Peace possible, but only if we want it: State Counsellor

In her continuing quest for peace, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday visited Myitkyina in Kachin State, one of the most war-torn regions in the country.

During her discussions with Kachin elders, she gave honest and heartfelt entreaties to the Kachin people to unite for peace. Kachin State has endured ethnic conflicts for decades. The main ethnic armed group in the region, KIA, has steadfastly refused to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) nor participate in peace talks.

“If we really want it, peace can be surely had”, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said. “The 21st Century Panglong Conference is an important political dialogue for building a Federal Democratic Union. I want all to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement. At the time when the NCA was discussed, the NLD did not take part in it. Yet, after taking office of the government, the government must take responsibility. In studying the NCA, it can be found that it has the guarantees of political dialogues and monitoring ceasefire, plus it guarantees amending the Constitution. The NCA and the 21st Century Panglong Conference is the way that will not harm the country and its people. The NCA is not a goal. It is only a step that national ethnic nationalities have longed for. I want you to take part in the conference for making decisions. Success of the NCA is the success for gaining peace, and it is like making firm decisions.
**Chinese charity group provides medical treatment for children**

**Ko Moe**

FIFTY children suffering from congenital heart problems born to poor families in Myanmar will receive treatment in China, according to the Yankin Children’s Hospital in Yangon.

The free treatment is for a selected 50 children from Myanmar. The humanitarian effort aims for healthy, happy children and to improve the relationship between the Myanmar and Chinese people.

The 50 children selected throughout Myanmar will be sent to China in three groups, the first in April, the second group in May and the third in June to An Zhong Hospital in Beijing, China.

“We share the information of free of charge treatment to the children’s parents all over Myanmar who had their children treated in Yankin Children’s Hospital. We will select 50 children from poor families out of 100 children and send them to the hospital in China for free of charge,” said Dr. Daw Myint Myint Khine, superintendent of Yankin Children’s Hospital.

China will pay for all medical treatment charges, including travelling charges for the children and their parents.

As an act of China-Myanmar cooperation, China Charity Federation’s group led by chairman Xu Yixuan and the Myanmar medical team led by cardiac specialists started the selection process on March 28 to pick 50 of the 100 children who suffered present-at-birth heart attacks.

China Charity Federation is a charitable treatment service organisation for children. It is the first time for the organisation to provide charitable treatment for Myanmar children in China.

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**Fruit, vegetable and flower wholesale market to be opened in Danyingon**

FRUIT, vegetable and flower wholesale market will be opened in Danyingon, Insein township, Yangon region at the end of April, according to an official from MAEX (Myanmar Agro Exchange Public Limited). The wholesale market is being built on an 83.73-acre plot of land and is aimed at not only making profits, but also at building bridges among farmers, consumers, local traders and exporters. Estimated cost of the whole project is Ks118 billion.

“We are selling a share for Ks10,500 to farmers, traders and other interested parties. At first, we had planned to sell only 500,000 shares. But there are many people who want to buy the shares. So, we have sold over 600,000 shares. We are also issuing the shares certificate starting in April,” said an official from MAEX. The project is being implemented through a public-private partnership with Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) and Myanmar Agro Exchange Public Limited (MAEX).—Min Min

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**Authorities seek more clinical partners to offer healthcare to workers with SSB**

PLANS are underway to join more private clinics in Yangon and Mandalay to offer better healthcare to the workers with social security numbers, said U Maung Maung Aye, deputy director of the Social Security Board.

The SSB is now searching private clinics in Shwepyitha, Dagon Seikkan, Shwelinban Industrial Zone and Dagon Myothit (South) townships in Yangon Region as well as Mandalay, especially in the areas with a large population of workers.

Under the agreement between the SSB and private clinics, the SSB will offer medicines to the clinical partners to treat unhealthy individuals with social security numbers. The medical expenses including service fees for an employer will be Ks3,600.

There are about 980,000 social security card holders across the country, according to the SSB’s statistics.

Almost 100 clinics plus three workers’ hospitals and one traditional medicine hospital have been opened by the Social Security Board. However, the SSB is now connecting with only two private clinics, planning to expand the joint services in the future.—200

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**National Blood Centre invites more voluntary blood donor participation**

BETWEEN 8,000 and 9,000 units of blood are needed per month for the National Blood Centre to meet hospital needs, said a spokesperson of the centre.

With the aim of raising knowledge on blood donation through online, the National Blood Centre recently launched a website https://www.donatebloodmyanmar.org, searching more voluntary blood donors to reach its targets of donation.

The new website includes detail information for those wishing to make blood contribution without a lot of problems, said Dr. Nwe Nwe Oo, assistant director of the National Blood Centre.

Organized by philanthropic organisations, the large collective blood donors frequent the National Blood Centre, which largely supports the public hospitals including the Yangon General Hospital.

The National Blood Centre is located at No. 97, corner of Bogoyoke Aung San Road and Shwedagon Pagoda Road, Latha Township, downtown Yangon.

For more information about donating blood, dial 01372753 of the National Blood Centre.

According to medical professionals, all healthy individuals between the ages of 18 to 60 are encouraged to donate blood.

Blood transfusions contribute to saving the lives of people, especially in emergency cases.—200
25-bed hospital in Myebon to double its capacity

THE Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Thar Aung, accompanied by officials from the office of the Amyotha Hluttaw and the township administrator, donated offertories to the monks from monasteries and Parratritta Sarhtantaik in Myebon Township, Rakhine State on Monday. The Amyotha Hluttaw deputy speaker then visited the 25-bed People’s Hospital, where he viewed patient rooms, delivery rooms and operation rooms. During a meeting with the medical staff, the deputy speaker called for construction of quality buildings using ministry-approved funds that would double the capacity of the hospital to 50 beds. The deputy speaker recounted his parliamentary experiences and replied to questions in meetings with the township administrator, township-level departmental officials, ward administrators and citizens at the town hall in the afternoon. The deputy speaker together with Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Sit Naing, the deputy commissioner, township administrators and the officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw office inspected the construction site of the 1,920-ft long Kyatassin Bridge Project that will link Minbya and Myebon Townships in Rakhine State. He was briefed about progress of the bridge by In-charge Deputy Director (Civil) U Thwin Naing. The deputy speaker called for timely completion of the project meeting the set standard, urging the officials concerned to compensate for the farmlands possessed by the farmers as soon as possible.—Myanmar News Agency

Foreign and local media leave for Maungtaw

MEDIA representatives including reporters from foreign media groups boarded a plane in Yangon for Maungtaw township in Rakhine State yesterday. The media trip conducted by Ministry of Information will allow journalists to report independently from 28 March to 1 April about the ground situation, border passing, commodity importing, the fishing industry, incidents of fire, resettlement, returnees who fled due to terrorism incidents and prevention of conspiracies for terrorist acts in Maungtaw township. The media representatives are from TV Asahi, the BBC, VOA, EPA, Nippon, Fuji TV, Central News Bureau, Frontier Myanmar, Myanmar News Agency, Myanmar Alin and Kyaemon, a total 18 journalists led by General Manager U Ye Naing from the News and Periodicals Enterprise. A media group visited Maungtaw previously in December 2016 for the first time since the October attacks on border outposts that killed nine policemen.—Myanmar News Agency

Union Chief Justice attends ASEAN Meeting

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Htin Htn Oo attended the fifth Council of the ASEAN Chief Justices’ (CACJ) Meeting held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 24 March 2017. Present at the meeting were the Chief Justices and their delegate to ASEAN. During the meeting they unanimously announced the “Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration”, which agreed to form a study group for the upcoming process and to establish the Secretariat of the CACJ. At the meeting, the chief justices discussed matters on implementing the Internet Portal of ASEAN Judiciary, cooper-ating the training for judges and judicial officers, studying the Court Technology and Case Management, convening the First ASEAN Family Judges Forum, and finding a way for facilitating the civil service process. The ASEAN Chief Justices’ Meeting has been held annually since 2013 and was renamed the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) and has been listed in Part 1 of Annex 2 of the ASEAN Charter as an entity associated with ASEAN. The Supreme Court of the Union will be engaging in judicial cooperation with the objectives of CACJ.—Myanmar News Agency

Peace possible, but only if we want it

>> FROM PAGE 1

to build the Federal Democratic Union, together. Please tell me openly as to which kinds of dif-
culties you have for signing the NCA and attending the 21st Cen-
tury Panglong Conference. I had never said I would fulfil all your needs. I cannot give you the
truth of the public. But I can give sol-
emn promises I will perform as much as I can, everything I can for you. Thus, all need to dis-
cuss openly in this discussion. “

Those present at the meet-
ing disclosed their concerns — armed conflicts between the Tammawd and the KIA, the in-
creasing amount of displaced people as a result, urgent needs for food and humanitarian aid,
amending the Constitution that will help to build a genuine fed-
eral union in accord with 1947
Panglong Agreement, an effect-
ive anti-drug campaign, the evil
effect of the armed conflicts, free-
dom of worship and eradication of religious discrimination, and the peace process as it concerns
the participation of Kachin peo-
ple. The State Counsellor gave
her advice about the concerns of the people.

Fighting between the KIA
and the Tatmadaw resumed in
June 2011 after a 17-year-old cease-fire collapsed. The ensu-
ing violence has resulted in the deaths of thousands and the dis-
placement of over 100,000 civil-
ians.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met sep-
arately with leaders of Kachin
societies, executive committee
members for officers, for peace,
and refugees at the Hsai-teo
Camp for displaced people, the
KBC Minvar Camp for displaced
people and Landau flood rescue

camp.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
boarded a plane in Nay Pyi Taw
for Mystikyina early yesterday
morning together with Union
Ministers Lt-General Kyaw Swe,
Lt-General Ye Aung, Dr Win
Myat Aye, Dr Tin Myo Win,
Deputy Minister U Min Thu and
responsible officials.

Afterward, the State Coun-
sellor held discussions with lead-
ers from Kachin social societies
at the Palm Springs Hotel in My-
stikyina and announced that there
were two reasons for her visit.

“For the first time, it is necessary to give assistance to those present at the camps for displaced people and another is matters for peace. Myanmar gained its independ-
ence nearly seven decades ago. The period is not a long period in terms of history. Due to many reasons, progress can be said to be little in the attempts for the peace in this 70 years period. Though our government has been in office for only one year, we have been continuously try-
ing to gain progress. Christianity or Buddhism is based on Metta, the loving kindness. It is said that there is no fear in love. In Buddhism, Metta can extinguish fire, which can cause anger.

Present at the meeting were dignitaries and leaders from Evangelist Church, Salawshaung of the Free National Christian or-
ganisation, U Longon Too Rau, Mystikyina Christian Council, Kachin Advisory Committee, Zawia tradition committee, Lho-
vo tradition committee, Bhamo
Tradition committee, literary de-
velopment literature and culture
committee (Namphatkar), PCG
(Peace Creation Group).

After the meeting, the State Counsellor and Kachin Societies’ leaders posed for documenta-
ry photos, followed by photos of State Counsellor and Daw
Maung Aung Khaunaw and Daw
Rwenaung, two women who had posed for pictures many years ago with the State Counsellor’s father, Bogyoke Aung San.—Myanmar News Agency
Mobile app-based ridesharing service coming to Yangon

Mark Angeles, senior expatriate editor, GNLM

GRAB, the ridehailing taxi service that is accessed by use of a mobile phone application, is coming to Yangon on 1 April. The company has already completed a trial run this month in Myanmar’s largest city. The Global New Light of Myanmar spoke to Cheryl Goh, Grab’s Group Vice President of Marketing, and asked her about the tech-focused service that is already serving seven countries in Southeast Asia.

- Grab is coming to Yangon on 1 April. What is your company doing differently from other alternative taxi services already here such as Hello Cabs or Oway Ride?

Grab will offer a more efficient taxi booking platform. Our strong machine learning and data analytics capabilities have enabled greater efficiency over time. We are using big data in a significant way to map real-time customer demand and alert available drivers to head to these locations. This helps drivers to improve their earnings and also improve passengers’ ride arrival times.

- We will continue to invest in technology to make the app experience more seamless — and more localised. Using Indonesia as an example, we’re improving our mapping, which is essential in a city like Jakarta where some street shops are not on the map — so regular maps often don’t work. Our mapping technology knows this and routes accordingly. By localising mapping, Grab can improve pickup times, recommend pickup and drop-off locations to passengers, and make it easy for passengers to search and select destination.

Our strategy is to create the best possible experience for drivers and passengers. We will focus on improving the quality of the vehicles, driver service and safety standards for taxis in Yangon. Grab has robust driver screening and training processes, including in-person verification and vehicle inspection, to ensure that taxis on the Grab platform are comfortable and well-maintained. For example, all our Grab drivers will offer air-conditioning in their taxis.

- Yangon has a severe traffic problem. Would the presence of Grab hurt or alleviate the traffic here?

As vehicle ownership grows and mass transit systems are still being developed, solving traffic congestion will require a long-term commitment — one that Grab is committed to. We wish to help solve the local transportation challenges in each city that we operate in and in Yangon, we are privileged to support the government’s plans to reform the public transport network, with a focus on taxis. We are heartened that the government is supportive of Grab’s plans to trial our taxi booking service in Yangon, and we will be actively collaborating with them.

By providing a more efficient taxi booking platform, Grab aims to make it easier for passengers to choose to book a taxi, rather than drive their own car or for taxi drivers to drive around looking for passengers — and reduce traffic congestion.

In addition, we aim to improve driver service and safety standards for taxis in Yangon, and enable taxi drivers to get more bookings and earn more with Grab. We are committed to work with the taxi industry and other transport stakeholders during our Grab beta trial, and work together to test and improve our taxi service to both drivers and passengers.

- Grab has already launched in Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. What have you learned from those experiences?

With Grab. We are committed to work with the taxi industry and other transport stakeholders during our Grab beta trial, and work together to test and improve our taxi service to both drivers and passengers.

- Is Grab similar to Uber or Lyft?

The concept is similar in that these are all companies in the ride-hailing space that offer on-demand transport services that can be booked via a mobile app. Lyft operates only in the US. However Grab is unique amongst other ride-hailing companies that provide transport services in Southeast Asia. We were founded to improve the safety standards and trust that consumers had in taxis. This remains one of our core missions and we’re proud that 8 in 10 women surveyed said they think it’s safer to take a taxi with Grab.

We also take a tailored approach to every city we operate in. Other companies tend to lump “Asia” into one bucket — and replicate their service wholesale in new cities — but the continent is incredibly large and vastly diverse. Grab has local teams in every country, who understand the unique set of complex challenges of their home country.

Staying true to taking a tailored approach, we continuously aim to collaborate and align with local public authorities and understand how we can best serve cities. We’ve seen great work being done in Manila with our collaboration with the World Bank to provide Grab GPS data to the OpenTraffic platform. Through this we’ve made it possible for city governments to be able to identify and address congested hotspots, improve traffic flow, and plan for better infrastructure.

Working together to develop strong and purposeful regulation is very much live and progressing between Grab and all governments, and that our services are being viewed as a long-term solution in improving public transport in Southeast Asian cities. Governments have appreciated the approach we take and that’s why we were the first to be legalised in the Philippines and are the exclusive legal rideshare in Vietnam. We are heartened that the government is supportive of Grab’s plans to trial our taxi booking service in Yangon, and we will be actively collaborating with them.
Performances in One-Year Period

Changes in one-year period of the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy

News feature: Khin Yadanar  
Photo: May Oo Moe (MEE)

During one-year period, extension and renovation of power plants, building upgraded power grid lines, implementing distribution of power with stable voltage & power-wastage-proof system and clearing away complicated service-wires were carried out, according to the Ministry.

Out of 10.87 million households in Myanmar, 3.69 million (34% of the national populace) consumed power in the financial year 2015-2016, while in 2016-2017 4.05 million (37.24% of the whole populace) consumed power.

At the present time hydro-power is mainly produced with generating power from natural gas. In implementing economical regenerative projects, the Ministry experienced challenges—existing environmental problems, taking time to construct power plants, difficulties to drive power plants depending power needs due to weather conditions, dropping capacity of existing plants in producing power by using natural gas, loss of finance from the State due to purchase power from private companies to distribute to the national populace, failure to implement to produce coal, the one that includes the Energymix that includes hydropower, coal, natural gas and renewable energy.

Increased natural gas consumption

U Pe Zin Tun, Union Minister explained, "The Ministry is performing the tasks of finding and drilling oil and natural gases at 27 plots in land, in co-operation with foreign companies. In one year period, 29 places were drilled and it was successful at 12 places. Previously, daily consumption from 120 cubic feet million to 200 cubic feet million rose up to daily consumption 233 million cubic feet. 30 million cubic feet for power generators and 3 million cubic feet for industrial sector, 33 million cubic feet were used more than ever. In transport sector as well, 143 public-used passenger bus lines were supplied with CNG."

Giving licenses

In the past, as regards import, storage and distribution of CNG, only two kinds of license were granted. But as of 2016 May, 5 kinds of license were granted after the process of scrutiny, in accord with the times. Until now, for import, storage and distribution of CNG, 19 private companies were given out license B, with 68 private companies given out license D for CNG tubes, 436 private companies given out license E, 532 in all given out temporary licenses.

Union Minister explained, "Temporary licenses are being given out to those who are running small-scale oil production, free of charge. 237 local oil producers were educated to apply for work permit license. In co-operation with respective Regions and States Cabinets, 156 temporary licenses had been granted."

Increasing amount of lubricant stations

Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise sold out its 261 state-owned lubricant stations to private companies. It is learnt that 256 private lubricant stations were given out license for distribution of lubricants, 2 private companies given out license for storage and distribution, 3 stations for selling to waterway vehicles and 11 enterprises for distributing lubricant stations.

Union Minister added that plans have been being made with US$ 300 million of World Bank, under the plan National Electrification Plan—NEP for 63% of the national populace who still needs electricity.

As the first step of five-year plan from 2015-2016 to 2019-2020, 626758 households of 5080 villages at 2 miles in diameter far away 11 KV gridline will be supplied with power, it is learnt.

At the step 1 of the local development project on poverty alleviation, availability of electrical power in Shan states is being carried out with the loan of Japanese Yen 4.571 billion from JICA. The availability of power for 33863 family members from 406 villages of Loilem and Langkho districts, Shan State (south) is underway with the aid of Euro 30 to 100000 from the government of Germany.

15% increase per year

Annual need for power consumption of the country is increasing from 15% to 17% annually. So, in order to be able to distribute electrical power it needs to implement the Energymix that includes hydropower, coal, natural gas and renewable energy, getting more power than ever

In the sector of generating power, more 301 mega watt of electricity were generated for the betterment of power system, 538.57 miles of 230 KV & 66 KV gridlines were extended with 18 transmitters built. For power distribution to improve, 504.14 miles of 33 KV, 11 KV & 400 Volts gridlines, were extended with 18 transmitters of 66 KV, 428 transmitters of 33 KV & 11 KV built. This resulted in the availability of power in 10 towns and 333 villages during one-year period, more than before, said U Pe Zin Tun, Union Minister.

Out of 10.87 million households in Myanmar, 3.69 million (34% of the national populace) consumed power in the financial year 2015-2016, while in 2016-2017 4.05 million (37.24% of the whole populace) consumed power.

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PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

Decreasing productivity
With the age-old production of inland and off-shore petroleum and natural gases for the sectors of industry, electricity, transport and agriculture of the State, decreasing rate of the plots and declining global oil prices led to the decrease of income over oil and natural gases. The country which wholly relies upon it, has been discussing for solutions of expansion of projects and drilling new oil wells.

Careless use of electricity
Due to careless uses of electricity from March 2016 until now, 89 fires broke out across the nation, losing K 10.34 million, claiming 203 lives, and 84 were injured. Despite the fact that talks and delivering leaflets on the knowledge of fire-outbreak were made, it is still a challenge to lay special stress on sharing knowledge on fire.

Finance
Ministry of Electric Power and Energy has to spend the budget under the category of normal expenditure and the category of capital expenditure. The former one includes paying charges for power, paying charges for natural gas needed for driving generators, wages and salaries for staff whereas the latter includes expenditures for investing to build generators, transformers and gridlines. The power plants which are generating power in the country are Independent Private Partnership—IPP.

In the financial year 2016-2017, IPP increased the production of power up to 48.9%. Purchase price for power one unit for the IPP—GT factory is 151.01 kyats, 66.74 kyats for hydro-power plant and 154.05 kyats for solar plant, Union Minister explained.

Over one unit power use
The Ministry of Electric Power and Energy at present, sells at 69.17 kyats per unit against its production cost of 89.39 kyats per unit, losing 20.22 kyats per unit, it is learnt. And it was said that K 333 billion which is the potential loss for the financial year 2017-2018 and expenditures for the cost of Gas for generating power has been paid from the normal expenditures of the budget.

Summer season and electricity
It is expected that there will be potential maximum need of power consumption for the summer—3100 mega watt. Actual power production is only 2856 mega watt, so needing 244 mega watt of power.

To fulfill the need of power, if we generate power with modernized machines by using natural gas that comes from Yadana Oil Well, 4 mega watt of power can be obtained from one million cubic feet, while EGAT machines can produce 2 mega watt only.

For power to be sufficient for coming summer, 30 million cubic feet of natural gas from Yadana Oil Well will be used for more production of 65 mega watt.

Reducing power consumption
In the day-time, the busiest hours of power consumption, making factories and mills stop their operations, reducing the production in state and privately-owned steels and melting factories, stopping water pumping from rivers can save 100 mega watt of power. By lighting alternate lamp-posts in such cities as Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay, 20 mega watt of power can be saved.

If we do not want to reduce power consumption in Regions and States, Tigyit coal power plant which can produce 60 mega watts must be operated. Failing that, regions and states must reduce power consumption in April, May and June to save 60 mega watts, it is learnt.

Union Minister said, “Increasing rate of power need for the country is 15% to 17%. To fulfill this need, matters relating to the building of more power plants, saving power consumption, to reduce wastage of power, substituting high-quality gridlines, changing digital electric meters, cutting trees and branches that obstruct gridlines and illegal connection to gridlines for dubious uses are underway.”

Multi-power sources
Natural resources for producing electricity in Myanmar are mainly based on hydro-power and natural resources. According to the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy, it is necessary to take part in launching Energy-mix power plant that adjust water resources, natural gas, clean coal and renewable resources for power production, likewise neighboring countries.

U Pe Zin Tun, Union Minister for Electric Power and Energy said, “There have been many performances for the development of electricity and energy sectors in one-year-period. But I did not hope for people’s complete satisfaction over it. As for us who are serving people, we will perform our duties to the best of our calibre in our respective sectors.”
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In respect of “Dried and cooked fruits and vegetables, jellies, jams, milk and milk product, milk derivatives product” in International Class 29.
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Daw Hoo Hoo, H.G.P
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Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
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DATED 29 March 2017

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Fraudulent or unauthorised use or actual or colourable imitation of the said Mark shall be dealt with according to law.

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Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
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DATEd 29 March 2017
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Rising number of deregistered buses causes slip price to drop

THE price for a registration slip plunged by over Ks11.8million because of the rising number of deregistered buses, according to automobile market sources.

Slips for used family cars are being issued as city Dyna trucks and mini-buses made before 1995 model are deregistered as clunkers. The number of deregistrations for buses has risen and the number of importers has decreased from a cool auto market, resulting in little demand for slips, which has made the price drop.

Previously, a slip fetched up to Ks11.8million. The prevailing price of a slip is now around Ks10.7million. Over 2,400 buses were allowed to deregister by the Road Transportation Administration Department and over 1,100 vehicles have already done so, it is learnt.

Additionally, the news of an advanced income tax on cars with slips at the automobile market further cooled down the price, said car dealers.

Nevertheless, the car importers hope that the market might raise its head again after Thingyan Festi-

val.—Ko Khant

Domestic gold price hits record high of Ks905,500 per tical

WITH the global gold price rising, the domestic gold price reached a new all-time high of Ks905,500 per tical on 27th March, according to gold and jeweller shops.

The global gold price remained on the rise from 22nd to 27th March. The domestic gold price showed a decrease under Ks900,000 per tical in early March. The price dropped down to around Ks880,000 per tical on 10th March and has slightly risen since.

The domestic gold price broke a record high in December with the increase in global gold price, according to the gold market.

Starting from 1st April, a one per cent tax will be levied on the purchase of gold products, while a five per cent tax will be imposed on buyers of gold bars, it is learnt.—Mon Mon

Value of normal trade with foreign partners up by over US$460m

THE value of trade through sea routes with foreign countries was up by over US$460,127 million as of 17th March this fiscal year when compared to that of last year, according to official statistics provided by the Commerce Ministry.


In the similar period, border trade also showed an increase of over US$110million. Therefore, the external trade from 1st April to 17th March hit US$ 27,026,827million which increased by US$ 572,544million when compared to that of the similar period of last year.

Border trade has not performed as well as normal trade, as the export value of the Muse border camp, which has the largest trade volume out of all 16 border trade camps, drastically declined compared to last year because of the enforcement of inspection and confiscation of rice, sugar and maize by China government.—Ko Khant

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV MCC HALONG VOY. NO ()
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC HALONG VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M&S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO ()
Consignees of cargo carried on MV SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M&S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

Global New Light of Myanmar
Different Levels of the Sangha Organizations of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Ba Sein (Religious)

According to the historical records of Buddhism, the Sangha of ALL Orders in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was first held in 1980. The Six Buddhist Synods were consecrated in the noblest tradition of the Buddha over 2560 years ago. In fact, all the members of the Sangha of ALL Orders in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar were approved and authenticated by the Central Working Committee of the Sangha of the sixty-six members of the Sangha throughout the country and supported by the previous Government of the Union of Myanmar.

Firstly, the Central Working Committee of the Sangha in charge of the Sangha throughout the country was formed to make necessary arrangements and requirements for successfully holding the First Congregation of the Sangha of ALL Orders of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The six-six members of the Central Working Committee of the Sangha actively and effectively carried out the noble task of holding the First Congregation of the Sangha of ALL Orders. The sixty-six members of the Central Working Committee of the Sangha toasted the whole country, and discussions and suggestions were made among the members of the Sangha of the respective regions to prepare and draw the drafts relating to the principles, rules, and regulations for holding the First Congregation of the Sangha of ALL Orders of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. And so, the Buddhist People and the previous Government of the Sangha of ALL Orders in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar tried again to hold the First Congregation of the Sangha of ALL Orders in 1980 for purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana, and to get the unity of the Sangha of ALL Orders in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

In order to be able to hold the First Congregation of the Sangha of ALL Orders for purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana, the sixty-six members of the Sangha of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar were attended by 1500 representatives of the Sangha throughout the country and supported by the previous Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

According to the resolution of the First Congregation of the Sangha of ALL Orders for purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar which was attended by 1500 representatives of the Sangha throughout the country and supported by the previous Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the First Congregation of the Sangha of ALL Orders was successfully held in 1980.
Denmark- Myanmar sustainable coastal fisheries project workshop held

DENMARK-Myanmar sustainable coastal fisheries project workshop was held at Horizon Lake View Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on Tuesday. The workshop was jointly held by Denmark and Myanmar ministry of agriculture, livestock and irrigation.

At the workshop, Dr. Aung Thu, Union minister for agriculture, livestock and irrigation, said that the fishery sector is one of the main business sectors for locals.

“We need to discuss the management of the coastal fisheries”, Dr. Aung Thu said. “For the development of the fisheries sector, we need to adopt policies for social development of fishermen and organisations. “The government, private businesses, expert fishermen and public need to co-operate in abundance by the rules and regulations in fishing and protect the reproduction habit of fish for sustainable development of the water and land resources as well as use the legal correct, fishing ways,” Mr. Peter Kysholt Hansen, ambassador of Denmark, explained that the aims and objectives, as well as the results were achieved in the implementation of the project. He also discussed the management of the coastal fishing sector, collaboration with the organisations and other conditions concerning the project.— Myanmar News Agency

Different Levels of the Sangha Organizations....

>> FROM PAGE 8

The disputes and misunderstanding arising among members of the Sangha of different sects and schools are solved and settled by respective Sangha Courts only not by any civil courts.

The different levels of the Sangha Organizations representing the whole members of the Sangha in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar are actively and effectively implementing the Sasana affairs which lead to the purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana throughout the world.

Sangha Organizations of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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<th>Organization Chart</th>
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<td>Ward / Village-tract Committee of Sangha (19,993 members)</td>
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Myanmar hosts 11th Asian Men’s U-19 Volleyball Tournament

MYANMAR hosted the 11th Asian Men’s U-19 Volleyball Championship at Wunna Theikdi indoor stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with the opening ceremony at 10:30am. Dr Myint Hmwe, Minister for Health and Sports, visited the tournament’s opening ceremony and Myanmar Volleyball Federation Chairman U Tun Myint Naing explained the competition.

The Union Minister for Health and Sports greeted and presented certificates of honour to the competitors from Australasia, Korea, Bangladesh, Iran, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, China (Taipei), Hong Kong and Myanmar.

The opening match in the event featured Myanmar vs Hong Kong, in which Myanmar defeated Hong Kong 3-0.

A news conference by the 11th Asian Men’s U-19 Volleyball Championship was held at 1:30 pm at Wunna Theikdi Indoor stadium. Vice chairman of the Myanmar Volleyball Federation (MVF) U Thein Win, technical advisor of MVF U Tin Maung Aye and officials from the Asian Volleyball Confederation explained the aims of the Asian Men’s U-19 Volleyball Championship to reporters.

“This is the third time Myanmar has hosted an international volleyball tournament, and the MVF has also continuously hosted Asian-level competitions” U Thein Win said.

“We have held townships-level, district-level, regional and state-level volleyball tournaments as well as Ministry-level volleyball tournaments to produce a new generation of qualified volleyball players. We held similar competitions in Ngwe Saung, Inle and Pyinmana,” officials said at the press conference.

The event began yesterday and will continue until 5 April at Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The 11th Asian Men Under-19 volleyball championship tourney is an important event for the World U-19 Men’s U-19 Volleyball Championship, which will be held in Bahrain in August. —Thura Zaw (MNA)
Russia to launch R&D on new ground forces’ air defence system

IZHEVSK — Russia will carry out R&D work codenamed Arbalet in 2021-2025 to develop a new surface-to-air short-range missile system, Air Defence Force Deputy Commander-Lieutenant-General Alexander Leonov said on Friday.

“One of R&D efforts will be focused on developing short-range air defence system with the expanded capabilities of detecting and hitting advanced air targets, weapons, including drones and precision weaponry attacking elements,” the commander said.

“This work is planned to be carried out in 2021-2025,” Leonov said.

As Russian Army Commander-in-Chief Oleg Salyukov said, a promising short-range anti-aircraft missile system is expected to start arriving for the Army by 2030-2035.

Four militants killed as Bangladesh troops storm hideout

DHAKA — Bangladesh army commandos have killed four Islamist militants in the northeastern city of Sylhet during a raid on a building where they were holed up amid local residents, a senior army official said on Monday.

The commandos surrounded the five-storey building on Thursday evening but had to evacuate its 78 residents before they could begin their operation on Saturday to flush out the militants, he told reporters.

The militants had a large arms store in the building so the operation was still going on, he added.

“We are about to end the operation and now we confirm that so far four militants were killed, including a female militant,” said Brigadier-General Fakhrul Ahsan.

“We have to carry out our remaining operation very carefully to avoid any risk,” he added.

Ahsan said two of the four bodies found in the building were wearing suicide vests and surrounded by dangerous explosives.

The commandos had stormed the hideout, which belonged to a domestic Islamist group that has pledged allegiance to Islamic State, because the group was blamed for a cafe attack in July 2016 in which 22 people were killed, most of them foreigners.

On Saturday, six people, including two police officers, were killed and over 40 were wounded — including about a dozen police — in two bomb blasts near the militant hideout in the Sylhet building.

Islamic State has claimed responsibility “for a bombing on Bangladeshi forces in Sylhet”, the SITE monitoring service said, citing a report on the militant group’s news agency Amaq that appeared to refer to that incident.

The explosions came a day after a suicide bomber blew himself up at a security checkpoint near the country’s main international airport in Dhaka, in an attack claimed by Islamic State.

Islamic State and al-Qaeda have competing claims over killings of foreigners, liberals and members of religious minorities in Bangladesh, a mostly Muslim country of 160 million people.

The government has consistently ruled out the presence of such groups, blaming domestic militants instead.

US attorney general says sanctuary cities may lose federal grants

WASHINGTON — US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said on Monday that cities and states that protect immigrant felons from federal immigration laws may lose grants from the Justice Department.

“Failure to deport aliens who are convicted of criminal offenses puts whole communities at risk, especially immigrant communities in the very sanctuary jurisdictions that seek to protect the perpetrators,” Sessions told a White House news briefing.

His statement drew swift pushback from New York state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who said his office would continue helping local governments “have the tools they need to protect their immigrant communities.”

Sessions said the Justice Department would withhold, and potentially block cash, grants to so-called sanctuary cities and other localities, such as counties, that are not in compliance with federal immigration law.

Sessions, who heads the Justice Department, said one of his agency’s offices was expecting to award more than $4.1 billion in grants this fiscal year.

Sanctuary cities help illegal immigrants avoid deportation by limiting cooperation with federal immigration authorities and other agencies.

“Strongly urge our nation’s states and cities and counties to consider carefully the harm they are doing to their citizens by refusing to enforce our immigration laws and to rethink these policies,” Sessions said.

He gave as an example Kate Steinle, who was shot to death in San Francisco two years ago by illegal immigrant Francisco Sanchez, who had already been deported five times and had seven felony convictions.

The city had earlier released Sanchez from custody even though immigration authorities had filed a request that he be kept in custody until they could pick him up for removal, Sessions said.

In his response to Sessions, Schneiderman, a Democrat, called the Republican president’s immigration policies “un-American.”

“Despite what Attorney General Sessions implied this afternoon, states and local governments and law enforcement have broad authority under the Constitution not to participate in federal immigration enforcement,” Schneiderman said in a statement.

“As my office’s legal guidance makes clear, President Trump lacks the constitutional authority to broadly cut off funding to states and cities just because they have lawfully acted to protect immigrants.”

Schneiderman said that public safety depends on trust between law enforcement and those they serve, but that Trump’s policies “only serve to undercut that trust.”

Last week, Maryland’s Democratic-controlled House of Delegates approved legislation to bar police statewide from checking the immigration status of individuals they arrest or from keeping them locked up longer than otherwise warranted at the request of federal agents seeking to deport them. The state’s Republican governor, Larry Hogan, has said he would veto the bill if it came to his desk.

The Maryland measure was in line with dozens of municipalities and local jurisdictions across the country that have declared themselves sanctuary cities, including New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Seattle and Washington.

So far no such state-wide designations have been enacted. President Donald Trump in January signed an executive order seeking to withhold federal funds from local governments that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

Chin State sees rosy picture for development

Maung Chin Swe

Chin State is located in western Myanmar. The 36,019-square-kilometre (13,907 sq mi) Chin State is bordered by Kakhine State in the south, Bangladesh in the south-west, Sagaing Region and Magway Region in the east, the Indian state of Manipur in the north and the Indian state of Mizoram in the west.

Chin State is composed of nine townships namely Kampalat, Mindat, Palatwa, Matupi, Hakka, Falam, Tiddim, Tonzang and Htantalan townships.

Currently, bridges are under construction along the road linking the southern and northern parts of Chin State and on completion of the bridges, the transportation between the northern and southern parts of the Chin State would be smoothed.

National-level political dialogue

National-level political dialogue started on 27th February, 2017 and came to an end successfully on 1st March, 2017, in Htantalan, Chin State.

Following Mindat has been connected with the national grid, Chin State Government is currently carrying out measures to link Palatwa, Matupi and Kampalat with the grid.

As transportation is the most important for local development, Chin State Government is working to improve the condition of the transportation sector in order to bring about the rapid commodity flow and also assist in local development.

“Chin State Government is mainly focusing on road infrastructure in the first one-year period. Currently, we are building a road which will cut the travel time to 12 hours for the more than 500 miles distance between the southernmost and northernmost parts of Chin State,” said Chin State Chief Minister Salai Lian Luai.

Bwenue Bridge, which is 400 ft long, between Narrain and Biza wa and Miyite bridge are under construction. Further five bridges are also being constructed.

Plans are underway to open a border market in Kyikha Township while Natzan bridge is under construction between Tunza n and Kyikha, said the Chief Minister.

Airport, jetty projects in Chin State

The state is a mountainous region with few transportation links. Chin State is sparsely populated and remains one of the least developed areas of the country. It can be accessed only by road. The state experienced the shortage of food in the past. Therefore, the Chin State Government is working to build an international airport in northern Chin State and to build a jetty in the southern part.

The new government has set its target of creating job opportunities and reducing the poverty in the state since it took office one year ago. It also laid down plans for development of agriculture and livestock farming, upgrading basic infrastructures, development of small and medium enterprises and human resources, environmental conservation and transportation.

“Currently, we are stepping up our efforts to complete the airport construction in Falam as soon as possible,” said the Chin State Chief Minister.

A jetty in Plataw have been completed and it will handle ships for transportation between the Chin State and other areas by water way.

“The transportation facilities will ensure boosting trade and economy of Chin State,” said the Chief Minister.

Town Plan

Chin State Government drew the town plan which includes development of three towns: Haka, Falam and Palatwa and have been carrying out for establishing new towns and housings in the three towns currently.

Conservation of State bird and trees

All the people in Chin State are obliged as a national duty to conserve Chin State’s hornbills and the Taungzalat trees so they will not become extinct.

The population of the great hornbill (Buceros bicornis) also known as the great Indian hornbill or great pied hornbill, is declining in Chin State, according to environmental conservationists.

Meanwhile, “Lu” and “Sap” rice, indigenous species of rice are also facing extinction in the state.

Natural parks would be established in the mountains to attract tourists who want to see unspoiled environment in Chin State.

“Natural parks would eventually become tourist spots. We have already joined hands with the Myanmar National League for Democracy (MNDP) for implementing ecotourism in Chin State with establishment of hotels and tourism services,” said Chief Minister of Chin State.

Eleven hotels will be established in six townships in Chin State next fiscal year.

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PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

Water supply project in Chin State

Water supply facilities in Chin State were totally destroyed by torrential rain in 2015 and the new government allocated K8 billion to construction of water supply facilities. Upon completion of the project, water shortage being faced by Falam would be overcome.

Visible reduction

The Chin Region Government is working with the aim of visible reduction of poverty and sufficient support of basic necessities in the region by the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

The Region Government is working the development of agriculture suitable for the region, improvement of basic infrastructure, development of small and medium enterprises, development of human resources, and conservation of the natural environment in mind.

Aim and Objectives

The Chin State Government aims to develop highland farming and production of organic crops, development of livestock breeding, development of inner state roads and inner state roads connecting with other regions, boosting development of small and medium enterprises, supplying adequate electricity to the region, boosting tourism, uplifting city development efforts, boosting the potential of human resources, elevating education, health and other sectors, reducing poverty and unemployment and increasing job opportunities, increasing investment and trade within the region and the border, and encouraging research into Chin State’s socio-economic development.

Students from Haka, Falam, Htantalan are now able to study academic disciplines in the arts and sciences. Haka Education College is under construction and is expected to be opened in the 2017-2018 academic Year.

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Vocational business

Chin State Government is providing assistance to the small and medium enterprises in the state to put the state on the road to development.

Weaving industries including traditional weaving businesses in Haka, Falam and Mindat in Chin State are producing clothing.

“We should focus on booming of silk clothing production and traditional clothing production in order to create more job opportunities in Chin State, said the Chin State Chief Minister.

Haka College, a point of pride for Chin State

With an attendance of Vice-President U Myint Swe, Haka College was opened on 8th November, 2016 to help students in Chin State achieve higher learning in their home state.

Thanks to the college, students from Chin State are no longer need to go to Kalay, Pakokku and Sagaing to earn a university degree. At present, the emergence of Haka college will help them to study with ease and convenience.

Meanwhile teachers and students in Chin state are obliged to perform their respective duties of strengthening sustainable human resources and creating the educational environment with updated knowledge and vision.

Students from Haka, Falam, Htantalan are now able to study academic disciplines in the arts and sciences.

Haka Education College is under construction and is expected to be opened in the 2017-2018 academic Year.

Falam Agriculture Institute was opened by Vice-President U Henry Van Thio and Haka Technical University is under construction. Plans are underway to establish colleges in Mindat and Matupi.
China, Philippines to hold talks on maritime issues in May

BEIJING — China and the Philippines will hold the first meeting of a bilateral consultation mechanism on the South China Sea issue in May, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said on Tuesday.

“Currently, the two sides are maintaining friendly negotiations on the issue,” Hua said at a regular press conference.

During the 20th diplomatic consultation between the two countries in January, China and the Philippines agreed to set up a bilateral consultation mechanism on the South China Sea issue to discuss issues of common concern and foster maritime cooperation and security.

China is willing to strengthen dialogue with the Philippines to properly manage and control divergences and advance maritime cooperation to create a favourable atmosphere for pragmatic cooperation as well as the sound and stable development of ties, said Hua.

She said China has invited the delegation of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to visit China at an early date.

At the founding conference of the Joint Coast Guard Committee on Maritime Cooperation in February, the two sides drew up a list of cooperative programs in 2017, including high-level visits, vessel visits, maritime operations and related exercises and capacity building, said Hua. She said the cooperation between the coast guards will deepen mutual trust and friendship between the two sides, so as to inject new vitality into the development of ties. — Xinhua

Thailand sends ousted PM Thaksin $494 million tax bill

BANGKOK — Thai tax authorities have sent ousted former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra a whopping 17 billion baht ($494 million) tax bill over the sale of shares in a telecoms company more than a decade ago, his lawyer said on Tuesday.

The claim is over the sale of shares in Shin Corp to Singapore’s Temasek Holdings [TEM.UL].

Thaksin’s legal team would appeal to the revenue department within 30 days, his lawyer, Noppadon Patama, told reporters.

“We need to exercise our right to appeal to show that no legal miracle can happen to collect tax from Dr Thaksin,” he said. Allies of Thaksin say the new tax claim is politically motivated. He has lived in exile since being overthrown in 2006 to avoid corruption charges, but his populist movement remains at the heart of political division in Thailand. Defense Minister Prawit Wongsuwan told reporters the tax claim was not aimed at bullying the Shinawatras. A court ruled against an attempt by tax authorities to claim 12 billion baht ($350 million) from the share sale from Thaksin’s children in 2010. Noppadon said the court said they could not be taxed because the shares were owned by Thaksin and his wife, he said.

Noppadon said that the sale of the shares was tax exempt because it was done through the stock exchange.

The army overthrew the government led by Thaksin’s sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, in 2014 in the name of ending political turmoil. Last month, the junta started reconciliation hearings with political parties ahead of elections that could happen as early as next year, but those talks do not touch on Thaksin’s fate. — Reuters

Cambodia bans breast milk exports

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia on Tuesday banned the export of breast milk, putting a stop to the business of a US-based company that had been selling milk, putting a stop to the exportation of milk from more than 90 Cambodian women for more than two years.

The decision was welcomed by United Nations child agency UNICEF, worried at a decline in breast-feeding in Cambodia.

Cambodia is one of the most poor and difficult countries in the world, which means “gratitude of mothers”, had been exporting milk from more than 90 Cambodian women for more than two years. The purchase and export of breast milk must stop immediately, Ngor Hong Ly, a Secretary of State at the Council of Ministers, said in an order on Tuesday.

“Despite how poor and difficult Cambodia is, it’s not at a level where we sell breast milk,” Ngor Hong Ly wrote. Ambrosia did not respond to a Reuters request for comment.

On its Facebook page, the company said it put the safety and well-being of donors and customers before everything. “We work hard to set, and monitor, guidelines to ensure that we are not taking milk out of the infants’ mouths,” it added.

The post said the company would not accept donations from mothers of infants younger than six months, and that donors should pump milk no more than twice a day. — Reuters
Gay men in my life helped me become a woman, says Lady Gaga

LONDON — Pop star Lady Gaga says she feels blessed to be surrounded by powerful gay men in her life who have helped her become a woman.

Speaking on “RuPaul’s Drag Race”, the 30-year-old songstress, who is a vocal supporter of LGBTQ rights, praises the community for being a source of inspiration for her, reported FemaleFirst.

“I have always been surrounded by incredibly intelligent, powerful gay men who have lifted me up through lots of changes in my life. Becoming famous was very strange and it’s the gay men in my life that helped me become a woman.

“And I don’t know that a lot of people would understand that but it’s because of what you’ve (been) through - you survived so much that you inspire me to continue surviving,” says Gaga.

—PTI

Drake ends Sheeran’s Billboard 200 reign, smashes streaming record

NEW YORK — Drake ended Ed Sheeran’s two week reign atop the Billboard 200 album chart on Monday, selling a monster 505,000 copies of his new album “More Life,” according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

The Canadian rapper, the world’s best-selling artist of 2016, took the No. 1 spot, setting a new streaming record and bringing home the biggest US sales week for any album since his 2016 release “Views.”

Nielsen said 257,000 units were earned from streaming, beating Drake’s previous record-setting 163,000 streaming units for “Views.”

The Billboard 200 album chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

Drake’s new release pushed British singer-songwriter Sheeran’s “Divide” into second place on the Billboard 200 with some 118,000 units sold.

Rapper Rick Ross landed in the No.3 spot with his new album “Rather You Than Me.”

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Kanye West and his wife Kim Kardashian enjoyed a date night at a posh restaurant here. The couple wined and dined for over three hours and spent some quality time inside a private room, reported E! Online.

Kardashian donned an off-the-shoulder beige sweater and a pair of snakeskin-patterned stiletto boots, while her husband opted for a casual look in a white hooded sweatshirt paired with a long black trench coat.

“Kim and Kanye were seated in a private room with several other tables, but the room was reserved just for the two of them,” a source said, before adding, “they sat on the same side of the table and talked very quietly.”

—PTI

Kim Kardashian and Kanye West. PHOTO: REUTERS

Selena Gomez surprises high school students

LOS ANGELES — Selena Gomez gave a sweet surprise to the girl students when she made an appearance at Step Up.

The 24-year-old singer has recently entered into a partnership with the hi-end brand Coach which also includes taking part at Step Up, an organisation that supports girls in underprivileged communities to pursue an education.

Gomez took to Instagram where she shared her experience of meeting her excited fans in person.

“@instagram is celebrating world kindness day and I got to spend it with people who fully will change our world one day.

“@coach introduced me to @stepupwomensnetwork which is an after school organisation that encourages girls to believe that they have the capability to do anything they set their mind to. It’s crazy to me how much they are willing put others before themselves,” wrote Gomez. According to Harper’s Bazaar, the “I’m Aint Me” singer helped them make a few crafts and even gifted them bags.

—PTI
Gold coin worth $4 million stolen from Berlin museum

BERLIN — A Canadian gold coin named “Big Maple Leaf” which bears the image of Queen Elizabeth II was stolen in the early hours of Monday morning from Berlin’s Bode Museum.

The coin is made out of pure gold, weighs about 100 kilos and has a face value of around $1 million (794,344.27 pounds).

“The coin was stolen last night, it’s gone,” museum spokesman Markus Farr said.

Given the high purity of the gold used in the coin, its material value is estimated to be $4 million.

The museum said on its website that the coin was issued by the Canadian Mint in 2007 and that its material value is estimated to be $4 million.

It was featured in the Guinness Book of Records for its “unmatched” degree of purity.

The coin, with a diameter of 53 centimetres and 3 centimetres thick, was loaned to the Bode Museum in December 2010.

Police said it was probably stolen by a group of thieves who entered the museum undetected through a window, possibly with the help of a ladder.

“How did they do it?” asked Wenzel, who believes that the thief, maybe thieves, broke open a window in the back of the museum next to the railway tracks,” police spokesman Winfrid Wenzel said.

“They then managed to enter the building and went to the coin exhibition.”

“The coin was secured with bullet-proof glass inside the building. That much I can say,” Wenzel added.

“Neither I nor the Bode Museum can go into detail regarding personnel inside the building, the alarm system or security installations.”

The Bode Museum has one of the world’s largest coin collections with more than 540,000 items.

San Francisco — A bystander who touched off a social media furor after she saw United Airlines stop two teenage girls dressed in leggings from boarding a flight admitted on Monday that she did not fully grasp the situation when she started tweeting her indignation.

The girls, who were flying standby on Sunday from Denver to Minneapolis using free passes for employees or family members, were told by a gate attendant that they could not get on the plane while wearing the form-fitting pants.

Passengers using the passes are considered airline representatives, United Air Lines Inc (UALN) spokesman Jonathan Guerin said, subject to a dress code that prohibits sleep or swimwear, torn clothing and revealing attire.

The girls were fine with the policy, Guerin says, but a traveller named Shannon Watts overheard the exchange and took offence.

Watts was further incensed when another woman who was listening told her 10-year-old daughter to put a dress on over her leggings, apparently thinking United’s policy applied to all passengers, not just those flying free.

Her subsequent tweet storm, which accused the airline of “policing women’s clothing,” quickly went viral, with celebrities such as model Chris Teigen and actors Seth Rogen and Patricia Arquette decrying United’s stance.

After the incident, United’s mentions on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram exploded from its average 2,000 daily mentions to 174,000, nearly 70 per cent of them negative, said Kellan Terry, a spokesperson for the social media analysis firm Brandwatch.

Watts, in a phone interview on Monday, conceded that she did not initially realize that the girls were using passes that entailed following a dress code.

Regardless, she said, the policy is wrong-headed.

“I don’t get why that’s the issue here,” she said. “A dress code still shouldn’t be gendered and sexist. To be clear, this was happening very publicly right here in the gate.”

American Airlines Group Inc (AAL) has a policy on free passes that is similar to United’s, but Delta Air Lines Inc (DAL) defers to travellers’ “best judgment” about their clothing.

United may have limited any damage to its image if it reacted more quickly to the tweets and explained its policy on the free passes, Terry said.

“Once the fire starts, it’s all about containing that fire,” he said.

Guerin conceded that the airline could have done a better job of getting the facts out early.

“But our response following that, once we did have all of the facts, I think we reacted the right way with this,” he said.

—Reuters
Peerless Federer rolls on with win over del Potro

MIAMI — Roger Federer produced another dazzling performance on Monday, easing past Juan Martin del Potro in the third round at the Miami Open.

Federer wowed a boisterous, capacity crowd at Crandon Park, winning 6-3, 6-4 in just over 80 minutes of nearly flawless tennis.

Former US Open champion del Potro, buoyed by a large Argentine contingent who did their best to lift him with regular chants of ‘ole, ole, ole’, did not submit easily but one break in each set was enough for Federer to move on to the fourth round.

Federer improved his career record against del Potro to 16-5, the Swiss closing out the match in style with a forehand winner before acknowledging the roaring crowd.

The 35-year-old, who missed the second half of 2016 with a knee injury, has lost only once this year, to Russian Evgeny Donskoy in early February.

An 18th grand slam crown in a five-set thriller over long-time rival Rafael Nadal at the Australian Open in January has been the highlight of the still young season, but the past two weeks in the United States have been second to none.

He ripped through the field at Indian Wells without dropping a set en route to the title, and has not lost a set in his first two matches in Miami either. Federer is giving his opponents less time than ever to react, running them ragged by regularly standing inside the baseline and taking the ball early.

Next up for Federer is Spanish 14th seed Roberto Bautista Agut, who overcame a slow start to outlast American 22nd seed Sam Querrey 3-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Czech 10th seed Tomas Berdych beat 24th seed Gilles Muller of Luxembourg 6-3, 6-4, while Adrian Mannarino of France edged Croatian Borna Coric 6-4, 2-6, 7-6(3).— Reuters

Man City fined 35,000 pounds for failing to control players

LONDON — Manchester City have been fined 35,000 pounds ($44,030) by the English FA after they accepted a misconduct charge for the way their players reacted to a 50th minute penalty in the 1-1 Premier League draw with Liverpool on 20 March.

City were charged by the FA last week after their players surrounded referee Michael Oliver who had awarded Liverpool a spot kick following a foul by Gael Clichy on Roberto Firmino.

Former City player James Milner converted the penalty after Clichy, who had raised his boot on Firmino, and David Silva were booked. Some City players continued to remonstrate afterwards. City equalised 18 minutes later through Sergio Aguero.

“Following an Independent Regulatory Commission hearing today (Monday 27 March 2017), Manchester City have been fined 35,000 pounds after the club admitted an FA misconduct charge,” the governing body said in a statement.

“City breached FA Rule E20(a) in that in or around the 50th minute of the game against Liverpool on 19 March 2017, the club failed to ensure that its players, conducted themselves in an orderly fashion.”

City, who are third in the table, travel to sixth-placed Arsenal on Sunday.— Reuters

Venus all smiles after straight sets win

MIAMI — Venus Williams had every reason to smile on Monday as she defeated Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 7-6(4) to advance to the quarter-finals at the Miami Open.

Williams, who will next play Angelique Kerber after the top seed crushed by Japanese qualifier Risa Ozaki 6-2, 6-2, is a three-time champion in Miami and first played in the tournament as a 16-year-old.

“I was still in braces, it’s been a long time,” she said in a post-match interview.

The 36-year-old delivered exquisite shot-making during a rally on match point to eliminate the twice major champion Kuznetsova.

Her next opponent Kerber was barely tested in her 62-minute match, feasting off her opponents’ serve, while second seed Karolina Pliskova also reached the quarter-finals as she beat 15th-seeded Czech compatriot Barbora Strycova 6-1, 6-4.

Pliskova cruised through the first set in 22 minutes and looked ready to wrap up a quick victory when she went ahead 5-2 in the second but Strycova found life late in the match breaking Pliskova then holding at love. Pliskova recovered to take the final game.

French Open champion Garbine Muguruza retired from her match with Caroline Wozniacki after dropping the first set. The sixth seed took a medical timeout after dropping the first set 7-6(1) to Wozniacki and decided she was unable to continue.

“I started normal, and then like at 3-3 or something like this I started to feel headache, pain in my stomach,” Muguruza said.

“Then it kind of went more and more during the match. “When I was getting to the 5-4, something like this, I started to feel a little bit dizzy. I think it was the heat? The heat affected me suddenly like that.”

Wozniacki has now advanced to her sixth quarter-final in seven 2017 events.

In other women’s matches, third seed Simona Halep overcame Australian Samantha Stosur 4-6, 7-5, 6-2, and former Czech world number five Lucie Safarova beat Slovakian fourth seed Dominika Cibulkova 7-6(5), 6-1 to reach the last eight. For unseeded Safarova, who is on the comeback trail from a bacterial infection that hampered her for parts of the past two seasons, the win marked her first top-10 victory since 2015.— Reuters

FIFA says no word from Maradona over threat to quit

ZURICH — Football’s governing body FIFA said on Monday it had heard nothing official from Diego Maradona since the Argentine World Cup winner threatened last week to quit his ambassadorial role.

FIFA said its last official contact with former Argentina captain Maradona had been when he took part in a draw for the under-20 World Cup in South Korea on 15 March.

“There have been no updates from him since then,” said a spokesman, adding that Maradona’s relationship with FIFA during that event had been “very positive”.

Maradona told Argentine newspaper Clarin last Wednesday he was angry over the Argentine FA’s (AFA) decision to appoint television presenter Marcelo Tinelli as head of its national teams committee, which oversees teams from under-17 upwards. Maradona told FIFA president Gianni Infantino in a telephone call that he would step down if the decision was not reversed within two days, the interview said. The AFA is currently under FIFA intervention which, Maradona said, gave football’s governing body the power to reverse the appointment.

Last June, FIFA responded to a financial and governance crisis in the AFA by stepping in and putting it under the administration of a ‘normalisation committee’. The committee’s main role is to prepare the AFA for a presidential election which is due to be held on Wednesday. Maradona took up his new role in February, saying: “Finally I can fulfill one of the lifelong dreams; to work alongside people who really love football.”— Reuters