

Four Objectives of the National Defence and Security Council

- 1. To steadfastly strive for emergence of political forces and the people’s representatives who can implement a genuine, disciplined multi-party democratic system while constantly emphasizing on the national interests of the State.
- 2. To persistently strive for promoting the socio-economic life of the people through the development of agro-based industries in improving the agricultural sector, the vital foundation of the economic growth of the State.
- 3. To put emphasis on enhancing the national education and health sectors for sustainable development of the State.
- 4. To implement multi-party democratic system, with the participation of the people, to ensure the success of multi-party democratic general election process and successfully moving towards with the multi-party democratic system aspired by the entire people.

Enabling a Clear Vision for the Multiparty Democracy We All Aspire To

ACTING President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing extends New Year greetings. The full text of the translated greetings is as follows: -

On the New Year occasion, when the year 2025 comes to an end and the New Year 2026 comes in, I would like to first extend my greetings and best wishes to all national brethren living throughout Myanmar. May your lives be filled with happiness and prosperity, may your mind and body be healthy and peaceful, and may all your good intentions and aspirations be fully realized.

The year 2025 has been an extraordinarily important year for our country. We have successfully addressed all the issues that arose when a state of emergency was declared on 1 February 2021. To continue advancing the country along the path of multiparty democracy, it is necessary to hold a general election. Therefore, to end the state of emergency and return the responsibilities of the State, these duties were handed back to the National Defence and Security Council. Under the leadership of the National Defence and Security Council and in accordance with the provisions of the 2008 Constitution, arrangements were made to hold a multiparty general election as soon as possible.

All national brethren must unite in marching towards the democratic goal, thereby bequeathing a legacy of honour and positive history for the future of our country.



Acting President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and State Security and Peace Commission Chairman Senior General Thadoe Maha Thray Sithu Thadoe Thiri Thudhamma Min Aung Hlaing.

sible. To ensure that this election is completely free and fair, both domestic and international election observers were invited. Moreover, Myanmar Electronic Voting Machines (MEVM) are being used to prevent any irregularities in voting.

From the very beginning of carrying out our state responsibilities, we set clear and firm

directions and worked steadily, keeping in mind the path our country must follow. Thanks to the collective support and co-operation of the people, we are now able to see the goal of multiparty democracy that everyone desires. On 28 December, the multiparty general election was successfully held in 102 townships, which was made possible

by the enthusiastic participation and collaboration of voters who cherish and support multiparty democracy in their respective townships. We also wish to express our gratitude to all the voting people who actively came out to cast their ballots. Since the election is being held in phases, it is necessary for voting individuals in the remaining townships

to fully exercise their rights as citizens of Myanmar and participate in the ongoing elections.

During the year 2025, many significant changes took place for the development of the country. We were able to strengthen and build friendly and cooperative relations with our partner countries, as well as take steps to help domestic products reach overseas markets and to increase both domestic and foreign investment in areas that are most needed within the country.

We were also able to carry out peace meetings, including the ceremony to mark the 10th anniversary of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), and establish important foundational pillars for the durable peace. During our government’s tenure, the outcomes of these meetings – centred on jointly implementing union-level peace and development – led to an agreement on 43 points for potential amendments to the 2008 Constitution. These points will be discussed in the upcoming Hluttaw and implemented in accordance with the law.

Throughout our tenure in office, we have strived to ensure the country’s stability, peace, and development. After the elections, we will hand over state responsibilities to the newly formed government and continue to work to ensure that this transition is carried out as smoothly and effectively as possible.

SEE PAGE 2

NATIONAL

- **Let us encourage production for prosperity of the Nation.**
- **Let us ensure education sector for the development of the Nation.**
- **Let us protect our environment for the prosperity of the Nation.**

Four National Objectives for 78th Independence Day 2026

1. To safeguard the non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty by all citizens, as they are the most essential and suitable national objectives and national duties
2. To strive forward for national unity and Union peace to implement sustainable and balanced development
3. To establish a genuine, disciplined democratic system completely by exercising the freedom and justice in accordance with the laws and regulations
4. To advance other economic sectors and promote MSMEs based on regional products

Enabling a Clear Vision for the Multiparty Democracy ...

FROM PAGE 1

I believe that the incoming year 2026 will be an auspicious New Year for our country, a year in which we can rebuild a modern, developed, and democratic new nation. It will be a year capable of achieving the durable

and stable peace that all citizens desire, as well as a year in which the social and economic lives of all ethnic communities can flourish. Therefore, in 2026, we must learn lessons from past experiences, base ourselves on love for the nation and our fellow

citizens, uphold the spirit of the union, and move forward with unity, mutual understanding, and trust to successfully overcome challenges. I hope that all national brethren will march towards the democratic goal and pass on a legacy of good history for

our country.

At this auspicious moment of the New Year, I extend my heartfelt wishes that all citizens of Myanmar, all national brethren, may treat one another with love and goodwill, and contribute to the well-being and prosperity

of the Union. May everyone embrace correct new ideas, fresh perspectives, and renewed beliefs, helping to achieve national stability and durable peace, and may all enjoy joyful, prosperous, and peaceful lives.
Thank you all.

Facts on General Election’s Phase I

- * There were 24,261,293 eligible voters (over 24 million) nationwide.
- * A total of 4,863 parliamentary candidates contested.
- * The first phase of the election was held in 102 townships.
- * There were 11,692,144 eligible voters (over 11.6 million) in the first phase of the election.
- * There were 6,095,511 people (over six million) who voted.
- * 52.13 per cent of voters cast their ballots in the first phase of the election.

Public Announcement

THE public is informed that those who need to travel abroad for important or urgent reasons may apply for an Express Service without waiting, either through online booking or by applying in person.

Under the Express Service, the passport booklet will be issued five days after the application is accepted.

The Express Service fee, including the passport booklet fee, is K545,000.

Detailed information is available on the website of the Myanmar Passport Issuing Authority at www.passport.gov.mm.

The Express Service will be launched on 5 January 2026.

Myanmar Gazette

Heads of Service Organizations transferred; Appointment of Head of Service Organization confirmed

1. The National Defence and Security Council has transferred the following individuals as Heads of Service Organizations, shown against each of their names from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Maung Maung Than Director-General Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection Department Ministry of Labour	Director-General Union Minister’s Office Ministry of Labour
(b) U Maung Maung Kyaw Director-General Directorate of Hotels and Tourism Ministry of Hotels and Tourism	Director-General Union Minister’s Office Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

2. The National Defence and Security Council has confirmed the appointment of Professor Dr Latt Latt Win, Rector of the University of Pharmacy (Yangon), of the Department of Human Resources for Health under the Ministry of Health, after the one-year probationary period.

Condition of La Nina in First (10) days of January, 2026

Issued at 31 December 2025

1. The Sea Surface Temperature (SST) over Tropical Pacific Ocean near the Equator and atmosphere phenomena is currently in a weak La Nina condition. According to the International Meteorological Agency, Numerical Weather prediction models are expected to continue weak La Nina level during the first (10) days of January.
2. Although the La Nina conditions occur at Pacific Ocean, more frequently occurs Easterly Waves, more low pressure areas may form over the the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal, decrease of night temperatures in some Regions and States, untimely rainfall will occur due to the impact of La Nina.
3. La Nina Condition will be updated in time. — DMH

NATIONAL

Call for Unity, Steadfastness
Amid Attempts To Divide

All citizens must stand orderly and united through thick and thin. We must never lose sight of our main goal and persevere it without deviation regardless of any attempt by the detractors to divide, incite and provoke us.

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by General Aung San at 7:40 pm on 1 January 1947)



Accurate statistics drive sound assessment
and informed decision-making

THE Union government held its meeting 6/2025 at the office No 18 of the Union government in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, attended by Prime Minister U Nyo Saw.

The meeting was also attended by Union ministers and officials in person and chief ministers of regions and states through videoconferencing.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that Phase I of the multiparty democratic general election 2025 was held in 102 townships with public participation on 28 December.

Representatives of political parties, media and election observation teams from international and locally based foreign embassies monitored the election processes at relevant polling stations and remarked that the election was comprehensive and successful with full responsibility.

Officials from the government were urged to join hands in holding Phase II and Phase III of the election successfully as part of meeting the aspirations of the people.

The government has designated the prevention, protection, and crackdown on telecom fraud



Prime Minister U Nyo Saw presides over the sixth Union government meeting.

and online gambling, illegal trading activities, and the transport and trafficking of narcotic drugs as a national duty, and has been consistently prioritizing and carrying out these efforts.

As this is the open and dry season at present, it is necessary to exercise caution to prevent fire hazards. Most fires occur due to negligence, so the use of

fire must be carried out systematically and responsibly. Given the increasing number of fire incidents, it is necessary to make advanced preparations to carry out public awareness activities.

In the coming February, the completion assessment examinations for basic education at the primary level (Grade 5), the completion assessment exam-

inations at the middle school level (Grade 9), and end-of-year school-based examinations for the remaining basic education grades will be held. Therefore, responsible officials from the Region/State Governments and the Ministry of Education must work together to ensure that students can sit for the examinations successfully and achieve a 100 per

cent pass rate.

In carrying out rehabilitation works in areas affected and damaged by the Mandalay earthquake, the relevant ministries, as well as the Region and State governments, have to work together to ensure that the tasks are completed within the prescribed timeframe.

With regard to financial matters, it is necessary to ensure that projects to be implemented using the funds allocated and approved for each financial year are completed before the end of the designated financial year.

Only if the statistical data and information submitted by ministries and by the region and state governments are as accurate and close to on-ground realities as possible can the various conditions of the State be properly assessed; and only with accurate assessments can correct decisions and policies be formulated and effectively implemented.

Union ministers participated in the discussions in their respective sectors and plans.

The meeting ended with the remarks by the Prime Minister, who coordinated discussions of Union ministers. — MNA/TTA

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and The Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.
News and Periodicals Enterprise

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.

(An 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)

State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Presiding Patron of Minkyaung Buddhist Learning Centre in Thanlyin Aggamaha Pandita, Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa Ethics for Auspicious New Year 2026

TODAY is an auspicious day on the New Year occasion for all global people as the New Year 2026 takes the position of the old year 2025. From the New Year occasion onward, may all global people be free from different types of existing and forthcoming dangers and bad things and enjoy all kinds of good things and advantages.

The great Magha Deva poem states that only when everyone

abides by the four cardinal virtues will they be free from dangers and diseases and be healthy and wealthy with longevity. Hence, all people in Myanmar as well as the entire world need to uphold loving-kindness, compassion, empathy and detachment so as to enjoy beneficial qualities such as freedom from illness, safety from dangers and hazards, physical wholeness and completeness, prosperity, great strength and vigour, and longevity.



New Year message 2026 sent by Presiding Patron of State Ovadacariya, Insein Ywama Pariyatti Buddhist Learning Centre, Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Tiloka Bhivamsa

TODAY marks the end of 2025 and the auspicious beginning of the New Year 2026. May all the people of the world, including the people of Myanmar, be blessed with every good fortune. From the New Year onward, may they enjoy peace of mind and good health, be free from all calamities, and have their wishes fulfilled. I also extend my heartfelt prayers for a peaceful world.

Especially, what I would like to urge the people of the world, including the people of Myanmar, is this: leave behind the negative attitudes, impurities, and unwholesome actions of the old year, and strive in the New Year to make both your mindset and your conduct as good as possible. I earnestly urge this, and also wishes everyone to be blessed with all auspiciousness.

For lasting good results, it is beneficial only if, at all times, everyone can gain at least one



– or even all three – of merit, knowledge, and wealth. May you all become people who can use time in a truly beneficial way.

They all need to follow the advice from the auspicious preaching to achieve prosperity and success. Moreover, they have to avoid bad behaviour and misconduct. Moreover, they need to perform meritorious deeds. These activities are auspicious. As such, a New Year’s message of goodwill is delivered, wishing that the New Year 2026 be filled with all auspicious blessings and that the world become a peaceful place.

New Year Ovadakatha for 2026 given by State Ovadacariya and Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies and Sitagu Hospitals

ALL virtuous and righteous people, all noble devotees who cherish the Dhamma,

The Gregorian year 2025 has come to an end, and we have now arrived at 2026. As each old year passes and we move from one New Year to the next, there is one point I would like to clearly understand and reflect upon.

With each passing year, we have one year less left to live in life. With each passing year, we draw one year closer to death. Keeping this firmly in mind, strive to grasp and make use of the true essence of life.

As Buddhists who believe in the cycle of existence, to live a new life peacefully and beautifully, we should seek and accumulate good conduct, sound systems, and virtuous qualities. I believe it is necessary to leave behind the old and to pursue and gather the new within a proper and wholesome framework.

Therefore, in an age when sensual desires are rampant, live with integrity. To the extent that one enjoys and partakes in heavenly blessings, one will be at peace and content — this is another way of living.

If beings are driven by the desire to dominate with power

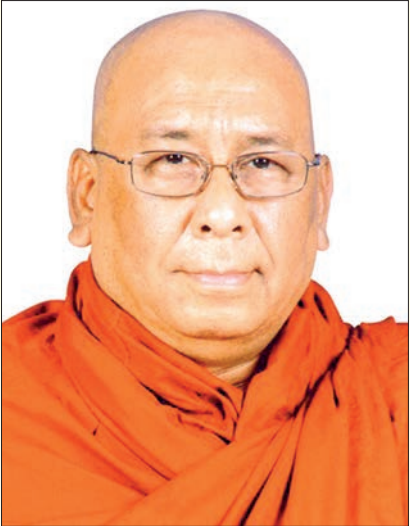
and authority, excessively greedy and reckless in pursuing it, then, in modern terms, they are abusing that power. If they continue to wield authority and chase after power, the world of living beings will inevitably become extremely miserable.

When religious disputes arise, it is best to maintain great awareness and wisdom. Living with awareness and knowledge is called “Ariya Vihara”, following the proper conduct and way of life of the virtuous.

All noble devotees who love the Dhamma

Just as the Lord Buddha analyzes the world six times a day, everybody should see the state of the world with their eyes and listen with their ears – and live accordingly. In an age when sensual desires are rampant, live with integrity. If power and authority have been excessively abused, then live with loving-kindness. To abandon hatred, enmity, and violence is true compassion.

To completely abandon all hatred and ill-will is called “Brahma Vihara”. Religious disputes or conflicts exist in every



religion as well.

In the coming New Year, for everyone to live in peace and well-being, one should establish integrity, uphold loving-kindness and compassion, and maintain wisdom and knowledge. If everyone lives holding on to these three principles, all will be at peace and happy.

Wherever the Lord Buddha may be, just as He observes the world six times a day and lives in peace, may everyone also live in peace and well-being. Wishing everyone safety from harm, I send loving-kindness as we bid farewell to the old year and welcome the New Year.

May everyone live in peace, happiness, and prosperity.

NATIONAL

General Aung San Declares Firm Stand Against Election Disruption

“Our Government shall not permit any disruption of the forthcoming election. The electoral process shall remain free and fair, and no interference shall be exercised upon those who participate in it. Yet, let it be firmly declared that any attempt to disturb or sabotage the election shall be met with the full weight of authority”.

(An excerpt from the radio address regarding the election, delivered by General Aung San on 13 March 1947)



New Year message for 2026 sent by Aggamaha Kammathanacariya, Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Saddhamma Kittasara (Aung San Sayadaw)

AT this auspicious New Year moment, as the world moves from 2025 to 2026, I extend my prayers and loving-kindness to the Sayadaws and venerable members of the Sangha in Myanmar; to the government leaders administering the country; to the people and citizens of Myanmar from all regions; and to all people of the world – everyone of all the seven-day-born beings. May this New Year’s auspicious time be marked by favourable stars, auspicious blessings, and an auspicious moment for all.

Taking this favourable constellation, auspicious blessing, and propitious time, I extend my prayers and loving-kindness that from today onward the people and citizens of Myanmar, the

people of the world, the government leaders administering the country, and all people from every region may sleep well, awaken to a good dawn, be free each day from unwholesome and unrighteous deeds, uphold and practice wholesome and virtuous conduct, and remain mindful and awake.

At this auspicious New Year moment as the year turns from 2025 to 2026, may all the people and citizens of Myanmar and all people of the world experience what is good and not what is bad; gain beneficial results and not harmful ones; abandon wrong views and doubt; and be able to diligently practice and cultivate wholesome conduct that leads to the realization of path wisdom, fruition wisdom, and Nibbāna.



New Year message for 2026 sent by Presiding Patron of Nanda Aungmyay Monastery of Leikpyakan Monastery Maha Saddhammajotikadhaja Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhaja Aggamaha Kammathanacariya Dr Bhaddanta Nimala



TODAY marks the New Year’s auspicious moment of the year 2026, observed by people around the world. From this New Year’s moment of 2026 onward, I extend special loving-kindness and wishes that all people of the world, regardless of race or religion, including the monks and people of Myanmar, may be healthy, prosperous, free from danger, and blessed with all forms of happiness and auspiciousness in the New Year.

The Lord Buddha is a precious gem

far superior to all worldly treasures. May the truth of this statement bring blessings so that the whole world may flourish in peace and prosperity, and may the flowers of eternal global peace bloom, spread, and radiate their fragrance.

The teachings of the Lord Buddha are a great treasure far superior to all worldly riches. May the truth of this statement allow the whole world to flourish in peace and prosperity, and may the flowers of eternal global peace bloom, spread, and radiate their fragrance.

The monks, as the disciples of the Lord Buddha, are a great treasure far superior to all worldly riches. May the truth of this statement allow the whole world to flourish in peace and prosperity, with the flowers of eternal global peace blooming, spreading, and radiating their fragrance. At this New Year moment, I especially extend my heartfelt wishes that your mind may be at peace, your body healthy, and your life fully blessed.

New Year Ovadakatha for 2026 sent by Rector of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Aggamaha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Hsekinda

I would like to convey a message on the New Year for 2026 to all.

According to the Buddha’s teachings, just as there are many kinds of suffering in the world, there are also many kinds of worldly prosperity. To attain such worldly prosperity, one must possess wide knowledge; when one has wide knowledge, wisdom increases, and when wisdom increases, one can work to achieve prosperity. Therefore, strive to acquire wide knowledge.

The knowledge and skills gained from learning and acquiring broad knowledge, however little you know, you can apply that little; however little you are skilled, you can use that skill, can be put into practice to bring benefits and prosperity both for yourself and for others. It can also be used to achieve growth and development.

In that way, everyone should strive to make their homes, villages, neighbourhoods, cities, countries, and the world around them as good and prosperous as possible. It is up to us to



work so that the human world we live in becomes wholesome, prosperous, and beneficial.

At this New Year’s moment, may we begin to acquire various kinds of knowledge and wisdom so that we can act for our own benefit, the benefit of others, the benefit of our country, and the benefit of the whole world. May we become virtuous people who are able to bring about diverse blessings and prosperity for everyone.

The people are urged to receive vaccination of COVID-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of COVID-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increase of death rate due to the disease.

NATIONAL

2026 Myanmar New Year Wishes from the Interfaith Dialogue Group



U Ye Htun, Chairman, Young Men's Buddhist Association (Central)-YMBA

As the year 2025 comes to an end and we move into 2026, I would like to extend my heartfelt prayers to all citizens of Myanmar and to people around the world for peace and good health. I strongly urge all Myanmar citizens to work together to achieve the four objectives of the National Defence and Security Council and to successfully hold the multiparty democratic general election to ensure the stability and development of the country.

I also appeal to all citizens to cooperate with the new government that emerges from the multi-party democratic general election to build a peaceful, modern, and developed country through national unity.

I wish all Myanmar citizens to love one another and to carry forward what is good for the country and its citizens.

U Wunna, Chairman, Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)

tral)



Mingalaba everyone

Today marks the end of the Christian Era 2025 and the beginning of the year 2026. On this day, 1 January 2026, the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar would like to first offer prayers for peace and good health to all ethnic national brethren living in Myanmar, as well as to all people around the world, and to wish them all the best in life.

I would also like to pray for the elimination of hate speech and hatred among the citizens of Myanmar, and for them to live together in peace and harmony, and work together for the peace and development of the country.

As the motto of the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group is "From Interfaith Unity to Peace," we live together in our motherland of Myanmar despite our different religions, ethnicities, and be-

liefs. Therefore, we urge all citizens to put love first and to work together for the benefit and cause of the motherland, walking the path of peace together. I would like to extend my prayers and love for the peace and prosperity of Myanmar.



U Aung Zaw Win (Islam), Vice-Chairman, Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)

Mingalaba everyone

As 2025 comes to an end and 2026 approaches, may all Myanmar citizens and people around the world be happy, healthy, and have all their wishes fulfilled. On behalf of Muslims, I, U Aung Zaw Win, Vice-Chairman of the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central), would like to extend my prayers and best wishes.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a country where people of all ethnic groups, races, and religions live together. In addition to Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam, other

beliefs are also practised, and people respect one another's religious beliefs while living in peace, love, and harmony.

As Muslims, we are also working together with the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group to contribute to the development, peace, and prosperity of the country.

As the old year comes to an end and the New Year begins, the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar would like to extend New Year wishes to all ethnic national brethren living in the motherland of Myanmar and to all people around the world. May they be free from all dangers and enjoy peace of mind. May they uphold the interests of their families, their country, and their religions, and may they welcome the New Year with the shared values of truth and love found in the four major religions.



Dr Tuu Tuu (Christianity), Vice-Chairman,

Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)

Mingalaba everyone

Today is the New Year, marking the end of 2025 and the beginning of 2026. I, Dr Tuu Tuu, Vice-Chairman of the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central), wish all Myanmar citizens living in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar a happy and prosperous New Year.

We are working together with the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group to achieve lasting peace throughout the country, which is essential for the social, economic, and security of everyone living in the Union of Myanmar.

We, the Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, are a group of people of different races and religions. We urge all citizens to join us in living peacefully and happily in the motherland of Myanmar, based on love and respect.

On this New Year's Eve, I wish all Myanmar citizens the very best in contributing to the building of a peaceful, modern, and developed democratic state of Myanmar.

May everyone's wishes come true in the New Year.

U Zaw Zaw Naing (Hindu), Vice-Chairman,

Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)



As 2025 comes to an end and the New Year of 2026 approaches, I would like to send my prayers and best wishes to all Myanmar citizens and people around the world, wishing them good health, happiness, and all the best. May Myanmar develop and enjoy peace and prosperity through the Metta of Gautama Buddha, and may it become a strong and thriving country, free from internal and external destructive forces, through the blessings of Ganesha. Our country needs only two things: to show more love and to work harder.

From the New Year of 2026, may all ethnic national brethren living in Myanmar, and people around the world, be as peaceful as water and as fragrant as a golden lotus flower, and may all their wishes be fulfilled and bring them prosperity.

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

NATIONAL

Reconstruction entails building a nation to have a secure and resilient future

❖ Reconstruction not only involves restoring what was lost but also entails building a nation that is secure and resilient in the future.

(An excerpt from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman, Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, at the opening ceremony of the Forum on Rebuilding Myanmar: Post-Earthquake Economic Recovery held on 30 May 2025)

New Year wishes of literati for 2026



U Myat Thu
(Tekkatho Myat Thu)

Myanmar's traditional New Year falls in the month of Tagu, but this New Year is the global New Year. A New Year signifies leaving the old behind and moving forward toward renewal. At this New Year moment, the State is moving forward by holding a major election that carefully implements the democratic system. The people themselves are actively participating with awareness and casting their votes to obtain democratically legitimate representatives for the country. No matter what anyone says, the majority of the public can see the truth clearly. Having come to understand who is constructive and who is destructive, a new democratic State will emerge. In other words, a people's democratic government chosen and implemented by the people themselves will come to power and work to advance the country.

Myanmar is rich in water and land. The country possesses a wide variety of mineral resources underground and under-water. Ninety per cent of the jade traded worldwide comes from Myanmar. The reason other countries cannot match Myanmar pearls as Myanmar has

favourable natural conditions, both on land and in water. Although the country is rich in precious resources, it has yet to become an "Asian tiger" because unity and peace are still needed. Economically developed countries are referred to as Asian tigers. If we achieve unity and peace, our country will not be a small tiger nation; it will certainly become a large tiger nation. So why would anyone abandon a country that is destined to become a great, large tiger nation? Therefore, in the New Year, everyone needs to work together in unity and cooperation.

"Mingala" means cutting off and removing all wrongdoings. The activities abandoning all bad deeds and practising good deeds truly mean Mingala. The New Year is a time for bad things to fade away and for good things to arrive. Myanmar can become a golden land, a ruby land. On the day when people come to understand and reject attempts by others to incite hatred and instigation, and on the day when we all stand united in recognizing that this is our land and our country, the nation will advance rapidly. On this auspicious New Year, may Myanmar achieve remarkable development and become a great ruby nation where democracy flourishes abundantly. May everyone be healthy and prosperous, safe from harm, free from worry and anxiety, free from poverty, and blessed with many forms of happiness and well-being. I send these New Year wishes to all.



U Ohn Maung
(Myinmu Maung Naing Moe, Chairman, Myanmar Writers Association)

I am deeply pleased and honoured to be able to extend greetings and auspicious messages at this New Year period. In our country, the government, ethnic nationalities, and all the people have already carried out, during the past year, the tasks that needed to be done and were worth doing. We also worked together in unity to address all the issues that arose for the nation. We endured the natural disasters we encountered, and thanks to the State's oversight and efforts to help rebuild our country and our people, reconstruction and progress have been achieved. In order to move toward a democratic State, systematic and appropriate measures have also been implemented to the necessary extent. There are still further plans and tasks that remain to be carried out.

As such, I would like to urge all ethnic peoples and citizens, together with national leaders and authorities to renew our determination and work hand in hand so that our country may continue in the years ahead to become a united, peaceful, and

developed nation. Let us strive to ensure the enduring stability of the nation's religious heritage, cultural heritage, and territorial integrity. May all the people enjoy happiness and peace of mind and body.



Writer Maung Swe Thet
(Colonel Nyunt Swe - Retired)

We, the people, have now cast our votes. Whoever it may be, we believe that the person chosen will work for the benefit of the country. We believe that the person elected is someone who can contribute positively to their respective region, to the nation as a whole, and to the wider world. We voted because we believe that the person we selected will not serve the interests of an individual, but will act for the benefit of everyone. This, too, is an auspicious message.

Citizens of every nation and people around the world all wish for peace and stability in their own countries. Likewise, the people of Myanmar also wish for peace in their country. If our country is peaceful, and all neighbouring and related countries are likewise peaceful, then the world as a whole will also be peaceful. Therefore, may the world be at peace, may Myanmar

be at peace, and may all the people enjoy peace and tranquillity. I send my prayers and goodwill that countries across the region may equally share in peace and harmony.



Dr Tin Tun Oo
(Chairman, Myanmar Press Council)

At this moment, we are entering the beginning of 2026, a New Year filled with many auspicious blessings. In our country, the people have struggled through various hardships, including the extremely powerful Mandalay earthquake that struck in March 2025. However, despite facing many kinds of disasters and difficulties, the people did not lose heart. With the strong spirit of "rising again after falling", we persevered and were able to recover, survive, and stand back up once more.

As a New Year's message, I would like to say that in striving to resolve such difficulties, we will be able to discover opportunities. Hardships, problems, challenges, and even failures are, in fact, the pathways to growth, development, and success. There are also opportunities. If we turn the outcomes of confronting and overcoming difficulties into opportunities, and continue to

strive tirelessly with perseverance, diligence, and determination in line with our goals, we will surely be able to reach our destination of success. Difficulties themselves are opportunities for achievement.

At present, a nationwide multiparty democratic general election is being held in our country, and before long, a Hluttaw composed of people's representatives chosen by the public will emerge. From there, a new government will also be formed. At that time, it is hoped that the country's peace, political, economic, and social conditions will further improve and develop. In the near future, a "stronger and better future" will take shape for the nation and its people.

Our Myanmar Press Council will also strive to ensure that the news media sector can fully develop and establish itself as the fourth estate of the nation, helping the media industry grow and progress further. In addition, we affirm that the news media sector will make every possible effort to serve the interests of the country and the people.

At this auspicious beginning of the New Year, I wish that throughout the year all citizens may enjoy physical and mental well-being, that they remain safe from all dangers and disasters; and that all their heartfelt desires may be fulfilled. I also wish for the entire Union of Myanmar to be peaceful, stable, prosperous, and modernly developed, and may the Union endure forever with lasting strength and stability.

OPINION

Shape a new and better State in the New Year period

THE periods of the past, though old and worn, have passed, and only the new continues to exist. In these new times, conditions must be created that will bring renewed strength for the nation in the coming year. Phase 1 of the recently and successfully held general election for multiple parties serves as a significant driving force, enabling Myanmar to continue advancing into the new year with fresh energy and renewed momentum.

As such, all ethnic groups have to cooperate and the government to develop their socioeconomic life with peace and stability. In line with the theme: Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal, not only the government but also the entire people, including different organizations, need to try to build a better State and socioeconomic lives for the sake of the nation and themselves.

across generations. Only by eliminating these negative impacts can the nation enjoy tranquillity and stand confidently on the international stage. In the new year, we should set aside personal pride and self-interest, focus on the nation's well-being, and move forward together toward a brighter future.

As such, all ethnic groups have to cooperate and the government to develop their socioeconomic life with peace and stability. In line with the theme: Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal, not only the government but also the entire people, including different organizations, need to try to build a better State and socioeconomic lives for the sake of the nation and themselves.

Actually, the country has not enjoyed deserved progress yet. If individuals wish to develop the country, they have to follow existing laws, live in peace and unity, while all stakeholders have to participate in the nation-building endeavours in line with the motto: "The strength of the nation lies within".

The affairs of a just and fair nation concern everyone living within the country, and all the daily actions of its citizens are matters of national importance. It is the responsibility of every citizen to build upon the past and create better new initiatives. Through these new efforts, they must provide momentum to ensure the nation progresses in a positive direction.

The new must surpass the best of the old. Every individual's actions should be directed solely toward ensuring the nation's stability, peace, and prosperity. As citizens move toward their goals, they must overcome difficulties with unity of spirit and patience, forgiving one another. Differences in opinion should be set aside, and matters of shared importance should be addressed promptly, building cohesion, trust, and understanding. In this way, divergent views can be reconciled, mutually beneficial conditions created, and the nation's lasting peace ensured through constructive efforts.

As long as the nation is not at peace, citizens will continue to bear the consequences of conflicts and hostilities

Happy New Year 2026

By Dr Than Lwin Tun

AS THE final moments of 2025 quietly pass into memory, the arrival of the New Year 2026 brings with it a renewed sense of hope, reflection, and possibility.

The past year has taught us valuable lessons about resilience, compassion, and adaptability. Each challenge we faced strengthened our ability to grow, while every success – no matter how small – reminded us of the power of perseverance. New Year 2026 invites us to carry these lessons forward, transforming experience into wisdom and dreams into action.

The New Year 2026 marks the beginning of a fresh chapter in our lives. It is a special time when people all around the world say goodbye to the past year and welcome a new one with hope, joy, and positivity. The New Year reminds us that time moves forward and gives everyone a new chance to grow and improve.

New Year's Day is celebrated on the first of January. People celebrate this day with their families and friends. Many

decorate their homes, share greetings, and enjoy special meals together. Some people attend parties, while others prefer to celebrate quietly by reflecting on the past year. The message "Happy New Year 2026" carries wishes of happiness, peace, and success for everyone.

This new beginning encourages us to set thoughtful goals, nurture positive habits, and renew our commitment to kindness and understanding. It is a time to strengthen relationships with family, friends, and communities, and to extend care to those who need support. Hope flourishes when we work together, guided by empathy and shared purpose.

The New Year is also a time for making resolutions. People promise themselves to study better, stay healthy, be kind to others, and work harder toward their goals. These resolutions motivate us to become better individuals. Although not everyone can keep all their resolutions, the effort itself helps us learn discipline and responsibility.

Happy New Year 2026 gives us hope for a brighter future. It encourages us to forget past mistakes and focus on new opportunities. It reminds us to be thankful for what we have and to spread kindness and positivity. As we welcome 2026, let us move forward with confidence, honesty, and determination to make this year meaningful and successful.

MYANMAR is a country fundamentally based on agriculture and farming. Favourable soil conditions, adequate water resources, and suitable climatic factors contribute significantly to the successful development of the agricultural sector. Consequently, successive governments have consistently encouraged and supported agricultural development. Among the four guiding principles of the National Defence and Security Council, the second principle emphasizes "the continuous development of the agricultural sector, which serves as the primary foundation of national economic growth, and the enhancement of people's socio-economic well-being through the development of agro-based industries." This clearly illustrates the critical importance of agriculture to Myanmar.

The agricultural sector not only underpins food security but also plays a vital role in international trade and employment generation. For these reasons, agriculture is often described as the lifeblood of Myanmar's economy.

When discussing agriculture in Myanmar, it is impossible to exclude rural areas from consideration. Approximately 70 per cent of the country's population resides in rural regions, where livelihoods are primarily dependent on agriculture and livestock farming. Beyond mere subsistence, these rural communities contribute substantially to the national economy.

In today's era of rapid technological advancement, interconnections among various economic sectors have intensified. Tourism, which has evolved in response to human curiosity and the desire for exploration, has

Enhancing Global Competitiveness through Agricultural Tourism

gradually integrated into the agricultural sector, giving rise to a distinct form of tourism known as Agri-Tourism or Agro-Tourism – a combination of agriculture and tourism.

While the terms Agri-Tourism and Agro-Tourism are often used interchangeably, tourism scholars note subtle differences between them. Both involve visits to rural agricultural areas and farming environments. However, Agro-Tourism primarily emphasizes educational purposes,

es, such as observing farming practices, participating in agricultural activities, harvesting crops, and feeding livestock. A notable example is the once-popular goat farm tours in Bagan, a world-renowned destination in Myanmar, which clearly reflected an Agro-Tourism model.

In contrast, Agri-Tourism extends beyond education to include recreation and entertainment, festivals, participatory activities, and team-building exercises.

As such, Agri-Tourism represents a broader and more diversified tourism concept.

Examining Myanmar's current tourism landscape, it becomes evident that Agri-Tourism is more prevalent than Agro-Tourism. As an agriculture-based nation with a predominantly rural population, agricultural scenery such as rice fields, plantations, forests, and farmlands becomes visible immediately upon leaving urban areas. With the growth of domestic tourism, visits to agricul-

ture-based destinations have increased significantly. However, most tourists are more inclined towards relaxation, photography, leisure, and entertainment rather than structured agricultural learning. Therefore, the tourism activities observed in these destinations align more closely with Agri-Tourism.

For entrepreneurs seeking to generate additional income through tourism based on agricultural activities, it is essential not only to provide educational content but also to create engaging and enjoyable experiences that appeal to tourists. Such an approach will foster the growth of Agri-Tourism and generate sustainable tourism-related benefits.

The benefits of Agri-Tourism are manifold. It enhances visitors' knowledge and awareness by combining educational value with recreation and memorable experiences. Tourists gain a deeper appreciation of natural landscapes, environmental conservation, and national heritage, fostering a sense of patriotism and environmental responsibility. This, in turn, supports sustainable development.



There are guided tours available to specific agricultural sites in Myanmar. Established in 2003, the FAME Organic Pharming Project is a pioneer of organic agriculture in Myanmar, specializing in the cultivation of indigenous herbal medicinal plants used to produce fresh, natural herbal supplements and products. PHOTO: COURTESY OF FAMEPHARMA

ARTICLE

World bids farewell to 2025

AS REVELLERS bid farewell to 2025 on Wednesday, the year was marked by political upheaval, global conflicts, and environmental crises. Celebrations worldwide, from Sydney's iconic fireworks to Brazil's Copacabana Beach, were tinged with sobriety. In Sydney, Australia's "New Year's capital", a minute of silence honoured victims of the Bondi Beach shooting, where 15 were killed in a mass attack on a Jewish festival. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese noted the tempered joy, with the Harbour Bridge lit in white for peace. Security was heightened amid crowds of hundreds of thousands.

Globally, events included Donald Trump's return to the White House, sparking tariff wars that roiled markets, and a fragile Gaza ceasefire brokered in October after Hamas's 2023 attack killed over

1,200 Israelis and Israel's retaliation claimed more than 70,000 lives in Gaza. Ukraine's war persisted without a truce, while leaders like Xi Jinping and Putin exchanged greetings pledging cooperation.

The year saw record heat fueling wildfires in Europe, droughts in Africa, and deadly rains in Southeast Asia. Cultural highlights included the Labubu doll craze, a Louvre heist, BTS's comeback, Jane Goodall's death, a new pope, and the assassination of Charlie Kirk, exposing US divisions. Hong Kong canceled its fireworks to mourn 161 victims of a housing fire.

Looking ahead to 2026, economic woes loom, with figures like Mexican merchant Ines Rodriguez fearing hardship. Optimism centres on NASA's Artemis II moon mission, the Winter Olympics in Italy, and the expanded FIFA World Cup across North America. AI faces scrutiny amid bubble fears, while sports and space promise excitement.

India's Chandrayaan 4 mission in 2025 marked a milestone as its lunar rover successfully transmitted data from the Moon's south pole, reinforcing India's role in space exploration. Meanwhile, Europe grappled with severe energy shortages linked to sanctions and supply disruptions, prompting urgent debates on renewable alternatives.

In Asia, Japan commemorated the 80th anniversary of Hiroshima with solemn ceremonies and renewed calls for nuclear disarmament. At COP30 in Brazil, nations pledged stronger action to curb deforestation and reduce carbon emissions, underscoring the global urgency of climate change.

By Si Thu Kyaw (MoHT)

NATIONAL

Artistes' New Year Wishes



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

According to the law of nature, the old fades away, and the new emerges. The old year has ended, and we have now entered the New Year. Learning lessons from the mistakes and shortcomings of the past year and continuing to strive so that good things may flourish in the New Year is a responsibility of human life.

The Myanmar people, who possess a great cultural tradition, follow the teachings of religion and noble traditions. With unity of spirit, may the people achieve great success in various fields. On this New Year occasion, I offer my New Year wishes that all people of Myanmar may enjoy peace of mind and good health, remain

united with one heart and one spirit, and be able to serve the interests of the country.



U Lwin Myint (Chairman, Myanmar Music Association)

At this auspicious New Year, when old leaves fall, and new leaves bloom, when the old fades, and the new takes its place, I would like to send my wishes that all citizens of the country and people around the world may enjoy peace of mind, good health, abundant blessings, and fulfilment in both body and spirit.

Surely from the New Year onwards, the country will be filled with fresh rays of light, and that anger, delusion, and resentment will fade away, and be replaced by the dominance of loving-kindness. Let's welcome a new na-

tion filled with peace, and may everyone welcome it with mental happiness and physical well-being.



Alinka Kyawswa U Aung Tin Win (Patron, Myanmar Theatrical Association - Central)

On this auspicious New Year occasion, may all citizens be healthy, prosperous, joyful, and have calm and peaceful hearts. May the performers also find their work going smoothly, and serve the country and people with new economic opportunities in the New Year. May all people around the world be healthy, prosperous, joyful, and able to overcome the three catastrophes.

U Aung Lwin (Actor)

Mingalaba. It has now transitioned from 2025 to 2026. Myanmar motion picture itself has also entered its 106th year from its 105th year. I wish good health,



prosperity, and happiness to our people and the people around the world who always support the film producers, cinemas, and professionals from all levels of the film industry. I also thank the people who have continuously supported the film industry to keep it alive. May all enjoy peace of mind and be filled with many forms of health and happiness.



Pachi Soe Moe (Director)

From the New Year onward, may everyone be filled with all auspicious blessings. Time moves

steadily without waiting for anyone, and year after year has passed, bringing us from 2025 into 2026. I believe that during the time that has passed, we have all carried out various good deeds for our own lives and families, for religion, and for the country and the people. Now, we have entered the 2026 New Year, we must cultivate noble minds and compassionate hearts, striving to improve our own lives while bearing responsibility for the interests of the country, the people, and the religion. From the New Year onwards, may all ethnic people, with renewed minds and bodies, work together energetically, peacefully, and hand in hand for the benefit of their regions and the country. With heartfelt goodwill, I extend my wishes to make efforts with harmony and proper cooperation to emerge as a united, peaceful and prosperous country, Myanmar.

Daw Nwet Nwet San (Actress)

I wish for peace throughout the world and in Myanmar as well. May all people around the world be able to overcome all forms of disasters. May the heads



of the country and all citizens enjoy good health, be free from dangers, and overcome the three catastrophes.

May all citizens who love and cherish the arts enjoy peace of mind, good health, and growing prosperity. For the new generation of artistes, may they possess strong moral character, respect the arts, and be able to create fine milestones. May all members of the film industry find their work going smoothly and be relieved of their hardships, and also be able to produce movies that people like. May producers and all members of the film industry be healthy, prosperous, and filled with all forms of peace and well-being. — Thitsa (MNA)/KTZH

Businesspeople's 2026 New Year Wishes



U Myo Myint (Chairman, MKT Construction Company Ltd)

From the beginning of the 2026 New Year, may the Republic of the Union of Myanmar be filled with peace and stability. May all the people enjoy peace of mind, good health and safe lives. May all have prosper-

ity and economic growth.



U Maung Maung Zaw (Chairman, Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association)

I extend my best wishes that, from the transition period from 2025 to 2026, all the people of Myanmar, association members and

consumers may enjoy good health and happiness in both body and mind. From the New Year onward, may everyone be free from dangers and hardships, live peacefully and healthily, and have all their wishes fulfilled. I also wish all citizens of Myanmar peace and prosperity.

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

Starting from the auspicious New Year 2026, may all citizens of Myanmar, people around the world, and seven-day born people



enjoy renewed minds and lives, complete with mental happiness and physical health. May wealth, business, and precious assets grow day by day like the rising tide. May wishes and aspirations be fulfilled, may illnesses and dangers be kept away, and may Myanmar be peaceful and stable.



U Kan Nyunt (Chairman, Myanmar MSME Cluster Footwear Manufacturers Federation - Central)

On the occasion of the 2026 New Year, may all citizens of Myanmar be fully blessed with mental happiness and physical well-being. It is the duty of

all citizens and all eligible voters to actively participate in voting so that a democratic government may emerge through the multiparty democratic general election.

Our Myanmar MSME Cluster Footwear Manufacturers Federation (Central) will cooperate with the democratically elected government in accordance with democratic principles and make special efforts to further promote and develop small and medium-sized domestic manufacturing industries.

SEE PAGE 11

NATIONAL

Nay Pyi Taw stages lively 2026 New Year's Eve Concert at Wunna Theikdi Stadium



This photo shows the 2026 New Year's Eve Concert in action in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

THE 2026 New Year's Eve Concert has been underway at Training Grounds 1 and 2 of Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw since 28 December. People from all walks of life, including young people, departmental employees and their families, gathered at the stadium on New Year's Eve to celebrate and joyfully welcome the New Year.

Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn, Union Minister for Electric Power U Nyan Tun, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission U Lwin Oo, along with departmental officials, also attended the New Year concert.

The concert features music bands and DJs, as well as well-known singers including Ye Yint Aung, J Fire, Eaindray Ra, Junior Chit Kaung, Khaing Mye Thitsar, Naw Naw, Phyo Gyi, Su Hlaing, Azalea dancer group and Ice Cold, who performed their popular songs.

Fans sang and danced along to the music of the famous performers, taking part in the celebrations with great enthusiasm.

Similarly, festival-goers joyfully counted down to the New Year just before midnight on 31 December, cheering and shouting "Happy New Year" in unison and setting off fireworks to welcome 2026 at 12

midnight.

The festival area was filled with restaurants and souvenir shops selling local products and cuisine. Visitors also enjoyed playing games, riding the Ferris wheel and taking photos at photo booths, while the playground was full of children playing happily.

The 2026 New Year's Eve music concert was held to provide a fun and relaxing experience for residents, departmental employees and their families in the Union Territory of Nay Pyi Taw, allowing them to recharge their energy and welcome the New Year in a peaceful and joyful atmosphere. — MNA/MKKS

Massive crowds ring in 2026 at Yangon People's Square Countdown Festival

THE 2026 New Year Countdown Festival at Yangon's People's Square was packed with visitors who gathered to enjoy the New Year's Eve concert, which began yesterday evening. Famous film stars, singers, DJs, ethnic traditional dance troupes and many emerging artists performed as part of the New Year's Eve entertainment programme.

Fans danced and sang along joyfully to their favourite songs performed by the vocalists as they awaited the arrival of the New Year.

As midnight approached on New Year's Eve, festival-goers took part in the countdown, and at exactly 12 midnight they chanted "Happy New Year" and set off fireworks to welcome the

New Year.

In addition, restaurants and souvenir shops were set up around the public square to serve festival visitors, and the area was crowded with people shopping and enjoying food.

Free round-trip transportation was provided for the public to travel to and from the festival, making access easier and smoother. As a result, attendance at the event was particularly high.

Similarly, across townships, wards and streets throughout the Yangon Region, young people welcomed the New Year by singing together, preparing and sharing food, and taking part in their preferred New Year activities. — MNA/MKKS



People throng at the 2026 New Year Countdown Festival in Yangon yesterday.

Businesspeople's 2026...

FROM PAGE 10

It is such an important time for the emergence of a new democratic nation. Only with the formation of a new democratic government can the country become more prosperous than at present, and can all citizens achieve their aspirations and economic development.

U Nanda Kyaw (Chairman, Myanmar Real Estate Development Association)



As the old year 2025 comes to an end and the New Year 2026 approaches, time has steadily moved forward over

many years. What is special about this year is that the darkness seems to be fading, and rays of hope are beginning to appear. I believe and hope that Myanmar, which has endured and overcome various crises and hardships with resilience, will soon return to bright new days filled with blessings.

Signs of political and economic recovery are already visible. We must prepare ourselves to effectively seize and utilize the new opportunities that arise for the benefit of our families, our regions, and our nation. I deeply respect the strong spirit of the people of Myanmar, who have faced and overcome challenges together despite various circumstances. Even in the most difficult times, they did not abandon their land or their country, but continued the journey together through good and bad

alike. Together with the political stability improvement in the post-election period, new opportunities for foreign investment and economic growth will also follow. Learning lessons from the past, I wish to move toward a new future of development and progress together with the younger generation.

If thoughtful leaders and resilient citizens work hand in hand in unity, it is certain that within a few decades, we will achieve golden successes and accomplishments. With patience, compassion, and mutual understanding, may each of us fulfil our responsibilities for the benefit of the country and the people. I send my heartfelt New Year wishes that our Republic of the Union of Myanmar may develop peacefully, and that everyone may share the fruits of success. — MNA/KTZH

ARTICLE

AS 2025 comes to an end and the New Year arrives, citizens who cherish traditional culture and religious values usually take the opportunity during festivals and public holidays to travel, whether with family, in groups, in small parties, or even alone, to enjoy natural beauty with a refreshed mind, renewed spirit, and new perspectives. During the international New Year holiday, from the end of December 2025 through the transition into 1 January 2026, people commonly travel to various tourist destinations for rest and recreation.

As the morning sunlight pours down onto Platform No 1 of Yangon Railway Station, the Yangon-Pyay up air-conditioned train is ready like a racehorse about to be released from the starting gate. On Platform No 1, travellers move about boarding and taking their seats, tour groups enter the platform area, and families and friends come to see passengers off. Yangon Railway Station warmly welcomes the New Year with lively activity. Railway staff, smiling and speaking courteously, guide passengers to their respective carriages, check tickets, and announce departure times and routes. In the cool morning air, the station is vibrant and full of activities.

During the December Christmas holidays this year, many people travelled to upper Myanmar for vacations. With the extended New Year public holidays from 1 to 4 January, travellers' faces reflect satisfaction and peace of mind as they enjoy three-night trips. As 1 January marks International New Year's Day, from as early as 5 am, Yangon Railway Station was bustling with travellers. Such a situation recalled the days when Myanmar Railways once carried large numbers of passengers, clearly showing the public's enduring affection for railway travel. Especially, the experience of travelling by train differs greatly from travelling by car, and also, comfortable train journeys continue to be favoured by the people of Myanmar. Regarding New Year holiday travel services, U Yin Min Oo, Manager of Myanmar Railways Division No 7, said as follows.

For the New Year period, services are provided on the Yangon-Mandalay route with the regular train No 1 up mail train, Train No 2 down mail train, Train No 11up train, and Train No 12 down train. On the Yangon-Nay

Pyi Taw route, services include Train No 31 up, Train No 32 down DEMU, Train No 7 up DEMU, and Train No 8 down DEMU. On the Yangon-Mawlamyine route, Train No 81 up and Train No 82 down are operating. On the Yangon-Pyay route, Train No 71 up and Train No 72 down are running, while on the Yangon-Bago route, Train No 13 up and Train No 14 down DEMU are in service.

New Year train travel gains popularity

BY THITSA (MNA), TRANSLATED BY KTZH

In addition, Train No 63 up and Train No 64 down are operating between Kyimyindaing railway station and Pyay railway station.

Yesterday morning, the Yangon-Mandalay and Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw special trains had already departed, while announcements for the departure of the Yangon-Pyay train were being made in a gentle voice by a young woman at the station service counter. Travellers chatting with those seeing them off wave goodbye and hurry aboard. Regarding the increase in passenger numbers and the addition of extra carriages, Manager U Yin Min Oo said, "As Myanmar Railways, depending on passenger demand, we sometimes increase the number of carriages. During the recent December and Christmas holidays, we also operated special trains to ensure convenient travel for both government staff and the public. As railway lines and signalling systems have been modernized, we are now able to use modern locomotives and passenger coaches. On the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw route, we operated special DEMU trains, and on the Yangon-Mandalay route, DEMU trains were introduced. These allow higher speeds, cleaner coaches, and reduced travel times, which passengers appreciate, leading to increased ridership. During this international New Year holiday, we are operating additional special air-conditioned trains and providing improved services.

At Platform No 1, the Yangon-Pyay special train is announced to depart at 11 am, with only five minutes remaining. The introduction of new coaches, locomotives, and upgraded railway infrastructure signals a new era for Myanmar Railways.

These improvements contribute to increased state revenue while giving a sense of pride to the relevant department. Previously, upper-class tickets had to be purchased three days in advance and ordinary tickets one day in advance. Now, tickets can be purchased online up to five days ahead using mobile phones and MMQR code payments. Online services are available for

the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw DEMU trains, including Train Nos 7, 8, 31, and 32, which travellers from distant areas greatly appreciate. Myanmar Railways continues to provide regular services as well as special trains during extended public holidays, ensuring smooth and convenient travel. During this New Year holiday season, the increase in train travel amid the cool winter weather highlights the benefits of offering modern special train services.

At 5 am yesterday, the regular Yangon-Mandalay train departed at 6 am by a DEMU Spanish train from Nay Pyi Taw connecting to Mandalay. Services also include a noon DEMU train to Nay Pyi Taw, an 11 am air-conditioned train to Pyay, a 7 am train to Mawlamyine, trains to Bago, and New Year special trains to Mawlamyine and Pyay from Kyimyindaing. Daw Pyone Lae Cho, a company employee travelling from Yangon to visit relatives in Mandalay, shared her feelings about New Year travel... "I enjoy travelling during the New Year more than other holidays. After a year of work, my heart feels lighter and refreshed, and travelling gives me time to think carefully about plans for the com-

ing year. Winter travel is more comfortable than summer and brings greater peace of mind. Travelling by car feels like viewing nature as a framed painting, but travelling by train allows you to experience vast, open natural beauty all the way to the horizon. That sense of joy is why I chose to travel by train this New Year. I can see the progress of Myanmar Railways, and as a citizen, I wish them continued success".

At 6 am, the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw DEMU departed, and the Yangon Railway Station was crowded with passengers bundled in warm clothing in the cool morning air. U Okkar Kyaw, who is travelling with his family to Nay Pyi Taw, shared his experience... this year, since my parents are in Nay Pyi Taw, we plan to visit them, pay respects, go on pilgrimages, and visit landmarks such as the zoo. Then, we plan to go to Mandalay and spend a night in Bagan. At first, we planned to travel by car, but the children insisted on taking the train. I hadn't travelled by train in a long time either. Once aboard, I was impressed by the interior and modernization. Seeing my children happy reminded me of the joy of travel from my own childhood. I hope Myanmar Railways continues to improve and succeed".

The sound of farewell spread through Platform No 1, and as the Yangon-Pyay train slowly departed, sounding its whistle. Ma Cherry Hmwe, who was training on that train, said, "I've never travelled by train before, and I've only gone to Pyay by bus. I loved seeing train journeys in movies and wanted to see the countryside, fields, and mountains. I've already prepared for Grade 12. In Pyay, I'll go on pilgrimages, watch the sunset over the Ayeyawady River, and spend time with relatives and friends. Travelling helps broaden our knowledge. Winter travel is comfortable, and

seasonal local foods make the experience special. Such experience can occur once a year. I only truly realized for myself that the feeling of competing in sports during the New Year and the feeling of travelling are completely different. Travelling on a big train like this, reading while on the journey, and enjoying the natural scenery outside are experiences unlike anything else, which is why I feel so excited to travel by train. Because the seats and interior are comfortable and well designed, I also feel proud to be travelling by train. In this New Year, I wish all travellers like me peace and happiness in both body and mind".

Health experts claim that those who travel tend to have a lower risk of heart disease than those who do not. The happiness and physical activity gained from travel support both heart health and overall well-being, while also improving memory. As it also offers a chance to be younger in mind and body, one should travel whenever possible. Travelling at times that are suitable for the season brings even greater benefits.

From the evening of 31 December 2025, travellers began departing Yangon. As 1 January 2026 is International New Year's Day, people travelling by train, road, and air can be seen. Around the world, people welcome the New Year through travel and celebration. In Myanmar, the growing preference for train travel has led to the operation of more special services. Welcoming the New Year with train journeys symbolizes new beginnings and positive change for the country. Travelling by train during the New Year brings light-hearted joy, full appreciation of natural beauty, and renewed strength of mind, offering fresh thoughts, perspectives, and hopes for a bright, progressive future.



Passengers are seen embarking onboard the train. PHOTO: ZWE MARN

ARTICLE/NATIONAL

Tatmadaw regains full control of Mandalay-Madaya-Singu-Thabeikkyin route

TATMADAW columns have fully regained control of and reopened the Mandalay-Madaya-Singu-Thabeikkyin communication route, with locals warmly welcoming security personnel.

PDF terrorist groups had previously entered Madaya, Singu and Thabeikkyin townships in Mandalay Region, disrupting transport routes, abducting travellers, extorting money, looting civilian property, setting fire to factories and workshops, illegally extracting aboveground and underground natural resources for personal gain, and using homes and buildings as strongholds and temporary bases. In response, Tatmadaw columns carried out systematic counter-terrorism operations to restore peace, stability and the rule of law in the area.

Through phased operations



Tatmadaw columns are seen reconrolling the route.

supported by security information from residents, Tatmadaw columns regained control of Thabeikkyin and surrounding areas on 23 July 2025, the

Phayaungtaung mining area in Madaya Township on 24 August, areas around the Alpha cement factory on 28 August, Setawgyi village and its dam on 7 Novem-

ber, and Singu and nearby areas on 19 December, effectively dismantling the terrorists' military objectives.

Following the restoration of control, Tatmadaw columns continued security operations to prevent the return of terrorist groups, ensure the safety and livelihoods of local people and maintain regional stability. Columns advancing from the Thabeikkyin side cleared and secured several villages between October and December, while columns advancing from the Singu side reached Leikkya village on 31 December. The two columns linked up at Leikkya village, enabling the full reopening of the Mandalay-Madaya-Singu-Thabeikkyin route for safe use by the public and travellers.

During these operations,

clashes occurred with terrorist groups, and some officers and soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation.

As security forces advanced through villages along the cleared routes, residents who had suffered abuses by NUG-backed PDF terrorists welcomed them with flowers and garlands.

Tatmadaw columns will continue necessary security measures to ensure lasting peace and stability in the Mandalay-Madaya-Singu-Thabeikkyin area and to facilitate safe travel, smooth trade, and systematic management of aboveground and underground natural resources, including efforts to reopen the Thabeikkyin-Mogok route at the earliest possible time, according to reports from Myawady Television. — MNA/KZL

538 online scam hub-related buildings demolished



This image captures scam-related materials being burned alongside online scam hub buildings.

THE government of Myanmar manages the combined team comprising security forces, administrative bodies and local authorities to raid illegal buildings in Shwe Kokko and KK Park areas where telecom fraud and online gambling activities are operated, and systematically dismantle the confiscated materials and illegal buildings used in the online scam and gambling activities.

Yesterday, the com-

bined team dissolved 13 more illegal buildings: two four-storey buildings and 11 two-storey buildings used in telecom fraud and online gambling activities in the Myawady-Maethawtalay (KK Park) area. Therefore, a total updated number of 538 out of 635 illegal buildings have been demolished in the KK Park area.

To destroy the illegal buildings within the KK Park area, these build-

ings were demolished using machinery and fire barrels starting from 14 December. As of yesterday, five more two-storey buildings have been destroyed, and a total of 81 buildings have been totally destroyed.

To prevent future reuse of the materials in online scams and gambling activities in KK Park and Shwe Kokko areas, the seized materials were incinerated systematically.

The government considers the eradication of telecom fraud and online gambling crimes as a national responsibility and, to ensure that such activities can no longer operate within Myanmar, will continue its efforts in coordination not only with domestic forces but also with the governments of neighbouring countries. — MNA/MKKS

Enhancing Global Competitiveness through Agricultural Tourism

FROM PAGE 9

Moreover, Agri-Tourism facilitates mutual understanding and goodwill between tourists and rural communities through direct interaction, a process often referred to as cultural exchange. This exchange benefits both visitors and residents alike. Additionally, Agri-Tourism provides farmers and rural households with supplementary income opportunities.

Another significant benefit is the development of supply chain linkages between agricultural producers and the hospitality and tourism sectors. Agricultural products can be supplied directly to hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops, benefiting all stakeholders involved. This strengthens not only agriculture but also transportation, hospitality, and other related industries, demonstrating the well-known ripple effect of tourism development.

Furthermore, Agri-Tourism plays a crucial role in narrowing the development gap between rural and urban areas. Governments have long sought to reduce this disparity through infrastructure development, improved connectivity, enhanced education, and

rural economic support. Tourism, by encouraging mobility and interaction, strengthens rural-urban linkages. Promoting Agri-Tourism can therefore effectively reduce development inequalities while improving rural livelihoods and living standards.

Traditionally, Myanmar has been internationally recognized primarily as a cultural and religious tourism destination due to its abundance of pagodas and heritage sites. Domestic tourists often travel for pilgrimage or beach holidays. However, in recent years, farmers in certain regions have begun transforming their farms into tourist attractions by beautifying their agricultural sites, charging entrance fees, selling local products, and sharing knowledge with visitors. The warm and welcoming interaction between hosts and guests has become a defining feature of Agri-Tourism.

With changing tourism trends, improved infrastructure, and advancements in technology, Myanmar's lush green farmlands and picturesque rural landscapes have emerged as compelling tourism attractions. Visitors are encouraged to experience these destinations firsthand and appreciate the unique charm of Myanmar's agricultural heritage.

ROLLING UPDATES

WORLD

Bangladesh declares 3-day state mourning for former PM

Begum Khaleda Zia, the first female Prime Minister of Bangladesh and chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), passed away at the age of 80 on Tuesday.



A sea of mourners attended the funeral ceremony of Bangladesh's former prime minister Khaleda Zia. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Bangladeshi interim government has declared three days of state mourning from Wednesday to Friday following the death of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The government also de-
clared Wednesday a public hol-
iday.

Bangladeshi interim govern-
ment's Chief Adviser Muhammad
Yunus made the announcements
on Tuesday afternoon in a tele-
vised address to the nation.

Zia, also chairperson of the
Bangladesh Nationalist Party,
passed away due to illness at the
age of 80 in the capital Dhaka at
around 6 am local time Tuesday,
her party said in a social media
post. — Xinhua

Berlin says decision postponed on European fighter jet

EFFORTS to break a dead-
lock in 2025 over plans for
a new European fighter jet
have been unsuccessful,
a German government
spokesman told AFP on
Wednesday.

The Future Combat
Aircraft System (FCAS)
programme was launched
in 2017 to replace France's
Rafale jet and the Euro-
fighter planes used by Ger-
many and Spain.

But the scheme, joint-
ly developed by the three
countries, has stalled
in recent months over
disagreements between
France's Dassault Aviation
and Airbus, which repre-
sents German and Spanish
interests in the project.

German Chancellor
Friedrich Merz had pre-
viously pledged a decision
on FCAS by the end of the
year.

However, the gov-
ernment spokesman said
Merz and French Presi-
dent Emmanuel Macron
had been unable to discuss
the project in recent weeks
due to "the comprehensive
Franco-German agenda
on foreign and security
policy issues".

No new date for a de-
cision was given. — AFP



A mock-up of the European New Generation Fighter for the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) at the International Paris Air Show on 18 June 2023. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

UN General Assembly adopts US\$3.45 bln programme budget for 2026

THE UN General As-
sembly on Tuesday
adopted the UN pro-
gramme budget for 2026,
totalling US\$3.45 billion.

The budget large-
ly reflects UN Secre-
tary-General Antonio
Guterres' proposed 15
per cent reduction in
financial resources and
a nearly 19 per cent cut
in staffing. Earlier in
the day, the budget was
adopted by the General
Assembly's Fifth Com-
mittee with responsibil-
ities for administrative
and budgetary matters.

Negotiations on the
2026 programme budget
highlighted both the
ongoing financial con-
straints and the broader
UN80 initiative, which
aims to improve efficien-
cy, reduce duplication
and better align re-
sources with mandates.

Member states de-
bated sharply over the
size and scope of the
budget, including pro-
posed reductions in staff
posts, funding for spe-
cial political missions,
and resource allocations
for new reform priori-
ties. — Xinhua

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
HOLIDAY NOTICE

AS the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 2026, 1st JANUARY, 2nd JANUARY (International New Year Day) and 4th JANUARY (Independence Day) Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

Train derailment causes toxic chemical fire

A train derailed near Trenton in the US state of Kentucky on Tuesday, triggering a chemical fire and a brief shelter-in-place order due to toxic fumes, local media reported.

The incident occurred around 6:30 am Central Time (1230 GMT), with more than 30 cars of a Chessie System and Seaboard Coast Line train off the tracks, reports said. One car carrying molten sulfur caught fire, releasing toxic sulfur dioxide gas.

Residents within a one-mile radius were told to leave their homes or shelter in place with their heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems turned off, the Trenton Fire Department said. No injuries were reported. The shelter-in-place order was lifted after the leak was contained, though US Highway 41 remains closed as cleanup operations continue. The cause of the derailment is under investigation. — Xinhua

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

The manufacture of **Shandong Zouping Nongyao Co.,Ltd** have registered the following product in Pesticide Registration Board of Myanmar to distribute in Myanmar. Now, we have to change from old distributor name "**Myanmar Max Agro Service Co.,Ltd**", to new distributor name "**Aventine Limited**". If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Aventine Limited. Ph-09401573814.

Sr.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.
1.	Armo Myan Shin	Diquat 20% AS	P2025-6827

SPORTS

China's sports industry accounts for 1.19% of GDP in 2024



This photo shows children training at an indoor ski resort in Suzhou, east China's Jiangsu Province. PHOTO: HE LEIJING/XINHUA

THE total output of China's sports industry reached 3.8421 trillion yuan (about US\$540.6 billion) in 2024, accounting for 1.19 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), according to data released by the General Administration of Sport of China and the National Bureau of Statistics on Wednesday.

The value added of the sports industry stood at 1.6033 trillion yuan, and the sector's share of GDP was 0.04 percentage points higher than last year. In terms of structure, the value added of sports services was 1.1548 trillion yuan, accounting for 72.0 per cent

of the sports industry total, down 0.7 percentage points year-on-year. The value added from the manufacturing of sports goods and related products was 424.5 billion yuan, making up 26.5 per cent of the total and marking an increase of 0.8 percentage points from 2023. — Xinhua

Arteta says Arsenal reaping rewards for 'sacrifices and commitment'

ARSENAL manager Mikel Arteta believes his side are starting to see the benefits of their hard work as the Gunners head into 2026 at the top of the Premier League. Tuesday's emphatic 4-1 win at home to title rivals Aston Villa left Arsenal five points clear of second-placed Manchester City, who are away to Sunderland on New Year's Day. Arsenal last won the Premier League back in 2004 and asked if this could be the season that they finally end more than two decades of title frustration, Arteta hailed his side's "belief and energy". "We're playing every two and a half days, the schedule is very, very



Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta (R) celebrates the win over Aston Villa. PHOTO: AFP

demanding, we have some very tough matches and injuries but the players are still winning, so winning helps all that," he said. "All the sacrifices and com-

mitment that you put in gets reflected in results and great performances and that's so satisfying, but we know there's still so much to play for." — AFP

Museum Mile steals Arima Kinen honor for 2nd G1 win

THIRD-FAVOURITE Museum Mile won the 70th running of the Arima Kinen at Nakayama Racecourse near Tokyo on Sunday, the second Grade 1 win for the three-year-old colt. Italian jockey Cristian Demuro kept his ride towards the back of the field for most of the race before unleashing his mount after the final corner to pass the leaders on the outside and pip Cosmo Kuranda by half a length to claim the winning purse of 500 million yen (\$3.2

million). Museum Mile finished the 2,500-metre race in two minutes, 31.5 seconds, with second-favourite Danon Decile finishing third and favourite Regaleira, seeking to become the first filly to win the race back-to-back, fourth. "(It's) revenge for last year," said Demuro following his first win at the race after losing by a nose to Regaleira 12 months ago aboard Shahr-yar. — Kyodo



Cristian Demuro rides Museum Mile to win the Arima Kinen at Nakayama Racecourse in Chiba Prefecture on 28 December 2025. PHOTO: KYODO

Fofana reckons 'small details' restricting Chelsea's progress

CHELSEA defender Wesley Fofana believes "small details" are behind the Blues' frustrating habit of letting leads slip after they were again pegged back in a 2-2 draw with Bournemouth at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday. Enzo Maresca's side have lost 13 points at home from winning positions this season and are on a run of one Premier League win in seven games. That sequence has seen Chelsea drop out of the top four, with the Blues wasting several chances against the Cherries as they failed to capitalize on their dominance for the second match in row following a defeat by Aston Villa on 27 December. "It was a tough game," said Fofana of the draw with

Bournemouth. "We tried to give everything but we didn't kill the game in the second half. "We had a few chances (which) we didn't score. We need to kill the game and we need to score. It's not only about the forward players, it's everyone." David Brooks gave Bournemouth the lead after six minutes before Cole Palmer equalized from the penalty spot. Enzo Fernandez's shot into the top corner looked to have put Chelsea on the road to a much-needed win but they conceded again before half-time, with Justin Kluivert tapping in unmarked at the far post. "We need to do better, we need to analyze and try to progress," said Fofana. — AFP



Xi, Putin exchange New Year greetings

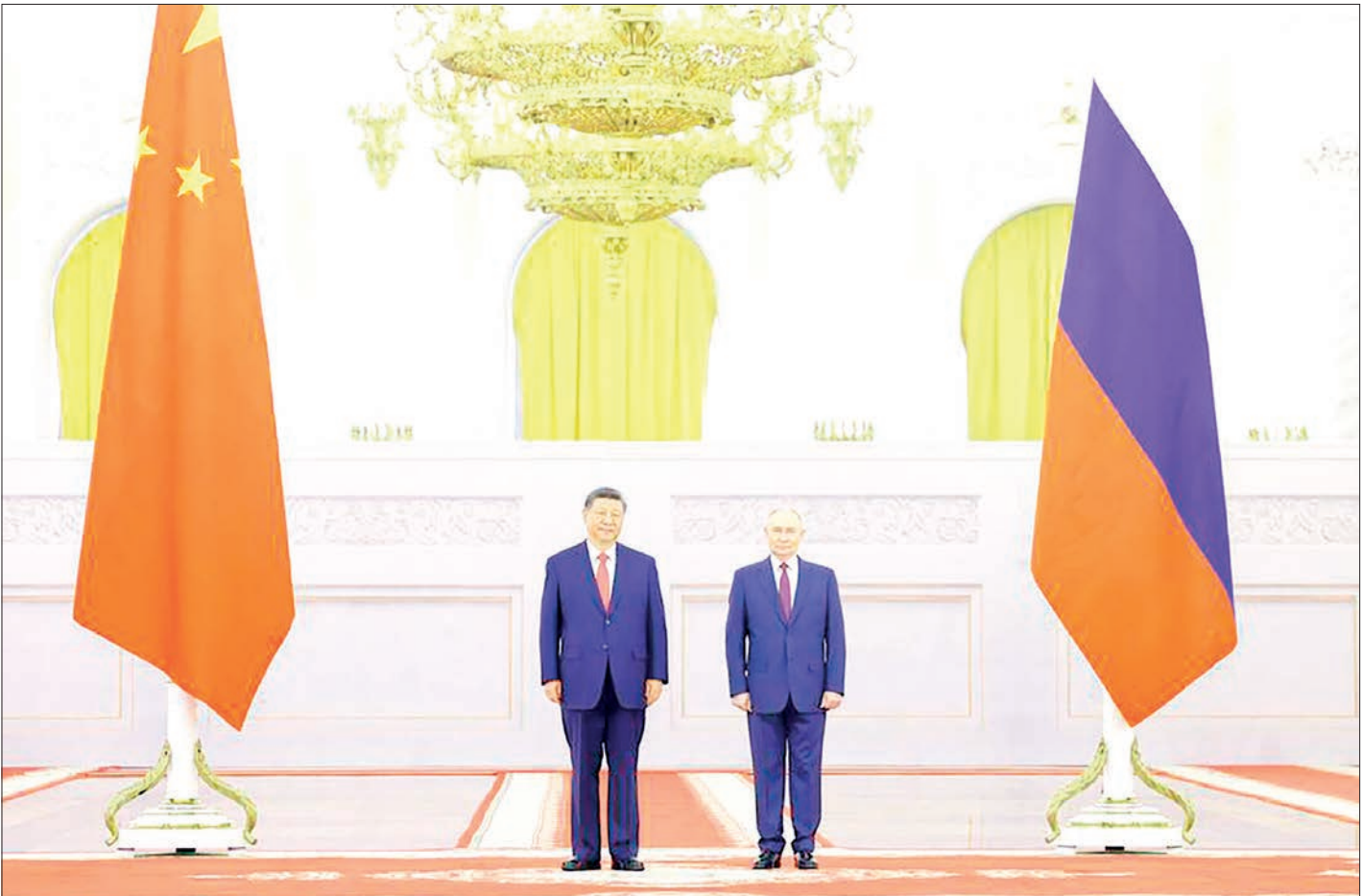
Xi emphasized that these commemorations send a strong message of hope, affirming that peace, justice, and the will of the people will ultimately prevail.

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on Wednesday exchanged New Year greetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In his message, Xi extended his sincere congratulations and best wishes to Putin and the Russian people on behalf of the Chinese government and the Chinese people.

Noting that 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, Xi said China and Russia have solemnly commemorated the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War and the World Anti-Fascist War, sending a powerful message that peace will prevail, justice will prevail, and the people will prevail.

Xi said the year 2025 also marks a con-



Russian President Vladimir Putin holds a welcome ceremony for Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Saint George's Hall at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, 8 May 2025. **PHOTO: HUANG JINGWEN/XINHUA/FILE**

crete step in the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, recalling that they met in Beijing and Moscow respectively this year, where they exchanged in-depth views on major issues of mutual concern. — Xinhua

Denmark delivers last letter as digital shift ends 400-year postal tradition

DENMARK'S state-run postal service, PostNord, delivered its final letter on Tuesday (local time), bringing an end to

more than 400 years of traditional mail delivery as the country fully embraces digital communication.



Denmark has become the first country in Europe to discontinue public letter delivery as Swedish-Danish postal company Postnord on Tuesday delivered its last letters to tie up 401 years of postal history. **REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE/SHUTTERSTOCK**

With this move, Denmark becomes the first country in the world to officially decide that physical letter delivery is no longer essential or economically sustainable in the digital age.

The decision reflects a sharp and long-term decline in letter usage.

In 2024, PostNord delivered over 90 per cent fewer letters than it did in 2000. A similar trend has been seen elsewhere, including in the United States, where the US Postal Service delivered about half as much mail in 2024 compared to 2006.

As communication has shifted online, from emails and WhatsApp messages to video calls and social media, the role of traditional letters has steadily faded.

PostNord began removing Denmark's iconic red mailboxes earlier this year. Around 1,500 mailboxes were taken down across the country starting in June. — ANI

Mongolia extends visa-free travel for South Korean tourists

THE Mongolian government on Wednesday has decided to extend visa exemption entry for citizens of South Korea on short-term visits to Mongolia until the end of 2026.

The decision is part of the government's efforts to promote the development of four-season tourism in the country within the framework of the "Years to Visit Mongolia" tourism programme and revitalize its tourism sector by attracting more foreign tourists, the government's press office said in a statement.

At present, Mongolia's economy depends heavily on the mining sector and on the export of mineral resources. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is considered one of the priorities for diversifying the country's economy and increasing the competitiveness of its tourism in the context of global competition. — Xinhua