

# The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

**NATIONAL**

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MoBA UM inspects regional development and human resource development in Nagmon, PutaO townships

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Three new special postage stamps to be issued marking 76<sup>th</sup> Independence Day

## Our government will continue working hand in hand with the people to implement the roadmap, national and political visions and objectives successfully

The following is the New Year greetings for 2024 of Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing.

On the occasion of transitioning to the New Year 2024 after the conclusion of 2023, I extend my prayers to all national brethren residing in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, wishing them physical and mental well-being. Additionally, I pray for people worldwide to be free from dangers and diseases, living in a peaceful and prosperous society with unity.

In 2023, the government and all ethnic people collaborated successfully in overcoming some difficulties and challenges. However, individuals unwilling to support the peaceful development of our country during the democratization process disrupted the entire populace through various means. Various destructive acts resulted in the loss and damage of state-owned and people-owned property, showing negative

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Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing.

## People cheerfully welcome New Year 2024



People join New Year Countdown Live Show for 2024 in People's Square in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**

As the New Year arrived and the Old Year departed, people across the nation joyfully welcomed the New Year 2024 with New Year Countdown Live Shows and market festivities.

Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar, was bustling with the happy movements of people at public areas such as Ocean Super Centre, Junction Centre, and Naypyitaw Wholesale, as well as eminent religious monuments. Significantly, the New Year Countdown Live Show and market festivities were crowded with people seeking relaxation, aiming to join the New Year with relentless efforts to participate in nation-building endeavours.

All participants at the countdown show chanted "Happy New Year" simultaneously at midnight as part of an active and warm welcome to New Year 2024 with the launch of fireworks.

An official letter revoking the curfew order for just a day on 31 December was dispatched to all district authorities, allowing people to joyfully participate in the New Year festivities, countdown shows, and entertainment programmes.

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# NATIONAL

## Five national objectives of 76<sup>th</sup> Independence Day

1. To uphold “Our Three Main National Causes” — Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and Perpetuation of sovereignty, which are national interests and national politics
2. To ensure the promotion of a comprehensive education sector that produces human resources with perfect abilities like intelligence, skills, and talents in building a Union based on democracy and federalism
3. To make efforts to hold free and fair elections under the law and ensure the right to vote across the nation
4. To foster public cooperation for state stability and strengthen the multiparty democratic system at the end of acts of terrorism
5. To promote agriculture and livestock-based MSMEs

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar Announcement of Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

4<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nattaw 1385 ME  
31 December 2023

IT is necessary to control Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) infection continuously. So, it is now announced that public requests, orders, notifications and directives (except for easing restrictions) released by Union-Level Organizations and Union Ministries up to 31 December 2023 have been extended to 31 January 2024 for prevention, control and treatment on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

## People cheerfully welcome New Year 2024

### FROM PAGE -1

Significant buildings in Nay Pyi Taw were illuminated throughout the night of New Year for the relaxation of the people.

Similarly, Yangonites joined the Yangon New Year Countdown at the People’s Square and Thuwanabumi Event Park on 31 December with entertainments featuring artistes, vocalists, DJs, and dancer troupes. Public places in Yangon city were bustling with merrymakers.

The New Year festival was arranged at the corner of 26<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> streets in Mandalay for happy public participation. Dwellers of Mandalay city enjoyed entertainments featuring artistes accompanied by modern bands and a Myanmar orchestra. People prayed for everyone’s physical and mental well-being. —GNLM



Revellers celebrate the New Year during a countdown event at People’s Square in Yangon (above), Mandalay (left below) and Nay Pyi Taw (right below) on 31 December 2023. **PHOTOS: KANU, MAUNG AYE CHAN, PHOE PYAE SONE**



# NATIONAL

Unity must be accomplished by common action for a common cause to serve the common interest. This kind of unity must be like an act of making a common endeavour for the achievement of common objective and benefit such as the independence and interest of the entire nation and people. A mere utterance of craving for unity will not be paid off. There must be common action, common interest and common objective. That is exactly what should be called as "unity".

*[An excerpt from the speech delivered by Bogyoke Aung San at the Congress of AFPFL on 23 January 1946.]*



## Our government will continue working hand in hand with the people to implement the roadmap, national and political visions and objectives successfully

### FROM PAGE-1

In 2024, our government will continue working hand in hand with the people to implement the roadmap, national and political visions and objectives successfully. Special emphasis will be placed on further boosting the economy, fostering the development of MSME businesses in agriculture and livestock sectors, and promoting the education sector. I urge all ethnic people to cooperate with each other and the government to develop

our socio-economic life with peace and stability, aligning with our theme: "Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal."

In the year 2024, our country will conduct the enumeration of biometric data and household registration nationwide. The biometric data from the census enumeration will benefit the social, economic, and management measures of the State and aid in compiling voter lists for holding a free and fair multiparty democratic general election, a fervent

wish of our government. Therefore, I urge all ethnic people to cooperate in the enumeration of the national census process.

Seventy-six years after regaining independence, the country has not yet experienced the deserved progress due to various reasons. To achieve development, we must follow existing laws, live in peace and unity, strive for school-age children to pursue education for the future nation, and work with a real sense

of commitment to increasing production. Regardless of our endeavors, we must exhibit united strength. Therefore, I encourage all to build happy families, carry forward beneficial lessons from the last year into the New Year, and leave behind negative thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Without racial, religious, and regional biases and with consideration, empathy, and compassion, I extend New Year greetings, urging all to march forward towards the new State we all aspire to.

## MoBA UM inspects regional development and human resource development in Nagmon, PutaO townships

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung inspected the construction work of the new RC double-storey annexe at Nagmon People's Hospital in Kachin State on 29 December, comprising the outpatient department and intensive care unit, and comforted the patients receiving medical treatments.

After that, the Union Minister gave the instruction to officials that the patient who is being treated at the hospital with chronic kidney disease be transported to the general hospitals for medical examination and treatment. At Kasanthi suspension bridge in Nampandam village, he fulfilled requirements for the necessary maintenance.

At the Basic Education High School (Nagmon), the Union min-

ister donated laptop computers and printers and inspected city water supply works.

In the afternoon, the Union minister visited the historic Kaunghmulon Pagoda in PutaO and discussed the maintenance and repair of the pagoda premises. The ministry is carrying out construction of the passage rounded at Kaunghmulon and replicas of Shwezigon and Shwedagon pagodas.

After that, Union minister viewed progress of a concrete road undertaken by the Ministry of Border Affairs in the PutaO Plain.

The PutaO Plain circular road is 25 miles long and connects 28 villages and farms. The concrete road, which was implemented by the Ministry of



Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung fulfills the requirements for necessary maintenance of Kasanthi suspension bridge on 29 December 2023.

Border Affairs, the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, and the Kachin State Government under a three-year project, will be completed by the end of this financial year, so local products will be able to be transported easily.

At the Phangkhaing Charity

Monastic Education School, he donated foodstuffs and others to the Sayadaw for convenience of students. On 30 December, the Union Minister visited the 24-mile and 7-furlong road upgrading work for Upper Samkhaung-Lonnam-Ziyadam road and the 240-foot bridge over the Mular Creek,

which will effectively contribute to the development of tourism in PutaO.

On arrival at the 20-acre Matpang Model Plantation project of the Ministry of Border Affairs in Kaungkahtaung Ward, he inspected progress of water supply project for the farm. — MNA/TS

# NATIONAL

## Let's Search for A Common Platform to Walk on Together

**W**e humans are mysterious beings with inconceivable potentialities. Noble characteristics and criminal tendencies are latent within us. These may rise to the surface of our life at any time unexpectedly without using strength and power. These are dormant within us in various degrees. Within the powerful complex machinery of man's mind, we find a treasure storehouse of virtue and rubbish heap of wickedness. By developing these respective characteristics, we may become either a blessing or a curse to humanity. If we wish to sublimate ourselves to the noble service of humanity, we must endeavour our best to remove the latent evils and cultivate the dormant seed of virtue. To discover invaluable treasure latent within us, righteous patience and persistent effort are essential. Even the poorest people can accomplish this task. Thus, wealth and power are not essential prerequisites to the accumulation of human value.

One powerful destructive vice within us is anger (Dosa). The constructive virtue that can eliminate this evil force and ennoble mankind is loving-kindness (MettĒ). Cruelty (HiÑsa) is another vice that is responsible for many horrors and atrocities prevalent in the world today. Compassion (KaruŌĒ) is its antidote. Jealousy (IssĒ) is another vice that is a poison to every system of the world. The poisonous jealousy leads to unhealthy rivalries and dangerous competitions. The most effective remedy for this poisonous drug is appreciative joy (MuditĒ). Two other universal characteristics that upset the

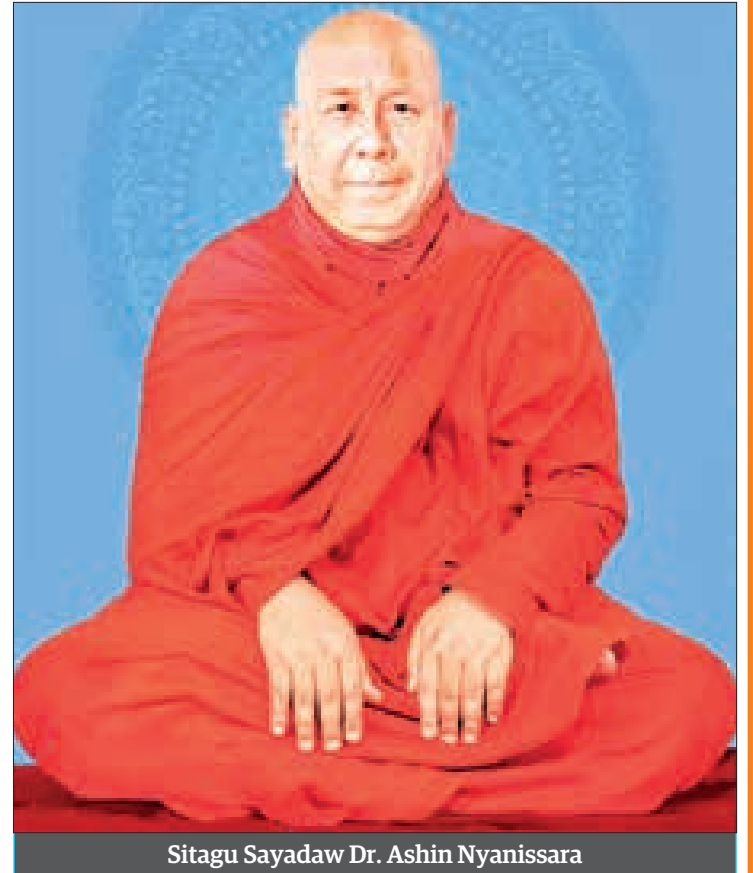
mental equipoise of a man are attachment to the pleasurable things and aversion to the un-pleasurable things. Developing equanimity (UpekkhĒ) can eliminate these two opposite forces. These four sterling virtues may be rendered by modes of Noble Conduct or Noble Abodes. These four noble conducts are capable of elevating the world if mankind is so wills on them. If all mankind tries to cultivate these conducts, irrespective of creed, colour, race or sex, the world can be transformed into a supreme paradise where we all can live in perfect peace and harmony as ideal citizens of one world. So, we should also extend these four noble virtues towards all living beings without exception. Consequently, these virtues can be called boundless noble spirit. Irrespective of religious beliefs, everyone should cultivate these sweet virtues and be a blessing to oneself and all others.

The development of loving-kindness softens people's hearts. In the organization of nations, instead of providing military aid, we should give the pure aid of loving-kindness to the helpless world. It is defined as the sincere wish for the welfare and genuine happiness of all mankind without making distinction between ourselves and others. "Just as a mother protects her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so one should cultivate boundless loving-kindness towards all living beings". Therefore, loving-kindness of mothers is not the passionate love towards her child. Even so, our love towards other nations or other countries must be a sincere wish and pure love for the genuine peace and welfare of the

world. We should extend the boundless universal brotherhood and sisterhood spirit without barriers in the differences of political views and religious beliefs.

The loving-kindness, which is a sincere wish for the genuine peace and welfare of the world, is not political, racial, national, or even a religious brotherhood. Political brotherhood is confined only to those who share similar political views, such as the partial brotherhood of Democrats, Socialists, Communists, and so on. Racial brotherhood and national brotherhood are restricted only to those of same race and nation. Very often to assert their racial or political superiority, they resort to brutal warfare and killing of people by mercilessly raining bombs from the sky above. The pathetic incidents of the Second World War are striking as examples, which can never be forgotten by mankind. Acts of violence and terrorism should be denounced, and harmonious relations should be established with the people of different background and faiths.

Loving-kindness (MettĒ) is not mere religious brotherhood either. Owing to the limitations of religious brotherhood, religious disputes and so called holy wars are waged without the least compassion; sincere outspoken men and women have been roasted and burnt alive. Many atrocities have been perpetrated which baffle description. Cruel wars have been waged, marring the historic pages of world history. To establish genuine peace and happiness amongst mankind, a sincere religious awaking and harmony are necessary in this morally bankrupt world. So we



Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara

must carefully establish a pure and useful life of love, reason and justice based on the noble principle of their respective teachers and leaders.

The Buddha addressed, "Hatred never ceases through hatred, but hatred ceases by love alone. This is the essence of the ancient and eternal law." As loving-kindness is a constructive peaceful force, it has the power to counteract destructive influences. Just as hateful thoughts can produce toxic effects in any system or policy, even so loving thoughts can produce healthy, wealthy mental and physical effects. The Buddha emphatically stated the importance of morality as a means to overcome tensions and difficulties, to solve the problems of humanity. We should exercise right thought of selflessness, loving-kindness, compassion and harmlessness or non-violence.

Today's world is full of a chaos, miseries, war-weariness, and violence; the na-

tions are arming themselves to the teeth. Human lives are in danger and frightened by the arms race between great countries or G countries. These weapons are always ready to release and to kill many human lives at any moment. In fact, the world is absolutely in need of this universal loving-kindness, measureless compassion, sympathetic joy, great tolerance and right vision in order for all of us to live in one world in perfect peace and harmony like brothers and sisters.

We should develop sincere love to kill the enemy of the world, which is hatred. We should develop invaluable compassion to remove the woe of nations, which is cruelty. We should develop appreciative joy to protest from the poisoning of all systems, which is jealousy. We should develop the mental equipoise of man to eliminate attachment to pleasurable situations and aversion to un-pleasurable situations.

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# NATIONAL

## 2024 New Year wish of SSMNC Secretary Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa

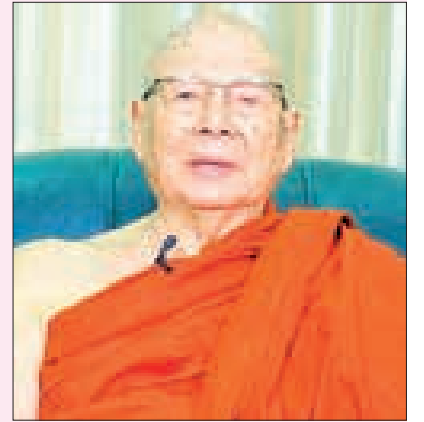
Today holds significance for the entire world as it welcomes the arrival of New Year 2024 and bids farewell to the Old Year 2023. I extend my heartfelt wishes for the well-being of all Myanmar citizens and people around the globe, hoping they remain safe from harm and negative influences and embrace all the blessings. May everyone steer clear of wrongdoing in their physical, mental, and verbal actions. Additionally, I send out my compassionate thoughts to all Myanmar citizens and global communities, wishing them the joy of reaping the rewards of their virtuous deeds and aspirations.



## Best wishes for 2024 New Year of Presiding Patron of Insein Ywama Pariyatti Buddhist Learning Centre State Ovadacariya Agga Maha Pandita Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Tiloka Bhivamsa

Today marks an auspicious New Year Day in 2024 for people worldwide. I extend my wishes for the well-being and safety of all Myanmar and global citizens. Leaving behind past negative experiences, losses, and damages, individuals must reform their physical, oral, and mental activities for a fresh start in this auspicious period of the New Year 2024. To ensure global peace, one must uphold the four cardinal virtues. Everyone should be willing to serve each other's interests in accordance with the Dhamma, fostering auspiciousness. Abiding by 38 types of auspiciousness, including avoiding bad deeds, negative spirits, and harmful individuals, will be fundamental in shaping a peaceful world.

Venerable Masoeyein Pathan Sayadaw outlined the four cardinal virtues, emphasizing the importance of recognizing people in different social and economic classes. Expressing joy for the success of those in higher classes, showing compassion towards those in parallel classes, and maintaining sympathy for those in lower classes are essential. In the Sakkapanna Sutta, the Lord Buddha conveyed to the king of celestial beings that human plights and sufferings arise from jealousy and envy. Therefore, it is crucial for everyone to set aside jealousy and envy while upholding the four cardinal virtues to contribute to the creation of a peaceful world.



## 2024 New Year message of Dr Bhaddanta Saddhamma Kittisara (Aung San Sayadaw)

I extend my heartfelt wishes and compassion to all global citizens and Myanmar nationals as we transit from the old year 2023 to the incoming New Year 2024.

May all living beings to enjoy sound sleep and peace of mind in their respective regions, awaken to auspiciousness

each morning, find the strength to combat all malevolent activities through the teachings of Dhamma, and seize opportunities to enhance their capabilities through virtuous actions.

In the New Year, may all Myanmar citizens and global inhabitants have the opportunity to savour the sweetness of

Enlightenment and engage in virtuous deeds on auspicious occasions. May they cultivate days filled with meritorious actions, steering clear of misdeeds in their physical, verbal, and mental pursuits. As the New Year unfolds, may both Myanmar citizens and global citizens reflect on their virtuous deeds.

## New Year Ovada Katha of Presiding Patron of Nanda Aungmyay Monastery Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Agga Maha Kammathanacariya Dr Bhaddanta Nimala (PhD, Buddhism)

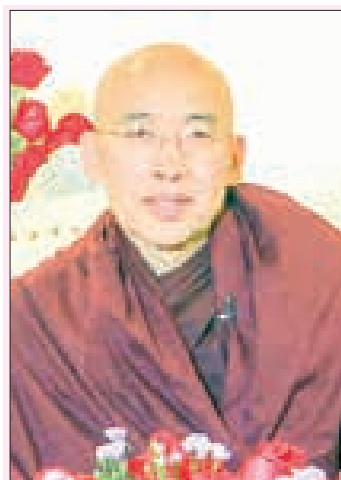
TODAY marks the New Year as the old year has come to an end. On the auspicious occasion, I would like to make the New Year wishes for all the people.

May all Myanmar people and global people have a chance to do meritorious deeds with good will. May they always be able to do good deeds and refrain from committing evil deeds. May they all be physically and mentally well.



## Rector of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita Maha Dhammakathika Bahujana Hitadhara Dr Bhaddanta Hsekinda

I wish all to be auspicious. Everyone wants good wishes for them and they should also value good advice. The Lord Buddha preached 38 kinds of auspiciousness. Some of them are: Look after parents. Have loving-kindness on everyone. Seek wisdom and knowledge and proliferate them. I want you all to follow the advice of the Lord Buddha and I pray that you all will be able to live auspiciously.



## New Year wish for 2024 of Rector of Shan State Buddha University Maha Dhammakathika Bahujana Hitadhara Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Oxford Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Dhammasami

NOW is the time for the New Year. We must bid a proper farewell to the old year 2023 to welcome the New Year 2024. The year 2023 posed its challenges, and we must acknowledge and accept that. In the face of difficulties, we may find ourselves dealing with depression. In such moments, there might be instances of wrong speeches within families, among friends, and at workplaces. If that happens, we should remind ourselves that we always strive to do our best, and then, we can bid farewell to the old year.

Crucially, we need to embrace the optimism that by envisioning

and aspiring for the best, we can create a sense of delight for all. This mindset will prepare us to welcome the New Year 2024 with the determination to do our best, to see the best, and to strive for the best—for ourselves, our partners and friends, our families, and our country and culture. Positive thinking, referred to as Yoniso Manasikara in Pali, allows us to solve problems, aligning with the concept of the Four Noble Truths. Therefore, my wish for you all is to enjoy physical and mental well-being and become individuals capable of serving the interests of all, Buddhism, and humanity.

# NATIONAL

## New Year wishes of artistes for 2024



Alinka Kyawswa Sithu Tekkatho Myat Thu.



Daw Nwet Nwet San.



U Lwin Myint.



U Aung Tin Win.



Director U Kyi Soe Tun.

### Alinka Kyawswa Sithu Tekkatho Myat Thu

TODAY, what the people of Myanmar yearn for is peace and stability. If they can live in peace and harmony, and if they become more united and work harder, it can be said that Myanmar, which is rich in resources, will inevitably become the richest country in the region. During the struggle for independence, the people of Myanmar, who unitedly fought to win independence out of patriotic spirit, were

divided by colonial rulers. Multicoloured insurgencies broke out as they took up arms holding political ideologies that came from abroad. So, peaceful unity is needed.

Myanmar will become the richest country in the region in 2024 if the citizens establish peace with keen efforts and transform the country with the resources they have. We need to strive for that. May Myanmar be completely peaceful with a promising economy. May all the people of the country be healthy and prosperous and fulfill their wishes. I also wish that all citizens have a chance to enjoy the taste of independence, living in a peaceful and developed country free from all kinds of dangers.

### Director U Kyi Soe Tun (Chairman of Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization)

I would like to sincerely wish all the people of Myanmar to be happy, healthy, united, and able to contribute to the bet-

terment of the country in 2024.

### Daw Nwet Nwet San (Film Actress)

I would like to wish all the people of Myanmar and the world peace. I also wish that everyone in the music, film, and theatre industries grows and blooms in their own fields, just like fresh flowers do, while the people of Myanmar make the right decisions and cultivate the right thoughts.

### U Lwin Myint, Chairman of the Myanmar Music Association (Central)

Our music association is an organization designated for musicians. It is organized under the guidance of the State to work for the benefit of the public and the music community and has no political colour. Under any type of government, musicians have a tradition of carrying out a task assigned by the government, selflessly serving the nation. The association maintains this tradition and participates in such efforts with the power of music and the support of the public.

Our country is a great union where many ethnic groups live together in harmony. May it be a peaceful and prosperous union. May the country of Myanmar exist until the end of the world, having unity among ethnic groups. At this time of transition from the old year to the New Year, all the people of the world and all citizens of Myanmar be safe, healthy, and prosperous. I also wish for the safety, health, and prosperity of all people worldwide as we usher in a new year and bid farewell to the old one.

### U Aung Tin Win, Patron, Myanmar Theatrical Association (Central)

May the Republic of the Union of Myanmar be blessed with health, prosperity, and happiness from the beginning of the New Year. May all citizens be healthy, happy, blessed, and safe. I also wish that members of the Myanmar Theatrical Association can improve theatrical art while achieving success based on theatrical art. — Nyein Thu (MNA)/TH

## Rectors' New Year wishes for 2024



Dr Tin Maung Tun.



Dr Tin Tin Htwe.



Dr Kay Thwe Hlaing.



Dr Kyi Shwin.

### Dr Tin Maung Tun (Rector, University of Yangon)

IN the New Year of 2024, I wish all the people of the world and all citizens of Myanmar to be healthy, prosperous, happy

and peaceful.

### Dr Tin Tin Htwe (Rector, Yangon University of Economics)

At the time of the New Year, I wish

the people of Myanmar good health and prosperity. For students, getting knowledge is the most important thing in education. So, I wish them to become capable people who can contribute to the development and prosperity of the country when they have finished their studies at the universities.

### Dr Kay Thwe Hlaing (Rector, Yangon University of Education)

May all the citizens of Myanmar and all the people of the world be free from all disasters from the time of the New Year 2024.

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# NATIONAL



U Wunna.



U Thomas.



U Aung Zaw Win.



U Zaw Zaw Naing.

## 2024 New Year wishes from various religious groups

### **U Wunna (Buddhist), Chairman of the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar (Central)**

Auspicious wishes to all citizens of Myanmar.

Today marks the end of the year 2023 and the beginning of the year 2024.

On this 1 January 2024, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar's Interfaith Dialogue Group wishes for a peaceful and healthy existence for the people of Myanmar as well as people around the world.

As the motto of the Interfaith Dialogue Group is "From interfaith unity to peace, and from peace to national development", I wish that people of different faiths and ethnicities living in Myanmar come together to strive for the prosperity of the country in the name of love and unity.

### **U Thomas (Christian), Vice-chairman, the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar (Central)**

Auspicious wishes to you all, and peace be upon you.

As the Vice-Chairman (Christian) of the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar, I thank God for the opportunity to make wishes for the New Year.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a country with more than 130 ethnic groups living together and enjoying religious freedom.

The Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar is working hard for national unity and peace, which are the nation's most pressing needs currently.

We wish all of us to be able to work together to build a peaceful new society for the nation in the new year with new spirits.

In the New Year of 2024, may all the people of Myanmar enjoy happiness, health, unity, peace, and development while receiving many blessings from God.

Happy New Year, May God Bless You all.

### **U Aung Zaw Win (Islam), Vice-chairman, the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar (Central)**

Auspicious wishes to you all.

Today marks the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024, and on this occasion of a happy new year, may all the people of Myanmar as well as all the people of the world have peace of mind and well-being while enjoying the prosperity of the economy. May the country of Myanmar become a peaceful and prosperous nation.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a country with more than 130 ethnic groups living together and enjoying religious freedom.

The Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar is working hard for national unity and peace, which are the

nation's most pressing needs currently.

In this New Year, I wish that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar develops peacefully and that a new society can be established with a new spirit and the unity of all religions, wishing you a peaceful and happy new year.

### **U Zaw Zaw Naing (Hindu), Vice-chairman, the Interfaith Dialogue Group of Myanmar (Central)**

Auspicious wishes to you all.

At the end of 2023 and on the occasion of the new year of 2024, I am happy to have the opportunity to make a New Year wish as the vice-president of the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central). Our country has a prominent wealth in the world — love. Other countries are materially rich; Myanmar is rich in love. If the people have a lot of love, everything will be fine. May Myanmar be peaceful and prosperous because of the love of the Lord Buddha. May the nation prosper and be unaffected by outside threats because of the god Ganesha.

The country will be peaceful and prosperous if the government and people work together. I would like to request that you remove hatred; if you have it, please replace it with love. I wish that everything will be successful because of love.

## Rectors' New Year wishes for 2024

### **FROM PAGE -6**

May they also be free from five types of enemies. May they be healthy and happy and fulfill their wishes.

May all students be able to learn all the subjects they should learn. I wish that they can continue to study safely to become good citizens who can serve their country.

### **Dr Kyi Shwin (Rector, Yangon University of Foreign Languages)**

In the New Year, may all the students pursuing education have the ability to achieve their goals in life. The world needs more peace and development, so I wish to get it as soon as possible. I also wish for our country to be peaceful and prosperous.

### **Dr Nay Win Oo (Rector, The University of East Yangon)**

On this auspicious occasion of the New Year, may all citizens of Myanmar live a peaceful and prosperous life. Since schools will start opening in the New Year, I wish that all the students are healthy, happy and have a chance to learn their favorite subjects. May they be successful in social science and sports in addition to the various subjects taught by the university. I also wish that they will be able to do their best for the benefit of the country.

### **Dr Myint Thein (Rector, Yangon Technological University)**

From the time of the New Year 2024 on, may all the people of the country be



Dr Nay Win Oo.



Dr Myint Thein.

filled with peace, happiness, and good wishes. I also wish that all the students achieve their desired educational goals

easily and quickly and be successful in life. — Thitsar(MNA)/  
Photos: Zwe Marn/TH

# OPINION

## Forge durable peace setting aside conflicts from New Year

In embracing the advent of the New Year, all Myanmar citizens have to bid farewell to the old year, much like the transition from withered leaves to the vibrant emergence of new foliage. As everybody ushers in 2024, a year ripe with possibilities, the collective consciousness resonates with the commitment to engage in virtuous actions while eschewing malevolent deeds.

This juncture marks the departure of 2023 and the forward march into a new epoch, a sentiment shared by individuals across the globe. In accordance with the inherent human desire for triumph, esteemed members of the Sangha illuminate the path to victory through the benevolent gift of Dhamma on the occasion of the New Year.

Leaders of nations and distinguished figures extend New Year messages, bestowing blessings upon the populace for the coming year. Their earnest prayers invoke auspicious outcomes and virtuous conduct, setting the stage for a harmonious entry into the New Year.

Everybody needs to undergo a transformative shift in mindset, aspiring to elevate themselves, their society and mother land. As all citizens enter the year of 2024, Hence, all the people should pray for all living beings to be free from devil acts, to be able to enjoy meritorious needs, to be able to culture the noble spirit, and to enjoy good results of society under the Dhamma teachings of the unrivalled Lord Buddha and to consider doing all things with critical thinking, rationality and compassion.

society and mother land. As all citizens enter the year of 2024, Hence, all the people should pray for all living beings to be free from devil acts, to be able to enjoy meritorious needs, to be able to culture the noble spirit, and to enjoy good results of society under the Dhamma teachings of the unrivalled Lord Buddha and to consider doing all things with critical thinking, rationality and compassion.

To be able to peacefully pass the whole year 2024, everybody needs to uphold consideration and compassion with more plans to forge durable peace for the whole nation setting aside controversies and disputes to be able to cease conflicts in all forms.

People from diverse walks of life must conscientiously abandon the practices of the old year, meticulously preparing to advance towards their goals. A critical self-reflection on past endeavours guides individuals to discern the optimal path forward, aligning with their missions and visions without deviation.

Venerable members of the Sangha extend heartfelt New Year wishes, expressing a desire for the physical and mental well-being of all living beings. Their compassionate efforts are multifaceted, contributing to the cultivation of peace within society.

On the auspicious occasion of the New Year, a call resounds for the dissemination of Metta (compassion), the practice of virtuous deeds (Dhamma), generous acts of donation (Dana), and the utterance of truthful words (Saccavaca) rooted in the soul. These actions serve as a foundation for securing victory on the path ahead.

Everybody needs to undergo a transformative shift in mindset, aspiring to elevate themselves, their

# Work Out Your Worries by Writing

By Mya Thae (Research)

After his father was rushed to the hospital with gastrointestinal bleeding, 43-year-old Yanatha Desouvre began to panic. So, he did the one thing he knew would calm him: he wrote.

"I'm so scared, he started." I don't know what I'll do if I lose

## Expressive Writing

Expressive Writing is a specific technique different from writing in a journal. The deal is to reflect honestly and thoughtfully on a particular trauma or challenge and to do it in short sessions.

severe trauma or depression may not find it useful to do on their own without therapy.

Yet it can be a powerful coping tool for many, in large part because it helps combat the secrecy people often feel about trauma, as well as their reluctance to face emotions.

"The more you avoid a prob-

Writing can increase someone's acceptance of their experience, and acceptance is calming," she says.

What if you don't consider yourself a writer? Don't worry about spelling or grammar, and don't share your writing with. But do dig deep into your thoughts and feelings. The goal

But he always starts with "the tough stuff" and then writes about how he's grown from the experience.

Last year, he wrote in a notebook, recording the stress

translation of thoughts and feelings into language," says Dr Joshua Smyth.

## Choose a topic

What is bothering you most? Is it something you can't talk to anyone else about? Expressive writing is perfect for this.

## Let sleeping days lie

Don't ruminate over something you were not troubled by, to begin with.

## Make the connections

Explore your deepest feelings. Pick a topic that is worrying you and explore why it happened, how it is related to other things in your life, and why it is bothering you now.

## Don't limit yourself

If your original topic leads you to another one, that's fine. "This is a meaning-making process," says Dr Smyth. "It might take some writing to get to what is really most essential." And it's OK if you feel bad at first. This is normal if you are focusing on a negative event.

## Give yourself advice

What recommendations would you give to a friend with a similar issue?

## Don't share

Our writing changes when we know others are going to read it. Your goal is to be honest with yourself.

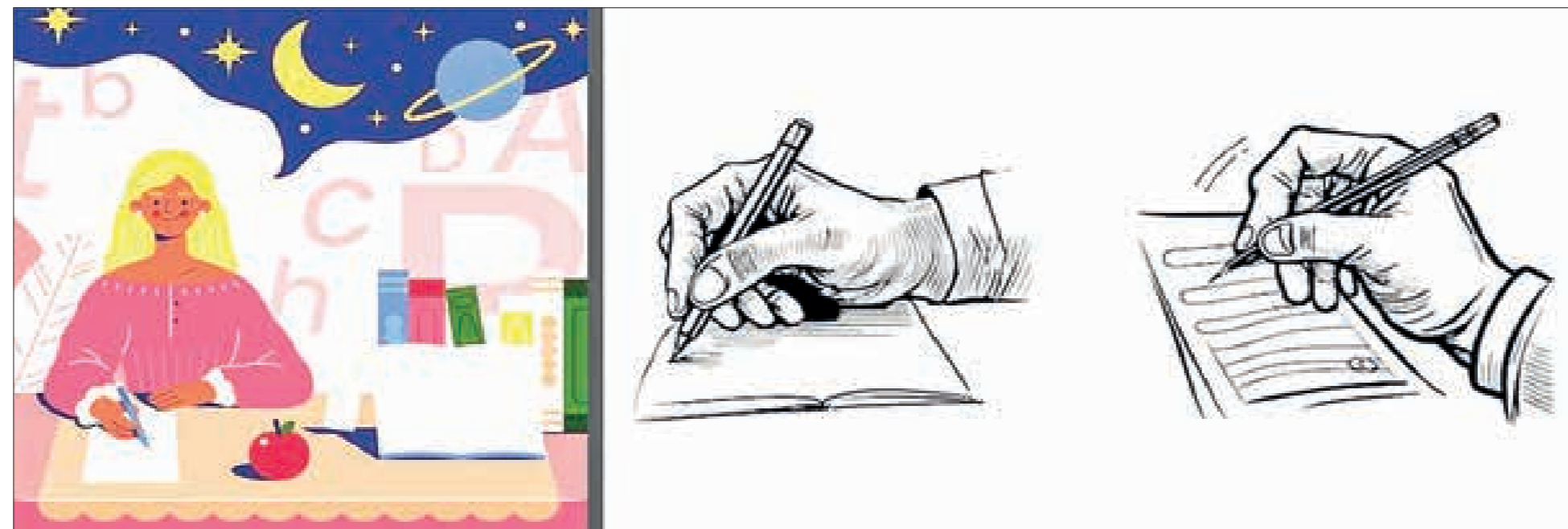
## Power through

If you get stuck, just keep going. Dr Smyth suggests writing the last sentence you wrote over and over until you get unstuck.

## Move on

If you find it doesn't help after three days, try something else.

Reference by Elizabeth Bernstein Arom, the Wall Street Journal.



Expressive writing, as studied by Psychology professor James Pennebaker, has been shown to enhance both mental and physical health by strengthening immune systems and alleviating chronic pain, inflammation, and symptoms of depression. ILLUSTRATION: FREEPIK

my dad."

Over the next few weeks, Desouvre filled several notebooks, writing about his worries as well as his happy memories with his dad. The jokes they'd shared, the sport they watched and the time they put up house shutters together, then cooled down with ice cream. Sometimes, Desouvre cried as he wrote. Often, he laughed.

"Writing allowed me to face my fear," says Desouvre. "My pen was a portal to process the pain."

He is in good company. An extensive body of research shows benefits to writing about a traumatic experience or difficult situation in a manner that psychologists refer to as "expressive writing." According to psychology professor James Pennebaker, people who do this, recording their deepest thoughts and feelings, often show improved mental and physical health. Pennebaker pioneered the scientific study of expressive writing as a coping mechanism to deal with trauma in the 1980s.

Professor Pennebaker says that hundreds of studies over several decades have looked at the potential benefits of expressive writing and found that it can strengthen the Immune system, including for people with illnesses such as cancer, depression, asthma and arthritis. Research also found that it can help reduce chronic pain and inflammation and improve mood, sleep and memory. And it may even help reduce symptoms of depression.

Experts say that expressive writing works because it allows you to make meaning out of a painful experience. Jotting down your thoughts can be good for your health. Recognizing that something is bothering you is an important first step. Translating that experience into language forces you to organize your thoughts. And creating a narrative gives you a sense of control.

But there are a few caveats. Expressive Writing isn't a magical panacea. It should not be used as a replacement for other treatments. People coping with

lem, the more trouble you will have with it because you create a loop of trepidation and apprehension and increasing negative emotions," says Dr Brain Marx, a professor of psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine. He uses an expressive writing protocol he helped design, called Written Exposure Therapy, with war veterans.

## Why write?

Thinking and talking about an event can lead to ruminating, where you get lost in your emotions. But writing focuses you on slowing down, says Dr Joshua Smyth, distinguished professor of biobehavioral health and medicine at Pennsylvania State University, who studies expressive writing. The mere acts of labelling a feeling of putting words to emotion can dampen the neural activity in the threat area of the brain, says psychology professor Dr Annette Stanton. Her research suggests that expressive writing can lead to lower depressive symptoms, greater positive mood and an enhanced appreciation for life."

of the exercise is to find meaning in an unsettling event.

Yanatha Desouvre initially turned to expressive writing about 15 years ago, after the break up of what he says was an unhealthy relationship. He wrote to understand why it made him feel vulnerable and sometimes physically ill. "You can keep things bottled up," he says. "It will make you sick."

The writing brought up an older trauma as well. When he was nine, he says, he survived a shooting in a barber shop in New York. He had nightmares about it over the years but tried not to focus on it. He started writing about it, then kept going. It helped. As he wrote, Desouvre asked himself how he felt about the traumas of his life and what they revealed. It was painful, he says. "But when I acknowledged the pain, I was able to see the courage I did not know I had," he says.

He thinks of his expressive writing as a captain's log – a recording of what happened and what he's learned. Sometimes, he jots down just a few minutes.

of wrestling with germs, loss, misinformation and his kids' home-schooling during the pandemic. But he's also written about what he has gained: more time with his family and perspective.

"My expressive writing gave me the courage to face my fears," Desouvre says. And I believe it has helped me discover the hope I need to heal.

## HOW TO START EXPRESSIVE WRITING

### Set aside time alone

Turn off your phone. Don't look at emails or social media. Expressive writing doesn't work well with a lot of interruptions or distractions.

Think short-term. This is not writing a journal. You aim to write for 15 to 20 minutes daily for three days.

### Pick your medium

Using pen and paper is nice because it slows you down to the pace of your own handwriting. But using a computer or even recording your voice works, too.

The secret sauce is in the

## Let's Search for A Common Platform to Walk on Together

FROM PAGE - 4

IN the world today, from the materialistic point of view, all technology, industry, machinery are highly advancing, but on the contrary, most people's mind are underdeveloped, their spirits remain in poverty.

Most modern people's mentalities are lacking loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equilibrium. Furthermore, the character of the young generation is bankrupt. Both material and mental progress are essential for the development of a country. In order to alleviate poverty, all religious leaders and spiritual scholars should develop educational infrastructures for modern education and moral education as well. Generally, good education is an avenue to upward morality and a way out of poverty. Now worldly progress is good enough, but the progress of spiritual life is at the minimum degree in the material world. Therefore, we need to try to elevate spirit of people, especially the character of sons and daughters of our world for the progress of our age in the near and far future.

To do so, we should change and promote the entire education system of every country; we should plan and project, teach and learn moral education, cultural education, religious education, spiritual education according to respective country, culture, nature, etc. Thus, all spiritual and religious leaders need to meet on a common platform and we should try to form one organization such as "The United Religions" just like the United States, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations. If we could organize the United Religions, we would co-operate with the United Nations to solve the problems of nations.

On account of different faiths or views, if we cannot meet, stand and walk on a common platform like brothers and sisters, and then surely the many mission of compassionate world teachers or many spiritual leaders would fail in doing good for the world. Since we all are citizens of the world, loving-kindness (MettE), great tolerance (KhantE), forgiveness and compassion are our common platform, it is to walk on together. However impossible it may seem now, surely it cannot be easier less risky than engaging at a brutal fighting in nuclear war. Let us get together and construct the spirit of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

I would like to conclude for my speech with the priceless word of the Buddha:

"One should win anger through loving-kindness, wickedness through goodness, selfishness through charity, and falsehood through truthfulness." This is the advice of the Buddha.

"Hatred never ceases through hatred, but it ceases by love alone. This is the essence of the ancient and eternal law." This is the advice of the Buddha.

May the truth and peace prevail in every corner of the world! May All beings be peaceful and happy forever!

Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara, The Admonition Master of State, Sangha Raja of Shwekyin Nikaya Buddhist Order, Abhidhajamharatthaguru, Abhidhajaaggama-hasaddhammajotika, Ph.D., D.Litt., Founder of Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Association, Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies, Patron of Sitagu Ayudana and Sekkhu Dhana Hospitals, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Theravada Dhamma Society of America



# NATIONAL



Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint inspects IPRD functions in Twantay.

## MoI DM conducts inspection of information activities in Yangon

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Ye Tint arrived at the Office of the Information and Public Relations Department in the Southern District of Yangon, located in Thanlyin on 30 December. He inspected the operations and subsequently met with officials and staff. During the meeting, he discussed various matters with the officials and staff of Dala, Kyauktan, Thongwa,

Kayan and Seikkyi-Khanaung-to townships, inquiring about their respective businesses.

He visited the Kungyan-gon and Kawhmu Township IPRDs in the morning. In the afternoon, he inspected Twantay Township IPRD and Hlinethaya (East) and (West) townships.

The Deputy Minister held a meeting with the employees to enhance the effectiveness

of information and awareness activities.

The offices were noted to be clean and orderly, attracting young people and other individuals to the library for reading. The Deputy Minister encouraged all to have continuous learning and to strive towards becoming competent public relations officers and responded to discussions of staff. — MNA/KZW

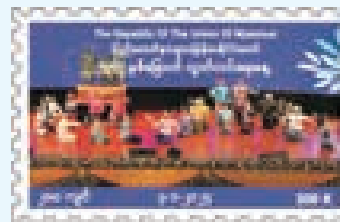
## Three new special postage stamps to be issued marking 76<sup>th</sup> Independence Day

THE Myanmar Post under the Ministry of Transport and Communications announced the release of special K200 postage stamps featuring to honour the 76<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of Myanmar.

The stamps will be sold at the Central Post Office in Nay Pyi Taw, the general post offices in Yangon and Mandalay and other post offices in each state and region at 9:30 am on 4 January 2024

(1385 ME).

To mark a special event, postage stamps purchased at the Central Post Office in Nay Pyi Taw and General Post offices in Yangon and Mandalay on 4 January 2024 on Thursday will have a date marking. — MNA/TMT



## Counter-argument to false information

### Misinformation: Security forces set fire to schools and tents in Bago Region

FALSE news on social networking sites that the security forces burned down the school and tents in Lapanpinpyant Village, Nattalin Township, Bago Region on 30 December.

Regarding the news, according to the findings of the ground inspection and a security official from the relevant area said that there was information about PDF violence against the village, and the security forces are taking security measures in the area and there are no burning buildings.

Terrorists attacked security forces using a human shield by ambushing people from inside houses and using landmines.

They are also setting fire

to houses as they flee, and are spreading false information through social networking sites to cover up their actions. — MNA/KZL



### Misinformation: Tatmadaw kills 6 workers from Shanmyaung stone grinding mill

MALACIOUS Khit Thit media and RFA have published and spreading false information on social networking sites that six workers, including the mother of the owner of the Shanmyaung stone grinding mill in Madaya Township, Mandalay Region, were shot by the Tatmadaw on the night of 30 December, and that more than 50 houses were burned due to the burning of Udein village on the morning of 31 December.

Regarding the news, according to a security officer from the relevant area, there was no security duty near Zeebin Phyugon village. Reportedly, PDF terrorists shot and killed one woman

and three men with small arms on the night of 30 December, further investigation is underway.

On the morning of 31 December, the security troops went to Udein village to stabilize the area as it was reported that there were arson attacks and threats of murder and money demands. PDF terrorists set fire to Udein village, and the homemade rockets they fired hit residential houses in the village and destroyed them.

In order to cover up their actions and misrepresent the security forces, the so-called PDF terrorists attacked the security forces by sneaking into people's houses and

burning down people's houses and illegal media outlets have created false information through social networking sites. — MNA/KZL



# NATIONAL

**T**HE commodity prices have highly fluctuated and broken records with the highest prices in the Yangon commodity market in 2023 compared to recent years.

Prices of black gram, pigeon pea, rice, Kyukok garlic, Shan garlic, sugar, jaggery, sugarcane, and potato skyrocketed with record-breaking prices this year.

Chilli, which reached the highest price in 2022, encountered very low prices in 2023 which led the traders to experience net losses.

There was an unusual encounter with the palm oil market in mid-2023.

The prices of tamarinds have been stable for three consecutive years.

Although the traders who keep stocks of the varieties of the commodities gained



The photo shows a dry groceries outlet.

## Overall commodity prices in Yangon wholesale market

By Toe Wai Aung

profits in 2023, chilli and tamarind traders experienced losses.

Moreover, the year 2023 will yield more profits for the crop farmers.

### Onion

Although the prices of old onion, on 2 December 2022, once peaked at K4,000-K4,700-K5,100 per viss and on 9 December 2022, the prices of rainy Myittha new onion were K3,700-K4,300-K4,500-K4,700 whereas Myingyan onion was K3,100-K3,900-K4,200-K4,400 per viss, prices of old onion on 12 December 2023 increased to K3,300-K4,300-K4,800-K5,100 per viss.

On 21 December, prices of Myingyan rainy onion (new) K2,000-K3,200-K3,400-K4,000 whereas Myittha onion was priced at K3,100-K3,900-K4,200-K4,700.

Summer onions were priced at K1,350-K1,575-K1,600-K1,350 per viss in late April 2023. Traders who keep onions gained fewer profits in 2023 rather than in 2022.

The farmers who grow monsoon onions gained more K1,500 per viss this year compared to that of 2022.

Before 2022, the peak prices of onions in the Yangon market were K3,700/3,800 per viss for large sizes in early December of 2015 and 2019. Onion exports in 2023 are fewer than that in 2022.

### Garlic

The garlic prices skyrocketed at peak on 3 November 2023 as Kyukok garlic was priced at K16,000/K17,000 per viss whereas Shan Aungban garlic was priced at K12,000-K13,000-K14,000-K15,000 per viss. On 29 November, Kyukok garlic was priced at K10,000 per viss while Shan garlic (special size) was increased at K16,500-K17,000 per viss.

Thus, wholesale prices of both types

of garlic in 2023 peaked at K17,000 per viss. It was four times higher than that of the highest prices usually trended in regular years.

### Potato

It is unusual that in the daily reference rates for potatoes at the Yangon commodity market, Shan potato prices were not shown up to the middle of the year; only the prices of Chinese potatoes were displayed.

Chinese potato peaked at K4,200 per viss on 15 November as the record-breaking price for the whole potato market.

In late 2023, the potato prices were downward trending as the sandy old potato was priced at K2,600 per viss whereas red soiled new Chinese potato was priced at K2,450 per viss.

### Chilli

The chilli, which marked a peak price in 2022, declined prices in 2023 despite skyrocketing prices of many commodities in 2023. Those who kept stocks of chilli in 2022 gained K10,000 per viss in profit.

However, many chilli traders encountered fewer profits in 2023.

In late 2022, both bell peppers and chilli with cold storage were priced at K31,000 per viss; Moehtaung chilli with cold storage was priced at K19,500 per viss; and long chilli with cold storage was priced at K21,000 per viss. In late 2023, bell pepper with cold storage was priced at K23,000/ 24,000 per viss and another type was priced at K19,500 per viss.

In the middle of 2023, the price of the Moehtaung chilli with cold storage was K16,000 per viss; the new Moehtaung chilli was priced at K9,500 in late November; K10,500-K11,000 on 29 December. The price of Shan Moehtaung chilli (new) was priced

at K11,500 per viss in late December.

The Sinphyukyun bell pepper in late 2022 was K29,000 per viss in the market. However, it declined to K19,000 per viss in late 2023.

In late 2023, prices of bell peppers were Chinese bell pepper K19,500 per viss, zee bell pepper K14,500 per viss while Tharzi bell pepper (new) was K16,000 per viss.

Long chilli processed with cold storage was priced at K15,500 per viss in late 2023 whereas reddish pink long chilli from the Salin region was at K13,500 per viss on 29 December.

The Shan long chilli (new) was priced at K9,500 per viss in early December. However, it increased to K12,000 per viss on 29 December.

### Rice

Prices of both smooth rice and rough rice skyrocketed this year.

In late 2023, a bag of Pawsan rice (old) from Ayeyawady Region was K150,000; from Shwebo was K170,000-K180,000; Pawsan rice (new) from Ayeyawady Region was K110,000-K120,000; from Shwebo was K140,000.

A bag of Pawkywe rice (new) was K100,000; (old) was K105,000; 90-day rough rice (old) was K95,000; double-cropping rice (old) was K82,000; monsoon rough rice (new) K68,000-K78,000.

In early January 2023, a bag of rough rice (new) was – 90-days rice (K49,000) and Pawkywe (K56,000); Pawsan in late 2022 was K72,000.

Pawsan rice from Ayeyawady Region was K65,000 per bag in late 2022. Therefore, the rice prices doubled in 2023.

The prices of reasonable rice that were sold by the rice NGO in early August

2022 to the consumers were – rough rice (K35,000-K37,000) per bag; Pawsan rice from Ayeyawady Region K52,000/K55,000, and Shwebo rice K75,000-K77,000.

However, the prices of rice sold by the rice NGO in early August of 2023 were – rough rice K60,000/K65,000, Ayeyawady Pawsan K94,000-K97,000 and Shwebo K110,000-K120,000.

Consumers encountered high rice prices in 2023; traders gained more profits than farmers in 2023.

### Sugar/jaggery

In early 2023, sugar price was K2,550-K2,650 per viss; raw jaggery from Pakkoku was K3,200 per viss; Yesagyo white jaggery was K3,700 per viss; and sugarcane K2,800 per viss. On 29 December, prices of sugar were K3,930 per viss; raw jaggery from Pakokku was K5,000 per viss; Yesagyo white jaggery was K5,800 per viss; and sugarcane K4,300 per viss.

### Palm oil

Authorities took action against those who sold the palm oil at higher prices than the reference wholesale rate. The domestic distribution of palm oil was changed in the system commencing from early December. The palm oil for states and regions was directly offered by Yangon edible oil tanks to the respective districts.

The long queues that were waiting to purchase palm oil at Yangon Bayintnaung and Lanmadaw Nyaungpinlay market are observed vanishing. The reference wholesale price of palm oil in early 2023 was K4,770 per viss while it was K4,955 per viss in late 2023.

In early 2023, the palm oil price at the external market was K5,250 per viss. It was K9,000 per viss in the middle of the year. However, palm oil price at the external market was not publicized in late 2023 since selling at the external market was taken action.

The price of palm oil in the international market was US\$965 per ton in early 2023. It was US\$840 in late 2023.

### Beans and pulses

On 23 December, black gram RC was K3,010,000 per ton; the price of pigeon pea was peaked at K4,150,000 per ton on 8 September.

However, black gram RC one ton was priced at K2,962,500 on 29 December 2023; red pigeon pea was at K3,250,000 per ton; green gram from Pakkoku was at K2,660-K2,920 per viss; Khayan Shwewah K3,750 per viss; and the price of chickpea was at K6,050-K6,250 per viss.

On 8 August, the price of green gram from Pakokku was at K3,660-K3,750 per viss; the highest prices in 2023 were Khayan Shwewah K4,000 on 9 June; and chick pea was K6,050-K6,250 per viss on 29 December.

Translated by TMT

# NATIONAL

## Significant events and news diary in 2023

By Toe Wai Aung

### 3 January

- The YCX marine product transportation process that links four ASEAN countries including Myanmar was launched. The service is available for Singapore- Port Klang-Yangon-Yangon-Port Klang-Singapore-Sihanoukville-Singapore routes. Along the route, it will connect Singapore, Port Klang of Malaysia, Yangon, Port Klang, Singapore, Sihanoukville Port of Cambodia, and Singapore.
- Green Power Energy announced the completion of the Taungtawkwun solar power plant established in Thanywa village of Myitha of Mandalay Region. The plant will generate 25 Megawatts per year and a total of 45,980 solar plates are installed. The solar tracking system is also installed to maximize photovoltaic (PV) energy from the sun.
- Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar Daw Than Than Swe said a specific plan should be laid to use a digital payment system for all tax payments including tax collection of the government, water and meter bills.

### 6 January

- 112 undocumented people entered by boat to Kadonelaykyun of Kadonkani village-tract of Bokale Township were sentenced to five years imprisonment for the maximum and two years' imprisonment for the minimum.

### 7 January

- Thousands of Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand had to wait for a long time to make token to renew their passports near the Myanmar Embassy to Thailand.
- Yangon Region permitted 53 new investments that can create over 35,000 local jobs. From January to the third week of December 2022, foreign and domestic investments created 35,792 job opportunities in the region.
- The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee announced that the seized illegal goods from border and sea routes are auctioned under the supervision of the committee.

### 8 January

- The Chinese Embassy to Myanmar announced that those who want to enter via the Ruili border camp no longer needed to submit a health code but to show a COVID-free certificate tested within 48 hours. The statement said after the reopening of the Ruili border camp, those who pass the camp do not need to apply for a health code but just need a COVID-free certificate tested within 48 hours.
- According to the Responsible Business Fund (RBF), Denmark will provide K2 billion to the domestic SMEs, and the Full Proposal for the 6<sup>th</sup> call (second stage) shall have to be submitted no later than 9 January.
- The YESC announced that power cut-offs occurred in some places of the Yangon Region. The compressors of Yadana offshore gas pipelines that transmit power to the Yangon Region will be under maintenance at 3 am on 9 January.
- Telematics devices that will enable YBS drivers to directly inform the Yangon Bus Operator Control Centre of unusual events on their buses have already been installed on 3,885 YBS buses, according to YRTC.

### 9 January

- The compressors of Yadana offshore gas pipelines that transmit power to the Yangon Region were under maintenance at 3 am on 9 January.



A part of the Taungtawkwun Solar Power Project is shown in the picture.

### 11 January

- The Union Minister for Labour talked about the importance of CMP businesses as the factories need to follow the rules and regulations of the Central Bank of Myanmar in transferring expenses from foreign countries.
- The Directorate of Investment and Company Administration announced that they will not accept the submission of visa extensions of foreigners of local companies if they do not apply at least 60 days before their expiration.
- The Ministry of Commerce announced the list of goods that can be traded using US dollars in addition to Yuan at Myanmar-China border trade.
- The day border pass for 6 am -6 pm was granted to those passing Myawady-Mae Sot Friendship Bridge 1 starting from 12 January.

### 15 January

- The five-year Judicial Strategic Plan (2023-2027) drawn with the theme of "Providing Justice by All" and the Year One Action Plan (2023) in Myanmar-English bilingual were released by the Supreme Court of the Union.
- The Ministry of Health released public health requirements for travellers entering Myanmar through the Myanmar-Thai border on 19 January.

### 25 January

- Yangon Region Investment Committee approved 10 new investments worth K6,000 million and over US\$10 million with more than 4,300 job opportunities in the region.
- Jin Tian cargo ship carrying Myanmar seamen sank in the sea off the coast of Nagasaki, southwest of Japan.
- The ceremony marking the 117<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yangon Zoological Gardens was held from 27 to 29 January.

### 1 February

- According to the Yangon Region Public Transport Committee-YRTC, taxis in Yangon Region will have numbers representing respective townships.
- The Yangon City Development Committee purchased 232 three-wheeled garbage trucks to improve the trash collection system in Yangon Region.
- Foreigners residing and working in Myanmar with an e-visa (business) can apply for a stay extension and re-entry visa online.

### 7 February

- A fire broke out at the MPT telecom exchange office in Mayangon Township, interrupting MPT calls, MPT

data, and WIFI.

- Forty-three jetties in eight districts of the Ayeyawady Region were leased to private businesses by auction in the financial year 2023-2024, according to the Ministry of Transport and Communications.
- Myanma Insurance signed an MoU with car companies and car sale centres to make insurance for various vehicles including EVs.

### 12 February

- Skay Cable Car services launched at BE. FALLS of PyinOoLwin Township in Mandalay Region marking Union Day.

### 20 February

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the Russian government allows six-month tourist visas for tourists from 19 countries including Myanmar.

### 28 February

- The EU announced that they will keep supporting local SMEs.

### 2 March

- A total of 138 Myanmar nationals detained in Bangkok, Thailand, were repatriated via the Myawady-Mae Sot Friendship Bridge.
- Myanmar Police Force announced that those who run online gambling, lucky draw, and illegal financing services will face legal actions under the existing law.

### 9 March

- Famous Myanmar singer Twantay Soe Aung passed away at 2:30 am.

### 20 March

- The Overseas Worker Identification Cards (OWIC) can be processed within a day at the office of the Yangon Region Labour Department.
- The Ministry of Construction announced that EVs will be exempted from tolls from 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2025.
- The Union Supreme Court announced that the adjudicating power of courts regarding trademarks shall come into effect starting from 1 April.
- The government allowed to allocate nearly K20000billion to ministries, departments, and region/state governments for the 2023-2024 financial year.

To be continued

Translated By KTZH

# Google agrees to settle \$5 bln consumer privacy lawsuit

*Google has reached a preliminary settlement in a consumer privacy lawsuit that sought a minimum of \$5 billion in damages over allegations of tracking user data during private browsing.*

GOOGLE has agreed to settle a consumer privacy lawsuit seeking at least \$5 billion in damages over allegations it tracked the data of users who thought they were browsing privately.

In a court filing, the judge confirmed that lawyers for Google reached a preliminary agreement to settle the class action lawsuit — originally filed in 2020 — which claimed that "millions of individuals" had likely been affected.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs

were seeking at least \$5,000 for each user it said had been tracked by the firm as they visited Google Analytics or Ad Manager in "private browsing mode" while not logged into their Google account.

This would have amounted to at least \$5 billion.

Google and lawyers for the consumers did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The lawsuit, filed in a California court, claimed Google's

practices had infringed on users' privacy by "intentionally" deceiving them.

The original complaint alleged that Google and its employees had been given the "power to learn intimate details about individuals' lives, interests, and internet usage."

"Google has made itself an unaccountable trove of information so detailed and expansive that George Orwell could never have dreamed it," it added. No figure was given for the preliminary



Plaintiffs' lawyers sought at least \$5,000 for each user allegedly tracked by the firm while in "private browsing mode" on Google Analytics or Ad Manager without logging into their Google account. **PHOTO: AFP**

settlement between the parties. A formal settlement is expected for court approval by 24 February 2024. — AFP

# Spain extends some anti-inflation measures into 2024

*The extended measures include a continued reduction or elimination of the value-added tax (VAT) on essential food items like fruits, vegetables, pasta, and cooking oils for the first half of 2024.*

SPAIN'S leftist government on Wednesday extended into 2024 some of the measures it put in place to help households cope with a surge in living costs, including lower tax on food.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who was reappointed to another term in November, said the measures aim to "improve people's lives" at a time of uncertainty caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Among the measures which will be extended is the elimination or reduction of the value-added tax on certain basic food items such as fruits and vegetables, pasta and cooking oils during the first half of 2024, he said.

The government will also extend free commuter rail travel until the end of next year but will start phasing out a reduction in the VAT on electricity and gas bills during the first half of 2024 since energy prices have fallen, he added.

Sanchez's government first

put in place a series of measures to help households cope with soaring prices in 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine that year sent consumer prices soaring.

Spanish inflation hit a record 10.8 per cent in July 2022, its highest level since 1985, but has since eased. It stood at 3.2 per cent in November although the cost of food continues to rise at a much faster pace.

The measures, which will cost

state coffers around 2.5 billion euros (\$2.8 billion) in 2024, will not deter Spain from reducing its debt and public deficit, Sanchez said.

To help pay for them, the government will extend a controversial windfall tax introduced in 2023 on banks and energy companies by an extra year.

The tax, which is set to raise about three billion euros this year, will now also be payable in both 2024 and 2025. — AFP



A demonstrator is wrapped in a giant Spanish flag during a nationwide protest called by the Spanish far-right Vox party against price hikes, in front of the city hall in Madrid, Spain, 19 March 2022. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

## PIA privatization plan fails due to its financial obligations

THE privatization plan of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has faced setbacks for the upcoming year as the privatization commission couldn't resolve issues related to loan repayments and legal matters, ARY News reported on Thursday.

It reported citing sources that the interim federal minister for privatization, Fawad Hussain Fawad failed to implement to transfer of PIA to the private sector by January 2024.

PIA has borrowed more than Pakistan rupee (PKR) 270 billion from the commercial banks on government guarantee. The Ministry of Finance will decide to meet the financial requirements of the PIA for the next three months. — ANI

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (350W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MCC SHENZHEN VOY.NO. (350W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **1-1-2024** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/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 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm 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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE., LTD.**

# ROLLING UPDATES

## WORLD

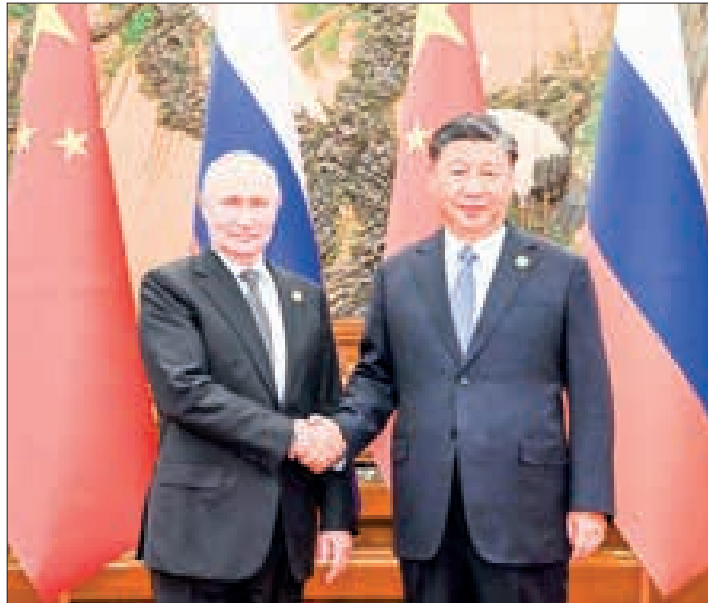
## Xi says to continuously consolidate, develop China-Russia ties serves fundamental interests of both countries

THE development of China-Russia relations in the past three-quarters of a century has shown that to continuously consolidate and develop bilateral relations featuring permanent good-neighbourly friendship, comprehensive strategic coordination and mutually beneficial cooperation serves the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples, meets the expectations of the international community and conforms to the trend of the times, Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Sunday.

Xi made the remarks as he exchanged messages of New Year greetings with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin.

On behalf of the Chinese government and people, Xi extended sincere congratulations and best wishes to Putin and the Russian people.

Xi said that in the face of changes unseen in a century and volatile international and regional situations, China-Russia relations have always maintained healthy and stable devel-



Chinese President Xi Jinping holds talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, 18 October 2023. Putin is in Beijing for the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF). **PHOTO: ZHANG LING/XINHUA**

opment, and moved steadily in the right direction in 2023.

During their two meetings in Moscow and Beijing this year, Xi said he and President Putin had candid exchanges and reached broad consensus on bilateral relations and major international and regional

issues of common concern.

Under the two leaders' joint guidance, the two sides have further deepened political mutual trust, strengthened strategic coordination and achieved new results in mutually beneficial cooperation, Xi said. — Xinhua

## Türkiye hopes to reap benefits of economic U-turn over 2024

AFTER years of wrestling with soaring inflation and a battered currency, Türkiye hopes the turnaround of the economic policy in 2023 will pave the way for a sustained recovery in 2024. But experts warn the journey will be long and arduous.

The country lurched from ultra-loose monetary policy to fiscal orthodoxy this year, with a new financial team led by Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek taking the helm in early summer.

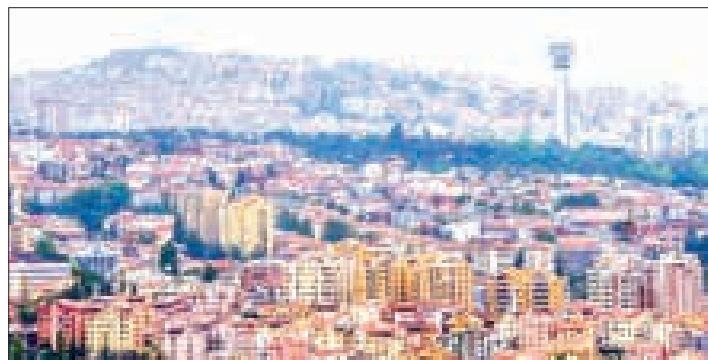
Aggressive interest rate hikes since June have sent the policy rate skyrocketing from 8.5 per cent to 42.5 per cent in just seven months, offering a glimmer of hope for the coun-

try to rein in the rampaging inflation.

"The tightening we've seen since June sets the stage for what's next," said Arda Tunca, an independent economist from Istanbul. "We can expect these measures to start impacting inflation in the second

half of 2024 finally."

He warned, however, that monetary policy alone won't suffice, adding that structural reforms are crucial to building resilience against inflationary pressures and addressing Türkiye's stark income disparities. — Xinhua



This photo taken on 22 August 2023 shows a view of Ankara, Türkiye. **PHOTO: MUSTAFA KAYA/HANDOUT VIA XINHUA**

### TOP HEADLINES

## Thousands protest in Serbia alleging election fraud by governing party

IN the largest protest over this month's parliamentary and municipal elections, thousands of protesters have gathered in Serbia's capital, calling for the annulment of the results and accusing President Aleksandar Vucic's governing party of perpetrating an election fraud, according to Al Jazeera.

The massive gathering in the heart of Belgrade on Saturday capped almost two weeks of protests in the streets over major irregularities that were reportedly observed during the vote on 17 December and were also observed by foreign observers.

Preliminary results from the state election commission showed that the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) had 46.72 per cent of the votes and was proclaimed the election winner. — ANI

## India-UAE joint military exercise 'Desert Cyclone' to be held in Rajasthan

THE Joint Military Exercise 'Desert Cyclone 2024' between India and UAE will be held from 2 January to 15 January in Rajasthan.

The joint drills under 'Desert Cyclone 2024' will aim to enhance interoperability by learning and sharing best practices in urban operations.

India and the UAE enjoy strong bonds of friendship which are founded on millennia-old cultural, religious and economic intercourse between the two regions.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, potential areas of bilateral cooperation in the defence field are the production and development of defence equipment; joint exercises of armed forces, particularly naval exercises; sharing of information on strategy and doctrines; technical cooperation in respect of Intermediate Jet Trainer etc. — ANI

## Brazil unveils national cybersecurity policy

BRAZILIAN President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva signed a decree on Thursday establishing the National Cybersecurity Policy (PNCiber) to promote national security related to cyber or virtual reality.

According to the decree published in the Official Gazette, the National Cybersecurity Committee (CNCiber) holds the responsibility of proposing updates to both the PNCiber and its mechanisms, including the National Cybersecurity Strategy and the National Cybersecurity Plan.

CNCiber will also be in charge of suggesting collaboration strategies for international technical cooperation on cybercrime.

"The PNCiber is a proposal aimed at unifying the existing regulatory mosaic, minimizing the growing number of incidents that affect the country, which cause huge losses for Brazilian society," the decree said.

The policy will include the adoption of regulatory measures and oversight mechanisms to promote cybersecurity in the country, as well as the development of national products, services and technologies oriented toward cybersecurity. — Xinhua

# SPORTS

## Two Myanmar players transfer to Thai football clubs

MYANMAR striker Aung Kaung Marn and defender Zaw Min Tun moved to Thai Football Clubs, as stated by the Myanmar Football Federation.

This season, the Thai League has opened its half-season transfer window, and the teams are filling up the necessary positions. Aung Kaung Marn and Zaw Min Tun have moved to new teams.

Striker Aung Kaung Marn, after playing in the first round for the Thai League-1 club Uthai Thani, parted ways in the middle of the season and moved to the Thai League-2 club Nakhon Ratchasima on a half-season contract.

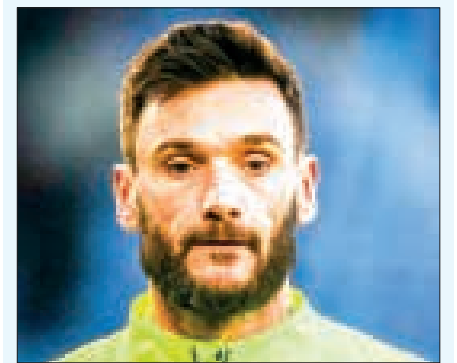
Nakhon Ratchasima team is trying to get back to Thailand League-1 this season and is ranked third after the first round of the League-2.

Defender Zaw Min Tun has returned to the Thai league after playing one season with Malaysian club Penang and signed a one-and-a-half season contract with Thai League-1 club Nakhon Pathom United.

After playing in the Thai League for a long time, Zaw Min Tun went to play in Malaysia in 2023 and returned from Malaysian Club this time. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL



Myanmar star player Aung Kaung Marn. PHOTO: NAKHON RATCHASIMA FC



The 37-year-old, who played a key role in France's 2018 World Cup victory and the 2022 final loss to Argentina, fell out of favor at Tottenham last season due to a series of subpar performances. PHOTO: PETER POWELL/ AFP

## Hugo Lloris to leave Spurs for Los Angeles FC

Lloris is expected to receive a hero's farewell from Spurs fans in Sunday's match against Bournemouth.

FRANCE'S World Cup-winning captain Hugo Lloris will move to MLS club Los Angeles FC after terminating his contract with Tottenham, a source close to the negotiations said on Saturday.

The goalkeeper, who has been with Tottenham since 2012 and captained the Premier League club for eight years, is expected to receive a hero's farewell from Spurs fans at Sunday's match with Bournemouth.

The 37-year-old was France's first-choice 'keeper when they won the 2018 World Cup by beating Croatia in the final and also played in the epic 2022 final which the French lost to Argentina on penalties. Lloris fell out of favour at Tottenham last season after a series of poor performances. — AFP

## Former US Open champion Stephens into Brisbane second round

FORMER US Open champion Sloane Stephens battled into the second round of the season-opening Brisbane International with a hard-fought 7-5, 6-3 win over Katerina Siniakova on Sunday.

Stephens, who reached a career-best ranking of three in 2018, broke her Czech opponent once in each set to book a second-round clash against 13th seeded Belgian Elise Mertens.

"It was obviously a good match,"

Stephens said.

"It's always really tough starting the year — you just don't really know what's going to happen, so I think being able to come here and get a win was really nice.

"I'm really proud of that performance".

In other first-round matches, there were wins for Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk over Romanian Ana Bogdan 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, and Italian Camila Giorgi, who beat

American Peyton Stearns 5-7, 6-2, 6-3.

Australian wildcard Arina Rodionova upset higher-ranked Italian Martina Trevisan 6-3, 6-2, while Anna Kalinskaya downed American Bernarda Pera 6-2, 6-1. Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva beat countrywoman Diana Shnaider 6-2, 6-3. Former world number one Naomi Osaka begins her comeback on Monday when she plays Germany's Tamara Korpatsch. — AFP

## Nadal leaves door open to playing beyond 2024

Rafael Nadal hints at the possibility of continuing beyond the 2024 season but acknowledges a high likelihood that his current visit to Australia may be his last as a player.

RAFAEL Nadal left the door ajar Sunday to continuing after the 2024 season, but conceded there was "a high percentage" that he was on his last trip as a player to Australia.

Speaking ahead of his comeback from a 12-month injury absence at the season-opening Brisbane International, the 37-year-old Spaniard said he did not know for

sure what the future held.

"The problem about saying that's going to be my last season is I can't predict what's going on 100 percent in the future," he said.

"That's why I say 'probably'. It's obvious it's a high percentage that it's going to be my last time playing here in Australia.

"But if I am here next year,

don't tell me, 'You said it was going to be your last season', because I didn't say it.

"You never know what's going on, you know? I can't predict how I'm going to be in the next six months. I can't predict if my body will allow me to enjoy tennis as much as I enjoyed the past 20 years. — AFP



In his return from a 12-month injury hiatus at the Brisbane International, the 37-year-old Spaniard expresses uncertainty about the future and the challenge of predicting it with certainty. PHOTO: AFP/FILE

Xi says to continuously consolidate, develop China-Russia ties serves fundamental interests of both countries

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## Iran to work on dedollarization of trade transactions within BRICS



A man passing a branch office of Iranian-based major bank Bank Melli Iran in Hamburg, German. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/AFP/FILE

*Joint missions and work with other BRICS nations are planned, focusing on dedollarization of trade, economic transactions, and financial cooperation.*

IRAN, like other BRICS members, will work on the dedollarization of trade, economic and financial transactions within the group of major emerging economies, and some efforts in this direction are already underway, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani told Sputnik.

"We have planned many missions and joint work with other BRICS members within the framework of this or-

ganization. One of the most important tasks is the dedollarization of trade and economic transactions and financial cooperation. Activities in this field of work of BRICS have already started, we hope to strengthen and expand these activities in order to achieve this goal as soon as possible," the diplomat said.

BRICS, established in 2009, is a group uniting the world's largest de-

veloping economies, which currently includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. In August, the 15th top-level BRICS summit in Johannesburg extended invitations to Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to join the bloc. Their full membership, except for Argentina, is scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2024. — SPUTNIK

### UNTIL ALL GOALS

## Netanyahu says Israeli operation in Gaza Strip will last for many more months

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Saturday that the military operation in the Gaza Strip will last for many more months, as well as warned Lebanon's Hezbollah movement against expanding the scale of its attacks on Israel.

"The campaign in the Gaza Strip will last for many more months," Netanyahu told a press conference.

He added that the Israeli operation will last until all its goals, including the destruction of the Hamas movement, are achieved.

"If Hezbollah expands the scale of the confrontation, we will carry out strikes that neither Hezbollah nor Iran can imagine," Netanyahu stated.

Earlier this month, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said that the United States agrees with the Israeli assessment that the ongoing conflict in Gaza could go on for several months, adding that it is important that Israeli strikes become more targeted and precise.

On 7 October Palestinian movement Hamas launched a large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip, while its fighters breached the border, opening fire on the military and civilians. As a result, over 1,200 people in Israel were killed and some 240 others abducted. — SPUTNIK

## Eurostar to resume normal services Sunday after cancellations

*Eurostar assures normal services on Sunday after a full day of cancellations due to flooded tunnels, causing distress for New Year travellers.*

EUROSTAR trains will run as normal Sunday, the company said, hours after an entire day's services had to be cancelled, causing misery for tens of thousands of New Year travellers.

Saturday's massive disruption left some travellers in tears as they arrived at London's St Pancras Station to discover that two flooded tunnels in southern

England had blocked the high-speed rail line to the continent.

Other travellers were left stranded in mainland Europe.

Earlier, High Speed 1 (HS1), which runs the railway line, had warned the volume of water in the tunnels was "unprecedented" and would take time to clear. — AFP



Eurostar services were cancelled due to flooded tunnels near Ebbsfleet International station in Kent. PHOTO: AFP