

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Tuesday, 18 April 2023

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Five-Point Road Map

1. Priority will be given to fully realizing peace, stability and rule of law throughout the Union to safeguard the socioeconomic life of the people.
2. People-centred development work that enhances socioeconomic well-being will be undertaken to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.
3. Processes will further continue to consolidate a genuine, disciplined multiparty democratic system and build a Union based on democracy and federalism.
4. Priority will be accorded to work aligned with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, in order to achieve enduring peace for the entire nation.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits National Kandawgyi Garden, Pwekawk waterfall resort (BE Falls)



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views round the National Kandawgyi Garden in PyinOoLwin on 17 April 2023.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday morning inspected the conservation of the National Kandawgyi Garden in PyinOoLwin.

Officials reported on the inflow of water to the lake from the inlets due to renovation in accord with the guidance of the Senior General, test growing of domestic flowery plant species in the research centre,

regular sanitation tasks at the inlet channels of water to the National Kandawgyi Garden and public relaxation during the Thingyan period and flower festivals.

After hearing the reports, the Senior General stressed the need to conduct research on flowery plants thriving all season round. It is necessary to systematically do research on the better blossoming of cherry. Only when the environment

is lush and green will people take relaxing. Officials were urged to maintain the inflow of water to the Kandawgyi Lake and instructed to develop PyinOoLwin.

The Senior General viewed round the National Kandawgyi Garden and cordially greeted the people who took relaxing.

The Senior General instructed officials to keep trash bins for systematic disposing in the garden not to throw gar-

bage into the lake, grow cheery plants in the National Kandawgyi Garden in addition to other shade plants.

As the inflow of water volume to the lake is lesser, the water courses are maintained in accordance with the guidance of the Senior General. So, an inflow of water to the lake turns into normalcy. During this Maha Thingyan festival, 24,950 people paid visits to the garden but 317,115 in the flower

festival in 2022.

Then, the Senior General and party rode Sky Cable Car built in Pwekawk Waterfall resort (BE Falls). The Senior General and party viewed the skill demonstration of elephants in the BE Falls and fed them. After inspecting the pumping at the flowery patches by using solar power, the Senior General cordially greeted the people who took relaxing.

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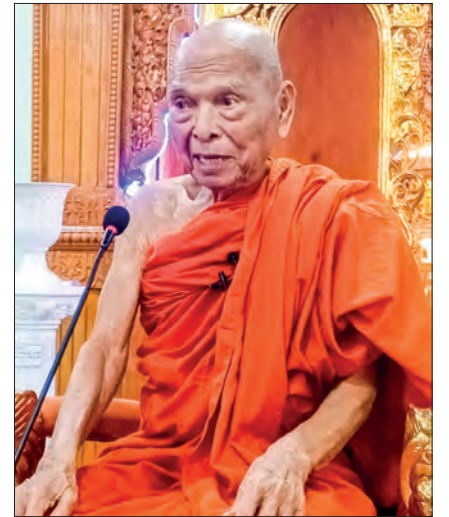
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Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa Bhamo Sayadaw, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Agga Maha Pandita

Bhamo Monastery, Mandalay
1385 ME
New Year Wishes

IN the new year, may the people of Myanmar and the world be blessed with happiness and good health forever. Let them be free from anxiety. Let them have a comfortable living. May all Myanmar people have loving-kindness.

*Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa
Chairman Sayadaw
State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee*



Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa (Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja), Secretary of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Presiding Patron of Minkyaung Pahtamapyan Buddhist Learning Centre in Thanlyin, Yangon Region

If it is a good deed, all will be good

TODAY is a significant day which falls in Myanmar New Year in 1385 ME after the old year 1384 ME has gone out. From this New Year's Day, I wish all citizens to be free from any dangers and enjoy all good deeds as they anticipate. On the New Year occasion, I would like to urge all with loving-kindness to follow ten good-deed practices on a daily basis to enjoy good things based on physical, oral and mental moves for their prosperity in the morning, in the afternoon and at night and to be able to overcome any challenges in line with the Pubbanhna Sutta preached by the Lord Buddha.



New Year speech of Rector of ITBMU Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita Maha Dhamma Kathika Bahujanahitadhara Dr Bhaddanta Chekinda



BHAVATU Sabba Mangalam, Rakkhantu Sabbadevata

Sabba Buddhānubhavana, Sada Sukhi Bhavantute.

May all auspiciousness be for all virtuous persons. May all good celestial beings look after all virtuous persons. May all virtuous persons be physical and mental well-being due to all Lord Buddhas, all Dhamma and all members of the Sangha.

It means making a wish for all. Ac-

tually, the Buddhism is the advice of the Lord Buddha. All virtuous persons have to exercise good deeds to have all auspiciousness under the advice of Buddhism. All virtuous persons have to take good meritorious deeds to have blessed varieties of good celestial beings.

All virtuous persons have to perform meritorious deeds to enjoy health and happiness because they believe in the Lord Buddhas, all Dhamma preachings and all members of the Sangha. The Lord Buddha had given advice to all living beings with blessings in addition to pointing out the ways of enjoying good deeds via self-efforts.

As such, all virtuous persons and I have to keep three gems: Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha in our souls from this New Year's Day to the Nibbana by performing noble deeds, and may all virtuous persons have a chance of serving their interests as well as the interests of all, the Sasana and the country.

New Year Ovadakatha of Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nyanissara, State Ovadacariya Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Shwegyin Nikaya Sangharaja Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies and Sitagu Hospitals

MAY the whole living world be peaceful and tranquil as a shining moon. I bid farewell to the old year and welcome the New Year. The moon gives lighting not only to the jungle where virtuous persons reside but to the jungle of robbers and rebels. Loving-kindness is like a "moon". I extend my greetings that the whole world can be peaceful and prosperous as a moon during the transition from the old year to the new one.

How do we bid farewell to the old year in the transition from 1384 ME to 1385 ME? How will we welcome the New Year? Everybody needs to understand how we will embrace the New Year. Every human needs to understand that the whole world is always changing from the old to the new ones. It is "Dhamma". Despite different faiths and religions, changing from the old to the new ones is a common concept for all. In changing process, new years take the positions of old years. So also, new eras and systems take the places of old ones. Old years and systems disappear. Likewise, new systems are getting old and then will disappear.

All humans in different strata including the poor, the rich, hunters, fishermen, politicians and all religious leaders are facing physical changes from the tip of the hair to the feet. At the same time, all physical and mental beings are changing and ruining. It can be called "Sankara". Hence, everybody needs to analyze "Sankara" to change their mindsets.

Greed, anger, ignorance, conceit, jealousy and envy are very old and faded minds. If everybody cannot wash their mindsets, the whole world will never be peaceful and prosperous. It is important that only when all kinds of old and faded



ed minds must be wiped off will they possess seven kinds of mindsets called virtuous morale. Just washing cannot clean the bad morale.

Some religious sects contemporary with the Lord Buddha keep themselves in the water of the Ganges, Jamuna and Niranjana rivers with their concept to fade out their passion. Some sets hold a concept that passion will not fade out by just keeping themselves in the water. So they scorch themselves in summer to burn passion. Up to now, there remain these concepts in India. The mind cannot be burnt as well as washed with water. The water of Thingyan is a commemorative concept. I would like to point out that if you all wish to clean your dirty mind which has been existing since the early world period, everybody needs to clean the mind with Sila, Samadhi and Panna called Dhamma water. So, all virtuous persons need to uphold the Dhamma water to clean and polish their mindsets.

May all wash their old minds with Dhamma water to possess new mindsets.

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Seeds, soil, water and techniques key factors in agriculture

IN agriculture, seeds, soil, water and techniques are essential. To harvest quality seeds, it is important to treat land properly, to supply water sufficiently, to use correct techniques and to utilize inputs systematically.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at a meeting with district and township departmental officials, town elders, MSME businesspersons from Homalin District, Sagaing Region on 15 January 2023)

SAC Chairman PM Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits National Kandawgyi Garden, Pwekawk waterfall resort (BE Falls)



The Senior General hears the report on the National Kandawgyi Garden.



FROM PAGE-1

Pwekawk Waterfall faced ecological degradation due to undisciplined acts of shops, disposing of and cutting trees. In accord with the guidance of the Senior General, the waterfall was renovated. As the fall uses natural clean water, visitors can enjoy water healthi-

ly. The first-ever glass bridge was built there for the visitors to enjoy the scenes under the bridge. Flower festivals will be held there annually. The area is facilitated with a glass bridge, suspension bridge, log house, coffee shop, jungle trekking paths, relaxation areas and playgrounds. Now, the 554 metres long Sky Cable Way has been built for travellers to ride sky cable cars so as to enjoy natural scenes. During the Maha Thingyan festival period, local and international travellers paid visits to the Pwekawk (BE Falls). — MNA/TTA

The Senior General looks into the skill demonstration of elephants at Pwekawk waterfall resort (BE Falls).

Daily newspapers available online

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News and Periodicals Enterprise

**New Year Message of greetings delivered by Chairman of State Administration Council
Prime Minister Senior General Thadue Maha Thray Sithu Thadue Thiri Thudhamma
Min Aung Hlaing on New Year occasion in 1385 Myanmar Era
Myanmar New Year Day, 13th Waning of Tagu 1385 ME
17 April 2023**

I extend greetings to all people and all ethnic national brethren to be auspicious on the occasion of the Myanmar New Year.

Today is New Year's Day of 1385 ME when we all could overcome all challenges in the old year with the concept that "The strength of the nation lies within", by giving a helping hand to each other of the Union. I believe we all would have the capacity to pass the year 1385 ME with unity not less than the previous year.

During the past year, the State Administration Council led by myself successfully solved the Covid-19 pandemic issue through the united strength of the government, Tatmadaw and the people. Now, we are striving for shaping a safe and healthy environment for all citizens and creating good health practices in the long run. Food security is important for all citizens to have a healthy lifestyle.

The national objective was adopted to encourage manufacturing based on agriculture and livestock farms which plays a key role in the primary livelihoods of the citizens so as to ensure food security.

Our country faced economic crises in 2021. As the internal strength was stronger in 2022, productivity rose up. Reopening border trade to some extent contributed to running industries



and rising about +3 per cent for the State GDP. It is necessary to operate firm businesses as well as to encourage domestic manufacturing for booming the State economy. The government is encouraging MSME businesses. I firmly believe that if people strive for exporting greater products, this year's economic development will be higher than the

previous years. The family spirit is the backbone of a family and the Union spirit is the lifeblood of a Union as well. If we all value the shade of the Union as our lives in doing everything, the development momentum of the nation will not halt. I believe we will reach our goal without fail.

Peace and tranquillity are essential for the democratization of the nation. The

countries facing terror acts will delay development. If everybody makes efforts with righteousness and honesty for the sake of the nation and the Union, the country will have developed in line with the "Keep Moving Forward to Achieve Our Goal".

Likewise, the success of a person depends on the accumulation of knowledge and skills. It shows everybody needs to have an education. So, the enhancement of school education for all school-age children with the national spirit will bring prosperity to the country.

Everybody knows man matters most. A man participates in all measures such as political, social and economic matters. Leadership, obedience and the creation of humans are crucial in all aspects. If we all actively and adorably serve our duties in cooperation with each other in respective sectors, the country will achieve victory without fail as we anticipate. On the auspicious occasion of the early period in 1385 ME, I would like to urge all to serve the interests of the State while amending the weakness and enhancing the strong points of the old year.

Let's join hands to serve the interests of the nation in unison!

Thank you all.

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 28/2023
13th Waning of Tagu 1385 ME
17 April 2023
Pardon Order**

THE State Administration Council Chairman has granted pardons to 3,015 male and female prisoners who are serving prison sentences at their respective prisons, jails and camps under the Code of Criminal Procedure Article 401 (1) "to serve the new punishment together with the remaining punishment to which he was sentenced this time if more offence is committed" in commemoration of the auspicious Myanmar New Year occasion and on compassionate grounds as well as on the goodwill of the government.

By Order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 29/2023
13th Waning of Tagu 1385 ME
17 April 2023
Pardon Order**

THE State Administration Council Chairman has remitted the punishment of 98 foreign prisoners from respective prisons and jails upon the condition "to serve the new punishment together with the remaining punishment to which he was sentenced this time if more offence is committed" under the Code of Criminal Procedure Article 401 (1) in commemoration of the auspicious Myanmar New Year occasion and on bilateral relations of the countries and on humanitarian grounds. Thus, those prisoners were expelled from Myanmar.

By Order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 30/2023
13th Waning of Tagu 1385 ME
17 April 2023
Pardon Order**

THE State Administration Council Chairman has remitted the punishment of five Sri Lankan citizens serving prison terms at the Insein Central Prison upon the condition "to serve the new punishment together with the remaining punishment to which he was sentenced this time if more offence is committed" under the Code of Criminal Procedure Article 401 (1) in commemoration of the auspicious Myanmar New Year occasion, on bilateral relations of the countries and humanitarian grounds. Thus, they were expelled from Myanmar.

1. Asa/23/02519/Ka Mr RR Gamini
2. Asa/23/02520/Ka Mr MMRD Dilshan
3. Asa/23/02521/Ka Mr LSJ Nanayakkara
4. Asa/23/02522/Ka Mr VGLR Kumara
5. Asa/23/02523/Ka Mr LHN Karunasinghe

By Order,

Aung Lin Dwe
Lieutenant-General
Secretary

SAC holds Paritta recitation ceremony on Myanmar New Year occasion

THE State Administration Council held a ceremony to listen to the recitation of Paritta on the occasion of Myanmar New Year 1385 ME for the citizens to be free from varieties of dangers at the Office of the SAC Chairman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

It was attended by members of the Sangha led by State Ovadacariya Maha Thihanada Monastery in Tatkon of Nay Pyi Taw Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Acinna, SAC Secretary Lt-Gen Aung

Lin Dwe, the deputy minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, permanent secretaries, departmental heads and officials.

The SAC Secretary offered alms, water, fruits and flowers to the Buddha image in the hall. Members of the Sangha recited Metta Sutta and Antarayika Kammava. The Secretary and party donated offerings to members of the Sangha.

After the ceremony, the Secretary and party offered day meals to members of the Sangha. —MNA/TTA



The Paritta chanting event of the State Administration Council in progress in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

New Year greetings from SAC Member U Wunna Maung Lwin



I am especially happy and honoured and grateful to have the opportunity to speak to you on the occasion of the transition from 1384 to 1385 in the Myanmar Era.

Thingyan New Year is a special and memorable occasion for all Myanmar citizens, ethnic people, and monks.

According to Myanmar tradition and the tradition of Buddhism, the impurities

of the old year are washed away with clean water on the occasion of the transition from the old year to the new year.

The new year is also the time of the Thingyan festival, which is the time to resolve to be full of energy and to do good things with new energy.

At this time, Buddhist monks and Buddhists have been doing good deeds for their vicious cycle for many years in Myanmar's history.

It is also a great festival with a good history and tradition where all the people of the country pay their respects to the elderly, perform good deeds, and wash themselves with Thingyan water to welcome the new year.

At this festival, all citizens of our country and ethnic groups should welcome the new year with new vigour and a new spirit, making resolutions for the prosperity and development of the whole country for the good of their country and religion.

We must identify the experiences and lessons learned in the previous year, and in the new year, we will have a new spirit, and new energy, and work on nation-building and religious development issues.

This is an opportunity for Myanmar to become a modern country with peace and development.

Therefore, in order to fully achieve the five-point Roadmap and 12 objectives set by the State Administration Council, we all need to work hard and strive hard.

At this time, all the people of all stratas in Myanmar are welcoming the new year with new energy.

Students also have to attend a new class.

High school students will also have to go on to university education. Young people who have graduated from university are also going to enter the workplace.

It is also an occasion when employees in the workplace make efforts to progress step by step year after year.

Thus, we all have to work together to achieve the nation's goals of promoting prosperity and the long-term stability of the country.

In order to do this, I would like to wish everyone that they will be able to work together and fully implement their goals.

At a time when the government is building a nation to stand tall in the world, maintain its independence and sovereignty, and stand with high dignity throughout the world, all the people of the country need to make special efforts.

While expressing my hope that they will be able to make efforts, I would like to welcome the new year with pride and extend greetings to all the people of the country. Thank you. —MNA/KZL

New Year Message of Greetings from SAC Member Daw Dwe Bu

FIRST of all, I would like to wish all ethnic national brethren residing in the Union a happy new year.

I pray for all Myanmar people to have peace and stability in the Myanmar New Year. Only when there is peace in our hearts, will our society, our country and all be at peace. For our hearts to be at peace, we need to forgive and love each other, starting with each one of us. Indeed, forgiveness and love are very difficult things to do, while hate and unforgiveness are very easy things to do.

It is important to have

love and forgiveness among all ethnicities in our country and move our country forward. If each individual has peace in their heart, then our families, our organization, our environment and our village will be at peace. I would like to say that through this kind of peace, we will be able to build the country's stability and peace.

So, I do want to wish for everyone to be at peace, attain stability and tranquillity and love each other in the new year. I pray that everyone can cancel the hatred and move forward with forgiveness.



SAC Member Porel Aung Thein extends New Year Greetings

ON the occasion of the end of the old year and the arrival of the new year, may all the citizens of Myanmar be full of health and happiness of mind, and may the weather be good throughout the coming period from the beginning of the new year.

May there be plenty of rice and crops in fine weather. May they be free from diseases.

I would like to say a New Year's wish that the country



stability to restore peace as soon as possible through unity and harmony of the country.

MoHA holds ceremonies of fish releasing, offering to elders



SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister MoHA Union Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut, his wife and party are pictured releasing fish yesterday.

THE donation for elders and fish-releasing ceremonies were held by the Ministry of Home Affairs at the Mingala Lake next to Pynmana-Taungnyo Road in Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw on the morning of the first day of Myanmar New Year 1385.

State Administration Council Member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut and wife, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Toe Yi and wife, Deputy Minister Chief of Myanmar Police Force Maj-Gen Zin Min Htet and wife, Permanent Secretary U Khine Tun Oo and wife, directors-general, senior officials and their wives, officials, staff and family members attended the ceremony, and led by Deputy Prime Minister MoHA Union Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut and wife, 3,000 golden carp fingerlings were released into the

Mingala Lake as a good deed.

Afterwards, the offertory ceremony for elders took place at the Arindhamma Hall of office No 8 of Myanmar Police Force, Nay Pyi Taw at 9:30 am. State Administration Council member Deputy Prime Minister Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut and wife, and officials attended the ceremony. Led by Deputy Prime Minister MoHA Union Minister Lt-Gen Soe Htut and his wife, New Year offerings were donated to 18 attendee elders out of the existing 79 elders in accordance with Myanmar customs and traditions, and Grandma Daw Khin San Yi repeated her prayers on behalf of the elders.

In the ceremony, 79 elders aged 80 and above were offered cash and medical supplies as a courtesy. — MNA/CT

Union Government Office Ministry hold fingerling releasing ceremony



ON the occasion of the 1st Day of the Myanmar New Year 1385, the fingerling releasing ceremony of the employees of the Union Government Office Ministry was held at Mingala Lake, Zabuthiri Township yesterday morning.

State Administration

Council member, Union Minister at the Union Government Office, National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and wife, Secretary of the NSPNC Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein, Member of NSPNC Lt-Gen Min Naing, and wife,

Member of NSPNC Lt-Gen Aye Win and wife, and Chairman of the Revenue Appellate Tribunal U Myint Oo and heads of departments attended the ceremony.

Officials released 2,700 Saffron carp fingerlings during the ceremony. — MNA

State Administration Council member, Union Minister for Union Government Office, National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and wife releasing the fingerlings.

Paritta recitation, rice offering, fingerling releasing, respect paying to the aged held in Mandalay

MANDALAY Region government organized the Paritta recitation, meal offering, rice offering, releasing fingerlings and paying respects to older persons above 90 at the city hall and in front of the hall of Mandalay City Development Committee yesterday morning.

Member of the State Administration Council U Maung Ko and wife, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Myo Aung

and wife donated cash and kind donated by Mandalay Region government to members of the Sangha through Salin Vibhajjavadhi Sayadaw and then offered dawn meals to members of the Sangha.

The SAC member and wife, officials and local people offered dry rations and alms to 108 members of the Sangha and then released 30,000 fingerlings into the water in the moat.

Led by the Mandalay Region government, the SAC member and wife paid respect and donated cash to the older persons above 90 from seven townships at the city hall.

In the evening, the Mandalay Region chief minister and party listened to Parittas and Antarayika Kammava recited by members of the Sangha and donated alms at the regional government office. — MNA/TTA



The Paritta chanting ceremony of the Mandalay Region government in progress yesterday.



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SAC member pays homage to SSMNC Chairman Bhamo Monastery Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa

AS Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Mandalay's Bhamo Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa is receiving healthcare services at the Mantaungyeik general medical ward of Mandalay General Hospital, member of the State Administration Council U Maung Ko, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Myo Aung and wife and officials on 16 April evening paid homage to the Sayadaw to ask after health progress.

The SAC member heard reports on the progress of health

conditions of the Sayadaw, close supervision for healthcare services, and further plans by Deputy Director General Dr Win Naing and officials of Mandalay Region Public Health and Medical Services Department. The SAC member and the region chief minister gave instructions on special healthcare for the Sayadaw and fulfilled their needs.

At present, Chairman Sayadaw, 94 years and 74 vasa, is being provided necessary healthcare services by specialists at the SICU at the Mantaungyeik general medical ward. Health conditions of the Sayadaw are in progress. — MNA/TTA



SAC Member U Maung Ko and party make homage visit to Bhamo Sayadaw at Mandalay General Hospital yesterday.

New Year Wish of Presiding Patron of Nanda Aungmyay Monastery Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Agga Maha Kammathanacariya Dr Bhaddanta Nimala (PhD, Buddhism) of Leikpyakan Monastery in North Ngahtetgyi Ward in Bahan Township



TODAY is the Myanmar New Year occasion for the 1385 Myanmar Era after the Myanmar Era 1884 has gone out. I would like to make New Year's wish on the auspicious occasion.

Yadisam Vapatevijam – Tadisam Haratephalam

Kalyana Karikalyanam – Papakarica Papakam. (Sagathavagga Samyugga)

It can be defined as follows: -

May all Myanmar people as well as

global people initiate meritorious deeds with goodwill.

May all Myanmar people as well as global people not perform evil acts with the bad will.

May all perform good deeds and forge good benefits in their souls.

May all keep themselves away from bad deeds.

Property accumulated from the morning to the evening does not follow you all

but two things: good deeds and misdeeds only follow you all.

Hence, you all should do meritorious deeds from the morning to the evening to accumulate good advantages with full prosperity.

May all remove bad deeds but consider good deeds for embracing prosperity.

I would like to make New Year wish for all to have good health and happiness on the New Year occasion.

Myanmar New Year wishes from various religious groups

Interview /Photos
by Ko Ko Zaw (MNA)



U Wunna (Buddhist)

U Wunna (Buddhist)
Chairman of Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)

When the old year has passed and the New Year has begun, may all Myanmar citizens, the esteemed ethnic national brethren, and all the people on earth have an auspicious new year. I wish the citizens to vanish from hatred and coexist in perfect harmony by moving towards a better future and development of



U Zaw Zaw Naing (Hindu)

the nation.

Regardless of the diversity in religions, races and political or other opinions, we cultivate optimism and compassion in hearts and the citizens are making genuine and maximum efforts to live peacefully in the country. I hereby would like to encourage people to join in our efforts for living together in peace. May all the ethnic brethren, citizens and people worldwide be protected from



Dr Sai Kyaw Myint (Christian)

danger and threat, feel at peace, and contribute to your nation, religion and well-being, under spiritual guidance, compassion and religious practices of the four major religions.

U Zaw Zaw Naing (Hindu)
Vice-chairman, Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Organization (Central)

Myanmar is a country with enormous ethnic diversity. Citizens are



U Aung Zaw Win (Islamist)

maintaining mutual harmony and compassion and goodwill among different communities. May all be protected from diseases in the new year and cultivate new ideas and optimism. May the country be peaceful. I wish the people and administrative bodies to join hands for economic development. Two factors play a pivotal role in shaping a peaceful nation; loving-kindness and hard work. May all be free from

hatred and enmity. May all be filled with good health, prosperity and well-being.

Dr Sai Kyaw Myint (Christian)
Vice-chairman, Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)

Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central) is exerting concerted efforts to maintain traditions, customs, beliefs and cultural characteristics of the entire ethnic people in building peace and socioeconomic security for the people living in the country. I like to encourage everyone in building a democratic nation and removing sins in the new year.

U Aung Zaw Win (Islamist)

mist)
Vice-chairman, Myanmar Interfaith Dialogue Group (Central)

Myanmar is home to several religious groups and different ethnic groups living in harmony. With kindness, unwavering loyalty, and positive and cooperative interaction between people of different religions, we shall participate in ensuring peace and stability of the nation. The strength of the nation lies within, our Islamist community believed. May all citizens and people worldwide be peaceful and contribute to the nation's interest, I wish. May the year ahead bring you good luck, success and happiness.

OPINION

ARTICLE WEATHER REPORT

Choose the best way waiting for us on New Year

Now is the time for the Myanmar New Year's Day. Everybody residing in Myanmar regardless of religion and racism should wish all the people of Myanmar a happy, peaceful, and prosperous New Year. We should all need to welcome all activities of restoring durable and perpetual peace for all.

From the transition to the New Year 1385 Myanmar era from the old year 1384 ME, all Myanmar people should do good deeds for themselves and others while doing daily routines like physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions. If we all wish to possess all new and good things, we should have to change our mindsets first. It is because only when our mindsets are pure can we possess all new things.

We should widen our scope and raise generosity to enjoy all better things with optimism without putting blame on anyone even if we face some difficulties and problems in doing daily routines. We should have to wish our souls to be whitish not only on the occasion of New Year's Day but on all days.

If we remove all grudges from our souls and forge optimism, the whole society will be peaceful and prosperous. If so, wars will cease. Hatred for someone will automatically change to the fraternity. The whole world will be rounded by happiness and pleasure. Every morning, every afternoon, and every evening as well as every day and every night will be full of peace and tranquility.

But, it is true that we have to try hard to change our mindsets. It is because new mindsets are important to embrace the new society and the New World. If we cannot change ourselves, we will miss all chances. Great options are waiting for us in how we choose our future.

Actually, we have to harvest everything we sowed. It is unavoidable for all. We have to thoroughly understand it is a Universal Truth. As such, we have to decorate society with the best morality in order to flourish Four Cardinal Virtues which can definitely benefit society. Only when we can improve our mindsets will society be better. If society is better, the environment as well as the Universe will give back good things to all.

Now, we are standing at the junction with tributaries leading to various futures. These are complicated in good and bad ways. We have knowledge based on our learning in our life to choose the best way.

In Mexican jungle, scientists prepare for future pandemics

As night fell in Mexico's Yucatan jungle, veterinarian Omar Garcia extracted blood and fluids from a bat as part of an investigation aimed at preventing the next potential pandemic.

The goal of the Franco-Mexican project is to detect diseases — known as zoonoses — transmitted from animals to humans in tropical climates.

Bats are under scrutiny from the international scientific community as a possible source of coronavirus transmission.

The winged mammal remained immobile while bearing its fangs, before being released by Garcia, a vector-borne disease expert.

Scientists from France's Research Institute for Development (IRD) and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) have been collaborating in the study since 2017, using a modern laboratory in Merida, the Yucatan state capital.

The aim is to discover how different viruses that circulate between animals such as mammals, birds and rodents, can potentially pass to humans, said Audrey Arnal, an infectious diseases expert at the IRD.

"This is zoonosis... understanding what the consequences of human contact with wildlife could be and then understanding what could be the next epidemic that can come out of nature," she told AFP.

Scientists take samples of all kinds of animals from the rich ecosystem of the tropical rainforest, where they have identified 61 species of mosquitoes.

"We have many questions" to try to "complete the history of the transmission cycle" of viruses, said UNAM biologist Maria Jose Tolsa, who after a decade of research finally feels that the importance of her work is recognized.

"A pandemic has serious

consequences for health and the economy," she said.

High-risk zone

The area was chosen for the research because rapid deforestation has made it "a highly emblematic region in terms of zoonosis emergency risks," said Benjamin Roche, a specialist in ecology and evolutionary biology at the IRD.

It is estimated that between 500,000 and 800,000 viruses could affect humans, he added.

The risks grow with the expansion of agriculture and tourism, which increase contact between animals and humans, according to researchers.

Thousands of trees have been felled in the Yucatan Peninsula to build President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's flagship tourist rail project, the Mayan Train, scheduled to start operating in December.

The government says that it is offsetting the loss with a



Bats are under scrutiny from the international scientific community as a possible source of coronavirus transmission. PHOTO: AFP

tree-planting programme and the creation of the second-largest tropical rainforest reserve in the world after the Amazon.

The key is to achieve a balance between humans and na-

ture, Arnal said.

"The population have to live, eat and develop their economy," she added.

The research is being carried out in 12 communities

across the three states that make up the Yucatan Peninsula.

"In birds we've found species that have been identified as reservoirs for the West Nile virus or influenza," said Rosa

Elena Sarmiento, from the virology laboratory of the UNAM Veterinary School.

'Great revealer'

Field work begins at dawn by placing a dozen fine nets to trap birds. At dusk it is the turn of bats and even owls.

Once caught, blood, fluid and ectoparasite samples — if they carry them — are taken.

Scientists identify the animal, measure it, record the data and check its condition before releasing it.

Later the material is analyzed in the laboratory.

"DNA is a great revealer," Arnal said.

"With the blood of the mosquito we can determine which species or which animal was bitten," she added.

Blood samples will also be taken from local residents to determine if they carry any virus that came from an animal.

The project also includes

consultations with communities to learn about their environmental and social problems, and encourage forms of coexistence with nature.

"There has to be a knowledge dialogue with the communities," said Erika Marce Santos, a member of the Mexican Association of Conservation Medicine who liaises with residents.

The Merida laboratory is connected with others in Africa, South Asia and other Latin American countries within the framework of an initiative called Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence.

Launched by France in 2022, it brings together 22 countries and 200 organizations.

"What we're looking for in the Yucatan is to devise a prevention strategy against zoonoses that can serve as an example to the whole world," Roche said.

Source: AFP

COVID-19 booster dose can do more harm than good at this time, says AIIMS doctor; some experts disagree

In the wake of the recent rise in Covid-19 cases, although many experts are advising

people to take maximum precautions and also booster doses, AIIMS doctor Dr Sanjay Rai is

of the opinion that at this point of time, a booster dose of the vaccine can do more harm than

good. In the last 24 hours, 10,753 new cases have been recorded. At the same time, the cases have crossed 1,500 in the national capital too. The infection rate has also risen to 33 per cent.

In view of these increasing cases, many experts and doctors are advising people to take maximum precautions and telling those who have not taken booster doses, to take them.

Dr Sanjay Rai, the professor of Community Medicine, at AIIMS Hospital, Delhi, is of the opinion that at this point in time, a booster dose of the vaccine can do more harm than good.

Talking to ANI, Dr Sanjay said, "Due to the mutation in the RNA virus, the cases will continue to increase and decrease. This situation will continue like this in the coming times as well. There is no need to panic about this. The people that will get infected with the new variants will create new immunity. But despite all this, the

more important thing is whether the severity, hospitalization or the death rate is increasing?"

He said, "In the initial phase of Covid, when people were not infected in large numbers, people did not have herd immunity, then they needed more vaccines. But now almost all the people in the country have been infected, after which natural immunity has been formed in them. This is more effective in protecting against any virus than the vaccine. Also, we cannot stop any new wave with the vaccine, it only reduces death and severity. Giving more steroids to prevent infection may do you more harm than good".

The Professor of Community Medicine further said that many researchers have come out saying that if you have been infected with coronavirus once, then you have developed natural immunity.

"And you have been protected from death and severity for a long time. At present both corona

and influenza are infecting people. Influenza is a viral infection that comes every year and infects people according to the season. How effective will the booster dose of the vaccine be? No research has come to the fore regarding this. Only on the basis of possibilities, we cannot say that booster dose will be beneficial for people at this time," he said.

Dr Sanjay Rai said that in the last few months we have seen that the infection of corona has increased rapidly in countries like China, Japan, South Korea.

"All these countries have been highly vaccinated, Japan has got four doses of the vaccine, yet the corona infection was once again spreading very fast there. Covid-19 spread rapidly even after vaccination in these countries because they kept zero Covid-19, people did not have natural infection due to which people got infected even after being vaccinated," he further said.

Source: ANI



A health worker collects a nasal swab sample from a woman to test for the Covid-19 coronavirus at a hospital in Amritsar on 5 January 2023. PHOTO: NARINDER NANU / AFP

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 17 April 2023)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 18 April 2023: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered in Souther Shan State, isolated in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi regions and Kachin, (Northern and Eastern) Shan and Kayah states. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4 - 6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 April 2023: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 April 2023: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18 April 2023: Partly cloudy.

Venerable Sayadaws recite Paritta while flying over Nay Pyi Taw



Sayadaws are seen onboard chanting Paritta in the sky over Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

VENERABLE Sayadaws recited Parittas in the sky over Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory by helicopter at noon for ensuring peace and prosperity of the people to be free from dangers.

Six members of the Sangha led by Presiding Patron of Wegyi Pariyatti Buddhist Learning Centre Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Adicavamsa of Pobbathiri Township flew over Nay Pyi Taw in recitation of Parittas.

The permanent secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and officials who accompanied the Sayadaws sprayed Paritta water on the Union Territory.—MNA/TTA

Myanmar New Year greetings Interviewed by Nyein Thu(MNA)



Aung San Sayadaw

Aung San Sayadaw

May Myanmar citizens and people worldwide live with peaceful hearts and a sense of serenity and equanimity. May all living things have a restful night and sweet dreams. May you all wake up to good news. May you all get rid of sins that will send you to hell, with Dhamma (teachings of Buddha). May you all follow good practices that can lead to heavenly realms and Nibbana.

U Kyi Soe Tun (Chair of Myanmar Motion Picture Organization)

The theme of Myanmar Motion Picture Organization is that Film is for the People. Therefore, may it bring happiness, peace and tranquillity, prosperity and propagation of religion. Film audiences is the

main pillar of support for filmmakers. I wish film lovers to have an auspicious and peaceful new year.

Artist Soe Moe (film director)

Myanmar's water festival will wash away sins from the old year and welcome the new year with love and peace. May the new year be free from physical and mental sufferings and be filled with joy and happiness. Positive opinions and constructive suggestions will hopefully contribute to the interests of the State, race and religion. Wishing you all great blessings in the year ahead.

Daw Nwe Nwe San (Actress)

My biggest wish is a peaceful and prosperous country for Myanmar New Year. May all be free from threats and dangers. I daily send blessings and wishes for all Myanmar film lovers and those benefactors who take care of us. I wish the new year brings joy, peace and prosperity to all Myanmar citizens and people worldwide.

U Lwin Myint (renowned musician and composer) Chair of Myanmar Music Association

Myanmar New Year is an auspicious and significant day for citizens and ethnic communities. The old year has passed and a new one has started. May

the new one brings you immense joy and good fortune. As the artists receive love and support from fans, may all the people have peace of mind and physical health. May the country be peaceful with stability and equanimity. Wishing the people to have contentment and tranquillity.

U San Lin (Chair of Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association)

Starting from the new year, may all the citizens find peace of mind towards lasting serenity. May you all have physical, mental and social well-being. I hope all of us live in harmony and join hands in building state development. I wish all Myanmar edible oil dealers be filled with happiness and wishes. May all your businesses flourish during the refreshing new year. I genuinely wish the concerted efforts of all stakeholders in the economy will contribute to the economic growth of the country.

U Aung Htun Chairman of Myanmar Real Estate Development Association

On the occasion of the traditional Myanmar New Year, may all Myanmar citizens be healthy and happy. May all be safe from dangerous cases of calamity, let all the socioeco-



U Kyi Soe Tun



Artist Soe Moe



Daw Nwe Nwe San



U Lwin Myint



U San Lin



U Aung Htun

omic issues be favourable, and let the businesses grow and prosper. Wishing all the best in the New Year.



A d v e r t i s e
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Pilgrims visit eminent pagodas on Myanmar New Year's Day

THE Myanmar Era 1384 was over and the New Year 1385 came in, and people were making good deeds at famous pagodas including Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon.

Paritta recitation ceremonies supervised by Buddhist monks were also held followed by making donations to the Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday morning.

Firstly, the board of trustees members donated dawn alms to members of the Sangha. Next, the Paritta listening and shar-

ing merits ceremony was held and Maha Visuddhayon Taikthit Monastery Presiding Sayadaw Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Dhamma Bhandagarika Agga Maha Pandita (Yaw Sayadaw) Bhaddanta Sirinda Bhivamsa gave the Nine Precepts to the congregation.

Then, Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees member U Min Lwin addressed the inaugural words followed by donations to Sayadaws and sharing merits gained. Refreshments were also



Devotees are seen at the Botataung Pagoda. **PHOTOS: KO KO ZAW**



Worshippers are pictured at the Maha Wizara Pagoda.

donated at the pagoda on Myanmar New Year's Day.

Similarly, pilgrims flocked to Maha Wizara Pagoda yesterday morning and officials including Maha Wizara Pagoda Board of Trustees members released 50,000 fish.

The Paritta recitation and listening ceremonies also took

place at Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda, Botataung Pagoda, Sule Pagoda, Sacred Tooth Relic Pagoda (Yangon), Shwe Phone Pwint Pagoda, Ngahtetgyi and Chaukhtetkyee pagodas as donors were distributing refreshments.

Young people performed shampooing for the elderly in a

traditional manner on the occasion of New Year's Day.

Releasing animals, pets and fish, keeping the Sabbath, recitation of Buddha sermons and offering refreshments to the people are symbols of the Myanmar New Year. — Zaw Min Latt/MKKS

Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory crowded with benevolent contributors on 1st day of Myanmar New Year



AS yesterday was the end of the year 1384 of the Myanmar Era and the transition to the year 1385, the impurities from the old year are washed away with water during the Thingyan festival, and the impurities of the mind are cleansed by offering charity, beginning the new year with auspiciousness.

On the first day of Myanmar New Year, people uphold Sabbath virtues at pagodas, temples and

monasteries from all over Myanmar, provide personal hygiene to elders, and do meritorious deeds by sparing lives and donating food.

Therefore, from the morning of the first day of the new year, the Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory was also packed with people doing good deeds by upholding the virtues, listening to sermons recited by the monks, releasing living beings and mak-

ing donations.

The Uppatasanti Pagoda, Dartucaya Datpaungsu Pagoda, Maha Thakyananthi Pagoda, Hlaykhwin Taung Pagoda, Phayakoesu Pagoda, Lawka Marazein Pagoda, Yanaungmyin Shwelathla Pagoda, Phaungtaw Chatma Pagoda and other famous pagodas were also crowded with devotees yesterday. — Jaing Law/CT



PHOTOS: KO KO HTEIN

Mandalay welcomes Myanmar New Year



ON the first day of Myanmar New Year, pagodas, temples, townships and wards in Mandalay were crowded with people doing good deeds.

The Mahamuni Buddha Image received its ritual of daily face washing led by Sayadaws with laypersons yesterday morning. Gold foils, flowers,

lights, and water were offered by devotees, and the precinct of the pagoda was packed with donors and merit-makers.

In addition, Aungtauwu



The Paritta chanting event in progress in Mandalay yesterday.

Pagoda, Shwekyeemyin Pagoda, Phayani Pagoda and other famous pagodas in Mandalay were also crowded with worshippers and well-wishers who donated refreshments.

Departmental staff and social organizations in Mandalay Region also made good deeds such as releasing the animals to safety, providing personal

hygiene to elders and making donations.

In the evening, devotees invited Sayadaws and monks to recite sermons and Paritta verses for the increase of blessings, and people doing good deeds on the first day of Myanmar New Year were all over the city of Mandalay. — Maung Aye Chan/CT

Pardon granted to prisoners from Regions, States' prisons

A total of 3,015 prisoners including 98 foreign prisoners from prisons/jails in Regions and States were granted pardons on the first day of Myanmar New Year on 17 April.

A total of 125 prisoners from Kachin State, 11 from Kayah State, 83 from Kayin State, 177 from Sagaing Region, 145 from Taninthayi Region, 93 from Bago Region, 50 from Magway Region, 347 from Mandalay Region, 398 from Mon State, 173 from Rakhine State, 1,277 from Yangon Region, 152 from Shan State and 82 prisoners from Ayeyawady Region were released from respective prisons. —MNA/KZW

49 inmates pardoned from multi-agriculture/livestock camp, prison and production camp in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area

IN commemoration of Myanmar New Year and focusing on peace of mind and humanitarian aid, a total of 49 inmates were pardoned from a multi-agriculture/livestock camp, prison and production camp in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Out of 49, four inmates from Nay Pyi Taw prison, 19 inmates from Kinthar 1 Production Camp, 12 inmates from Kinthar (1) multi-agri-

culture/livestock camp (Nay Pyi Taw), 14 inmates from Kinthar 2 Production Camp (Tatkon) were pardoned.

The pardoning ceremony was held yesterday morning at the Nay Pyi Taw prison hall, and officials of Zabuthiri Township delivered speeches.

Afterwards, prison officials conducted temperature and health checks on the inmates to prevent the spread

of Covid-19.

Next, officials issued Prison release certificates, travel expenses, daily allowances and labour benefits.

After signing the pledges, the prisoners were transported to the Myoma Market bus terminal and Nay Pyi Taw railway station by department-owned vehicles. — MNA /KZL

77 inmates from Mandalay Central Prison freed from sentences

A total of 3,015 prisoners from prisons across the country were pardoned for their sentences in honour of the Myanmar New Year and on humanitarian grounds. Seventy-seven inmates from the Mandalay Central Prison were reportedly given an exemption from their punishment.

Minister for Transport Region Police Force Commander Police Brig-Gen Sein Lwin of Mandalay Region Government gave his speech to 77 inmates at the Mandalay Central Prison on the morning of 17 April.

Afterwards, 77 prisoners were released from prison after undergoing a medical ex-

amination and receiving travel expenses.

Similarly, 50 trainees from the Mandalay Youth Training School of the Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Aungmyaythazan Township, Mandalay Region were also released from punishment and returned to their respective parents/guardians.

A total of 130 prisoners from five prisons and 71 inmates from camps and 97 trainees from two youth training schools and the Women's Vocational School in Mandalay Region were released under the amnesty order. — Maung Aye Chan/CT



Released prisoners are pictured lining up for their homes.

Markets rally as traders weigh latest US data, rates outlook

MARKETS rose Monday as traders weighed a bigger-than-expected drop in US retail sales and the prospect of further Federal Reserve monetary tightening.

The mood was helped by forecast-beating earnings from US banking titans that eased concerns about the sector after last month's turmoil that saw three regional lenders go under.

Investors built on last week's broad rally that came on the back of data showing inflation falling quicker than estimated last month, which fanned hopes the Fed will bring its interest rate hiking campaign to an end soon.

Analysts said that while the one per cent drop in retail sales — double what was forecast — could give the US central bank more room to pause,

it also revived worries that the world's top economy could tip into recession.

Despite figures pointing to prices falling, a survey by the University of Michigan on Friday showed consumers' expectations for inflation rose this month to 4.6 per cent annually, from 3.6 per cent in March.

Meanwhile, Fed governor Christopher Waller dented hopes the bank will



A man walks past an electronic quotation board displaying the closing numbers of share prices of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on 5 April 2023. PHOTO: AFP

ease back on its tightening campaign soon, saying on Friday that rates should continue going up as inflation remained elevated.

“Because financial conditions have not significantly tightened, the labour market continues to be strong and quite tight, and inflation is far above target, so monetary policy needs to be tightened further,” he warned. — AFP

Increasing demand pushes up airfares during holiday season in Viet Nam

VIET Nam's local airfares have risen sharply due to increased fuel prices, the exchange rate of US dollars, and interest rates, resulting in higher airline costs, according to the country's Aviation Business Association.

Airlines have resumed international routes after the pandemic, but cannot

increase domestic flights like in 2022 due to the need to balance manpower and aircraft, resulting in limited domestic flights and ticket prices being pushed up, local newspaper Vietnam News reported on Monday, citing Bui Doan Ne, vice-chairman of the association.

The price of flights has

increased sharply as thousands look ahead to the national holiday, which lasts for five days from 29 April to 3 May, the newspaper reported. Round-trip airfares for some routes from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to tourist destinations such as Phu Quoc, Da Lat, Hue, Da Nang and Nha Trang

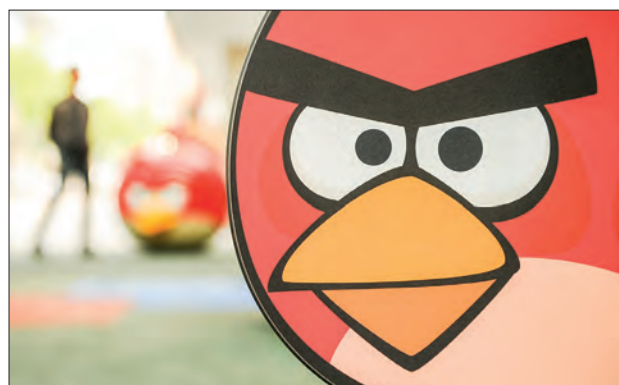
are currently very high, ranging from four million to eight million Vietnamese dong (169-339 US dollars) including taxes and fees.

A representative of the country's national carrier, Vietnam Airlines, explained that the tickets at low prices have been almost sold out, and only tickets at high

prices are left, but this price is still within the ticket price framework of the Ministry of Transport. Bamboo Airlines, a local private airline, said commercial aviation is seasonal. During peak periods such as 30 April to 1 May, travel demand spikes, while the supply of airlines is limited, leading to high

ticket prices.

The Ministry of Transport has requested the Civil Aviation Authority of Viet Nam to direct airlines to arrange night flights to meet travellers' needs in line with the aviation infrastructure whilst also ensuring security and safety. — Xinhua



(FILES) In this file photo taken on 31 October 2012 a visitor walks through Shanghai's first Angry Birds Activity Park at Tongji University in Shanghai. Japanese video games group Sega has offered to buy Angry Birds maker Rovio, valuing the Finnish company at over 700 million euros (USD 770 million), the companies said on 17 April 2023. PHOTO: AFP

Japan's Sega to buy Finnish Angry Birds maker Rovio

JAPANESE video games group Sega has offered to buy Angry Birds maker Rovio, valuing the Finnish company at over 700 million euros (\$770 million), the companies said Monday.

“Combining the strengths of Rovio and Sega presents an incredibly exciting future,” Alex-

andre Pelletier-Normand, CEO of Rovio, said in a statement, which added that Rovio was recommending shareholders to accept the offer.

The offer, which represents a 19 per cent premium over Rovio's closing share price on Friday, is part of the Sonic the

Hedgehog maker's “long-term goal” of expanding into the mobile gaming market, Sega CEO Haruki Satomi said.

“Among the rapidly growing global gaming market, the mobile gaming market has especially high potential,” he added.

In 2022, Rovio, which

employs over 500 people, saw a revenue of 317.7 million euros, and an adjusted net profit of 31.4 million euros.

Rovio launched the bird slingshot game in 2009 and it soared rapidly to become one of the most popular games on Apple's App Store. — AFP

<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V VTC OCEAN VOY.NO. (2303)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V VTC OCEAN VOY.NO. (2303) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-4-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301928</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S ELDER TRIUMPHANT SHIPPING LINES PTE LTD</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V HAI CHANG VOY.NO. (2302)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HAI CHANG VOY.NO. (2302) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-4-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301928</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S WILHELMSSEN PORT SERVICES (S) PTE LTD</p>	<p>CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V MOMENTUM PHONIX VOY.NO. (002/2023L)</p> <p>Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MOMENTUM PHONIX VOY.NO. (002/2023L) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-4-2023 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day. Phone No: 2301928</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shipping Agency Department Myanma Port Authority</p> <p>Agent For: M/S INFINITE PROSPERITY SHIPPING PTE LTD</p>
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GLOBAL AFFAIRS



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu meet with Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu at the Kremlin in Moscow on 16 April 2023. **PHOTO: PAVEL BEDNYAKOV / SPUTNIK / AFP**

Putin praises Pacific drills as China minister visits

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Monday praised the “very high level” of military drills in the Pacific as Moscow seeks closer ties with China amid a stand-off with the West.

The surprise drills announced last week come as Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu is in Russia on a visit which will last until Wednesday.

Putin received Chinese leader Xi Jinping last month in Moscow for a summit showing

the nations’ united front against the West.

During a meeting with Putin and Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu on Sunday, Li hailed ties with Moscow, saying they “surpass the military-political alliances of the Cold War era”.

The exercises in the Pacific involved over 25,000 Russian military personnel, 167 warships and support vessels, including 12 submarines as well as 89 aircraft

and helicopters, Shoigu said.

“The first stage of this surprise inspection did indeed take place at a very high level,” Putin said during a televised meeting with Shoigu.

“Today we have clear priorities for the use of the armed forces and, above all, this concerns the Ukrainian direction and everything related to protecting our people in the Donbas” in eastern Ukraine, Putin said. — AFP

Russia’s Pacific Fleet conducts anti-submarine exercises in Sea of Japan

COMBAT ships of Russia’s Pacific Fleet conducted anti-submarine exercises in the Sea of Japan, as well as artillery firing at sea and air targets during a sudden readiness check, TASS news agency reported on Monday.

The vessels left their permanent bases and arrived at the designated training area, where they carried out tactical manoeuvres in different formations and provided all types of defence for the naval convoy during the sea transit, said the

report.

All tasks were completed, said Sergey Merkulov, commander of the frigate Marshal Shaposhnikov, adding the sudden readiness check did not present difficulties for his team as they have been receiving training almost every week since January.

Under the directive of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the exercises started from Friday, which involved naval and air forces, as well as military and support units. — Xinhua

Iran court jails 10 troops over 2020 Ukraine jet downing

IRAN has sentenced 10 members of the armed forces to prison after finding them guilty of involvement in the downing of a Ukrainian airliner, the judiciary’s Mizan Online website reported Sunday.

Iranian forces shot down Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 shortly after its takeoff from Tehran on 8 January 2020, killing all 176 people on board. Most were Iranians and Canadians, including many dual nationals.

Mizan reported that a commander received the heaviest penalty of 10 years in prison for having defied orders in shooting down the plane.

Nine other personnel were sentenced to between

one and three years, Mizan reported.

The commander of a Tor M-1 surface-to-air missile system “fired two missiles” at the airliner “contrary to orders” and without obtaining authorization, Mizan said.

It did not identify any of the accused.

Three days after the Kyiv-bound plane was shot down, the Iranian armed forces admitted there had been a “mistake”.

“Given the extent of the effects and consequences of this action, the main defendant was sentenced to the maximum penalty,” Mizan Online added on Sunday, without giving further details. — AFP

Fighting rages in Sudan as death toll passes 100

EXPLOSIONS rocked the Sudanese capital Khartoum Monday as fighting between the army and paramilitary forces led by rival generals raged for a third day with the death toll surpassing 100.

The violence erupted Saturday after weeks of power struggles between the two generals who seized power in a 2021 coup, Sudan’s army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The intense conflict, which has seen air strikes, tanks on the streets, artillery fire and heavy gunfire in crowded neighbourhoods both in Khartoum and other cities across Sudan, has triggered international demands for an immediate ceasefire.

“The death toll among ci-



People gather on the street in east Khartoum on 16 April 2023 as fighting in Sudan raged for a second day in battles between rival generals. Sudan’s army and rival paramilitaries began an hours-long humanitarian pause on the second day of urban battles that killed at least 56 civilians and three UN staff. **PHOTO: AFP**

vilians... has reached 97,” the doctors’ union said, adding later that “dozens” of fighters had been killed. The figure does not include

all casualties as many could not reach hospitals due to difficulties in movement amid the fighting. — AFP

Protesters demand justice for Black teen shot in Kansas City

HUNDREDS of protesters demanded justice for a Black teenager shot in the midwestern US state of Missouri, local media reported Sunday, as police promised to move quickly with the investigation.

Ralph Paul Yarl, 16, is in critical condition after he was shot twice and struck in the head by a white man last week in Kansas City, according to a statement on Sunday by high-profile lawyers Ben Crump and Lee Merritt, who have agreed to take the case.

Yarl was picking up his twin

brothers from a friend’s house on Thursday when he rang the wrong doorbell and was shot by the homeowner through a glass door, according to a note from his aunt, Faith Spoonmoore, on a GoFundMe campaign for his medical bills and therapy. The case has drawn nationwide attention and prompted outcry on Kansas City’s streets and online from celebrities and activists.

On Sunday, protesters gathered in front of the house where Yarl was reportedly shot and demanded the homeowner face

hate crime charges, Kansas City public broadcaster KCUR 89.3 reported.

Kansas City Police Chief Stacey Graves said at a Sunday night press conference that the homeowner had been released after 24 hours in custody, and that a statement from the victim would be needed before pursuing any charges.

“The information that we have now, it does not say that it’s racially motivated, that’s still an active investigation,” Graves said. — AFP

Heatstroke kills 11 at India awards event

ELEVEN people died of heatstroke in India after an estimated one million spectators waited for hours in the sun at a government-sponsored awards ceremony, officials said on Monday.

Around 20 people were hospitalized and 300 felt ill at the event near the western city of Mumbai on Sunday, when temperatures hit close to 38 degrees Celsius (100 Fahrenheit) with high levels of humidity, local media reported.

Senior government officials attended the ceremony, including Interior Minister Amit Shah,

who praised the crowd for waiting so long in the sun.

The office of Maharashtra state Chief Minister Eknath Shinde described it as a “sad and disturbing incident” and promised compensation for the victims’ relatives.

India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party said around a million people attended the event, the Indian Express newspaper reported.

The opposition Congress party accused the government of negligence and said it should face criminal charges.

Heatwaves have killed more than 6,500 people in India since 2010, and last year saw record temperatures in several cities across the country.

The hot spells are becoming harsher and more frequent across South Asia, spurred by climate change, according to scientists.

Authorities in the eastern state of West Bengal announced a week-long shutdown of all schools, colleges and universities from Monday due to the heat, local media reported. — AFP



In this photograph taken on 16 April 2023, people gather to attend an award ceremony on the outskirts of Mumbai. PHOTO: AFP

Viet Nam’s growth likely 2nd fastest in Southeast Asia in 2023: IMF

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) expected Viet Nam to continue to be one of the fastest-growing economies in the Southeast Asian region, Vietnam News Agency reported on Monday.

The IMF projection came as the growth of Viet Nam’s gross domestic product is expected to reach 5.8 per cent in 2023 and accelerate to 6.9 per cent in 2024, the news agency said.

The IMF has just revised up the growth forecast for Viet Nam, making it second only to the Philippines in the region, due partly to the rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic and trade diversion to the

country, said Daniel Leigh, head of the IMF’s World Economic Studies.

However, the IMF’s 2023 forecast is lower than the World Bank’s prediction of 6.3-per-cent growth rate for the Southeast Asian country and the Asian Development Bank’s expectation at 6.5 per cent.

In addition, the IMF expected Viet Nam’s inflation to rise in line with the global inflation trend but above the Vietnamese government’s target, from 3.2 per cent last year to around 5 per cent this year and 4.3 per cent next year.

Viet Nam is targeting an

economic growth at 6.5 per cent while keeping inflation at below 4.5 per cent for this year.

In order to maintain growth momentum, the IMF economist advised the country to pursue a monetary policy stance that is consistent with achieving the inflation target, and a fiscal policy focused on supporting vulnerable individuals and businesses.

Regarding financial stability, to stabilize the real estate and corporate bond markets should be a priority but not at the cost of higher inflation, Leigh said. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Air quality in Malaysia drops to unhealthy levels

AIR quality in parts of Malaysia including the capital Kuala Lumpur has dropped to unhealthy levels, according to government data on Monday.

The worst hit parts of Malaysia include Penang state and Kuala Lumpur, which recorded air pollution index (API) readings of 151, according to the country’s Air Pollutant Index Management System managed by the Department of Environment under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change. — Xinhua

New Zealand public radio threatens to quit Twitter

RADIO New Zealand became the latest broadcaster to threaten to leave Twitter on Monday, after the social media platform labelled the public broadcaster “government-funded”.

RNZ’s head of content said it could join US counterparts National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting Service, who both quit Twitter last week in protest at the tag.

“Not only is our editorial independence protected by the law, we guard it vigorously,” head of content Megan Whelan wrote on Twitter. — AFP

After major Yemen prisoner swap, another 104 released: ICRC



Members of Yemeni government forces who have been recently released, disembark from an aircraft upon arrival at Marib airport on 16 April 2023. PHOTO: AFP

MORE than 100 prisoners of war were flown from Saudi Arabia to Yemen on Monday, further buoying peace hopes a day after a major exchange of 869 captives ended, the ICRC said.

Two International Committee of the Red Cross planes carrying 48 prisoners each flew to Sanaa, Yemen’s rebel-held capital, while a third with eight captives headed for government-controlled Aden in the south, the humanitarian group said.

The “unilateral” release is outside the terms of the three-day exchange that was nego-

tiated between Yemen’s Huthi rebels and government officials and finished on Sunday, ICRC media adviser Jessica Moussan told AFP. “We welcome this initiative and are pleased to see that humanitarian considerations are being taken for the sake of reuniting families,” Moussan said.

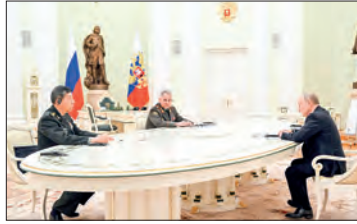
“This will bring immense relief to the families of the detainees,” she added.

The ICRC is “facilitating” the transfer by providing air transport and logistical support, and by interviewing the captives, Moussan said.

The release of 104 captives, days before the major Muslim festival of Eid al-Fitr, takes the total number to 973 freed since Friday.

The Iran-backed Huthis seized Sanaa in 2014, prompting a Saudi-led military intervention months later. Hundreds of thousands have died in the conflict, which has also triggered a major humanitarian crisis.

A UN-brokered ceasefire that started in April 2022 has sharply reduced casualties. The truce expired in October, but fighting has largely remained on hold. — AFP



The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council: Twelve Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To prioritize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active, and non-aligned foreign policy.
- (d) To ensure peace, stability, rule of law, and the safe and smooth functioning of transport networks across the Union.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance development based on agriculture and livestock using modern production techniques and to strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To assure support for the sustainability of Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) that prioritize import substitution, export production, and the use of domestically produced raw materials, in order to increase domestic production and generate employment opportunities.
- (d) To advance the socioeconomic life of the people, in order to ensure the country's prosperity and food security.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National people and preserve and safeguard their faiths, beliefs, culture, and characteristics of patriotic nationalism.
- (c) To strengthen basic health care in order to achieve the emergence of a health system that enhances the longevity and health of the entire nation.
- (d) To comprehensively promote the education sector to make it capable of producing the human resources necessary for building a modern, developed, and progressive democratic nation.

Arsenal can handle title stress as Man City close in, vows Arteta

ARSENALS bid to win the Premier League for the first time since 2004 is in danger of imploding, but Mikel Arteta remains adamant the leaders can cope with the pressure of the title race.

Arteta's side blew a two-goal lead for a second successive game as West Ham hit back to snatch a 2-2 draw at the London Stadium on Sunday.

After squandering the same advantage in last weekend's 2-2 draw at Liverpool, the Gunners once again paid the price for taking their foot off the gas.

Although Arsenal are four points clear of second placed Manchester City, it is the champions who have all the momentum heading into the final weeks of a gripping title battle.

With a home game against Arsenal looming on 26 April, City know they will be crowned champions if they win their last eight games. Ominously for Arsenal, Pep Guardiola's men have



Arsenal's Spanish manager Mikel Arteta reacts during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Arsenal at the London Stadium, in London on 16 April 2023. PHOTO: BEN STANSALL / AFP

already beaten them twice this season, winning 3-1 at the Emirates Stadium in the league in February, just weeks after knocking the Gunners out of the FA Cup with a 1-0 victory in Manchester.

For Arsenal to no longer be in control of their own destiny is a bitter pill for Arteta to swallow

after the north Londoners' long spell at the top this term. Arteta concedes Arsenal's untimely collapses against West Ham and Liverpool were self-inflicted wounds, with the Spaniard especially frustrated by the way his players took their strong position for granted on Sunday. — AFP

Wuhan to play host as world snooker returns to China

THE World Snooker Tour hailed the "momentous announcement" of three tournaments in China this year, including one in Wuhan, as the return of international sport to the country gathers pace.

Almost all international sports events were cancelled in China after Covid emerged in

Wuhan in late 2019, and they are only just returning after travel curbs were lifted.

The World Snooker Tour will stage the first professional snooker tournament in mainland China in four years with the showpiece Shanghai Masters on 11-17 September, the WST said.

That will be followed by the

Wuhan Open on 9-15 October and the International Championship in November at a Chinese city yet to be confirmed.

Total prize money for three events combined will be more than £2 million (\$2.5 million).

"This is a momentous announcement for our sport as we ramp up our return to staging events in Asia," said WST chairman Steve Dawson.

"Throughout the pandemic we have maintained dialogue and relationships with the Chinese Billiards and Snooker Association as well as our key partners and promoters across China.

"This has allowed us to make a fast return to staging key events now that travel restrictions have lifted."

In a nod to snooker's popularity in the world's most populous country, Dawson added: "We will continue to explore opportunities to stage further events in China and beyond." — AFP

Barcelona have not cheated, insists chief Laporta

BARCELONA president Joan Laporta insisted Monday his club never tried to cheat amid investigations into payments made to a former refereeing chief.

In a two-hour news conference, he said there was a smear campaign against Barcelona and the head of La Liga for backing the case against the Catalan club, who are top of the league.

"Obviously referees were not bought and there was no attempt to influence their decisions," he told reporters gathered at the club's Camp Nou stadium.

"Barcelona has never done anything with the aim or intention of adulterating the competition in order to gain a

sporting advantage."

Last month Spanish prosecutors charged the Catalan club with corruption after payments of more than 7.3 million euros (\$7.8 million) to a company owned by a former refereeing chief were uncovered earlier this year.

Barcelona say they paid Jose Maria Enriquez Negrera, the former referee and ex-vice-president of the refereeing committee of the Spanish football federation (CTA) between 1994 and 2018, for reports and advice related to refereeing.

Barcelona ceased its payments in 2018 due to Negrera's departure from the CTA, according to Spanish prosecutors. — AFP



This photo taken on 11 September 2018 shows China's Ding Junhui watching during his second-round match against Northern Ireland's Mark Allen in the 2018 Shanghai Masters snooker tournament in Shanghai. PHOTO: AFP