



Ethnic Rakhine women wash Buddha statues with scented water. PHOTO: TIN SOE



Dance troupe performing at a small pavilion in Buthidaung. PHOTO: TIN SOE

Buddha statue washing in Maungtauw draws crowds

PAGODAS and monasteries in Maungtauw Township, Rakhine State were packed with devotees yesterday morning for the Rakhine traditional Buddha statue washing event.

Yesterday morning starting at 7, Maungtauw District Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut and staff were going around monasteries, including the Min Kan Nikaya Myoma monastery, Paho monastery, and Zawtikaryone monastery to conduct the ceremonial washing of Buddha statues.

Other government departments, social associations, philanthropic groups and local elders were similarly going around town in Buddha statue washing vehicles to assist in the traditional event.—*Yamanya*

Youths practice meditation during Thingyan Festival



Youths learn meditation at Mingun meditation center in Yangon. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

WHILE many Yangon youths are participating in the traditional celebration of Thingyan by happily throwing water, many others entered monasteries and meditation centres.

At Mingun monastery in Bahan Township, Yangon, the trustee of the monastery said most of the 806 yogis who enter the meditation retreat during Thingyan were youths.

“There are 117 don-la-ba monks (part-time monks), 116 shin-tha-ma-ne (junior monks), 216 thi-la-shin (female monks), 46 male yogi and 401 female yogi during this Thingyan,” said Mingun monastery trustee group member U Soe Min Aung.

Maung Yan Paing from Ahlone Township who is attending the retreat, said it was an annual ritual.

“During Thingyan, all our family enter the meditation retreat. This is the second year. I will try to do this every year.”

Maung Myo Min Kyaw, 17, from Tharkayta Township, is in the Mingun monastery meditation retreat for the first time as an adult.

“I have no experience of meditating in a meditation retreat like this during Thingyan even though I did went to a youth meditation retreat earlier. I’m here now to gain experience as well as merit. I plan to do the same next year too.”

It is learnt that there are about 2,000 male and female yogis in this year’s Thingyan meditation retreat at Mahasi Meditation Centre in Bahan Township.

Mahasi Meditation Centre trustee reserve volunteer member Ko Zaw Myint said arrange-

ments were made to receive about 2,000 this year, including full-time monks, and added that there are many young people this year.

Devotees were seen bringing donations for the welfare of people to the meditation retreats in monasteries and meditation centres.

Ma Nay Min Soe, 19, who came to the Mahasi Meditation Centre from South Dagon Township, was at a retreat for the first time.

“I no longer have my parents, and I’m here for them. I didn’t enter a meditation centre before and it is very peaceful here. I’m able to learn about the nobleness of Buddha and his teaching and the value of Dhamma. I’m thinking of coming again next year.”

Since the Thingyan period is a new year holiday period, youths from the wards, students as well as middle-aged employees are seen entering meditation centres to practice vipassana meditation.

There are differences in the meditation times among meditation centres and retreats, but meditation is normally practiced in the morning, noon and afternoon interspersed with preaching on meditation methods by the head monks.

In addition to meditating and fasting in the wards and monasteries, Shwedagon Pagoda, Kaba Aye Pagoda, Botahtaung Pagoda, Shwe Bone Pwint Pagoda, Ngar Htat Gyi Pagoda, Chauk Htat Gyi Pagoda, Ko Htat Gyi Pagoda were packed with Thingyan period merit makers and people distributing satuditha (free food).—*Min Thit & Thint Zin Win*

Nay Pyi Taw residents enjoying Thingyan Akya

ON Thingyan Akya Day, people in Nay Pyi Taw were enthusiastically throwing water at each other yesterday, continuing the Myanmar tradition of washing away the old year’s excesses with water.

In the morning, joyful songs

were heard from pandals around Nay Pyi Taw, where people happily threw water at Thingyan revellers who were driving past in motorcycles and cars.

In the same way, Satuditha (free food) was distributed at the

Nay Pyi Taw mayor’s Thingyan pandal and other pandals in Pyinmana while people were entertained with Thingyan songs and modern music as well as Thingyan dances by Thingyan dance troupes.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Revelers soak themselves under splash of water enjoying the Thingyan festival in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA



Firefighters put out the fire at about 6pm in Shwelinban Industrial Zone in Hlinethaya Township.
PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)

Fire destroys buildings in Hlinethaya

A FIRE broke out at a garment factory in the Shwelinban Industrial Zone, Hlinethaya Township yesterday evening, resulting in a loss of two buildings and all the items inside.

"There was a blackout, and when the power came back on the transformer in front of the factory made a loud noise so we contacted the electricity office. An electrician arrived and while he was inspecting the transformer smoke began coming out from inside the building, the fire had started," said security guard U John Bayri.

The fire started at the Harmony Myanmar Garment factory on Banmaw Atwin Win street at about 4pm and spread to a nearby building. Officials, firefighters, and Red Cross members arrived with about 50 fire engines and managed to douse the fire at about 6pm.

Due to the fire in the two buildings, textiles and machinery were lost and some firefighters suffered minor injuries.

"This is a Level-4 incident and we received some cuts and bruises and 10 people were choking from the large volume of

smoke inside. We administered first aid to our firefighters who suffered from smoke inhalation and some had to be sent to hospitals," said Staff Officer (Grade 1) U Thein Win of the Yangon Region Red Cross.

The factory was temporarily closed since 8 April for the Thingyan holidays and only three security guards were present when the fire broke out.

Officials are investigating the cause of the fire. The cost of the damages will be assessed in accordance with the law. —Zaw Gyi (PaNiTa)

Wakema villagers to receive free eye surgery

PEOPLE with vision problems are set to receive free eye surgery at Sattkupa clinic of Wakema Township Association (Yangon Branch) for three days starting from 21 April. This is the 7th free surgery to be sponsored by Wakema Township Association.

A total of 4510 people from Wakema Township with vision

problems have already their eyes tested and 1083 their eyes operated from the 1st to 6th time treatment organized by Wakema Township Association Sattkupa free eye surgery team. And 2141 persons have been provided free of charge with the spectacles.

Wakema Township Associ-

ation will also provide meals to both patients and their attendants during the period of eye test and treatment. Those wishing to donate for eye operations can contact the chairman and secretary of Sakkhupala association and offer cash amounting to K 45,000 for an eye surgery.—Hlwan Thiha (IPRD)

Public safety awareness conducted in Seikphyu Township

MAGWAY Region's authorities has stepped up safety awareness for people during the Thingyan festival in attempts to prevent accidents.

The authorities has conducted public awareness program especially near the Yaw Creek, which is popular destination for the people during the four-day festival, to prevent crimes and accidents.

Members of the Myanmar Police Force have taken the preventive measures, educating the shops and revellers along the beach of the creek during the festival.—Soe Lin Naing (IPRD)



Revellers celebrating Thingyan Water Festival in Yaw Creek, Seikphyu Township. PHOTO: SOE LIN NAING

Armed robbery in Maungtaw

A MASKED man armed with knives and sticks entered the home of Sweyotarlaung, a resident of Tulatulaung village, on Thursday and robbed him of Ks 430,000

from a safe in the living room.

Sweyotarlaung has filed a lawsuit at the Kyainchaung Police Station on Friday.—Myanmar News Agency

Dual selfie camera phone popular

WITH the arrival of several telecommunications operators in the past few years, the smartphone market in Myanmar has grown rapidly, with smartphone users comprising almost half of mobile phone users, according to Forbes magazine.

Between 60 and 80 per cent of mobile phone users are using touch screen phones. With the increase in the number of smartphone users, consumer behaviour has changed, with the majority of the users choosing the high-quality smartphones.

In early days, consumers chose handsets that have better connection capability. But now they are turning to smartphones with high-quality cameras, fingerprint sensors and other features.

Realising this consumer behavior, handset manufacturers such as Samsung, Huawei, OPPO, Xiaomi and Vivo are of-

fering affordable smartphones with special features for high-end users.

Smartphones with a dual camera system have become popular, as the younger generation are increasingly sharing their photos on social website such as Facebook and Instagram.

The photo organising website Mylio.com said that there were 1.1 trillion digital photos taken in 2016. Of these photos, over 900 million photos were shot with mobile phones.

According to Telegraph, the British newspaper, mobile phone users from across the world are taking about one million selfies a day. This has prompted smartphone manufacturers to produce smartphones with dual selfie cameras systems, a feature formerly seen only in the most expensive devices.—The mirror

Over 400 navigation markers to be erected in April

OVER 400 navigation markers will be erected in April because of the changing of river courses in the Ayeyawady River.

Out of 420 navigation markers, there will be 290 in the water and 130 on the river bank, said an official from Mandalay Division 5 of Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems.

Cargo vessels and passenger ships ply the Ayeyawady River every day, as this river is the main source of transport for commodities.

The navigation markers are being erected with an aim to en-

sure safe cruising in the river.

The department will erect 50 navigation markers in the water and 25 markers on the river bank on the Katha-Bamaw route, 70 markers in the water and 35 markers on the river bank on the Katha-Malae route, 50 markers in the water and 25 markers on the river bank on the Malae-Mandalay route, 50 markers in the water and 15 markers on the river bank on the Mandalay-Myinmu route, 70 markers in the water and 30 marks on the river bank on the Myinmu-Singu route.—Min Thu

Stimulants seized in Mayangon

A LOCAL anti-drug squad discovered 60 stimulant pills from a young man on Wednesday in Mayangon.

After interrogating Aung Htet, 29, the police searched the apartment of Aung Ko Ko Kyaw in Ward-1, Mayangon Township, and also found 3,022 stimulant pills, 0.00311 kilos of marijuana and 9 kilos of ice. Police also arrested Aung Ko Ko Kyaw, 30, and Thar Htet, 23, and Thet Naing Aung, 23, who were found at the apartment. Actions are being taken against them under the Anti-narcotic and Psychotropic Substance Law.—MPF