State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s Speech on the Occasion of the One Year Anniversary of the Government (30 March 2017)

The following is the full text of State Counsellor’s speech that was delivered on Thursday evening and broadcast from MRTV in Nay Pyi Taw.

To All the People of the Union,

A year ago on 30 March 2016, the NLD Government took over the responsibilities of the State with a clear mandate given by the people in the multi-party general elections held in November 2015. Accordingly, we have a bounden duty to be accountable to the people. The respective Ministries at the Union level and the States level have shared with you their work priorities, implementation of those priorities, the challenges that remain and future direction they will be pursuing in serving the interest of the people.

On my part, I would like to highlight three important matters. The first concerning “the change” that the NLD had promised in the campaign leading up to the elections. We need to review and assess how far we made good on that promise. When we say “change”, we are referring to two: “changing the system” and “changing mind-set”. Both the Government and people have to be on board to ensure the success of such changes. Neither the people nor the Government acting alone can bring about change and transformation we seek. The Government, of course, has the duty to take the lead to change the system.

When we speak of changing the system, we need to understand that it involves changing the old system that has been deeply entrenched in our society for over fifty years. In this regard, our main goal for the change is to demonstrate that the Government is here to serve the people. How people perceive our action – whether the Government is really serving the people or whether it is using the people to achieve its goals – is an important indicator to determine the measure of success. I believe most people are becoming increasingly aware that they do not have to live in fear of the Government anymore. I see this as progress.

The Government is not to be feared but rather to be respected, valued, and trusted by the people. We will continue to strive to achieve those lofty goals.

We have enacted laws that will protect the people. At the same time, we have removed and amended laws that suppress the people. These are but some of the steps taken to change the system. On the part of the people, they have to judge whether they have changed their mind-set.

On the part of the Government, changing “mind-set” means Government that is clean and free from corruption. Some may think that incorruptibility means being free from taking financial bribes. But as I have often cautioned, there is more to that. There are four types of-corruptions, namely ဗိ (desire or greed), ညာ (anger or hostility), ဗစ် (fear), မွေး (ignorance). Corruption free Government servants are one who refrains from being self-serving, or those that serve the interest of their inner circle and their kith and kin. Civil servants must be the personnel who have the integrity to stand up for truth and justice. Only then will they be free from “ဗိ” (desire or greed). The act of refraining from bribes by itself is not sufficient to claim one as free of corruption. Looking out for the interest one’s close circle, family, or friends and not looking at the interest of the country as a whole is a form of corruption.

“ညာ” (anger or hostility) means going out of the way to do harm to people you don’t like based on malice. I believe my Government is free from those acts. “ဗစ်” (fear) is being free from fear. It is important that the people must be free from fear. Similarly, the Government must also be free from fear. It must have the courage to do what is right. It has no right to assume the responsibility of the State if it does not have the courage to do what is right for the country.

In the past year, we have had to face many daunting challenges. As you are aware, we have experienced economic hardship. Furthermore, we have never had the privilege of enjoying the full essence of peace from the time we became independent to date. For us, national reconciliations is of the essence. This is the second matter that I wish to highlight. However, all three matters are interlinked and interrelated.

We must be free from corruption if we are to achieve national reconciliation and peace. In our relationship with all organizations in the country, whether we like them or not, we must always put at the forefront what is right and just for all.

The people can judge, whether my Government is carrying out its duties in keeping with this practice. We have never targeted or opposed or criticized or made insinuation against any organization or individual during our year in office. If there are things to be said, we would say it in a straightforward fashion. We will never do things based on the narrow interest of an organization, an individual or in our self-interest. If we do not stand on such a principled position, we will never achieve national reconciliation.

Our country is composed of many diverse organizations. We have many ethnic nationalities as well as many different religions. Hence, if we desire to achieve a genuine national reconciliation, our relationship with all the organizations must be based on equal treatment and fairness.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivering her speech Thursday night from Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

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NLD patron Thura U Tin Oo shares views on first year term of government

Interviewers
KhinMaungHtwe, Yi YiMyint

When asked for his view of the one-year term of the current government, the veteran patron of the NLD Thura U Tin Oo said yesterday that much had been achieved, and much remained to be done.

"There have been multiple accomplishments as well as many cases left to be pursued and settled. There is only so much that can be done in a year after half-a-century of military rule and a one-party system. We have to find and deal with its roots one by one and it will take time. Of course, it will encourage the people if that process can be put in a timeframe."

"There are still armed conflicts even today, so we should learn something from this and (implement a) cease fire. It will be even better if all the armed ethnic groups were involved, and it seems it is more effective if things are carried out with faith, compassion and intimacy," Thura U Tin Oo said when asked for his opinion of the peace process.

"Our leader has met with our ethnic brethren and zealously pursued to end armed conflicts. If trustworthy words and actions are shown from both sides it leads to the right path, then it will benefit the nation. The entire nation needs to foster this mindset for it to become a reality," he added.

When asked for his view on criticism concerning the financial sector during the NLD government's one-year term, Thura U Tin Oo replied, "We can't expect too much to happen in one year after decades of a previous economic system. If the challenges are dealt with in a discursive and systematic way, then it can become effective. It can be guessed that the economy has shifted to the negative after the system enforced by the Parliament-democratic era of the Union Revolutionary Council. Similarly, my understanding is that the effects of this era's workings will only produce visible results in the years to come."

As is the custom in politics there has been admiration as well as criticism during the NLD government's term. When asked what message he would like to send to the critics, the veteran patron said criticism was welcome.

"There has been many criticism and complaints on a myriad of cases, but the bright side is that this is evidence that the public is no longer afraid to voice their opinions. A government is not free of criticism, but if we persevere step by step with the people's will in mind, then there is no doubt challenges can be dealt away."

Thura U Tin Oo was also asked which qualities a person should possess in order to be revered, such as Bogoye Aung San. "Good morals and honesty. Good morals attract trust and a person with questionable morals will find it extremely difficult to become a leader of the people," he said.

"Bogoye Aung San had a strong and calm disposition and he was well respected for his morals and the genuine sacrifice of his personal life for the good of the nation. He also said things that were reasonable and had the drive to make them come true, for example, history has proven his skills when he promised independence within a year. However it is a great loss that he had to die so young while serving the nation," he added.

Of his expectations for State Counsellor Daw/Aung San Suu Kyi, he said he had much confidence in her to continue to lead the country and its people.

“I have high hopes for her. She takes accountability for her promises. She takes great risks when travelling to meet ethnic leaders for the peace process. I want to wish her good health and safety from danger,” he said.

In conclusion, the veteran NLD patron said: "May each and everyone be able to maintain generous compassion and unity of mind while peacefully striving for development of all ethnic races in the country. I hope to see something that ensures a path towards everlasting peace and unity among the ethnic races before us (the older generation) die. May everyone be at peace. That is all." (Unofficial translation)

Philanthropic associations team up to fight drought in summer

With some areas across Myanmar facing drought conditions linked to the El Niño climate pattern, philanthropic associations are teaming up to donors to supply water to the people.

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology forecasts that this summer season will be the hottest in five centuries.

Local authorities in Monywa, which is also located in the arid region, are bracing for the drought, preparing to work together with non-governmental and philanthropic organisations to overcome water shortages in Monywa District this summer, said Daw San San Myint of the Monywa Township Rural Area Development Department.

Six villages in the district are expected to face water shortages this summer, according to the department.

Meanwhile, KBZ’s Bright Future Myanmar Foundation announced yesterday that it will donate water bowers to philanthropic associations located in drought-hit areas as part of efforts for aiding in the battle with drought nationwide.

A 3,000-gallon bowser which was donated by the BFM to the Sitagua International Buddhist Academy yesterday was the 34th bowser donated to philanthropic associations. The bowser will be used for supplying drinking water in wards and villages in Sagaing Region this summer.

The BFM bought 44 bowser in 2016 and supplied water to the people facing water shortages that summer.—Thura Lwin

Gon Shein Wah handicraft shop to be opened in May

A new Myanmar traditional handicraft shop, Gon Shein Wah, will be opened in May, according to U Thardu, chairman of the Myanmar Arts & Crafts Association (MACA). Gon Shein Wah will only sell the handicrafts made by the 25 members of MACA.

The Gon Shein Wah shop will be located on the second floor of Excel Tower, on Kaabar Aye pagoda road, in Bahan Township. The shop will exhibit 15 kinds of handicrafts created by 25 members from MACA.

“There are over 100 members in our MACA. So, we can not open the shop in the name of Myanmar Arts & Crafts Association. Thus, we opened the shop in the name of Gon Shein Wah. Our 25 members will provide products made of bamboo and cane. They will also create wooden sculptures, finished wood, gold, silver and copper wares,” said U Thardu.

The Myanmar traditional handicraft shop will be opened with the aim of collecting the Myanmar traditional handicrafts for sale in one place and attracting the tourists.—200
State Counsellor addresses the ceremony for informing the Initiation of National Health Plan (2017-2021)

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor, addressed those gathered for the ceremony unveiling the national health plan (2017-2021) held at Myanmar International Convention Center 2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The state counsellor stressed the importance of public health. “I would like to assert that the good health of the public is the best luck for the country. But the lack I want to say here is not the easily accessible present given by others, but the one acquired through intellect and zeal. With such an idea, the national health plan was drawn up after making decisions as to how it will be implemented year after year, absolutely not one drawn up just by imagining or generalising.

Public health is of great importance for the country. My mother, who was a nurse, used to say that we must be healthy and nothing can be done without good health. She herself encountered many educated or high-ranking or wealthy persons lost their potential when their health deteriorated. My mother stressed great importance on health. Here, I want to say that public health is an irreplaceable resource for our country, hence the need to make concerted efforts for public health care.

The present national health plan is the public orientated plan, so we are required to start from our houses. It is not to get medical treatment for the need to make concerted efforts for health. Instead, we must be concerned with health care teams, development environmental organisations, ethnic health care teams, development allies and health care programmes.

It is of great importance to give health care since the time of being in the mother’s womb. Infants who are healthily-nurtured and well-cared for become more healthy and brilliant when they are grown up. They can be of great help to the country in every way. As regards the health, we get help locally and from abroad. Others will help only if we have potential, likewise, only if we have potential will others have desire to help us. For example, in eradicating the three great diseases [tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria], our country’s progress led to global support for our effort. They are implementing their plans to support us systematically. Only if we can help ourselves, would others like to help us. Matters relating to the health are very broad and plentiful. Our finances are limited. According to our financial condition, the plan has been drawn up to provide the best health care to the public. It was not drawn up depending upon finance. We have drawn up the potential plan. The Minister for Health is eager especially on public orientated health so we can be said to be blessed with this. Accordingly, a good leader needs good followers. All staff of the Ministry of Health and Sports will perform the tasks of developing people’s health under the leadership of the Minister, I firmly believe. The plan is aimed at gaining health that all people can reach. Being the health everybody can do, the rural populace needs to practise it. As known by all, 70 per cent of the whole populace in the country lives in rural areas, not in the urban areas. In the plan, it has been included to prioritise the health of the rural populace.

The State Counsellor said that the plan was drawn up to upgrade the capacities of the people to the highest level and other ministries needs to help the Ministry of Health to succeed, especially the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. Likewise, the Hluttaw is also of great importance in promulgating regulations on health, she said.

In her concluding remarks, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has called for support of the other ministries and regional and state governments to cooperate with each other, stressing the importance of attracting the people to participate in the plan.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe explained work procedure, vision and objectives of the National Health Plan (2017-2021) before he offered a commemorative gift for the Nation Health Plan (2017-2021) to the State Counsellor.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, Union Ministers and responsible persons then posed for photos and visited the booth displaying documentary photos on community-based health care.

The ultimate goal of the Myanmar National Health Plan (2017-2021) is to be able to provide health care services, which is essentially basic health care for the people, at less expense in any places in 2020-2021 fiscal year. To reach that goal, the National Health Plan was aimed to cooperate harmoniously with health care organisations, private health care services, non-governmental organisations, ethnic health care teams, development allies and health care programmes.

—Myanmar News Agency (Unofficial translation)

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi looks at photos displayed at the ceremony. Photo: MNA

Mayanmar News Agency

Gen Aung Soe presented the response action on the complaint letters and Union Ministers, Nay Pyi Taw council chairman, Region and State Chief ministers discussed matters that would enable land issues to be solved easily and, in accordance with the law. The vice president then made a concluding remark.—Myanmar News Agency

The vice president said the central committee has been working with delegations from line ministries and Region and State governments to solve the land disputes. Special cases in Regions and States are coordinating for the first time with the Mandalay Region government as well as with Kayah State, Chin State and Bago Region.

The Central Committee has been solving cases left over from the previous government and it is necessary for the development of the cases to be published in a monthly government gazette. It is also necessary to present the plans and conditions, in accordance with land management law, for those confiscated lands by Nay Pyi Taw,

Ministries in Region and State, Private Organizations that have not been used for any projects.

The committee’s works report will be sent to the Ministry of Information to be published in state media. The committee also needs to approve 10 principles previously stated to easily solve land issues.

The secretary of the central committee Deputy Minister Maj-
MFVP to be reformed into Federation

The Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP) will reportedly improve its organisation, making changes into a federation with its clusters reformed into branch associations.

The fruit and vegetable sector participated in Myanmar’s trade boost and National Export Strategies. The business is required to expand, and the reformation into a federation is planned. As a first step, suggestions about the reformation were received at a triennial meeting of the clusters under MFVP from each region and state in a bid to formulate the plan.

Drawing up the Articles of Association, linking of the businesses, and submissions to the ministries concerned will be continued. The MFVP will submit its reformation mainly to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, and the Commerce Ministry and Ministry of Planning and Finance, it is learnt.—200

Earthen pots sell well for water festival

Earthen pots (Atar pots) are well in Tatkyi village, where they are used for collecting different types of clay for their own village. The clay then has to be sun-dried. After the pots have been dried in the sun, they are placed in fire kilns to harden. Local people can make over one hundred earthen pots (Atar pots) a day. Currently, the Atar pots are selling for Ks180 per pot wholesale. Currently, Tatkyi village is producing and selling the earthen pots locally only.—Ten Taman

Share certificate for Danyigon vegetable new market to be issued in early April

The share certificates for Danyigon fruit, flower and vegetable retail and wholesale market situated in Insein Township, Yangon will be issued in early April, followed by its stock trading, said U Tharue-in Aung, Managing Director of Myanmar Agro Exchange Public Limited (MAEX). Up to 600,000 shares were traded for its new market beyond its expectation of 500,000 shares. The stock trading was planned to kick off from 16 Jan to 10 Feb with a share price of Ks 10,500. However, it came to close on 7 Feb with a pile of submission of proposals received.

This Danyigon fruit, vegetable and flower retail and wholesale new market is jointly constructed by Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) and MAEX, which is scheduled to open in end of April.—200

Border trade over US$6billion, decrease of US$60million in export

Border trade as of 17th March this Fiscal Year 2016-2017 hit US$6.91 billion, a decrease of US$63.236 million in export and an increase of US$175.653 million in import, according to the official statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

The decline in export through border trade is attributed to the significant decline in Muse border trade camps, which performed the largest trade out of all 16 border trade camps.

The value of border trade from 1st April to 17th March this FY was up by USS 112.417 million when compared to that in the similar point of last FY.

The border trade values as of 17th March in the current FY were US$1,726.91 million at Muse, US$1,785.586 million at Lweje, US$5,850.88 million at Chimmewaw and US$9,691 million at Myeik, US$1,452 million at Htee Khee, US$3 million at Mawtauang, US$365,000 at Maesoe, US$4,222 million at Sittwe, US$3,666 million at Maungtaw, US$4,341 million at Tama and US$36,724 million at Reed.—Mon Mon

Kal Park Housing Project to be completed in 2018

KAL Park Housing Project situated in Inpyin village, Kalaw town is slated to be completed in 2018, said U Wunna Phyo, operation director of Wa Min Company.

This housing project will be developed on 110 acres of land in Inpyin village, with architecture provided by Aedas, a leading international architecture and design firm.

This housing project will be carried out in a similar structure to Pun Hlaing Golf Estate, ensuring that it will not harm the environment. Detached houses will be built, he added.

About 70 separate houses similar to the ones at the old village town dating back to 1800s will be built and sold, it is learnt.

The infrastructure, including an underground cable system, a waste water treatment system, waste management, and street lighting using LED bulbs will be built.

The housing plan aims to offer better service to tourists and local travellers to be able to rest comfortably.—200

Muskemelon price declines from China’s low demand

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THE price of muskmelon declined because of low demand of China, causing financial difficulties for muskmelon growers, according to the Mandalay fruit market.

The muskmelons are mostly cultivated in Mandalay Region and the price is solely dependent on China market. China merchants set the price depending on the production and supply of its neighbouring countries.

Similarly, the watermelon price dropped by nearly Ks4,000 when compared to that of last year, resulting from excessive supply. About 200 to 300 trucks loaded with watermelon enter the Muse market daily. The watermelon on price last year was Ks10,000, whereas it fetched only Ks6,000 this year. But the price in Muse is higher than that offered by local market, said a watermelon grower.

About 200,000 tonnes of watermelons are yearly exported to China, according to the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporter Association (MFVP).—Ko Htet

Border trade as of 17th March

Trucks seen near Muse Border Trade Zone in Muse, northern Shan State. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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Muskemelon price declines from China’s low demand

A farmer works in the muskemelon farm in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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Performances in One-Year Period

Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor which worked for Peace and the Rule of Law on a priority basis during the one-year period of the government

The incumbent government soon after taking office enacted the law regarding the State Counsellor on 6 April 2016 and later established a new Ministry in accordance with that law: the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor.

The objectives of the Ministry are as stipulated under Article 3 of the State Counsellor Law:

1. For the flourishing of multi-party democracy
2. For the development of a market economy
3. For building a Federal Union
4. For Peace and Development of the Union.

The Ministry plays the main supporting role in the realization of the following goals – peace, economic prosperity and flourishing of democracy or in other words Peace-Prosperity-Democracy-PPD – of the new government. The three goals have correlation with each other: Peace in the country ensures a robust economy of the State and the two provides support for the building of a Federal Democratic Union.

It is learnt that the government in implementing the above-mentioned three goals does not implement the goals separately but looks at the process holistically and implements comprehensively.

Preparing the Institutions for the Peace Process

“How is the incumbent government going to continue implementing the peace process?” Not only the people of Myanmar but the international community also wants to know the answer to this question. The Ministry has taken the responsibility to ensure continuity of the entire peace process, creation of a process which is pragmatic and has good potential, and agreed and acceptable to all stakeholders,” explained the Union Minister.

In establishing NRPC, not only peace in the Union but also national reconciliation was taken into consideration. In reforming the NRPC, the headquarters is kept in Nay Pyi Taw while the former Myanmar Peace Centre has been turned into its Yangon branch. Efforts were made to house the NRPC headquarters at a building in the sports village formally earmarked as the sports in Nay Pyi Taw and this building was inaugurated on 1 January 2017, according to the initial plan. The State Counsellor grace the occasion by planting an Olive Tree to mark the inauguration of the NRPC.

On the other hand, the Ministry formed the Preparatory Committee of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong – NRPC on 11 July 2016.

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As the NCA involves the two important major tasks – to maintain the ceasefire and to hold the political dialogues – efforts were made to effectively maintain the ceasefire and strengthen the JMC functions. In this way disagreements among the NCA signatories has been reduced and ceasefire agreement has been cemented through the effective maintenance of the ceasefire and strengthening of the JMC functions.

During the one-year period of the government in office, Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor prioritized the national reconciliation and peace process, and peace, stability and progress of the Rakhine State.

Dual track approach for the all-inclusiveness of the peace process

“In implementing the peace process through the Dual Track, we are holding peace talks with the NCA signatories as well as the non-signatories to the NCA,” said the Union Minister.

The political dialogue with the NCA signatories is centred mainly on the amendment of the framework of the political dialogue. At the same time, discussions were also made with the respective persons for holding peace talks with the non-signatories. In this regard, the Dual Track process could be launched in a simultaneous manner. In order to implement the above-mentioned tasks the “Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong” Preparatory Committee was formed with subcommittee-1 and subcommittee-2.

The subcommittee-1 deals with the NCA signatories and the subcommittee-2 with the non-signatories. As a whole, the two subcommittees have reached the stage of reviewing the framework of the political dialogue in seeking means for a dialogue in which both the NCA signatories and the non-signatories can participate.

In addition, the Peace Commission chaired by Dr. Tin Myo Win was formed to realize the policies adopted by the NRPC, hold talks with armed ethnic groups at the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong and coordinate with NRPC for internal peace and progress.

The Peace Commission held talks with NCA signatories and non-signatories, concentrating on the participation of the non-signatory armed ethnic groups in the peace process.

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In implementing the peace process which is the main objective of the State Counsellor, not just to desist the armed conflicts but also to root out the tense, hatred and menace from all social atmospheres are prime importance.

4. Preparations for a series of political dialogues

Since the youths of new generation are regarded as the future of the country, they have to be educated to have awareness of political dialogue, and to facilitate the nation-level political dialogues.

5. Process Funding – JCB chaired by the State Counsellor for the next four-year periods

To find lasting solutions to the complex and delicate issues in the Rakhine State and to give advices to the international community to help and support the efforts of the Rakhine State and to give advices to the international community to help and support the efforts of the State Counsellor to find lasting solutions to the issues of the Rakhine State.

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To the People:

We are meeting today to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Government. This is a special occasion for all of us. But it is also a time for reflection and introspection. As we look back on the past year, we must ask ourselves: What have we accomplished? What have we learned? And what do we need to do in the future?

One Year Ago

A year ago, we faced many challenges. The world was watching as we tried to build a new government. Some were skeptical. Others were critical. But we were determined to make it work. We were determined to do what was right for our country.

We knew that we had to change. We had to change our government, our society, and our economy. We had to create a new future for our country.

We started by making some tough decisions. We abolished the death penalty. We allowed political prisoners to be released. We legalized the NLD. We promised to hold free and fair elections.

We knew that these decisions would not be popular. But we believed in them. We believed in the people of Myanmar. We believed that they would support us.

And they did. They supported us because they saw the change that we were trying to make. They saw the hope that we were offering.

One Year Later

A year later, we can look back and see how far we have come. We have made progress in many areas. We have made some good decisions.

We have made progress in our government. We have made progress in our society. We have made progress in our economy.

We have made progress because we have listened to the people. We have made progress because we have acted with courage. We have made progress because we have had a clear vision.

But we must also be honest with ourselves. We have not made as much progress as we had hoped. We have not made as much progress as we had expected.

We must be realistic. We must be patient. We must be persistent. We must continue to work hard.

We must continue to listen to the people. We must continue to act with courage. We must continue to have a clear vision.

We must continue to be true to our goals. We must continue to be true to our values. We must continue to be true to our people.

We must continue to be true to ourselves.

Thank you, dear people of Myanmar. Thank you for your support. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your trust.

We will continue to work hard. We will continue to listen. We will continue to learn.

We will do our best. We will do our best to make a difference.

Thank you again.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
Let's Go To Voting Booths!

Khin Maung Oo

Somehow, people seem to be least active about, or rather interested in, the 2017 by-election to be held today. Compared to election campaigns in the November 2015 general election, conditions of the ruling party’s election campaigns dropped remarkably. This may be attributed to two reasons: activists’ assumption that the amounts of vacant seats in Hluttaw are not large enough to harm the cleanly no group of their ruling party, and decreasing supports from campaign activists. In my opinion, election awareness, that is, political awareness needs to develop in us.

Under the democratic practice, we can elect anyone we like. Generally, voters can be categorised into three groups — strong supporters for one party, normal supporters for one party and swing voters. The first kind is the one who himself is a sympathiser and organises others to vote for the party they like. The second one is a sympathiser for one party but he or she never organises anyone to vote for the party they like. The last kind is floating or swing voters who do not vote for the same political party and have not decided which party to vote for in an election. So, votes of swing voters can change into different sides occasionally because of their changing minds depending upon deeds of their supported party or induce.

ment or euphemistic persuasion or barnstorming campaigns.

To put it simply, we generally lack the knowledge on psephology which means the study of how people vote in election, never trying to know it. In fact, we need to know the essence of voting. Every individual can cast a vote as desired. Winning candidates must sit at parliamentarian seats, from which they will perform the national tasks of legislature, executive and judiciary panels.

Only if our people have been endowed with political awareness, can we have a good government and clean governance. If a parliamentarian candidate we voted for has won in the election, it can be said that we ourselves are going to sit in the Parliament because he represents us. Instead, if we fail to go to voting booths, it will be like giving away our rights to sit in the parliament. There is another duty for us to abide by rules and regulations prescribed by the Union Election Commission. Under the democratic practices, we must accept any results that will come out from a free and fair election, on one condition that we are responsible to take care for anyone who will break the law and rules, not to emerge in our environment. Last but not least, let us go to our respective voting booths on April 1, and on election days which will come in future, so as not to lose our rights.

Are We on Track?

Khin Maung Myint

Our country had been independent for nearly seven decades, but we haven’t developed as much as we should, in comparison to our neighbours. So, what is hindering us? In my humble opinion, the lack of national reconciliation and peace is at the root of this. Since our Independence we had been faced with rebellions or in other words, insurrections. Some insurrections stemmed from differences in political concepts, but most are racially motivated. There is no absolute or total peace until today. The main reason is the inability to achieve national reconciliation. Ever since before our Independence there was no unity among some of the national races and between some political groups. After the Independence that disunity turned into all out armed conflicts. In the early stages it’s acceptable to blame the divide and rule policy of the colonialists. However, after over three quarters of a century that excuse is no more acceptable.

Successful governments and ethnic national leaders had endeavoured to unite the country during all these past decades without much success. Now, at long last, there are some rays of hope that those goals could be achieved. So what are the factors that had been causing the hindrances and how can they be overcome?

Hindrances

Lack of Trust. The national races do not trust one another. So, the most important task is to build trust among our national races. To trust one another, everyone needs to abandon the grudges they harboured based on the past histories, dating back centuries. Some national races are still dwelling in the past. Here, I would like to bring up the case of the Vietnamese people. They had been colonized by the French and later they had to fight between themselves as well as the Americans. Once the fighting were over, they shed all the differences and grievances between themselves. Also, they bear no grudge nor animosity against the French as imperialists or the American as intruders, but forgave and forgot and moved on. Today those attitudes paid off. Just look where Vietnam is today. So let’s forgive and forget our past and move on.

Hate

Some say that hate breeds hate and terror breeds terror. I would like to make a slight change to those concepts. My concept is: hate breeds hatred and hatred leads to terrorism. If we can eradicate hate, there wouldn’t be hatred among the national races and so ato there wouldn’t be terrorism, which are in the forms of armed conflicts or wars. We should avoid hate speeches directed at any race or religion. These hate speeches can lead to hate crimes. Actions should be taken against those who instigate divisiveness by making hate speeches or hate comments on the social media.

Nationalism

Nationalist spirit or nationalist played an important role in our drive for Independence. It was the best tool to rally the people to unite and stood up against the imperialists. All the countries, which strive for Independence from the colonialists rulers, promote nationalism to the highest levels and achieved their goals. However, once the Independence they toned down the nationalist spirit. Those countries that can change their nationalism in the right directions prospered more than the hardliners who cling on to the old dogma of nationalism or ultra-nationalism.

Racism

The ultra-nationalism leads to racism, which is undesirable. Racism mentality leads to religionism, which can be very dangerous when it turns into extremist religionism that could lead to terrorism. We should not forget the fact that extreme racism or the white supremacist ideology of the Nazis had led to the two World Wars.

Partisan Spirit

It may benefit the party, that is the political party, for its members to foster partisan spirits, but they tend to be reluctant to compromise with others. They have the tendencies to support or endorse everything and anything their party did, whether right or wrong.

The Right Attitudes

Patriotism. It’s one’s love for one’s country. It’s the right attitude or spirit that should be nurtured. It’s a noble and most desirable spirit. Patriot persons or patriots are ever ready to sacrifice for the right causes of their country. They are always ready to sacrifice even their lives for the country, if needed. This is the right spirit that every citizen irrespective of race or nationality should foster.

Union Spirit

The Union Spirit or the Panglong Spirit is the most desirable attitude that will contribute greatly to the national reconciliation and peace. Instead of placing the individual’s national identity first, we should identify ourselves as the citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar first and our ethnic identity second. For instance: As I’m a Myanmar of Bamar origin, I identify myself as Myanmar first and Bamar second. If our nations who migrated to other countries take much pride in identifying themselves as Americans, Australians or Canadians, etc, why can’t the national races living in Myanmar identify themselves as Myanmar?

These attitudes will unite all the nationalities and achieve our goal of national reconciliation and peace will prevail. Here, I would like to mention how I came up with the expression Myanmar first and Bamar second. About a decade ago I read in the Bangkok Post, an interview with an ethnic minority race of Thailand concerning their National Day celebrations. At one point during the interview, one of the ethnic leaders said: they considered themselves as Thais first and their ethnic identity second. That attitude was very correct. I liked that attitude and the expression so much that I borrowed that and used it here.

Conclusion

However, there is hope and belief is, once all our citizens irrespective of their ethnicity or religion, could accept the fact that we are Myanmar first and our ethnicity second, there is no reason that national reconciliation and peace can’t be achieved. So, let us trust one another, discard our grudges and grievances, forget and forgive what had happened in the past, and embrace the Panglong Spirit as good patriots. Above all, avoid the differences, extreme nationalism, narrow-minded racism and blind religionism, make necessary compromises and join hands to set our country on the right track to peace and prosperity.
Old bullets found in Aungtharya Village, Maungtaw

AROUND 385 old bullets were dug up in Aungtharya Village, Maungtaw District on 30 and 31 March.

On the evening of 30 March, Aungtharya Village residents Maung Nay Myo Htun and Maung Kyaw Htay Aung were searching for a location to set up a bird trap when they discovered 310 bullets in what they assumed was a bird’s nest on the side of a hill to the south of the village.

Afterwards on the morning of 31 March, they continued digging up the same area and discovered 75 more old bullets. The bullets are thought to be Point-303 rifle bullets used back in 1942. The bullets have been sent to Arms and Ammunition Troop for careful inspection. — Ramanyu, Tin Soe

Man found dead in Buthidaung Tsp

THE body of a man was found in Kalapanzan Creek of Buthidaung Township on Thursday morning.

After an investigation by the local police force, it was learnt that the identity of the man was Shivele, 53, who was from Myoma Ward, Buthidaung Township. His body was found dead in the middle of Kalapanzan Creek in Derpaing village tract with stab wounds and incision wounds.

It was reported that Shivele’s wife filed a lawsuit after he went missing while visiting the house of his mother-in-law in the village of Mykyaung Kaungswa village since 21 March.

Local police station have already filed a lawsuit on the murder case for the man. — Myanmar News Agency

Correction

A story on page four of Wednesday’s Global New Light of Myanmar on Grab, the new rideshare service, contained inaccuracies. Grab has launched the beta trial of its GrabTaxi service in Yangon. The company is running an ongoing beta trial in Myanmar’s largest city but did not launch service on 1 April.
State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s Speech on the Occasion of the One Year Anniversary of the Government (30 March 2017)

In continuing on this journey together, I would like to introduce a well-known term “ownership” by the country. Everyone must take ownership and be accountable for its own affairs, solving problems and issues, and development, i.e. right to take actions and assume ownership. Ownership, at the same time, demotes being accountable. We will be accountable for our actions together with the people. We will work together with the people. We will march forward with the spirit that in fulfillment of our duties and responsibilities we will let the people be the source of our strength and likewise, our capabilities and strength will be for the people. I hope the people of the Union will join hands with the Government and assist it in our march towards our future together.

Respect and trust of the people is not something easily obtained. It cannot be robbed. It is not an inherent right. However, in order to continue to enjoy the respect, support, and confidence from the people, I can boldly promise that we will redouble our efforts. When I entered the politics, I made a promise to carry the spirit forward, and I will do and give my very best. I will not be able to give more than my very best. And if my very best is not enough for the country and if some other individuals or organizations are more qualified than us to achieve better results, we would be more than happy and ready to step aside.

That is one thing every democratic government must understand clearly. Democracy does not mean one can remain in power permanently. It is not a matter of thinking that we are the smartest or the best to do the job. Democracy means responsibility (impermanency of all things). We realize that the concept of impermanency in politics and that the situation and position of the government is only as durable and strong as people’s acceptance. We welcome people to look at our Government. Give critical remarks where necessary. Assist us and work with us in matters that could make a difference for the interest of the people and the country.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to the people. I have noted that however hard some organizations and individuals have been criticizing our Government, the people have steadily rendered their support and stood by us and have shown understanding. I can boldly say that they are supporting us, in every way possible, to give us an opportunity to do what needs to be done. As you are all aware, we requested public donation for our National Reconciliation and Peace Center. Within a short time we received over (14) billion Kyats. The donors are not just big businesses. Many ordinary people have responded. What is so enviable to me is that everybody chipped in to contribute - one thousand here, five thousand there. This is a reflection that everybody is trying to support us in whatever way possible. Their gesture of support have not only contributed significantly to the peace funds but have also provided encouragement and strength for our endeavor.

By the same reckoning, if God and every citizen would render their support to the ongoing work of the Government, I can say with confidence that we will achieve progress and development. When succeeding generations look back to these times, they will be saying that this was the dawn of the new era in the history of our country. Thank you.

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Stimulant pills seized in Nawnghkio Township

TIMULANT pills were seized in Nawnghkio Township on Friday.

A local anti-drugs squad in Lashio searched an express bus named golden triangle on the road of Lashio-Mandalay Road on 31 March and seized 10,000 stimulant pills from a passenger named Zaw Myint Naing. Similarly, on the same day they also searched Shwe Le Oo express bus and discovered 990 stimulant pills from the bag of passenger Aung Naing.

The suspects are being charged under the Anti-Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force

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CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO (025) 10,000 stimulant pills were seized in Nawnghkio Township.

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO (025) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 12 noon and 12 noon to 4 pm from 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: MS SILKAGO LOGISTICS PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

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CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV MCC JAVA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC JAVA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses 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 MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS MERIDIAN SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

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CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses 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 MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

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Performance of Yangon Region Government in one-year period

Po Thet

YANGON is a historic city, a city of culture, a city for trade, and one of the best Myanmar’s cities for romance and also was the city of hate in the past. Anyhow, almost all the people of Myanmar cherish Yangon. And all Yangonites wish to see their great city grandeur.

To satisfy the desires of Yangonites
Smooth transportation and enough power and water supplies are earnest desires of people living in Yangon today. To satisfy these desires, Yangon Region government puts all energy into implementation of over 700 projects between 1 April 2016 and 1 April 2017.

To ease traffic congestion
Thanks to the efforts exerted by the region government, Yangon has gradually become a pleasant city. To ease traffic congestion in the city, YBS bus service was introduced. This is an important change made by the region government. This change is just the system change aiming at creating people’s convenience. People’s participation in the process is attributable to successful changing of the system within three days said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein. Another attempt to ease the traffic congestion is designating places for street vendors and hawkers. Although there were some difficulties, now the situation increased significantly as about 4000 vehicles of nearly 80 bus lines are plying along roads in Yangon and 154 traffic lights with advanced technology were installed at junctions in the city.

Proper garbage collection system
Indiscriminate disposal of garbage is one of the reasons for water overflow in drains and gutters which has reverse effects on health in residential areas. Garbage packet collection system was introduced in the areas of Yangon City Development Committee and it helped increase the situation of drainage system.

Yangon Region government puts all energy into implementation of over 700 projects between 1 April 2016 and 1 April 2017.

Night bazaar, park and sports ground
For recreation of the city dwellers, night bazaars were established on Strand Road, Maha Bandoola Park Road and Bank Roads. As these bazaars have been established in a systematic manner there are no problems of road blocks. Parks were upgraded and new sports grounds were built for the people. At the facilities education talks can be held and literary campaign be conducted.

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PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

Sister city
Agreements were made to establish Sister City among Yangon and Fukuoka of Japan and Quizon of the Philippines. These agreements open opportunities for making reciprocal visits of leaders, businessmen and tourists of the cities, sharing information and culture, and making contacts among youths of both sides in the fields of sports, science and technology.

It is sure that the relentless efforts of the region government will bring about prosperity for the people who hope a brighter future.

Mingalarbar
To mark the 55th anniversary of Myanmar-France culture contact, Mingalarbar festival was held and it is a milestone for both countries. It is one of the achievements made in the time of new government just in a year of period which helped strengthen ties among the two countries. 69th Anniversary Independence Day and 70th Anniversary were held in front of the City Hall where state level ceremonies have not been held for years and thus the events are milestones of the region governments.

Power supply, preservation of culture heritages
Dream of the city dweller will come true as master plan has been made to supply full electricity to them. Yangon Power Supply Corporation spent over 38 billion kyat on power supply from 1 April 2016 to December the same year. In the energy sector efforts are being made to open more LPG stations to supply gas for gas stoves.

New housing plans as well as urban plan will be made and preservation of culture heritage such as Tourist Burma building and Government Secretariat in which General Aung San was assassinated will be preserved as its original style. These plans are directed supervised by the region government.

Harmonious efforts
Under the guidance of the Union Government, Yangon Region government is paying special attention for rural area development. As a result floods were prevented in outside, areas of Yangon City Development Committee such as Hlegu and Dagon Myothit situated along Ngamoeyeik creek. Ayeyawady River burst its bank and inundated nearby areas in Taikkyi and Hmawby Townships. To prevent floods, 8 billion kyats was earmarked, said the chief minister.

It is sure that the relentless efforts of the region government will bring about prosperity for the people who hope a brighter future.
Lack of cash clouds Cuba’s green energy outlook

CIRIO REDONDO, (Cuba) — Cuba, battling a chronic energy crisis, had no sunshine, wind and sugar to fuel what should be a booming renewables sector - if only it could find the money.

The country’s first utility-scale renewable energy project, a biomass plant in Ciro Redondo, is finally under construction thanks to an injection of funds from China, a socialist ally and in recent years, the communist-led island’s merchant bank of last resort.

Turning Cuba’s renewables potential into reality has become a state priority over the past year since crisis-stricken ally Venezuela slashed subsidized oil shipments to Cuba that were supposed to help power its traditional plants.

Some foreign players in green energy, such as Spain’s Gamesa and Germany’s Siemens, have shown early interest in the country. But the overall paucity of foreign financing means that this project, being carried out by Cuban-British joint venture Biopower, is still the exception rather than the rule.

The financing puzzle is a crucial one to solve if cash-starved Cuba is to hit its target of renewables filling 24 per cent of the energy needs by 2020, up from 4 percent today, a strategy that would require billions of dollars in investment.

SYDNEY — Flooding rivers swamped towns along Australia’s east coast on Friday forcing tens of thousands of people to be evacuated as fast-flowing waters cut roads and destroyed bridges after the remnants of a powerful cyclone swept through the region.

The disaster zone from ex-Cyclone Debbie stretched 1,000 kms (612 miles) from Queensland state’s tropical resort islands and Gold Coast tourist strip to the farmlands of New South Wales state, with more than 10,000 homes reportedly without power.

Six large rivers had hit major flood levels and were still rising, said the Bureau of Meteorology.

Flood sirens sounded before dawn at Lismore, in Australia’s northern New South Wales town of Lismore, Australia, on 31 March 2017 after heavy rains associated with Cyclone Debbie swelled rivers to record heights across the region.

— Reuters

Invitation for Open Tender Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Department of Rural Development

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Grant from the Federal Republic of Germany (KfW/bank) through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation towards the cost of Rural Development Phase II & III.

2. Department of Rural Development under Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation intends to implement, with contract system, the construction of bituminous roads (total length around (60)Km) and bridges along the roads in Taunggyi District Shan State. Rural roads express as follow:

   No Township           Road Name          Length(Km)
   (i) Taunggyi           KanLaung-Zale            17.36
   (ii) Hopone            Lwe Oti – Ht Bwar         7.11
   (iii) NyaungShwe       Nyaung Shwe - Kanu         6.51
   (iv) YetSauk           Pin Phit - Wayar         11.37
   (v) Kalaw              BawNing-Thayetpyu       12.48
   (vi) Kalaw              KumParNi-SupanNi         6.47
   (vii) Kum Par Ni - Pow Toke  5.67

3. Interested companies may obtain further information and may inspect the complete bidding documents, and may purchase a set of the documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of MMK-50000 at the Purchaser’s following address on or before the 26-5-2017.

— Reuters

US to study causes of trade deficits by country, product

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump will sign an executive order Friday that will direct officials to conduct a country-by-country, product-by-product analysis of the causes of US trade deficits, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said Thursday.

Ross said China, Japan, Germany, Mexico and other countries with which the United States incurred hefty deficits are likely to be subject to the planned investigation.

The move is part of the Trump administration’s efforts to address what it says are unfair trade practices of US trading partners and reduce US deficits.

Ross said it will be “the first systematic analysis” of what causes the United States to incur trade deficits, looking at the issue “country by country, product by product.”

The order will direct the Commerce Department and the Office of the US Trade Representative to conduct the study and report the findings to the president in 90 days, he said.

Officials will study to what extent US deficits have been caused by “cheating” trade practices and currency misalignment by other countries, as well as asymmetrical treatment of tax systems by the World Trade Organization.

They will also review the effects on the deficits of free trade agreements that have failed to produce the benefits that were forecast.

“The United States has the lowest tariff rates and the lowest non-tariff barriers of any developed country,” Ross said.— Kyodo News

INFORMATION FOR PRICE QUOTATIONS

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of the National Community Driven Development Project (NCDDP).

The IDA No. of the financing agreement is No. HS1-4MM. The Department of Rural Development (DRD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in its role as implementing Agency of the NCDDP, intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this financing towards eligible payments under the Purchase Order/Contract for the supply of G81. Printed Items for Grievance Handling for forty seven (47) Township Offices, 15 Regional Office and Union NCDDP. DRD now invites eligible suppliers to express their interest in supplying the following items:

Reference Number: G81: Printed Items for Grievance Handling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference No.</th>
<th>Lot No.</th>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G8 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grievance pamphlets</td>
<td>96000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manual booklet for focalists</td>
<td>52000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grievance Letter/Envelope</td>
<td>182000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The goods will be contracted in 3 (three) contracts for G81. Suppliers will be selected following the Shopping Method as per the “Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and non-Consulting Services under IDA Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers” dated February 2011. Please submit your Expression of Interest for receiving the Invitation to Quote (ITQ) to: U Kyaw Soe, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Development, Office No.(14), Nay Pyi Taw. ITQ will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below on 24th April 2017.

For detailed information please contact: U Kyaw Soe Aung, Director, Procurement and Logistic Section, Mobile phone (097) 534333 or office phone 067499071, Email: uniondpdpvcurement@gmail.com, Website: www.cdd.drdmyanmar.org
Oscar accountants get reprieve after best picture blunder

LOS ANGELES — The accountancy firm behind the biggest blunder in Oscar history is staying in the picture.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said on Wednesday it has decided to retain the services of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) despite a backstage envelope mix-up that led to the wrong film being announced the winner of the best picture Oscar last month.

But a third accountant will be added to the PwC staff on the Oscars night and backstage tweeting, photos and posting to other social media will be banned.

“After a thorough review, including an extensive presentation of revised protocols and ambitious controls, the Board has decided to continue working with PwC,” Academy President Cheryl Boone Isaacs wrote on Wednesday in a letter to Academy members that was made available to the media.

Isaacs added that the Academy had been “unsparring in our assessment that the mistake made by representatives of the firm was unacceptable.”

The unprecedented mishap led to musical “La La Land” being declared the winner and its producers and cast celebrated and started acceptance speeches on the stage before “Moonlight” was named the real winner of the night’s top prize.

Isaacs called it “the most extraordinary and memorable Oscars ceremony in decades.”

PwC, which has overseen Oscar balloting for 93 years, took full responsibility for the gaffe, which stunned the A-list audience.

Other new measures include closer checks of the winner envelopes on stage and rehearsals with the accountants ahead of the Oscar ceremony, Isaacs said.

PwC on Wednesday confirmed its services were being retained by the Academy but said nothing more.—Reuters

Big B launches trailer of film written by Goa governor

MUMBAI — Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has unveiled the trailer of Hema Malini starrer “Ek Thi Rani Aisi Bhi”, which has been penned by the Governor of Goa Mridula Sinha.

The film is based on the book, “Rajpath Se Lok Path Par”, an autobiography of erstwhile Maharani of Gwalior Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia, who also served as a Member of Parliament multiple times.

“I got an invitation for this on my phone and she asked me to come here. She is the governor of Goa but a great writer too. To honour that, I have come here. Thank you all. I am privileged to be here,” Bachchan told reporters.

Bachchan posed for shutterbugs along with Sinha and filmmaker Prakash Jha, who was also present at the event.

The movie features Hema in the role of Vijaya Raje Scindia along with Sinha and filmmaker Prakash Jha, who was also present at the event.

The film features Hema in the role of Vijaya Raje Scindia along with Sinha and filmmaker Prakash Jha, who was also present at the event.

It is set to release in April.—PTI

Akshay Kumar unveils first poster of ‘Toilet: Ek Prem Katha’

MUMBAI — Akshay Kumar has revealed the first glimpse of his upcoming film “Toilet: Ek Prem Katha”.

The 49-year-old actor took to Twitter to share the poster, which also features his co-star Bhumi Pednekar.

“Please to share, @Toilet_TheFilm an unusual love story will be with you on 11th August, 2017.” Akshay wrote.

The film, which is based on the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will release in the Independence Week.

Akshay added, “Tayyar ho jayye Swachh Azaadi ke liye! (Brace yourselves for a clean Independence Week).”

The poster shows Akshay and Bhumi dressed in traditional marriage attire in an interesting way triggering a debate on cleanliness and our rights.—PTI

Usher, Lauryn Hill to perform at Montreux Jazz Festival

MEZIERES, Switzerland — Usher, Lauryn Hill, Macy Gray and Erykah Badu are booked to perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival during its 51st edition, organizers said on Thursday.

The eclectic lineup for the 30 June-15 July event includes Ibrahim Maalouf, a 27-year-old American composer with a classical but a real digital artist who will be with you on 11th August, Pakistan’s Saeed Ahmad, Aretha Franklin, Prince and the Foo Fighters to perform in the village of Mezieres above Lausanne.

Nicolas Jaar, a 27-year-old American composer with Chilean-Palestinian-French heritage, opens the festival.

Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue opens for headliner Usher & The Roots on 5 July, with top-end tickets at 295 Swiss francs ($296.01).

“The big night with Usher, you know him, he’s coming with The Roots, very funky. We really wanted to see Trombone Shorty again who dazzled us in 2012. It shows the spectrum of R & B and soul. The night might end with big acts,” Montreux Jazz Festival Director Jaton, festival director, told a news conference held in the Theatre Jorat in the village of Mezieres above Lausanne.

“An alchemist of the electronic, a real composer who takes us into curious universes... We paired him with Max Richter, rather classical but a real digital artist who has worked with Woodkid,” Jaton said.

Lauryn Hill, who rose to fame with the Fugees in the 1990s, is returning to Montreux for the first time since 2005 and her performance on 6 July is expected to include hits by Lisa, Isaacs said.

“She is coming for a one-off, a unique concert. Apparently she has not announced any other concerts in Europe this summer,” Jaton said. Herbie Hancock returns to Montreux for a record 38th time, while the “unclassifiable” Grace Jones promises an “atypical show,” he said.

The Foo Fighters had previously returned to Montreux for a record 38th time, while the “unclassifiable” Grace Jones promises an “atypical show.”

“Can’t wait to see you and Tayyar ho jayye Swachh Azaadi ke liye! (Brace yourselves for a clean Independence Week).”

The poster shows Akshay and Bhumi dressed in traditional marriage attire in an interesting way triggering a debate on cleanliness and our rights.—PTI

Katy Perry joins Sheeran, Radiohead for Glastonbury festival

LONDON — American pop singer Katy Perry will join the likes of Ed Sheeran, Radiohead and the Foo Fighters to perform at this year’s Glastonbury festival, a huge green-field music event held in the countryside in southwest England.

Organisers unveiled the 21-25 June festival’s first line-up poster on Thursday, presenting a mix of singers and genres.

This year’s performers include the likes of British grime artist Stormzy, hip hop star Dizzee Rascal, R&B singer Emeli Sande as well as the Bee Gees’ Barry Gibb.

Rockers Radiohead and the Foo Fighters had previously been announced as part of the line-up as was Grammy Award winner Sheeran.

Lorde, Solange as well as Toots and the Maytals also join the more than 80 performers listed on the poster for the event, which is known for its muddy fields and wet weather.

“Can’t wait to see you and hopefully catch a cold,” Perry wrote on her Instagram page regarding her attendance. Tens of thousands of people descend on the Worthy Farm site in Somerset for the five-day festival, where 2016 performers included Adele and Coldplay.—Reuters

Martha Ruiz (R, in red) and Brian Cullinan (upper R) of PricewaterhouseCoopers confer on stage after the Best Picture was mistakenly awarded to “La La Land” instead of “Moonlight” at Oscars Awards Show in Hollywood, California, US, on 26 February 2017. Photo/Reuters

Montreux Jazz Festival Director Mathieu Jaton. Photo/Reuters

London exhibition elevates selfies as an art form

LONDON — From Old Masters’ self-portraits to contemporary selfies taken on phones, a London exhibition explores the creative potential of a mode of expression whose modern form is often derided as mundane. The British capital’s Saatchi Gallery on Friday launches “From Selfie to Self-Expression”, which it says will be the world’s first exhibition looking at the history of selfies. It kicks off with Rembrandt, the 17th century Dutch artist whose dozens of self-portraits created an intimate autobiography with confident brushstrokes. His paintings are represented on digital screens that one can “like”, resulting in a red heart appearing over the image - just as on social media. Modern-day selfies are different because they show “how we would like the world to see us, rather than how we are and who we are,” said Saatchi Gallery Chief Executive Nigel Hurst. “It’s no coincidence... that most selfies are shot in pretty exotic locations, on holiday when people are experiencing things that are away from their humdrum, mundane lives,” he told Reuters. “It’s not about sharing our humanity, it’s about really sharing a version of our identity that we would like people to believe.”

In the digital age, the selfie has become ubiquitous, and the word was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2013. Running to the end of May, the exhibition includes selfies by soccer player David Beckham and reality TV star Kim Kardashian, and even the first selfie shot by an animal (a monkey). “People transform social media into something that is very expressive of being Chinese, or English, or Trinidadian and that is also true of the selfie,” said University College London Professor Daniel Miller, who researched the phenomenon around the world. “In southern Italy, people feel they almost have a responsibility to represent Italian stylishness. In Trinidad, you want to be highly individualistic.”

The exhibition concludes with a critical stance on selfies, with an installation by Mexican artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer and Polish artist Krzysztof Wodiczko of 12 surveillance cameras. “Selfies are not an option, it’s something that is opening out our identity for good but mostly for bad, shaping up a controlling society,” Lozano-Hemmer said.

“the problem is that we don’t have privacy any more.”— Reuters

Done the rock trick, now to hatch some eggs: artist tries bizarre new feat

PARIS — French artist Abraham Poincheval, who famously spent two weeks inside a bear sculpture and a week inside a rock, began his latest feast on Wednesday — hatching eggs.

The 44-year-old, who specializes in performance art, will spend the next two weeks by incubating 10 eggs with his own body heat inside a glass vivarium until they hatch.

Poincheval says he spent a fortnight living inside a bear's diet. — Reuters

Egypt uncovers part of ancient King Khufu’s boat

CAIRO — A plank of wood believed to be from the boat of an ancient Egyptian king has been unearthed near the Great Pyramid at Giza, archaeologists said on Wednesday.

The boat, which is the second such vessel to be found on the site, was believed to have been built for King Khufu who ruled Egypt during the fourth dynasty more than 4,500 years ago.

First discovered in the 1980s, experts say they have so far uncovered 700 pieces of the boat from the site and now believe that they have unearthed most of its pieces.

“We are celebrating the extraction of the largest plank of wood,” said the project’s main supervisor Mamdouh Taha, adding it measures 26 metres (85 feet) long. "Archaeologists and conservation experts extracted the piece from a pit nearly three-meters underground and moved it to a conservation centre located next to the discovery site. Egyptian and Japanese archaeologists are working on the project with an aim to restore all the boat’s pieces and display them in the Grand Egyptian Museum when it opens next year.

Egypt hopes ongoing archaeological discoveries can boost its ailing tourism industry, a critical source of hard currency which has suffered in the aftermath of mass protests that toppled former president Hosni Mubarak in 2011.

The number of tourists visiting Egypt stood at 9.3 million in 2015, compared to more than 14.7 million in 2010, but the country’s tourism minister expressed hope earlier this month that numbers could return to levels experienced before the uprising.— Reuters

Japan spa city to run ‘spamusement park’ combining bathing and rides

OITA, Japan — A Japanese city hosting one of the world’s largest hot-spring resorts said Tuesday it will open an amusement park this summer with a hot-tub merry-go-round and many other rides featuring immersion in its thermal water.

Beppu Mayor Yasuhiro Nagano pledged to open a “spamusement park” in a Youtube video uploaded last November if the video got more than 1 million views. It surpassed 3.2 million views as of Wednesday.

The footage shows men and women of all ages wrapped in towels having fun at the prospective park. The city in Oita Prefecture, southwestern Japan, is crowdfunding to set up special rides using hot-spring water at an existing amusement park for a limited period and has already garnered 20 million yen ($180,000), enough to get the plan up and running.

“A considerable number of people have supported our project. I hope we can gain even more support so we can materialize more attractions at the park to entertain citizens and tourists,” the mayor said at a press conference Tuesday.— Kyodo News
Federer saves two match points to beat Berdych in Miami

MIAMI — Roger Federer stared down defeat and saved two match points before knocking Tomas Berdych out of the Miami Open on Thursday with a 6-2, 3-6, 7-6(6) victory in their thrilling quarter-final.

Federer will next face Nick Kyrgios on Friday after the 12th seeded Australian edged German teenager Alexander Zverev 6-4, 6-7(9), 6-3 in an evening quarter-final, finally clinching victory on his sixth match point.

Swiss magician Federer had to call upon all his resources of skill, poise and experience to edge the Czech in a third set tiebreak in front of a frenzied crowd at Crandon Park.

Berdych served for the match at 6-4 in the tiebreak but Federer reeled off four points in a row, including two unplayable serves, and secured the win when the 10th seed crumbled with an awful second serve.

Federer conceded he had rode his luck at times to advance.

“I’ve had some tough losses here where I should have won. They stay with you so I’m happy today to have come through somehow,” he said courtside.

“Definitely got very lucky at the end but I think I showed good heart today and I fought. Tomas really stepped it up and it was a great match at the end but one guy had to win.”

Australian Open champion Federer, who also won at Indian Wells two weeks ago, is playing some of the best tennis of his career and appears completely recovered from a knee injury that kept him out of the second half of last year.

The 35-year-old is 17-1 this season, his only loss a surprise defeat to Russian Evgeny Donskoy in Dubai.

Federer has won all seven of the tiebreaks he has faced during his current American campaign.

“I enjoy winning breakers because those are the ones that are going to make you win a tournament or not sometimes,” he said.

“My thought process is don’t mess up, hit a few aces, stay aggressive on the return, all those silly things that never work but they seem to be working now.”

In the tiebreak, Berdych hit a backhand winner into the corner, the pressure reverted to Berdych and this time he cracked, his second serve landing closer to the baseline than the service line.

Kyrgios is looking forward to facing Federer after pulling out of their scheduled Indian Wells quarter-final with a virus.

“He’s my favourite player, so I’m going to enjoy the moment,” said the 21-year-old, who won their only career meeting, on clay in Madrid in 2015.

“He’s the greatest of all time. We don’t know how long he’s going to hang around so it’s a blessing.” — Reuters

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Icher leads wind-shortened day at ANA Inspiration

RANCHO MIRAGE, Calif. — French veteran Karine Icher held the early first-round lead over an impressive chasing pack during the first round of the ANA Inspiration golf tournament at Mission Hills Country Club course. Play was scheduled to resume at 7:30 am PT (1430 GMT) on Friday.

Icher fired a five-under-par 67 for a one-shot lead over American Michelle Wie and compatriot Park Sung-Hyun of South Korea, with top-ranked Lydia Ko of New Zealand two-under through five holes along with Ryu So-yeon and her compatriots Park Sung-Hyun and amateur Seong Eun-jeong.

The proposals will be submitted to the FIFA Council at its next full meeting in Bahrain in May for a final decision, FIFA said.

Under the proposal, made by the FIFA Bureau, for the enlarged tournament beginning in 2026, Europe would get 16 direct places, Africa nine, Oceania one, totalling 46 teams.

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With gusts of 45 miles per hour (72 kph) bending palm trees Thursday.

Another shot back, at three-under, were Korean Jenny Shin and long-hitting American Lexi Thompson as the early starters took advantage before the high winds hit the long layout to challenge the other half of the field.

Defending champion and top-ranked Lydia Ko of New Zealand was two-under through five holes along with American Christina Kim (11 holes), Germany’s Caroline Matson (8), England’s Charley Hull (7) and Suzann Pettersen of Norway (6).

Icher, 38, was looking to improve on her best previous showing in a major, a tie for sixth at the US Women’s Open in 2005. — Reuters

FIFA reveals proposed slots for 48-team 2026 World Cup

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FIFA decided in January to increase the tournament from 32 teams to 48. The current allocation is 13 places to Europe, five to Africa, four to Asia and South America and three to CONCACAF.

Asia, South America, CONCACAF and Oceania also get a place in two inter-zonal playoffs.

The proposal shows how football has grown around the world over the last 40 years.

As recently as 1978, when the World Cup had only 16 teams, Africa and CONCACAF were given only one place each while Asia and Oceania had to share one place between them.

According to the FIFA world rankings, the top nine teams in Africa currently include Burkina Faso, who have never played at a World Cup, and Democratic Republic of Congo, who took part only once as Zaire in 1974.

CONCACAF’s top six include Panama and Haiti while St Kitts and Nevis are seventh.

Asia’s top eight include Uzbekistan and Qatar while China are ninth and Syria 10th.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said in a statement that he was “satisfied” with the proposal.

“We feel that UEFA will be fairly represented with a total of 16 national associations competing in the new format of the World Cup,” he said. — Reuters

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Karine Icher hits on the eighteenth course fairway during the first round of the ANA Inspiration golf tournament at Mission Hills CC-Dinah Shore Tournament Course in Rancho Mirage, CA, USA, on 30 March 2017. Photo: Reuters