showcases revellers enjoying the music concert.

New Year celebration kicks off in Yangon



This phot shows vocalists performing for joyous New Year Countdown eventgoers in Yangon.

NAY Pyi Taw and Yangon, along with other cities, welcomed 2025 with thousands of revellers counting down to the new year.

People were crowded at People's Square in Yangon starting yesterday afternoon, and pilgrims visited the Shwedagon Pagoda.

At the 2025 New Year Countdown Festival stage, well-known singers, artistes,

DJs and dance groups performed for visitors. Over 100 stalls of food and souvenirs were established at the event site.

At midnight, all the New Year revellers made a New Year countdown chanting Happy New Year and cheering at colourful fireworks. The people were satisfied with a free transport system. — Zaw Min Latt (MNA)/KTZH

NATIONAL

New Year wishes from officials of literary, film and ...

From page 5

U Lwin Myint (Chairman, Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central))

DIFFERENT nationalities and religions of the countries around the world celebrate the New Year with great joy. On the occasion of the New Year, there is also a tradition of bidding farewell to the negatives of the past year and embracing the New Year with positive aspirations for a fresh start. May everyone foster kindness, love, and compassion toward one another, joining hands to create a peaceful world. As we step into the New



Year of 2025, I extend my heartfelt wishes for the fulfillment of everyone's aspirations, along with mental peace, physical health, and overall well-being.

Alinka Kyaw Swa U Aung Tin Win (Patron, Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central))

TO all citizens of the Union and all artistes, I extend my heartfelt New Year wishes, praying for everyone's good health, peace of mind, freedom from fear, and an abundance of happiness and prosperity.



U San Lin (Chairman, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association)

AS the Myanmar Oil Dealers' Association, we are working hand in hand with the government to ensure that the public has sufficient supply of edible oil. The year 2024 has just concluded, and we have entered the auspicious New Year of 2025. On this joyful occasion of the New Year, may entire people enjoy peace of mind, good health, and prosperity. May all members and affiliates of the association continue to dedicate themselves to serving the nation's and the people's interests while upholding the objectives of our organ-



ization. I would like to extend my New Year greetings. May all the people of the world and all citizens of Myanmar enjoy physical and mental well-being with goodness.

U Maung Maung San (Treasurer of Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association)



AS the world transition from 2024 to 2025, this marks a joyous New Year's occasion. At this significant time of celebration, may all Myanmar citizens and people around the globe embrace a fresh mindset, renewed spirit, and a life filled with peace of mind and good health.

May prosperity grow abundantly each day, like a flowing stream, and may all aspirations be fulfilled. May everyone be free from illnesses and dangers. Let us also pray for Myanmar to remain peaceful and prosperous, wishing for harmony and well-being for all.

U Nanda Kyaw (Acting Chairman of Myanmar Real Estate Development Association)

AS we welcome the New Year 2025, may all the people of Myanmar be free from harm and danger, enjoying health, happiness and prosperity.

May everyone be blessed with physical and mental well-being, surrounded by all forms of good fortune and success in the coming new year.



Chaungtha Beach bustles with holidaymakers during New Year

CHAUNGTHA Beach located in Patheingyi District, Ayeyawady Region is bustling with visitors during the New Year holiday season. Both locals and tourists are enjoying their time on the beach, swimming and relaxing.

Tourists are also visiting nearby islands, such as Phoekala and Thebyu Islands by boat. Others are travelling to Shwethaungyan Beach, Kyaukmaungnama and Sea @Lake Garden by car, tricycle or motorcycle.

Officials led by Township Administrator U Thiha Aung are overseeing the

beach's management to ensure safety, cleanliness and smooth traffic flow. They are working with local authorities to maintain order and create a pleasant environment for all visitors.

Chaungtha Beach is popular for its long coastline and clear waters. The beach becomes busier than usual during this new year season. — Kyaw Kyaw (IPRD)/KZL

Visitors throng.



YBS buses commuting people who join the countdown at People's Park.

YRTC arranges buses for New Year countdown in Yangon

YANGON Region Public Transport Committee provided YBS buses to the Yangon 2025 Countdown Festival at People's Park in Dagon Township, Yangon Region.

For the convenience of the journey returning home for those who joined the countdown begin-

ning at noon on 31 December, seven YBS bus lines — YBS 21, YBS 61, YBS 37, YBS 115, YBS 62, YBS 7 and YBS 8 commuted from 9 pm to midnight.

"Taxi prices are expensive so we can't afford. But YBS buses helped our family to celebrate the

New Year Eve cost-effectively, so we thank YBS," said a woman.

The new year countdown, which featured many famous movie stars and singers and entertainment by DJs and dance troupes, was celebrated with fireworks.— Htun Htun/ZS

OPINION

Initiate peace for the entire nation through united strength

HUMAN nature tends to hope for all good things and wishes. However, when what is longed for does not materialize, people face frustration and hardship. The reality of human society is intertwined with both good and bad, meaning not every hope will result in only good outcomes. According to the natural order, undesirable things may also arise alongside the bad.

Those who aspire to genuine goodness should reflect on how well they have lived and practised virtuous behaviour within their society. They should carefully consider how much positive impact they have brought to their families, communities, and nations. At the same time, they should also assess how their actions and words may have caused harm to their family, surroundings, or country. Only by doing so can they truly determine whether they deserve or are entitled to the goodness they seek.

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. For someone who harbours negative thoughts, beliefs, or actions while desiring only good outcomes, can the world truly provide them with what they seek? And if it does, would it be fair when compared to others? If the world were to reward every good deed with unwavering precision, would it result in a just decision for all of humanity?

There is a saying in this world: "Give and take." One must be able to provide others with what they need. Only then will others provide one with fulfilment for needs. This is a profoundly true principle of mutual reciprocity in the world. Therefore, as the New Year approaches, those who wish for blessings must live and act in ways that make them deserving of those blessings.

Everyone desires a peaceful and prosperous life. Therefore, as the New Year begins, everybody wishes for peace and prosperity. With peace and prosperity, all endeavours will proceed smoothly and successfully, free from harm and danger. Worries and anxieties will be alleviated. Only then can people work with peace of mind for their livelihood. As a result, a harmonious society can be built, bringing comfort and happiness to the hearts of the people.

The benefits brought about by national peace are numerous. A peaceful future awaits the people of Myanmar. However, peace cannot be achieved through prayers alone. It requires the collective effort of all walks of life, working together towards peace. Praying will not bring peace to the nation. Only through genuine efforts by all competing groups to build peace sincerely can the country achieve lasting tranquillity.

The benefits brought about by national peace are numerous. A peaceful future awaits the people of Myanmar. However, peace cannot be achieved through prayers alone. It requires the collective effort of all walks of life, working together towards peace. Praying will not bring peace to the nation. Only through genuine efforts by all competing groups to build peace sincerely can the country achieve lasting tranquillity.

HAILING THE 77TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025: ASPIRATION OF THE PEOPLE FOR LONG-LASTING INDEPENDENCE

By Khin Yadana

THE 4th of January 2025 is a significant and historic day that marks the 77th anniversary of Myanmar's liberation from colonial rule and attainment of independence. The people must have been eagerly waiting for the auspicious moment of gaining independence since January's early days 77 years ago.

The city of Yangon enveloped in the serene atmosphere of the winter breeze waited with anticipation whether the national flag would be raised high upon its soil. 4 January 1948. The news of the impending declaration of independence at dawn spread from Yangon to even the furthest corners of the country. Historical records describe the night as one filled with restless anticipation. Some stayed awake through the night that it was a moment of great significance, eagerly waiting for that moment, others laying out plans for their newfound lives of freedom. Still, others were savouring the imagined taste of independence. Many remembered and paid tribute to the martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for this cause. That day marked over 100 years since liberation from the control of another, granting the people the right to carve their own nation's destiny. It's no surprise that everyone would feel immense joy and pride on such a momentous occasion.

At exactly 4:20 am, the sounds of cannons from the Myanmar Tatmadaw and the British navy stationed at the Yangon port were first heard. The thunderous cannon fire was not for warfare but rather to mark the auspicious occasion of Myanmar's impending independence. At the end of the booming sounds, the UNIJET flag, which had stood for over 100 years in front of the Yangon City Ministers' Office, gradually slid down from the top of the



the flag representing the entire nation of Myanmar rose swiftly from the bottom of the pole to the top, taking its place at the pinnacle.

pole. Following this, the flag representing the entire nation of Myanmar rose swiftly from the bottom of the pole to the top, taking its place at the pinnacle. The gentle breeze of the winter season seemed to support the national flag as it fluttered proudly at the top, enhancing its dignity.

Upon gaining independence, some citizens shed tears of joy, overwhelmed with happiness. Others danced, with exhilaration, some gave offerings, and a few ran and shouted in boundless excitement. Yet, some quietly savoured the taste of freedom. Having been liberated from the bonds of servitude, the people's collective aspiration was to unite and work towards progress and prosperity. The

voices of children would resonate through schools. Factories would operate, their chimneys releasing smoke as a sign of industrial activity. Highways, railroads, and other transport networks would connect the mountains and plains, rural regions and cities, fostering movement and trade. They rejoiced with the hope that wars would cease and the great garden of peace would bloom eternally.

In a speech delivered at the City Hall before the assassination and before achieving independence, General Aung San, as if foreseeing the future, urged the people with clarity: **"If you desire independence, cultivate the discipline necessary to attain it. If you want independence, maintain the**

unity required to achieve it. If you wish for independence, build the foundations that can make it possible. After doing so, if you wish to truly savour the essence of independence, you must work hard, be dis-

ciplined, and, starting now, reform yourselves by shedding bad habits, outdated customs, and indulgences." Although the General had warned us, we still lack discipline to this day. Unity continues to fade, and the people have yet to fully and completely experience the essence of freedom.



Burma declares Independence on 4 January 1948.

ciplined, and, starting now, reform yourselves by shedding bad habits, outdated customs, and indulgences." Although the General had warned us, we still lack discipline to this day. Unity continues to fade, and the people have yet to fully and completely experience the essence of freedom.

The British colonialists deliberately divided and marginalized the hill regions with ill intent, refusing to grant immediate independence to these areas. This strategy has perpetuated mistrust and discord between the hill people and the lowland people until today. Thanks to the far-sightedness of General Aung San and national race leaders, who engaged in extensive discussions and ne-

gotiations, the Panglong Agreement was reached, enabling a united struggle for independence. However, after the death of General Aung San, divisive ideologies based on distinctions such as hill people, lowlanders,

in various cities and regions, there was widespread destruction due to bombings and air raids. The abandoned fields during the colonial withdrawal were also devastated. Many civilians, affected by the war, were still

unable to return to their homes. Reconstruction efforts were ongoing, but much work remained to be done.

After gaining independence, Myanmar embarked on a path of development and nation-building. However, different political ideologies, diverse thoughts, and communities continued to clash. Communists went underground. In northern Rakhine State, insurgents such as the Mujahideen sought control, and the situation escalated to the point where the Karen National Union (KNU) came close to Yangon, particularly near Insein. The government with lesser governing experience, dealing with the country's internal conflicts, has had to navigate and resolve these challenges.

Some members of the new generation, having lost hope due to the news of those in hiding in the jungles, and those who, believing in instigations wedged by followers of foreign masterminds, invited and welcomed armed conflicts to their regions, have become homeless as a result. Young people, who cannot attend school because the schools are closed, lose their future. Political figures, who, under the pretext of revolution, have raised funds in various forms, are now enriching themselves abroad, using the name of politics to betray their country and its citizens. When these news reports and events are witnessed, they cause great distress to the people.

The armed groups should all look forward to peace with a vision and political maturity. They should strive for a peaceful resolution to end the armed conflicts. Based on the national spirit of adoring the country, citizens must all work together to build a genuine disciplined democratic nation. Every citizen deserves to experience the taste of freedom on the democratic path. Freedom is explicitly defined as the right to vote. Each citizen has been entrusted with a small share of political power. This is the most fundamental political right, ensuring that every individual in a free country has the right to participate.

The main issue with the current armed conflicts is the attempt to solve political problems through military means. The government has kept the door to peace open continuously since the previous administrations. Even now, it remains open. If there is a true desire for durable peace, or if there is political maturity that genuinely considers the welfare of the people, then the weapons in hand should be laid down, and the parties should be brought to the negotiation table for peace.

Since the 77th Anniversary of Independence Day, we pray that the people may soon experience the fruits of peace by resolving the conflicts that have long been a source of desire and struggle and that peace may flourish swiftly.

Even the Myanmar Tatmadaw couldn't assert control amidst the complexity of internal rebellions in different colours. Armed conflicts, which originated in the struggle for independence, still burn like an unquenchable fire up to this day.

The past 77 years were not only marked by wars. Successive national leaders have frequently called for discussions and negotiations to end conflicts driven by ideologies, ethnicity, religion, and other causes. They have often sought peaceful solutions through dialogues and agreements, setting aside weapons at times to find resolutions at the negotiation tables. On the other hand, governments have worked on the development of the nation, the nurturing of human resources, and the construction of basic infrastructure. Moreover, the 2008 Constitution, based on a federal system, paved the way for a democratic path, and political reforms, such as the opening of new parliamentary spaces, enabled the establishment of democratic governments in two terms.

The journey of democracy has been marked by political changes that began with electoral fraud, leading through a period of political transition. This transition was accompanied by groups like CRPH and NUG, composed of exiled terrorist betrayers, as well as internal and external supporters who have fuelled violence. These individuals and armed groups, including the armed factions of PDF, aimed to destroy the nation and engage in widespread violence. It is well-known that they have committed more and more armed conflicts in their pursuit of their goals leading to the utter devastation of the country.

Despite achieving independence for a considerable period, the country has yet to attain political maturity. The people remain caught in the consequences of political instability, including economic downturn, lack of rule of law, and the impacts of armed conflicts. The country's essential infrastructure — such as roads, bridges, factories, workplaces, electricity supply, and human resource development projects — continues to be in a state of perpetual construction and destruction.

30-12-2024 Myanmar Alimn
Translated.

NATIONAL



A local oil refinery.

Locally produced petrol available at State fuel stations nationwide starting Jan 2025

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Energy, domestically produced petrol will be available at State-owned petrol stations nationwide commencing January 2025.

From 4 January 2025, local product of petrol will initially be sold at one State-owned fuel sta-

tion in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and two stations in Mandalay Region. Additionally, plans are underway to begin distributing and selling locally produced petrol at one State-owned filling station in Bago Region and another in Shan State beginning

in January.

Currently, domestic fuel production is supplied by the Thanlyin Oil Refinery in Yangon Region, the Chauk Oil Refinery in Magway Region, and the Mann Thanpayakan Oil Refinery also in Magway Region. — ASH/TMT

Budding actor donates K1M to film industry



This image reveals actor Aye Chan Maung donating K1 million.

ACTOR Aye Chan Maung donated K1 million to the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO) to support

its plan to distribute rice, cooking oil, and other food supplies as a New Year donation to members of the film indus-

try, according to MMPO Vice-Chairman U Aye Kyu Lay.

MMPO plans to provide rice and food supplies for the 15th time to its members in January 2025. Film industry members and donors have been reportedly contributing monetary and food donations to make this possible.

“MMPO will distribute rice and foodstuffs to film industry members as a New Year donation for the 15th time. For this purpose, U Kyauk Taung donated K1 million, actor Naw Phaw Eh Htar contributed K3 million, and actor Aye Chan Maung donated K1 million. Film industry members and donors continue their contributions,” said U Aye Kyu Lay.

Previously, MMPO organized its 14th distribution event from 3 to 6 April 2024. During the event, sector-wide members of the movie industry received rice, cooking oil, and foodstuffs. — ASH/MKKS



This image shows a poster for the TV series.

New Myanmar TV series to premiere on Channel K on 11 Jan 2025

REPORTS say the new Myanmar television series ‘Myat Na Hpone’ (Mask) is set to air commencing on 11 January 2025.

Aye Thiri Ko wrote the storyline of this Myanmar TV series, with the script crafted by Phyo Thinza Kyaw and Yin Min Khant. Kyaw Thar Gyi directed it for King Wish Film Production.

The cast of the ‘Myat Na Hpone’ series includes Hein Wai Yan, Htun Ko Ko, Academy Award winner Soe Pyae Thazin, Saung Yoon San, Ella Shwe Sin, Nyi Nanda, Nay Myo Aung, Academy Award winner Myat Kathy Aung, Tha Tha, and many other actors.

The series will premiere on Saturday, 11 January 2025, and will be broadcast every Saturday and Sunday at 7 pm on Channel K. — ASH/TRKM

Duet Art Exhibition to open at Izana Gallery

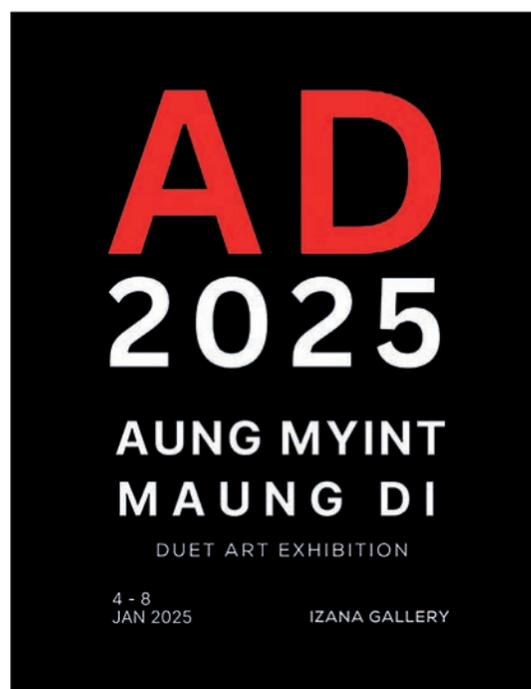
THE “AD 2025” Historic Duet Art Exhibition will be held at Izana Art Gallery in Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region, from 4 January to 8 January 2025, according to Izana Art Gallery.

This event will be the first collaborative art exhibition by two renowned Myanmar painters: Saya Maung D and Saya Aung Myint. The exhibition will feature a variety of paintings covering diverse subjects and styles.

“Izana Gallery is honoured and proud to present the ‘AD 2025’ art exhibition by two distin-

guished figures in the Myanmar art scene, Saya Maung D and Saya Aung Myint, as a tribute to the New Year 2025. We warmly invite all admirers and supporters of these two artists and their creations to join us in celebrating this remarkable event. We also wish everyone health and happiness in the New Year,” said the gallery’s curator.

The paintings on display will come in various sizes, including 24 by 24 inches, 36 by 24 inches, 18 by 24 inches and 18 by 18 inches. — ASH/KZL



An advert poster for the Duet Art Exhibition.

NATIONAL

3-day illegal trade crackdown confiscates goods worth K684M+

UNDER the supervision of the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, efforts to combat the illicit trade are continued effectively by the law.

On 28 and 30 December, the combined teams impounded industrial materials (valued at K638.92 million) without official documents from 23 containers at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint, an unregistered Toyota Mark II (approximately worth K10 million) in Ayadaw Township, an unregistered Toyota Ipsum (estimated value of K9.5 million) in Mingaladon Township, and a Hyundai Starex van (worth approximately K20 million) carrying 0.502 tonne of illegal teak (worth K441,900) at milepost 8/0 on Yangon-Mandalay expressway in Hlegu Township. The action was conducted under the Export-Import Law,



Confiscated illegal items across the country.

the Forest Law, and Customs procedures.

Similarly, on 31 December, 4.16 tonnes of illegal coal, 6.64 tonnes of illegal teak, 1.217 tonnes of hardwood and 2.903 tonnes of other timbers (valued at K6.09 million) were seized in Bago, Toungoo, Nyaunglebin,

Pyay and Thayawady districts. The action was taken under the Forest Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported 16 arrests on 28, 30 and 31 December, confiscating illegal goods worth approximately K684.96 million. — MNA/MKKS

PDF terrorists attack Sagaing Region, 1 dead, 13 hurt



Homes are engulfed in flames set by PDF terrorists in Sagaing Region.

AT 11:45 pm on 29 December, PDF terrorists set fire to a two-storey teaching hall measuring 108 feet in length, 33 feet in width, and 22 feet in height at a basic education high school in Zarhaw village, Gangaw Township, Sagaing

Region.

In a separate incident, PDF terrorists launched a drone attack on Sargon village in Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region, dropping bombs that tragically killed a woman and injured eight other women and

five men. The injured were transported to the People's Hospital in Kanbalu Township for medical treatment.

PDF terrorists under the NUG employ coercion, intimidation, arrests, and killings targeting students, teachers, and parents. They destroy school buildings through arson and the use of explosives, instilling fear in villagers who do not support them. Their tactics include drone and heavy weapon attacks, resulting in the loss of innocent lives. These actions aim to disrupt educational opportunities and leave the youth uneducated.

Security forces actively work to safeguard local communities and take measures to apprehend and prosecute those responsible for these incidents. — MNA/MKKS

5 nabbed for robberies at Mandalay jewellery, money transfer shops

THE Mandalay Region Police Force arrested five suspects on 29 December in connection with armed robberies at a jewellery shop and a money transfer shop in Mandalay.

On the morning of 29 December, police arrested two suspects: Moe Aung (aka) Aung Moe (29), a resident of Paukgon Village, Phongpyin Town, and Kyaw Soe Lwin (aka) Kyaw Gyi, Pyata (29), a resident of Htaungtan Village, Dabayin Township. The arrests took place in Room No 209 of the Nature Guest House, in Aungmyaythazan Township. Authorities seized the following items: an M-5 rifle, one magazine, an M-4 A1 Carbine, three magazines, 83 rounds of ammunition, a Click motorcycle, one viss and 40 ticals of gold, and K21.5 million in cash.

According to statements from the arrested suspects, Moe Aung and Kyaw Soe Lwin, two accomplices in the robbery, were identified as Aung Pyisone Lwin (35) of Nanoolwin Village, Patheingyi Township, and Than Htike Tun of Maikone Village. The two were arrested at their respective homes, where police recovered a CANDA Wave 110 motorcycle and a Mini-Oway tuk-tuk, both of which had been used during the robbery. Tun Min Latt, a suspect from Aungmyaythazan Township, who had melted down the gold items obtained from the robbery, was arrested later that

afternoon at his home.

On 26 December, Moe Aung, Kyaw Soe Lwin, and Aung Pyisone Lwin arrived at the "Naga Nantaw" Diamond and Gold Jewelry Shop in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay Region. The men threatened the employees with guns and stole various gold items (approximately one viss and 91 ticals of gold, worth about K1.05 billion) and approximately K30 million in cash.

The arrested suspects, Moe Aung, Kyaw Soe Lwin, Aung Pyisone Lwin, and Than Htike Htun, also robbed the Sin Phyu Taw Money Transfer shop in Mahaangmyay Township, at gunpoint on 24 December, stealing K30 million and an Ertiga vehicle. The vehicle obtained from the robbery was sold to an unknown man for K15 million.

According to investigations, Moe Aung is the deputy leader of the PDF terrorist group in Suppyarkyin Village, Dabayin Township, Sagaing Region. Kyaw Soe Lwin is a member of the PDF terrorist group in Htaungtan Village, Dabayin Township. The guns used in the robberies were reportedly purchased from Ko Soe Gyi, a member of the PDF terrorist group. The two men allegedly came to Mandalay to purchase more weapons and ammunition with the proceeds from the robbery. Arrangements to take legal action against them are underway. — MNA/TH



Offenders are seen alongside seized vehicle, motorbikes and related items.

NATIONAL BUSINESS

Yangon Port handles 633 container vessels in 2024

A total of 633 container vessels docked at the Yangon Port in 2024, the Myanmar Port Authority announced.

The arrival of the container vessels rose in 2024 compared to 629 vessels in 2023.

Myanmar Port Authority stated that 49 vessels in January, 53 in February, 55 in March, 50 in April, 52 in May, 50 each in June, July and August, 55 in September, 52 in October, 57 in November and 60 in December 2024 arrived at Yangon Port.

Following the draft extension, international ocean liners can now access the inner port, according to the Myanmar Port Authority's statement on 22 June 2022.

After the new navigation channel (Kings Bank Chan-



This image captures a bustling container yard with terminals and cargo-laden lorries.

nel) accessing the inner Yangon River had been found, the

draft extension work was accelerated. After that, the port

can now handle larger ships. The container vessel MV SITC

Zhaoming (185.99 metres LOA, 35.25 metres Beam, 29,232 GRT and 2,698 TEU) of Hong Kong-based SITC Shipping Line docked at Asia World Port Terminal for the first time on 22 June, which is the largest ship that AWPT Port handled.

From May 2021, the arrival of the ships at terminals in Yangon has increased again. Three new container vessels by Maersk Line Myanmar (SeaLand Maersk) started to run to fulfil the seaborne trade requirements in 2021. Earlier, the larger ships had draft problems preventing sailing on the Yangon River. With the draft being extended up to 10 meters, the larger ocean liners can enter the Thilawa Port. — NN/KK

Myanmar rubber exports hit 150,000 tonnes in Apr-Dec

ACCORDING to the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association, Myanmar shipped 150,000 tonnes of rubber from April to December during the current financial year 2024-2025.

The association aimed to meet rubber exports up to over 300,000 tonnes this FY.

Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

The Ministry of Commerce in cooperation with the relevant departments and

institutions is endeavouring to achieve monthly export targets for fisheries and agricultural produce including rubber, rice and broken rice, pulses and maize. Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Myanmar Rice Federation, Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association, Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, Myanmar Industries Association, Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association and Myanmar Fisheries Processors and Exporters Association are exerting concerted efforts to

meet the export target and tackle challenges in export.

Global demand for rubber, rubber production of the Southeast Asian nations and the market supply influence Myanmar's rubber prices.

Rubber is commonly cultivated in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres. — NN/KK



This photo shows natural rubber sheets drying in the sun, ready for export to overseas markets.



A vendor arranges cooking oil for sale in the market.

YGN palm oil wholesale reference rate stays put

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market stayed the same at K7,280 perviss for the week ending 5 January like that of last week.

The Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil weekly.

To control overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Commerce informed the consumers of lodging the complaints for overcharging through the call centre hotline in late August. The Department urges consumers not to buy palm oil at high prices.

The Committee notified that any person who is involved

in price gouging and oil storage to attempt market manipulation will face legal action under the Essential Goods and Services Law. The department is working with the Myanmar Oil Dealers' Association and the cooking oil importing companies to offer affordable rates of imported palm oil for consumers. Complaints for overcharging can be lodged over hotline 1535 of the call centre of the Consumers Affairs Department or sent to the Facebook page of the department and the region and state departments concerned.

The domestic palm oil consumption is estimated at one million tonnes per year. The local palm oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 700,000 tonnes of palm oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia to meet domestic demands. — NN/KK

Tesla's Shanghai megafactory kicks off trial production

US carmaker Tesla's megafactory in Shanghai has kicked off trial production seven months after its construction started, according to Tesla China on Tuesday.

The company told Xinhua Tuesday that the factory is dedicated to manufacturing Tesla's energy-storage batteries, Megapack, whose mass production is expected to fully start in the first quarter of 2025.

The project, Tesla's second plant in Shanghai, underscores the US company's commitment to investing in the world's second-largest economy, defying the rhetoric of "decoupling" and "de-risking" from China ratcheted up by some American politicians.



An aerial drone photo taken on 15 December 2024 shows a view of Tesla's megafactory in east China's Shanghai. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

The plant construction set a new record of "Tesla speed" in China, as Gigafactory, Tesla's first plant in the eastern Chinese financial hub, was built and inaugurated within a year in 2019.

The new factory is built with an initial capacity of producing 10,000 units annually, equal to around 40 GWh of energy storage.

Covering an area of approximately 200,000 square metres, the new plant represents a total investment of around 1.45 billion yuan (about US\$201.7 million), according to the administration of the Lin-gang Special Area of China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone. — Xinhua

KIA, Ford, RAM among 39,000 vehicles recalled in US

THE US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued multiple recalls last week, including notices for more than 22,000 KIA all-electric EV9 sport utility vehicles, because some seats were missing mounting bolts.

Meanwhile, Volvo is recalling two of its 2023-2024 Volvo C40 electric crossover vehicles because the clamps may be improperly crimped on the driver's side inner far side air bag module (FSAB), which can cause the air bag to deploy improperly, Volvo said in an NHTSA report. Dealers will replace the driver's side inner FSAB, free of charge. Owner notification letters are expected to be mailed on 11 February 2025.

In addition, Lamborghini is recalling two of its 2024 Revuelto sports cars because the oil circuit connection flange screws may have been improperly tightened during assembly, which could cause the oil line to leak and increase the risk of a fire, the company said in an NHTSA report.

Polestar Automotive USA is

recalling seven of its 2024 Polestar 2 electric vehicles because an inner airbag may not deploy properly. Mercedes-Benz is recalling 17 of its 2025 E 350, E 350 4MATIC and E 450 4MATIC sedans and E450 4MATIC All-Terrain station wagons because the camber strut bracket may have been improperly welded onto the rear axle carrier, possibly resulting in separation of the bracket from the rear axle carrier.

Jaguar Land Rover North America is recalling 34 of its 2019 Jaguar I-PACE electric SUVs vehicles that received an improper interim repair under recall number 24V-633 because the high-voltage battery may overheat, increasing the risk of a fire, according to an NHTSA report. Stellantis, the parent company of Chrysler, is recalling 53 of its 2025 Ram 1500 pickups because incorrect headlight module software may cause the headlights to become inoperative, reducing visibility which can cause a vehicle crash, the company said in an NHTSA report. — Xinhua

Mizuho Bank says connection disruption hit online transactions

MIZUHO Bank said Tuesday that its systems experienced connection disruptions from around 7 am, affecting online transactions for individuals and corporations, but it stressed there are no other issues detected such as a loss of customer data. One of Japan's three megabanks suggested it may have been targeted by a distributed denial-of-service, or DDoS attack, in which networks are overwhelmed by data from multiple sources over a short period. The bank said internet transactions were functioning again by approximately 10 am.

The system failure led the Tokyo-based financial institution to encourage customers

to use automated teller machines for urgent transactions. — Kyodo



File photo taken in Tokyo on 11 May 2019 shows the Mizuho Bank logo. **PHOTO: KYODO**

US home sales notch fourth straight month of gains in Nov

THE US housing market accelerated for the fourth consecutive month in November, with a widely followed indicator of pending home sales from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) gaining 2.2 per cent over October. "Those gains contrib-

uted to a 6.9 per cent year-over-year improvement in pending transactions," noted The Washington Post on Monday. Home buyers appear to have grown accustomed to stubbornly high mortgage rates, as they are buying new homes at a steady clip

across the United States, said NAR chief economist Lawrence Yun. "Consumers appeared to have recalibrated expectations regarding mortgage rates and are taking advantage of more available inventory," Yun said in a statement. — Xinhua

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

World greets 2025 after sweltering year of Olympics, turmoil and Trump



Fireworks light up the midnight sky over Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House during 2025 New Year's Day celebrations in Sydney on 1 January 2025. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE world ushered in 2025 on Tuesday, with huge crowds waving goodbye to the old year that brought Olympic glory, a dramatic Donald Trump return and turmoil in the Middle East and Ukraine.

It is all but certain that 2024 will go down as the hottest year on record, with climate-fuelled disasters wreaking havoc from the plains of Europe to the Kathmandu Valley.

Sydney — the self-proclaimed “New Year’s capital of the world” — sprayed nine tonnes of fireworks from

its famed Opera House and Harbour Bridge at midnight local time (1300 GMT).

“Just to see all the beautiful colours and enjoy being in this situation with so many people in wonderful Australia,” said 71-year-old retired nurse Ruth Rowse ahead of the display.

As champagne corks popped and New Year’s Eve parties kicked into gear along picturesque Sydney Harbour, many revellers were relieved to see the past 12 months in

the rearview mirror.

“It would be nice for the world if it all sort of fixed itself, sorted itself out,” insurance worker Stuart Edwards, 32, told AFP before the fireworks.

Taylor Swift brought the curtain down on her Eras tour this year; pygmy hippo Moo Deng went viral and teenage football prodigy Lamine Yamal helped Spain conquer the Euros.

The Paris Olympics united the world for a brief few weeks in July and August. — AFP

UN chief calls for making 2025 “new beginning” in New Year message

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called for making 2025 “a new beginning” in his message for the New Year.

“Throughout 2024, hope has been hard to find. Wars are causing enormous pain, suffering and displacement. Inequalities and divisions are rife — fuelling tensions and mistrust,” Guterres said.

He said that the globe has just endured a decade of deadly heat and the top ten 10 hottest years on record have happened in the last 10 years, including 2024.

“This is climate breakdown — in real time,” Guterres stressed. “We must exit this road to ruin — and we have no time to lose.” The UN chief urged countries to put the world on a safer path by dramatically slashing emissions, and supporting the transition to a renewable future. “It is essential and it is possible,” he added. — Xinhua



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks to the press outside the Security Council Chamber at the UN headquarters in New York, on 5 December 2024. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Health alert issued over deadly mosquito-borne virus in southeast Australia

HEALTH authorities in Victoria, Australia’s second-most populous state, on Tuesday issued a high-risk warning after identifying a human case of a deadly mosquito-borne virus.

The Department of Health in Victoria announced that a probable human case of Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus has been identified in a resident of the state’s north.

It is the first human case of JE virus — a potentially deadly flavivirus related to dengue and yellow fever — in Victoria during the current summer and has prompted a warning for people to take extra precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

“The risk of mosquito-borne diseases remains high in the coming weeks. Taking measures to avoid mosquito bites is critical to protect against infections,” the alert issued by Victoria’s Acting Chief Health Officer Christian McGrath said. — Xinhua

Dozens of flights cancelled in northern Japan due to heavy snow

HEAVY snow blanketed northern Japan on Tuesday, forcing dozens of flight cancellations as many people were travelling for the New Year holidays.

Japan Airlines said it cancelled 42 flights to and from the northernmost island of Hokkaido, affecting 6,398 passengers, while All Nippon Airways scrapped 14 flights, affecting 800 passengers.

According to the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), heavy snowfall fell in many places in central and northern Hokkaido on Tuesday due to a winter pressure pattern.

The JMA said that more than 20 centimetres of snow has fallen in some areas of Hokkaido since Monday, most of it on Tuesday morning, noting that snowfall was expected to continue on New Year’s Day. — Xinhua

Swiss cabin crew member dies after smoke forced emergency landing

A Swiss International Air Lines cabin crew member on an aeroplane forced to make an emergency landing due to smoke inside the aircraft has died, the flag carrier said on Monday.

The Airbus A220-300 jet, with 74 passengers and five crew on board, was flying from Bucharest to Zurich on 23 December when it had to land in Graz, Austria after engine problems occurred and smoke filled the cockpit and cabin. The plane landed safely.

“We must report, with the deepest of sorrow and regret, that our young colleague died in the hospital in Graz on Monday,” Swiss said in a statement.

Swiss chief executive Jens Fehlinger said the loss had left the airline, a subsidiary of Germany’s Lufthansa, in shock and grief.

“We are devastated at our dear colleague’s death,” he said. — AFP

SPORTS

Ipswich stuns Chelsea, Newcastle piles pain on Man Utd in Premier League

CHELSEA missed the chance to go second in the Premier League after losing 2-0 at relegation-threatened Ipswich Town on Monday night.

Ipswich had not won at home since its return to the top flight, but sprung one of the surprises of the season with Rory Delap and Omari Hutchinson among the goals.

Delap put his side ahead from the penalty spot in the 12th minute after he had been fouled by Chelsea goalkeeper Filip Jorgensen.

Jorgensen twice frustrated the impressive Delap, while Joao Felix saw a goal ruled out after a tight offside call, before Hutchinson doubled Ipswich's lead after a pass from Delap early in the second half.

The result leaves Chelsea fourth, behind Arsenal and Nottingham Forest, who remain second after their 2-0 win away to Everton on Sunday.

Newcastle United made it three wins in three games and increased the misery at Old Trafford with a 2-0 win away to Manchester United, who have now lost their last four games in all competitions, and five from six in the Premier League to increase the pressure on new boss Ruben Amorim.

Newcastle had the game in the bag by the 20th minute after goals from Joelinton and Alexander Isak, with Isak scoring after four minutes and



Manchester United's Portuguese head coach Ruben Amorim (L) and Manchester United's Cameroonian goalkeeper (24) Andre Onana leave the pitch after the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Newcastle United at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, on 30 December 2024. PHOTO: AFP

Joelinton taking advantage of a cross from Anthony Gordon, as United offered little resistance.

Harry Maguire hit the post for the home side in the second half, but his side did little to deserve anything from the game.

Monday's third game ended in a 2-2 draw between Aston Villa and Brighton, with Simon Adingra putting the visitors ahead after 12 minutes before Ollie Watkins levelled with a

penalty.

Morgan Rogers gave the home side the lead two minutes into the second half, but Tariq Lamptey saved a point for Brighton eight minutes from time.

On Sunday, Liverpool strengthened its lead at the top of the table with a 5-0 win away to West Ham, while Manchester City won 2-0 away to Leicester City, who now sit second from bottom of the table. — Xinhua

Matsuyama eager for more after 2 wins, Olympic bronze

JAPANESE golfer Hideki Matsuyama has given himself high marks for a 2024 season with two wins on tour and a difficult but successful Paris Olympics that has made him circle the 2028 Los Angeles Games on his calendar.

"I managed to win twice, so it was a very good year," the 2021 Masters champion said in a recent interview in Tokyo. "Things turned out better than last year or the year before that."

The wins took his PGA career wins to 10, a meaningful number he is hungry to add to.

Matsuyama won the Genesis Invitational in February for his ninth PGA Tour victory, breaking a tie with South Korea's K J Choi for the most by an Asian player.

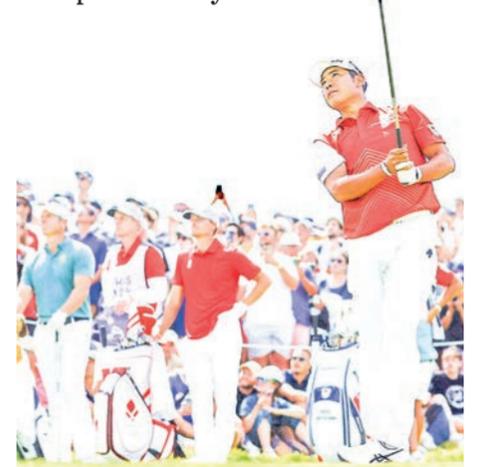
Two weeks after taking bronze in Paris, Matsuyama won the FedEx St Jude Championship in mid-August.

Asked to comment on reaching 10 wins, the 32-year-old said, "I think that's one milestone. I hope to get my 11th soon if I can."

At the Paris Olympics, Matsuyama finished two strokes behind gold medallist Scottie Scheffler of the United States and one behind Britain's Tommy Fleetwood, but any disappointment he felt was soon outweighed by the gravity and unusual circumstances of his tournament.

"Of course, I tried to win gold," Matsuyama said. "But when I settled for bronze, (national team manager Shigeki) Maruyama-san told me he was happy with a medal of any colour. It made me so happy to think my efforts paid off."

His strong showing came despite being in poor condition and brought an epiphany about how Olympic success touched a larger segment of society than he expected. — Kyodo



Hideki Matsuyama of Japan hits off the 11th tee during the final round of the men's golf tournament at the Paris Olympics on 4 August 2024. PHOTO: KYODO

Djokovic, Sabalenka open new season with victories at Brisbane International

NOVAK Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka opened their Australian Open campaigns with straight sets victories at the Brisbane International tennis tournament on Tuesday.

Djokovic beat Australian world number 73 Rinky Hijikata 6-3, 6-3 in one hour and 14 minutes on centre court.

The Serbian 10-time Australian Open champion lost only 10 points on his serve and never gave Hijikata a break point opportunity.

"I always expect myself to do well on the court," Djokovic said on court after the match. "Obviously, a win is a win. To start off the new



Novak Djokovic of Serbia pretends to play the violin to his family after winning his men's singles match against Rinky Hijikata of Australia at the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane on 31 December 2024. PHOTO: AFP

season with a win is very important."

Earlier on Tuesday, Sabalenka — the world number

one and two-time reigning Australian Open champion — beat Mexico's Renata Zarazua 6-4, 6-0 in 65 min-

utes.

The powerful-hitting Sabalenka won 51 per cent of points when returning serve compared to Zarazua's 28 per cent.

It takes her record in Australia since the start of 2023 to 23 wins and one defeat, with the sole defeat coming in the final of the Brisbane International in January 2024.

"It was a tricky start for me but I'm glad that I closed the first set. Then in the second set it felt like whatever I would do would work so I'm really happy with the first win of the season," Sabalenka said. — Xinhua



US appeals court rejects Trump's effort to overturn E Jean Carroll verdict

THE Second US Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday rejected US President-elect Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the rulings in a case of defamation and sexual abuse filed by writer E Jean Carroll.

"Trump has not demonstrated that the district court erred in any of the challenged rulings," said the appeals court in an opinion.

Trump "has not carried his burden to show that any claimed error or combination of claimed errors affected his substantial rights as required to warrant a new trial," concluded the appeals court.

In May 2023, a federal jury from the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York awarded Carroll \$5 million in damages, including nearly \$3 million for defamation, after they found that Trump sexually abused Carroll and then defamed her in 2022 for public statements he made disparaging her and denying the allegations.

Trump appealed and contended that the district court erred in several of its evidentiary rulings and those asserted errors entitled him to a new trial. Carroll, a former magazine columnist, alleged that Trump raped her in a department store in the mid-1990s and then defamed her when he denied her claim. — Xinhua

Xi underlines confidence, hard work in 2025 to rise above challenges



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a New Year message through China Media Group and the internet Tuesday evening in Beijing to ring in 2025. PHOTO: XINHUA

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Tuesday called for the nation to remain confident in the coming year, saying the world's second largest economy can overcome its challenges and pressure through hard work.

Xi made the remarks in his New Year message for 2025 delivered through China Media Group and the internet.

Set to fully complete its 14th Five-Year Plan in 2025, China will implement more

proactive and effective policies, prioritize high-quality development, promote greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology, and maintain sound momentum in economic and social development, Xi said.

He said the Chinese economy "now faces some new conditions, including challenges of uncertainties in the external environment and pressure of transformation from old growth drivers into new ones".

"But we can prevail with our hard work. As always, we grow in the wind and rain, and we get stronger through hard times. We must be confident," Xi said.

Reviewing China's footprint in 2024, Xi said the economy has rebounded and is on an upward trajectory, with the national GDP expected to pass the mark of 130 trillion yuan (about US\$18.08 trillion) and the country's grain output surpassing 700 million tonnes. — Xinhua

India rocket launches space docking mission



INDIA launched a rocket Monday carrying two small spacecraft to test docking in space, a critical step for the country's dreams of a space station and a manned Moon mission.

The mission is "vital for India's future space ambitions", Jitendra Singh,

This handout photograph taken and released on 30 December 2024 by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) shows the launch of the ISRO PSLV-C60 rocket carrying two SpaDeX satellites SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. PHOTO: HANDOUT / INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (ISRO) / AFP

the country's science and technology minister, said in a statement ahead of the launch, which was broadcast live by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced plans last year to send a man to the Moon by 2040.

The PSLV-C60 rocket, which blasted off Monday evening at the Sriharikota launch site with shooting flames as it soared into the night sky, included two 220-kilogramme (485-pound) satellites.

ISRO has dubbed the mission SpaDeX, or Space Docking Experiment.

"PSLV-C60 successfully launches SpaDeX and 24 payloads," it said in a statement. — AFP