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TOGETHER WITH THE PEOPLE

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.



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

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, name-

If we desire to achieve a genuine national reconciliation, our relationship with all the organizations must be based on equal treatment and fairness.

ly ဆန္ဒ (desire or greed), ဒေါသ (anger or hostility), ဘယာ (fear), မောဟ (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 "ဆန္ဒ" (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.

"ဒေါသ" (anger or hostility) means going out of the way to do harm to people you don't like based on maliciousness. I believe my Government is free from those acts. "ဘယာ" (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 experience 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 reconciliation 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 straight forward 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.

As human beings, we tend to have preferences on whom or what we like or dislike. There are those we may love or hate. However, the Government, under any circumstance, should not entertain those emotions.

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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 and 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 disciplined 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



NLD patron Thura U Tin Oo. PHOTO: YE HTUT

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 re-

vered, such as Bogyoke 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.

“Bogyoke 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 DawAung San Suu Kyi, he said he had much confidence in her to continue to lead the country and its people.

“I have great trust in 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)



Foreign and Local media observe Maungtaw POE. PHOTO: MNA

News media continues reporting in Yathedaung, Maungtaw Townships

THE group of local and foreign news media who arrived in Maungtaw township, Rakhine State to report from the scene continued their news gathering in Maungtaw and Yathedaung yesterday.

Media representatives went to port of entry (POE) in Maungtaw yesterday morning, gathering news on immigration and commodity exports.

Via the Maungtaw POE, fishing products, dried fish and mung beans have been exported to the neighboring country from December 24 until now. In March exports were valued at about US\$490,000.

Afterward, the Chief of No. (1) Border Guard Police

Headquarters Police Brig-General Thura San Lwin and U Ye Htut, chairman of Maungtaw District Management Committee, answered the questions of reporters on security, peace and stability, rule of law in the area, education, health and upgrading socio-economic life.

The journalists also reported on the plan to build 100 houses for local nationals to live, in Kyaukpandu village, Maungtaw township, under the arrangement of the Ministry of Border Affairs, and the situations of the Koetangauk police outpost in Yathedaung township, which was attacked by terrorists on October 9, 2016. —Myanmar News Agency

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 with 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 Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation

announced yesterday that it will donate water bowsters 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 Sitagu International Buddhist Academy yesterday.

It 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 bowsters in 2016 and supplied water to the people facing water shortages that summer.—Thura Lwin



Local residents clamour to get clean drinking water from a water bowser. PHOTO: MNA

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 Ka-

bar 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 cannot 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 prod-

ucts 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 luck 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 as a nurse that 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 invaluable 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 only when we arrive at the hospitals. Instead, we must be careful about our health while living in our homes. We generally differentiate between those who need to have medical treatment and those giving medical treatment. In fact, we cannot think like that. Some say that medical doctors do not cure patients,



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

but the latter cure their suffering themselves. Doctors only guide how to do and what to do. That statement is partly right. Doctors are those responsible for health, to educate and instruct. People are required to take responsibilities for their health, themselves. I am convinced that our national health plan has been drawn up, with the intention of reaching the stage of taking responsibility of our health, ourselves."

The State Counsellor added that it is never too early to become concerned with health care in the home.

"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 up-

grade 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 the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. Likewise, the Hluttaw is also of great importance in promulgating laws, rules and 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)

VP U Henry Van Thio attends meeting of committee on confiscated farmlands

VICE President U Henry Van Thio said the committee tasked with dealing with confiscated farmland needs to concentrate on resolving the 3,980 complaint cases it has received, of which only 212 have been solved.

"The committee at different levels needs to put emphasis on the resolution of the confiscation of farmlands to ensure the grievors can survive for the long term", said Vice President U Henry Van Thio, the Chairman of the Central Committee for Rescrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands at the coordinating meeting held yesterday at the Ministry of Home Affairs.

"As Myanmar is an agro-based

country, agriculture, farmlands and farmers play a major role. So, it is needed to push forward speedily in solving the land matters by reviewing the land matter, as such is the image of the country." He said the committee has received 3,980 complaints letters since the committee was formed, from States and Regions forwarded to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw.

The committee has informed related ministries, the Nay Pyi Taw council and committees in Regions and States to scrutinise the cases in accordance with the policy and procedure. Among the cases, 212 were solved and 3,768 were being scrutinized, said the vice president.

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,



Vice President U Henry Van Thio delivering a speech at the meeting. PHOTO: MNA

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-

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

LOCAL Business

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 triannual meeting of the clusters under the 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

Kalaw Park Housing Project to be completed in 2018

KALAW Park Housing Project situated in Inpyin village, Kalaw town is slated to be completed in 2018, said U Wunna Phyto, 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

Earthen pots sell well for water festival

EARTHEN pots (Atar pots) are selling very well in Tatkyi village, Amarapura township, Mandalay region with Thingyan festival approaching.

Local pottery industries mainly produce Atar pots and drinking water pots in the months between January and March. Tatkyi village produces the earthen products yearly and distributes them across the country. Local pottery makers produce different sizes of vases, stoves, oil lamps and toys made of clay.

Local people are used to collecting different types of clay from 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 posts locally only.—Tein Taman

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

THE share certificates for Danyingon 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 Thurein 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 Danyingon 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

Muskmelon price declines from China's low demand



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

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 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 Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP).—Ko Htet

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\$175.653million 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 US\$ 112.417million 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\$4.72bil at Muse, US\$185.588mil at Lweje, US\$550.081mil at Chimshehaw, US\$93.691mil at Kan Picketee, US\$4.424mil at Kengtung, US\$74.260mil at Tachilek, US\$866.692mil at Myawady, US\$121.950mil at Kawthoung, US\$193.329mil at Myeik, US\$11.452mil at Ht-



Trucks seen near Muse Border Trade Zone in Muse, northern Shan State. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

at Kan Picketee, US\$4.424mil at Kengtung, US\$74.260mil at Tachilek, US\$866.692mil at Myawady, US\$121.950mil at Kawthoung, US\$193.329mil at Myeik, US\$11.452mil at Ht-

eeKhee, US\$3mil at Mawtaung, US\$365,000 at Maese, US\$4.222mil at Sittwe, US\$5.666mil at Maungtau, US\$46.341mil at Tamu and US\$36.724mil at Reed. —Mon Mon

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

Article: Khin Yadanar

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 is a government body which provides assistance in accordance with the powers entrusted under the State Counsellor Law to implement the four tasks of the State Counsellor and to act as a coordinator in implementing the policies laid down by the State Counsellor. So the Ministry's functions are related to the works of the State Counsellor.

"In fact, the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor is a Ministry providing necessary assistance to the State Counsellor and acting as a coordinator in implementing the policies adopted by the State Counsellor. So its functions are related to the work of the State Counsellor. During the one-year period of the government in office, the Ministry has prioritized the national reconciliation and peace process, and peace, stability and progress of the Rakhine State. It is also implementing the important sectors of the State including the work of releasing prisoners of conscience and eradicating corruption under the policy guidance laid down by the State

Counsellor," said Union Minister of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe.

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. It is learnt that in order to do this the State Counsellor held a meeting with people who had actively participated in the peace process, and also held talks with representatives of armed ethnic groups.

"In accordance with the aspirations of the State Counsellor, the peace process aims at achieving national reconciliation apart from restoring peace in a holistic way. The Ministry on its

part has been working for the 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.

The Ministry has been meeting with all the participants of the peace process, holding bilateral talks with them and taking suggestions from them. As an initial step in creating an array of institutional platforms for the realization of the three goals, the State Counsellor founded the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre- NRPC on 11 July 2016. NRPC in fact is the first step towards the whole process of achieving national reconciliation and peace in the Union.

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 graced 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 and made changes in the event planning for the continued progress of the peace process. Peace talks and institutional changes had to be conducted simultaneously. In order to ensure

that the concept of the 21st Century Panglong is in conformity with the existing peace process, the State Counsellor met with the leaders of the armed ethnic groups who were the signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement – NCA and chose the name of the future conference as "the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong." A meeting was held with the Joint Monitoring Committee-JMC formed according to NCA and the continuation of the JMC functions was approved.

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.

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.

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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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is seen during her visit to Japan in 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

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The subcommittee-1 discussed the holding of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong while the subcommittee-2 was meeting with the non-signatories. The two subcommittees by holding the Framework Review Meeting together could ensure Ownership for the non-signatories. Thanks to the Dual Track, understanding with the non-signatories was reached to the level of ensuring their participation in the first Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong. What is more significant is the fact that at the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, which was held at the International Convention Hall (2) in Nay Pyi Taw from 31 August to 3 September 2016, representatives from the Government, the Tatmadaw, the Hluttaw, Political Parties, Ethnic armed groups who have signed the NCA and the Non-signatory ethnic armed groups all attended the meeting. This significant development could be considered as a success for the peace programme under the leadership of the NRPC Chairperson, the State Counsellor in which all the people who should participate attended the meeting.

Preparations for a series of political dialogues

At the same time, efforts had to be made to reconstitute the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee-UPDJC, which is the main body for the political dialogues. UPDJC was formed according to the NCA. The State Counsellor gave guidance that the political dialogues must be accessible to all those who need to participate. In accord with this guidance, UPDJC was reorganized with the representatives from the government, the Hluttaw, the Tatmadaw, the armed ethnic groups and the political parties under the leadership of the State Counsellor.

UPDJC drafted and adopted necessary work guidelines to prioritize the holding of the Peace Conference in reviewing the framework of the political dialogue, and to facilitate the national level political dialogues. The peace process concerned with all the citizens, and the prioritization of the people's participation in the national level political dialogues has resulted in the largest public involvement ever in such an event in many years. The other uniqueness is the involvement of the civil society organizations-CSO in the peace process after seriously taking into account their important role. The role of the UPDJC is important in taking into account the proposals made at the specific CSO Forum. The amendment of the framework and the public accessibility are the success of the current peace process.

Tasks and programs for Peace

Internal peace is the main requirement for a country that faced severe conflicts for over 60 years.

As publicly declared, the incumbent government has given

priority to the peace process. Normally, the peace process needs time as it is a task that must be implemented with great patience, tolerance, goodwill and mutual understanding while experiencing many ups and downs all along the way. The many years of experiences the country has faced can be seen as lessons against deviation for the peace process.

As a show of the indivisibility between the political dialogue and the peace process the first Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong where ethnic views and positions could be freely expressed in a period of over 60 years was held to find a political answer to the political problem. As the conference was broadcast live on TV the entire nation could witness and hear the stands and voices of multiple ethnic races and various organizations.

Plans are under way to hold the second Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong in the near future. UPDJC has already passed a decision to reach an agreement on the basic principles of federalism at the conference. These basic principles will be the important foundation for the emergence of the Democratic Federal Union in the future.

The NCA after one year and its future goal

The progress of the peace process is based on the NCA. NCA that produced political dialogues gave assurances for all parties in holding the political dialogue in addition to problem-solving process through ceasefire monitoring and ceasefire agreement. A review of the peace process during the one-year period shows both the brilliant rays of hope and the challenges for cementing the peace process. Come hell or high water, the Ministry is making continuous efforts to realize peace which is the goal of the Union.

Undertaking for the detainees detained for their conscience to get released

The government undertook the process for the detainees detained for their political outlook and activities, political activists and those being engaged in the trial at the courts to get released pursuant to the policy, guidance and instruction of the State Counsellor that dictates no prisoners of conscience during the administration of the Democratic government. The process includes closing the cases under investigation and the cases on trial at the respective township courts in line with the law, by-law and regulations concerned. According to the constitutional law Act 204, Sub-Act (A) Amnesty Order of the President 453 defendants were released till the end of May 2016 including 83 released on 16 April.

Cultivating the awareness of the peace among the people

(A) Holding the peace dialogue

Since the youths of new generation have to bear the brunt of the result of the fact whether



Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

In implementing the peace process which is the main objective of Office 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.

peace is acquired or not, with good will intention for the young generation the State Counsellor held a peace talk with the young people on 1st January 2017 and held Panglong Peace Talk meeting with ethnic people at Panglong on the Union Day, 12th February 2017 envisioning the peace process is the concern of all people. Apart from the peace talk sponsored by the State Counsellor, emergence of peace talks among the people will also be tried.

(B) Opening the Peace Process Orientation Course

Union Peace Conference-21st century Panglong is the only venue to talk and discuss the process and procedure aiming at the successful implementation of the Federal Union. Hence, Peace Process Orientation Course was opened at NRPC (Naypyitaw) on 19-21 January 2017 with a view to make government representatives, government ethnic representatives, working committees and supervisory committee members more knowledgeable pertaining to the works of peace process of 21st Panglong Conference.

Coordinating the supporting process to peace

The State Counsellor's Office has opened an account at the Myanmar Economic Bank, Naypyitaw Branch for the donors local and abroad to be able to donate to the fund for peace process. The donations made by local donors are spent transparently and in line with the financial rules and undergo the auditing of Union Auditor-General Office. Moreover, Joint Coordinating Body for Peace

Process Funding – JCB chaired by State Counsellor was organized and that body is undertaking the works related to collecting the fund to be used in peace process, systematically disbursing the fund donated by international donors, effective utilization of the fund and making appropriate sharing of the fund. It is remarkable that all NCA signatories and non-signatories are included in the JCB. UNFC representatives, "Wa" and "Mongla" representatives are also included in JCB in addition to 8 armed groups that already signed the NCA. Coordination and discussion on the matter of foreign aids are carried out in connection with peace process.

Establishing the peace, stability and development of Rakhine State

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. Reconciliation and peaceful co-existence among the social groups and ethnic people are also pivotal in successful implementation of peace process.

"Peace in Rakhine should not be seen separately from the whole country. It sheds large effect on the peace of the whole country. Therefore, the government has worked with special emphasis to sustain peaceful condition in Rakhine, to promote the socio-economic condition of Rakhine people and to build harmony and understanding among the social communities. Both international and national level implementation mechanism are applied from all angles to gain the coveted target in Rakhine" said Union Minister.

The government came to learn that much as the Rakhine State is a coastal state rich in natural resources, people leave the state on account of various circumstances for other places that seem better for their livelihood and compounded by the fact that many thousands of illegal migrants came into their land, Rakhine people become the minority group on their own land. This fact compelled the incumbent government to find ways and means to address the long-lasting problems in this state as a priority work. Long-term and short-term plans are set to approach this touchy issue from all angles for the sustainable existence of development and peace in Rakhine State. With a view to include all the members of the Union Government in implementing the plans for Rakhine State, The Rakhine State Peace And Development Implementing Central Committee was formed including all the members of Union Government and chaired by State Counsellor on 30 May 2016. Four sector-wise working committees were also formed. The central and sectorwise working committee are touring around the Rakhine State to observe the true facts and carry out necessary tasks for the development and

peace in Rakhine State.

To find lasting solutions to the complex and delicate issues in the Rakhine State and to give advices and support to the efforts of the government so that it can solve the Rakhine issue, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Office of the State Counsellor and the Kofi Annan Foundation to establish an Advisory Commission on Rakhine State chaired by former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Chairman and Founder of the Kofi Annan Foundation and noble laureate, Mr. Kofi Annan.

The commission submitted its interim report to the government on 16th March. The report's advices which based on facts found during their facts-finding mission in conflict areas in northern Rakhine, are helpful for last solutions to the delicate issues.

While the government is taking constructive measures for the Rakhine issue, armed men funded by overseas groups attacked the police border outposts in Maung-taw. Following the violent attacks, the authorities imposed the curfew and designed the conflict areas as the operation areas and security forces carried out area clearance operations to crack-down the attackers.

To probe into the background situations that led to violent attacks that occurred on 9 October and 12-13 of November in Maung-taw, Rakhine State and the truth about the incidents, and to investigate whether existing laws, rules and regulations were observed in taking measures to avoid similar incidents in the future before making recommendations, the Investigation Commission was formed with chairman Vice-President U Myint Swe.

The government has been taking citizenship verification measures in accordance with the 1982 Citizenship Law, issuing the National Verification Card (NVC) to eligible people.

Releasing information in timely manner

To release information including developments of Rakhine issue timely, the State Counsellor's Office Information Committee was formed in November 2016 and it released information through media to the people.

Fighting against corruption

Eradicating corruption plays an important role in establishing good governance, the rule of law and boosting investment and economy of a country.

Under the guidance of the State Counsellor, the State Counsellor's Office has worked together with the Office of the President to fight against corruption and malpractices at government departments, setting up mail, fax and email and telephone hotlines to accept complaints from the people.

The State Counsellor's Office has been implementing the policies and guidelines laid down the State Counsellor for the next four-year period.

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

>> FROM PAGE 1

We lobbied the people to vote for the NLD during the campaigns. We promised the people that if any of our representatives were found to be corrupt, we would be accountable and take necessary action. We have kept that promise.

In the past year, when we found that appointed individuals members of our party abused rules and regulations or failed to carry out their duties, we took necessary and will continue to do so in the future. At this time when we are putting the interest of the country at the forefront we must refrain from acting in our self-interest. We will not protect those who should not be protected irrespective of whether they have close relation to us or not.

It needs not be stressed that national reconciliation and peace are interlinked. The peace process we are pursuing is not an easy process. Yet, we have high hopes. In the past few days, we have been given greater reason to be more hopeful and optimistic for the success of the second Panglong Conference.

Having said that, hope remains a hope. We have not grasp everything entirely in our hand yet. We will continue to strive to achieve a substantive outcome. Taking the path of peace is like taking a journey. We have to move forward. Sometime we have been standing still. Sometime we have had to move back a little. But clearly, we have never lost sight of our goal. Therefore, we will continue our march towards that goal.

Our goal is peace. Our goal is national reconciliation. Striving for these goals, we highly appreciate and value the support, assistance and understanding we have received from our friends from around the world. Yet we must be the master of our own destiny. No one understands our country's situation and our needs better than we. I am fully confident that we have the wisdom and capability to choose the right path in fulfilling the needs of our country. This is our spirit. I want the people of Myanmar to have the same spirit and confidence in themselves. You may know this already. I don't actually know how much our Myanmar people are following the news, and making criticism.

The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on Myanmar citing the situation in the Rakhine State. We dissociated ourselves from it. We responded the way we did not because we do not respect the United Nations. Nor because we do not value friendly relations with member countries of the Human Right Council. We could not accept the resolution because we feel it is not keeping with the realities and it's against the interest of our country. We would be appreciative of and

more than happy to welcome any constructive advice. We will do our very best to implement such constructive advice. The initiatives we have taken in the past year were done with the single goal of building a better future for the country.

We do not take action for the sake of expediency or appease the majority. We do not choose quick wins just to be applauded or for temporary gain. We took risks to do the right thing. By risk, it meant that whatever we do in life, there are always risks because no one knows or can predict the future. We will do what are needed to be done, relying on conviction and policy priorities. In the past year, we have been doing what was needed to be done.

I would welcome any assessment by our people in connection to our Government's performance. It is their right to judge whether we have met their expectations. Because we are a country composed of many ethnic nationalities, we face many complex and sensitive situations in our peace process. Yet, I look at our diversity as a vast resource that can serve our interest. I believe that because of those diversities, we have more opportunities to work together for more progress and development. In working towards national reconciliation and peace, we need

No one understands our country's situation and our needs better than we. I am fully confident that we have the wisdom and capability to choose the right path in fulfilling the needs of our country.

to be free from the four types of corruption – “ဆန္ဒ” (desire or greed), “ဒေါသ” (anger or hostility), “ဘယ” (fear), and “မောဟ” (ignorance). Not doing it because one does not like it; doing it because it meets one's interest; doing it because of fear; or doing it because one is oblivious of consequences are all forms of corruptions. The Government has to strive to eliminate all forms of corruption.

Last year, just after the NLD Government took office, I delivered a similar address to the people on the occasion of the Myanmar New Year. I made a promise then that we will always cherish and care for the people and be loyal to the nation. This

is the final point that I would like to highlight. Loving and caring for the people means to strive our utmost for continuous progress and development to improve their lives. Just saying that you care is not enough. If one genuinely loves and care for the people, one must strive for their physical and mental wellbeing. Saying you care without taking action would just be empty words. Not a sign of strength for the people. Hence, we have been striving, as promised, for up-lifting the lives of the people. As I've mentioned earlier, you be the best judge how far we have come by analyzing presentations of various ministries.

I would like to bring to your attention a matter that I consider important. Caring for the people means that we need to pay more attention to their health and education. We have accordingly been paying special attention to budget allotment for the health and education sectors. This year we have allotted unprecedented amounts for health and education sectors. This is distinct departure from past practice. I can guarantee that it will be money worth spending and none will be wasted. We have witness a significant rate of development in the public health care sector. The international community has acknowledged our progress. Significant progress has been noted on the fight against (3) diseases, namely Tuberculosis, Malaria, and HIV/AIDS. The Global Fund established to fight the three diseases has commended Myanmar's remarkable achievement.

Myanmar, which used to be ranked at the bottom of the list in the fight against the three diseases, has now been moved to the top of ranking. The Global Fund not only praised our progress, but has pledged US\$ 500 million for next three years. This success provided me with immense pleasure and satisfaction.

One other success story, I would like to point out that transportation networks have improved considerably. When we issued our economic policy, we stressed that job creation was most important. This year, we managed to establish a good transportation network. We have also scored success in the electricity sector. With electricity comes job creation. People will have opportunity to create their own jobs with their own business opportunities. It will also enable places where transportation and electricity are available to attract investments from businesses.

We must therefore accord priority to electrification in-line with development of transportation and job creation. Utilization of public funds to focus on building a country and to implement plans and projects for the people must be systematically aligned and managed. I am also very proud



of our achievement in this regard.

In some of the States and Regions, public funds allotted last year to complete on-going projects have not only been put to good use but large sums have also been saved. The money has not been wasted or lost. Neither has the quality been compromised. These projects and plans have fully met the quality standards as priority was given to ensure quality.

In some States and Regions there are enormous amount of surplus in their balance sheet. Some have millions in surplus - others not millions, but billions in surplus. I am pleased and satisfied with these results. We don't abuse public funds by turning them into our own. Public funds are for the public. It is the resource of the country and we systematically managed and utilized it. This is what we mean by being loyal to the country. Actually, loyalty to the country and caring for the people cannot be separated.

If one is loyal to the country, one should care for its people. One must ensure their development and wellbeing. Vice versa, if one care about the people, one must also be loyal to their country. Only then you are being a dutiful Government. Whenever we are being called the NLD Government, I would also like to remind the people that we are a government of national reconciliation.

When we say we are the NLD Government, we do not mean that the NLD ownership of the Government. When we came to office, we made it clear that we are a government of national reconciliation. Our Government is composed not only of the NLD faithful but includes representatives various parties. This is to avail ourselves to the best talents in the interest of the people.

As to whether Ministers we have appointed have the neces-

sary qualifications or not, only time will tell. I note that some are making progress. Some are faster than others. Some may not be the right person for the right job. If change is needed, we will make the change after careful consideration. People have the right to know what the Government is doing. What are its priorities. Without transparency people would not be informed. It would mean that we do not trust, respect nor recognize the views of the people.

Doing things in transparent manner would reflect respect for the people. That is why being transparent and accountable are the basic characteristics of a good government. We have been working hard in transparent and accountable manner to serve the interest of the people and the country. I am also aware that we have not achieved the level of development that people have expected.

One year is not a very long period. I have has conversation with people from the countries that had gone through similar experiences like ours. That was two or three months ago. The majority of them acknowledged that our development rate is very fast. In some of their countries, they have had to work 3 or 4 years to achieve the level we have achieved. This is encouraging. It gives us added strength to continue to push forward.

At the time the NLD took over the responsibilities of the State, our slogan was “time for a change”. Now that we are one year old, I feel that we should change our slogan to provide another impetus. I have been thinking what slogan we should adopt. One that is short and precise in meaning. I've decided on “Together with the People” to express our desire to continue on this journey together with the people on board with us.

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Opinion

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

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

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 Hluttaws are not large enough to harm the decisive power 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 parliamentary 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 parliamentary 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, insurgencies. Some insurgencies 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.

Successive 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 grievances 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 peoples. They had been colonized by the French and later they had to fight between themselves as well as the Americans. Once the fightings 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 forgot our past and move on.

Hatred

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 also there wouldn't be terror-

ism, 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 disunity by making hate speeches or hate comments on the social media.

Nationalism

Nationalist spirit or nationalism played an important role in our strive 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 colonialist rulers, promote nationalism to the highest levels and achieved their goals. However, once they gained 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. Racist mentality leads to religionism, which can be very dangerous when it turns into extreme 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. Patriotic persons or patriots are ever ready to sacrifice for the good 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 ethnicity second. For instance: As I'm a Myanmar of Bamar origin, I identify myself as Myanmar first and Bamar second. If our nationals 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 ethnicity second. That attitude was very correct. I liked that attitude and the expression so much so that I borrowed that and used it here.

Conclusion

My sincere hope and belief is, once all our citizens irrespective of their ethnicity or religion, could accept the fact that we are Myanmar's 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.

Maungtaw Investigation Commission holds meeting 7/2017

THE Maungtaw Investigation Commission held its meeting 7/2017 at the meeting hall of the President's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Chairman of the Investigation Commission Vice President U Myint Swe said regarding the allegations of the UN Human Rights Commission, the commission made field trips to Maungtaw region to probe into the incidents and went to Bangladesh to interview the refugees who are said to have fled Myanmar due to violent attacks in Maungtaw region.

Concerning the UN Human Rights Commission's accusations, the Vice President said that the Tatmadaw investigation team led by Inspector-General Lt-Gen Aye Win and Myanmar Police Force investigation team headed by Police Brig-Gen Win Tun went to the Maungtaw region to investigate the incidents in detail. He continued that the aforesaid investigation teams made field trips to systematically probe into the case in accord with rules and regulations and their detailed reports were submitted to the Vice President. The commission mem-



Vice President U Myint Swe addresses the Maungtaw Investigation Commission meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

bers are to give their suggestions freely as it is important to review all findings in the commission's report.

The Commission Secretary U Zaw Myint Pe clarified mat-

ters on fact-findings mission to Bangladesh and compiling final report and a brief report. Then, the commission members U Aung Kyi, Dr Aung Tun Thet, U Nyunt Shwe, Dr Hla Maung,

U Saw Thalay Saw, Daw Kyein Ngai Man, U Thar Nyan, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win and U Aung Naing took part in the discussions.—Myanmar News Agency

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, Auntharya 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 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.—*Ramanya, Tin Soe*



Hundreds of old bullets dug up near Aungtharya Village, Maungtaw. PHOTO: MNA

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 Shivel, 53, who was from Myoma Ward, Butidaung 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 Shivel's wife filed a lawsuit after he went missing while visiting the house of his mother-in-law in the village of Mikyaung 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.

Myanma Tatmadaw's military uniforms seized in Bangladesh

MILITARY uniforms of the Myanmar army were seized in Teknaf, Bangladesh, on Wednesday, according to the State Counsellor's Office Information Committee.

It is reported that 402 military uniforms, 227 insignia, 186 military rucksacks, 18 military vests, 50 military helmets, 30 military rain coats, 188 pairs of military boots and 230 longyi were seized by Bangladeshi cus-

tomers officers after the search of a motor boat in Keiyaung Tawle port on Wednesday evening.

It was found that the military items were imported by a young man to Rahman Trading Company Limited in Chittagong. The man was arrested by Bangladeshi authorities at 8 pm Wednesday in Teknaf.

The company is owned by Nuru Arlaung Sedeki, who nor-

mally imports dry food stuffs from Myanmar.

The State Counsellor Office's Information Team said that the motive behind the seizure is that the violent attackers can disguise themselves as the members of the Myanmar Army and can rob and set fire to villages and violate human rights in attempts to disgrace the Myanmar army.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Senior General opens new jetty in Coco Island

THE Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party arrived at Coco Island on Thursday morning and attended a ceremony that formally opened a new jetty.

The commander-in-chief also inspected the work progress for the construction of an earthen road.

The Senior General and entourage additionally observed manufacturing of home decoration items made of coconut products at Coco Island Naval Command, met with government employees, town elders and locals at the town hall and presented cash assistance and gifts to them. They then paid homage to the Zina Marazein Pagoda and donated offertories to the abbot of Sasana Mandaing monastery.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also attended the opening ceremony of the Coco Island jetty yesterday morning. At the ceremony, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San, Quarter-

master-General Lt-Gen Nyo Saw and Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myo Zaw Thein formally opened the jetty.

Afterward, they were briefed about construction of the jetty by Dr Nyein Zin Latt, a lecturer from Myanmar Maritime University and an official handed over documents related to the jetty to

the naval commander. The Senior General and party released turtles into the sea to commemorate the opening of the jetty. The new jetty is expected to contribute to development of the Coco Island and will help improve transportation and the flow of commodities.—*Myanmar News Agency*



A naval ship shoots congratulatory fire to celebrate new jetty in Coco Island. PHOTO: MNA

Yangon Book Plaza products mostly bought by tourists

THE Yangon Book Plaza opened on the fifth floor of Iron Bazaar in Lanmadaw Township and is doing well because books are being bought mostly by tourists, according to an official from Plaza administration.

Yangon Book Plaza is the biggest book shop in Myanmar and is open from 10 am to 9 pm daily. The plaza houses 22 bookshops opened by various publishing houses.

The plaza not only sells publications but also provides recreation

places where books can be read free of charge. The books from Yangon Book Plaza are selling at a fair price. From time to time, the plaza also hosts book festivals and related events as well as literature talks.—200

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

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In continuing on this journey together, I would like to introduce a well-known term “ownership by the country”. Every country 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 hand 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 that 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

We will be accountable for our actions together with the people.

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 “အနိစ္စတရား” (impermanency of all things). We must also understand 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 steadfastly 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 endearing 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 each 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.

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

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO (025)

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 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 SILKAGO LOGISTICS PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV SIGAP VOY. NO (4)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SIGAP VOY. NO (4) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-3 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 MERIDIAN SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV LE MIN VOY. NO (124)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV LE MIN VOY. NO (124) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-2 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 COSCO SHIPPING CO LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

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 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 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 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 ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR 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.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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

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 in-

stalled 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 can be conducted.

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Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein in attendance at a Hluttaw meeting. PHOTO: MNA



Welcoming ceremony for Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong. PHOTO: MNA



The road is being paved with concrete. PHOTO: MNA



Yangon Region Chief Minister, centre, at the workshop on development of agricultural sector. PHOTO: MNA

PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

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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 heriages

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.



Yangon Region Chief Minister observes the scale model of Yadanar Hninsi housing complex in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA



Yangon Region Chief Minister warmly greets squatters in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA



Yangon Region Chief Minister listens as an official clarifies measures for regional development. PHOTO: MNA



Workers clean the area for the night market along Strand Road. PHOTO: MNA



Laying of underground water pipelines in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

Australians cling to roofs as floodwaters swamp towns

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 100,00 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

when the Wilsons River surged over the town's levee. By daybreak the center of the town of 25,000 people in the Northern Rivers region of NSW was underwater. Throughout the day several towns suffered the same fate and were submerged under floodwaters.

Stranded residents climbed onto roofs of flooded homes to await rescuing, but fast-moving water and high winds hindered emergency crews reaching some people. Farmers moved livestock to higher ground, while others sandbagged property, desperately trying to stop floodwaters.

NSW police said they had recovered the body of a woman from floodwaters on Friday, the first reported death since Cyclone Debbie



Local residents waded through floodwaters near their homes in the 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. PHOTO: REUTERS

hit on Tuesday. Authorities had feared that people may have died overnight as

floodwaters rose swiftly in the dark.

"We've seen a lot of

flood rescues here this morning," Lismore State Emergency Service Deputy Con-

troller Amanda Vidler said while floodwaters lapped her feet in the hard-hit town. She told Reuters of one rescue where she plucked a man from rushing water on the town's main street.

"We put him in an inflatable and we got him out of there...yeah, we all got wet," she said.

Cyclone Debbie, a category four storm, one short of the most powerful level five, pounded Queensland state on Tuesday, smashing tourist resorts, bringing down power lines and shutting down coal mines, has become a huge rain depression. Debbie will hit Australia's A\$1.7 trillion (\$1.3 trillion) economy, with economists estimating it will slow growth to under 2 per cent in the first quarter.—Reuters

Lack of cash clouds Cuba's green energy outlook

CIRO REDONDO, (Cuba) — Cuba, battling a chronic energy deficit, has all the 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-strapped Cuba is to hit its target of renewables filling 24 per cent of its energy needs by 2030, up from 4 percent today, a strategy that would require billions of dollars in investment.—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 Ont - Hti Bwar	7.11
(iii)	NyaungShwe	Nyaung Shwe - Kanu	6.51
(iv)	YetSauk	Pin Phit - Wapyar	11.37
(v)	Kalaw	BawNing-Thayetpu-KumParNi-SuPanNi	12.48
(vi)	Kalaw	Kum Par Ni - Paw 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.

Daw Tin Moe Myint U Kyaw Swa Aung
Director Director
Department of Rural Development Department of Rural Development
Office No(14), Nay Pyi Taw OfficeNo(14),NayPyiTaw
Tel/Fax: 067409410, 067409210 Tel: 067409029
Email: rbbdrd@gmail.com Email:ksaung@gmail.com

4. Submitting the tender document, Individual document must submit each lot.

5. A pre-bid conference will be held in the Meeting Room of the DRD at (28-4-2017) at 10:00AM. Each bidder is invited to attend the conference with maximum two representatives.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before (26-5-2017). Late bids will be rejected.

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 incurs 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 complete 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 nontariff barriers of any developed country," Ross said.—Kyodo News

INVITATION 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. H814MM. 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 G-81: Printed Items for Grievance Handling for forty seven (47) Project Townships, 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

Reference No.	Lot No.	Item No.	Description	Quantity
G 81	1	1	Grievance pamphlets	96000
	2	1	Manual booklet for focals	52000
	3	1	Grievance Letter/Envelope	182000
Supply to (Project Sites)			Department of Rural Development, Office No.(14),Nay Pyi Taw, 15 Regional Office and forty seven (47) Township Offices spread over the National Territory.	

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in a written form to the email address below and clearly indicate the reference number above. Please indicate your e-mail address as only electronic copies of the ITQ will be send. Eligible suppliers having expressed interest will receive an INVITATION TO QUOTE (ITQ). Sealed Quotations will be submitted to the address below at the latest at the dead line of **Tuesday 25April 2017 at 10:00am Myanmar time for G-81**, after which no Quotations will be accepted.

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 IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers" dated January 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 Swa Aung, Director, Procurement and Logistic Section, Mobile phone 0943434333 or office phone 067409071, Email: unioncddprocurement@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 "unsparing in our assessment that the mistake made by representatives of the firm was



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

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 83 years, took full responsibility for the gaffe, which stunned the A-list audience

in Hollywood and millions watching on television.

PwC quickly removed the two accountants responsible from further involvement in the Academy Awards and carried out a review of its procedures.

Starting next year, Isaacs said PwC will place a third accountant in the Oscars show control room, who will be able immediately to notify the director should a mistake be made. All accountants will have to hand over their phones and other electronic devices before going backstage, Isaacs said.

That decision followed news that one of the accountants involved in the Feb. 26 blunder had been taking photos backstage with celebrities and posting them on Twitter during the ceremony.

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

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, Beth Ditto of indie rock band Gossip, Phoenix, as well the "Two Brians" double billing of Brian Ferry of Roxy Music and Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys.

Tickets for one of Europe's most prestigious music festivals go on sale on Friday.

Trombone Shorty & the Orleans Avenue open 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 jam, you never know," Mathieu Jatton, festival director, told a news conference held in the Theatre de Jorat in the village of Mezieres above Lausanne.

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



Montreux Jazz Festival Director Mathieu Jatton. PHOTO: REUTERS

on the main stage of the Stravinski Auditorium.

"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," Jatton 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 Nina Simone.

"She is coming for a one-off, a unique concert. Apparently she has not announced any other concerts in Europe this summer," Jatton said. Herbie Hancock returns to Montreux for a record 38th time, while the "unclassifiable" Grace Jones promises an "atypical show," he said. Badu, celebrating 20 years since her debut album Baduizm, will follow Solange.

Simone, Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin, Prince and Deep Purple have given legendary concerts at Montreux, which former co-director Quincy Jones called the "Rolls-Royce" of festivals.—Reuters



Singer Katy Perry poses at Elton John's 70th Birthday and 50-Year Songwriting Partnership with Bernie Taupin benefiting the Elton John AIDS Foundation and the UCLA Hammer Museum at RED Studios Hollywood in Los Angeles, California, US, on 25 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

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 Dizze 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 lol," 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

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 shutters 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 alongside Vinod Khanna.

Directed by Gul Bahar Singh, the film was completed and screened in 2008, but its theatrical release was put on hold.

It is set to release in April.—PTI

Akshay Kumar unveils first poster of 'Toilet: Ek Prem Katha'



PHOTO: PTI

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.

"Pleased to share, @Toilet-TheFilm an unusual love story will be with you on 11th August, 2017," Akshay tweeted.

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

Akshay added, "Tayyar ho jaye Swachh Azaadi ke liye! (Brace yourselves for a clean freedom)"

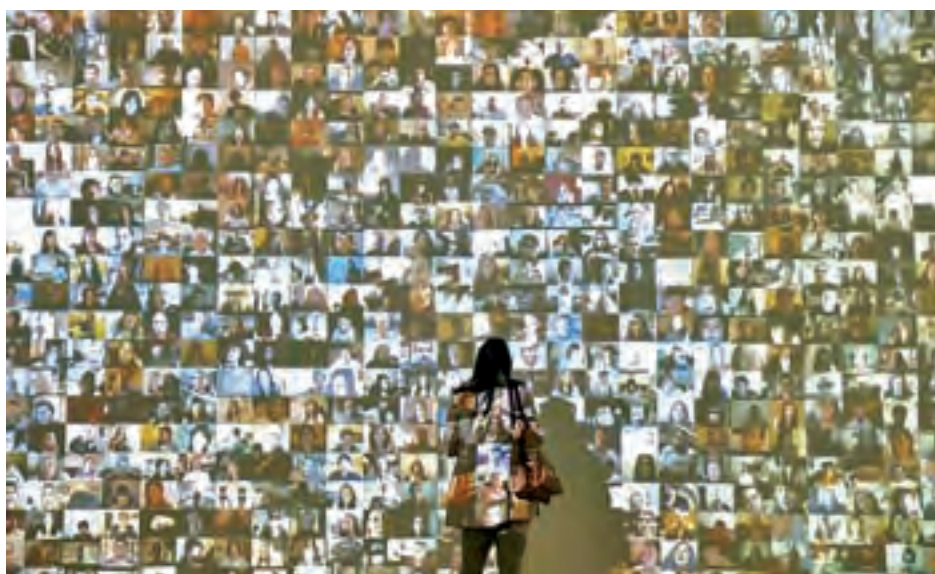
The poster shows Akshay and Bhumi dressed in traditional marriage attire in an interesting way triggering a debate on cleanliness and our rights.—PTI

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 inane.

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,



A woman looks at the audio visual installation 'Hello World' by Christopher Baker during a press day to promote the upcoming exhibition 'From Selfie to Self-Expression' at the Saatchi Gallery in London, Britain, on 30 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

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 not that we don't have privacy any more."—Reuters

Egypt unearths 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



An Egyptian scientist works on restoring a piece of the second Khufu boat at a temporary laboratory set up next to the Great Pyramids where it was discovered, in Giza, Egypt, on 29 March 2017. PHOTO: 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 feat on Wednesday — hatching eggs.

The 44-year-old, who specializes in performance art, will mimic a mother hen by incubating 10 eggs with his own body heat inside a glass vivarium until they hatch.

He reckons the endeavor will take from 21-26 days.

"I will, broadly speak-

ing, become a chicken," Poincheval said last month.

Poincheval says he seeks to explore varying concepts of time for different species and natural objects in his performances. The best way to understand objects is not from a distance but by entering them, he says.

In his latest experiment, Poincheval sits on a chair with the eggs in a container fixed under the seat.

He calculates that the heat from his body — kept high by him being wrapped

in a thick, insulating blanket designed by Korean artist Seglul Lee — will maintain the right temperature directly over the eggs. He will eat certain foods such as ginger to raise his body temperature. He will be able to stand up and leave his place over the eggs for no more than 30 minutes a day to receive meals that will be brought to him. For his own calls of nature he will use a box beneath him, though he will not be able to get up to relieve himself.

This is the first time

in his explorations that Poincheval confronts the world of the living.

Last month, he spent a week in a body-shaped slot carved out from a limestone rock in the same contemporary art museum in Paris, eating stewed fruit, soups and purees.

Before that, he had spent a fortnight living inside a hollowed-out bear sculpture in Paris's Museum of Hunting and Nature in April 2014, eating worms and beetles to mirror a bear's diet.—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

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(1-4-2017 07:00am ~ 2-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Great Shwedagon-The Prayer Halls And Buddha Images (Part-2)
07:51	Am	Next Generation "May Melody"
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	A May Yay Yin Nat Festival (Ep-I)
08:42	Am	Welcome to the Southern most part of Myanmar
08:53	Am	Next Generation: Nyan Kyal Say
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Aye Aye Soe: Myanma Pioneer Female Bodybuilder
09:40	Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
09:54	Am	Art Students: Sculpture

10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Next Generation "Nyan Lin Htet (Football Player)"
10:36	Am	Myanmar Prehistory

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture The Golden Land
07:46	Pm	Dances of Myanmar: Enn Traditional Dance
07:50	Pm	Today Myanmar: Pristine Nature - Gaw Yan Gyi Island
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part-2)
08:53	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Impressionism

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)



Roger Federer of Switzerland hits a backhand against Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic (not pictured) in a men's singles quarter-final during the 2017 Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Center in Miami, FL, USA, on 30 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

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.

"I definitely got very lucky at the end but I think I showed great 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 to set up two match points, the first on serve, but netted a forehand to squander the first.

Federer saved the second match point with a superb first serve and set up his own with an ace down the middle. 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

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 at the ANA Inspiration before high winds halted play at the first women's major of the year on Thursday.

With gusts of 45 miles per hour (72 kph) bending palm trees and blowing marked balls off greens and higher winds forecast,



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

officials called an end to play with the afternoon wave of players still on the 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 South Korean world number three Ryu So-yeon and her compatriots Park Sung-Hyun and amateur Seong Eun-jeong on a calm morning in the California desert.

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 Masson (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

ZURICH — FIFA announced its proposed slot allocation for the expanded 48-team World Cup on Thursday, including an automatic place for Oceania, 16 places for Europe — up from 13 — and a six-team inter-zonal playoff tournament for two more spots.

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, Asia eight, South America six, CONCACAF six and Oceania one, totalling 46 teams. The host nation would qualify automatically and its slot would be taken from the allocation of its confederation. In the most innovative part of the proposal, the two remaining places would be decided by a six-team playoff tournament which would take place in the World Cup host nation, possibly in the November before the finals, FIFA said.

That tournament would include one team from each confederation, except UEFA, and an extra one from the continent of the host country.

FIFA decided in January to



The snow-covered landscape is reflected in a logo in front of FIFA headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland, on 10 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

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