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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Seven more arrests, linked to huge 2016 drug bust

SEVEN men, some of them foreigners, were arrested on Tuesday, bringing the total number of arrested men suspected of running a major illegal drugs ring in Yangon to 15. Nine men are still being sought, police said.

The latest arrests stem from a drug bust on 17 November 2016 by Yangon Police, where 1,110 kilos of crystal methamphetamine, also known as “ice”, and 622.3 kilos of Ketamine were seized. A lawsuit was filed that day against nine suspects, including Cai Jeng Ze and 16 suspects who had fled, including a man with numerous aliases known as Mr. Sue, Myint Aung and Lauk Da. The nationalities of the men were not revealed, but police said many were foreigners.

On Tuesday, a combined task force comprised of members of the Anti-Narcotics Force and the Border Task Force received a tipoff that one of the runaway suspects, San Chin, alias Yan Shin, would be returning to

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Above, drugs seized on Tuesday in four houses in Yangon. Upper right, one of the weapons seized. Lower right, drugs and mobile phones. PHOTO: MPF



Harris Binotti walking in Craigton, Scotland, a suburb of Glasgow. Binotti has left his Craigton apartment and is reportedly in hiding. PHOTO: THE SCOTTISH SUN

Murder suspect on the run

Mark Angeles

The British man suspected of killing a compatriot in Yangon last year may have felt the pressure of impending arrest and has reportedly fled from his flat in Scotland and is in hiding, telling Facebook friends: “See you in the next life”.

Harris Binotti, 26, the prime suspect in the November 2016 murder of Gary Ferguson, a fellow teacher of English at Horizon International School in Yangon,

left Myanmar hours before the body of Ferguson, a husband and father, was found on 6 November. Binotti was recently discovered to be living comfortably in Craigton, Scotland, a suburb of Glasgow, until a British newspaper, The Scottish Sun, disclosed his whereabouts.

A “red notice” had been issued for Binotti by Interpol last week.

The sudden and steady glare of the media and law enforcement apparently prompted Binotti

to go underground.

On his Facebook page, Binotti told friends: “Whoever did this, I hope your [sic] proud of yourself,” according to the Scottish Sun. “I’m sorry if you really are a true friend and this had nothing to do with you, but I can’t take chances anymore. Peace out, catch you in the next life.”

Binotti’s Facebook page has since been taken down.

A source told the Scottish Sun how Binotti was furious after

being caught with his girlfriend Elsy Devolder.

“He was not at all happy about being found by the Scottish Sun. It sounds like he might hide if he can. He doesn’t know who he can trust. He’s saying goodbye to the team and going it alone.”

Binotti, originally from Dumfries, Scotland, was not arrested by Scottish police because of what appears to be some miscommunication among international law enforcement agencies.

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Seven more arrests, linked to huge 2016 drug bust

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his Thakayta and Yankin houses after the Thingyan holidays. Six of the suspects, San Chin, Aung Ye Thwin, Zan Myat Htun, Myo Lwin, Moe Kyaw and Soe Naing, were ambushed by the joint task force in San Chin's house on Market Street in Thakayta Township. Seized by police during the ambush were a .32 caliber pistol and 7 bullets, 198 tablets of am-

phetamines, 0.3 kilos of heroin and 4 vehicles.

The joint task force then proceeded to search San Chin's other house in Kamachee Street, in Thakayta Township and seized 3.665 kilos of heroin, 2,145,800 tablets of amphetamines, 299.6 kilos of 'Ice' and a motor vehicle.

Afterwards, the joint task force proceeded to runaway suspect Htun Lin Aung's house in

ShweOhnPin housing in Yankin Township and seized 20,000 tablets of amphetamines, a 9mm pistol and 8 bullets.

Next, they went on to search runaway suspect Min Min's house in ShweOhnPin housing and seized 14 tablets of amphetamines.

The total number of confiscated drugs from the four households includes 3.965 ki-

los of heroin, 2,166,012 tablets of amphetamine, and 299.6 kilos of 'Ice' with a total value of Ks31.9455 billion, along with two pistols, 15 bullets and five motor vehicles. The suspects will be charged with violating the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. The investigation continues, and the remaining 9 suspects are being sought.—Myanmar News Agency



Min Min, alias San Shae.



Aung Ye Thwin.



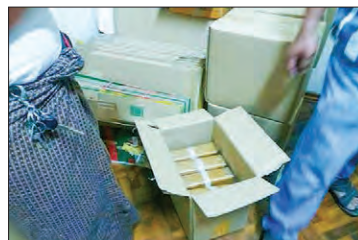
One of the vehicles used by drug traffickers. PHOTO: MPF



Moe Kyaw.



Zan Myat Htun.



Drugs confiscated by police.



San Chin, alias Yan Shin.



Myo Lwin.



Soe Naing.



One of hideouts used by the drug traffickers in Thakayta.

Thingyan crimes down in Monywa this year

DEATHS and crimes during the Thingyan Water Festival decreased in Monywa District this year due to the active participation of residents in crime prevention activities, according to the Monywa District Police Station.

Police Major Myint Aye said that 65 per cent of the police force were dedicated to patrolling the festival, while other 15 per cent remained ready to respond to emergency cases.

He went on to say that public involvement plays an important role in preventing and reducing crime in the four-day festival.

It is found that participating residents are more likely to follow the law.

No major or complex criminal cases occurred between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. over the period of four days but traffic accidents were reported during the evening hours, the police major said.

According to hospital records, the 500-bed General Hospital in Monywa received about 200 new patients, including 150 males and 45 females, who sustained injuries mostly in road accidents and as a result of fighting.

A total of 1,200 criminal cases occurred in the 2017 Thingyan period, causing 285 deaths and over 1,000 injuries nationwide.—Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

Briton suspected of killing compatriot in Yangon last year goes into hiding

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Scottish authorities have said Binotti could not be arrested because an arrest warrant had not been issued by Myanmar police. But Myanmar police said yesterday that an arrest warrant was issued within days of the discovery of Gary Ferguson's body on 6 November.

The arrest warrant was translated into English, notarised, and then sent to Myanmar police headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital, according to Police Major Toe Myo, the head of the Kyauktada police department. Kyauktada was the neighbourhood in Yangon where the murder took place.

Messages to Interpol, the global police organisation that fa-

cilitates cooperation among international law enforcement agencies, elicited a complex response.

"A Red Notice is a request to provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition issued by the General Secretariat upon the request of a member country based on a valid national arrest warrant. It is not an international arrest warrant", a statement from Interpol's press office said.

"The individuals concerned are wanted by national jurisdictions (or International Criminal Tribunals, where appropriate) and Interpol's role is to assist national police forces in identifying or locating those individuals with a view to their arrest and extradition."

The statement went on to

say that interpretation of a red notice is left up to the country in which the suspect is found.

"Interpol cannot insist or compel any member country to arrest an individual who is the subject of a Red Notice. Nor can Interpol require any member country to take any action in response to another member country's request. Each Interpol member country decides for itself what legal value to give Red Notice within their borders."

The statement from Interpol's press office said that many of Interpol's member countries consider a Red Notice a valid request for provisional arrest, especially if they are linked to the requesting country via a bilateral extradition treaty. In cases where

arrests are made based on a Red Notice, these are made by national police officials in Interpol member countries.

Gary Ferguson, 47, was found dead in Binotti's Kyauktada apartment on 6 November with massive head and chest wounds. Binotti and Ferguson had been drinking together on 3 November before going back to Binotti's apartment.

Neighbours in Kyauktada told reporters in November that they heard a loud ruckus in the early morning hours of 4 November involving two men and a woman.

They said Binotti and his girlfriend, Elsie Devolder, had rented the apartment about three months prior.

Devolder, a Belgian national, was apparently living with Binotti in his Glasgow apartment until two days ago.

Ironically, Binotti and Devolder lived less than a mile from a police station in Glasgow, according to the Scottish Sun.

Gary Ferguson, originally from Bangor, Northern Ireland, leaves behind a wife and a four-year-old son.

His brother, Martin Ferguson, said the delays in justice for his brother have been frustrating and, at times, infuriating.

"We really want to get him (Binotti) off the streets," Martin Ferguson told the Global New Light of Myanmar yesterday.—Aye Min Soe contributed to this report.



Vice President and party being seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials.
PHOTO: MNA

Vice President U Henry Van Thio starts working visit to the Netherlands

AT an invitation of Mr. Lodewijk Frans Asscher, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands, a Myanmar delegation led by Vice President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Henry Van Thio left the Yangon International Airport yesterday morning for the Netherlands to pay a working visit there.

The Vice President accompanied by the Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung and the officials were seen off at the airport

by the Yangon Region cabinet members and officials.

The Vice President and party arrived at the Amsterdam-Schiphol International Airport (AMS) at 4:30pm local standard time and were welcomed by Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Myanmar Mr. Wouter Robert Marie Jurgens and responsible officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Myanmar Ambassador to the Netherlands U Paw Lwin Sein and officials from the Myanmar Embassy in Brussels. —Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than meets with Myawady residents

AMYOTHA HLUTTAW Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than who was in Myawady visited Palu village tract, Minletpan village yesterday at 9 a.m. met with the villagers in the Dhamma Hall of the Ywa Oo Monastery.

Hluttaw representatives, district, township and village officials were present together with the local people.

At the meeting, Mahn Win Khaing Than said that he was happy to meet with local ethnic brothers and sisters. He said attempts were being made to upgrade the education and health sectors according to the Union budget and that in fact more funds had been spent on the education and health sectors currently. There were plans to allocate more funds to these two sectors. As the economy of the country developed, the education and health sectors would become more adequately funded.

Foreign investment was required for the country's economy to improve and the Hluttaw was having deliberations for the emergence of a comprehensive law required to increase foreign investment. Foreign investment would come in only if the law was logical and sound. More job opportunities would be created only if foreign investments came into the country.

In giving a briefing about the work of the Hluttaw the Speaker explained that the Hluttaw was an organization that enacted laws. It also had the responsibility of overseeing the work of the judiciary and executive branches of the government to ensure that there were checks and balances. In exercising the legislative powers entrusted to it, the Hluttaw had been enacting new laws, amending ex-



Mahn Win Khaing Than greeting villagers from Palu village-tract, Myawady. PHOTO: MNA

isting laws and removing outdated laws for the benefit of the country and the people.

He requested the local people to discuss with him candidly about the problems they were facing and he assured that he would take effective measures to resolve them while informing the people that action would be taken in a transparent manner. He added that the Union Government and the Hluttaw had been instituting changes and introducing reforms in the various sectors of the country to achieve the best results.

He said Peace was the key for the development of the country. Foreign investments would come in only when peace was achieved and the country would develop further only if foreign investments came in. He continued that under the leadership of the State Counsellor, they had been striving to achieve eternal peace with Metta (Loving-kindness).

He concluded by saying that he hoped the local people would

cooperate with strength and high spirits, and that they would do their respective tasks no matter what functions they were performing.

Afterwards, State Hluttaw representative provided explanations to the discussions on developmental requirements presented by the people of Minletpan village, Ingyinmyaing village and Kyaukkhet village of Myawady Township.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than then thanked the people for discussing about the regional development matters in an open and frank manner and said he would coordinate with officials concerned and take action accordingly regarding the matters that had been discussed.

The Speaker then visited the Minletpan Basic Education Middle School and inspected the status of laying a concrete road in front of the school that was built with the Union Hluttaw reserve fund.—Myanmar News Agency

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President's Office
Order 7/2017
8th Waning of Tagu, 1379 ME
19 April, 2017

Appointment of Deputy Minister

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 234 (a) (d) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 16 (b) sub-section (9) of Union Government Law, U Aung Htoo, has been appointed as the Deputy Minister for Commerce.

Sd/ Htin Kyaw
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Housings for government employees to be constructed in regions and states

THE 2nd coordination meeting on construction of staff housing for government employees was held at the Ministry of Planning and Finance in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon, with Union Minister U Kyaw Win in attendance.

At the meeting, the Union Minister said that the incumbent government has been constructing fair price apartments and low-cost housings for the retirees in some regions and states to settle housing insufficiency. He added that the low-cost apartments were being sold on an installment basis for the

convenience of the general public, saying the Ministry of Construction plans to build low-cost housings across the country in cooperation with the ministries, region and state governments, banks and the construction entrepreneurs.

The officials from Nay Pyi Taw Council and the ministries, regional and state ministers for construction, the chairman of Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association and responsible personnel from Myanmar Banks Association took part in the discussions. —Myanmar News Agency



The 2nd coordination meeting held at the Ministry of Planning and Finance in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA



The Yangon circular railroad project includes preliminary engineering, embankment maintenance and a proper drainage system. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAH

Transport authorities prioritise railway project

A RAILWAY project to improve five important railroad sections, including the Yangon-Mandalay and Yangon-Pyay railroads, is the key priority under a master plan, according to the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

In the initial stage of the railway plan, the ministry will implement the upgrading of five major railroad sections which cover 80 per cent of the country — the 385-mile long Yangon-Mandalay

railroad, the 340-mile long Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad section, the 176-mile long Yangon-Mawlamyine railroad section, and the 160-mile long Yangon-Pyay railroad section and the Yangon circular railroad. The cost for the project that will upgrade all railroad sections in the whole country is expected to reach approximately US\$60 billion.

For the time being, the ministry is implementing the Yangon

circular railroad project with the use of more than \$200 million in Japanese loans and it is estimated to be finalised by the 2020-2021 financial year.

The Yangon circular railroad project includes preliminary engineering, embankment maintenance and a proper drainage system. The project will cut travelling time as well as improve rail safety for commuters, officials said.—200

Hteesekha Waterfall in Loikaw draws crowds

HTEESEKHA Waterfall, the most accessible and well-known waterfall in Loikaw Township, Kayah State, is drawing increasing numbers of visitors from near and far who come to see its unspoiled beauty.

Visitors to the magnificent waterfall have significantly increased from last year because of its beautiful landscapes and natural attractions, according to tour operators.

Situated in Hteesekha Village in Loilinlay Village-tract, near the Shan-Kayah bor-

der seven miles from Loikaw Town, Kayah State and about 90 miles from Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State, the Hteesekha Waterfall is a natural wonder surrounded by lush green forest. Swimming is possible in the clear, clean and cool stream.

Police carry out security checks around the waterfall area regularly for safety of visitors.

Pagodas and a Buddhist monastery are located near the waterfall have similarly drawn increasing numbers of devotees

and merit makers, especially during religious events.

The waterfall dates back many decades, but remained undiscovered until Saigyilong from Hteesekha Village came across the stunning scene in the summer of 2001. The waterfall then began to be known as a nice place to camp in the summer, with natural caves nearby that can be explored. The emergence of stupas, related religious structures, rest houses, restaurants and ornament shops have since increased.—Ko Sai (Loikaw)



Flocks of visitors gather Hteesekha Waterfall in Loikaw. PHOTO: MMAL

Mon State's Thanphyuzayat Township needs water

RESIDENTS in Thanphyuzayat, a township in Mon State, need more drinking water on a daily basis during this hot season, locals say.

To fill the need of residents, members of Thanphyuzayat Township Fire Services Department continues to donate many gallons of water to the water-stressed wards every afternoon under the supervision of its head fire service official.

The firefighters daily supply roughly 8,000 gallons of water to the target areas, providing real-time service to the residents.

Temporary water tanks have also been established on each

street by the department in order to ensure the water distribution programme is fast and easy.

Water scarcity is among the main problems to be faced by many communities, mainly in central arid zones, during the summer climate as the streams and other water sources dry up.

Several villages in Mon State yearly experience water shortages. The most affected townships in the state include Paung, Thaton, Belin, Kyaikmayaw, Mudon and Chaungzone townships. Meteorologists say that temperatures are forecast to rise this summer, particularly from mid-April to May.—Tin Htut (Mawlamyine)

Crime NEWS



EaikOo, Ma Aye Aung with drugs. PHOTO: MPF

Yaba seized on Lashio-Mong Yaw road

AN anti-narcotic squad from Lashio searched a motorbike driven by EaikOo together with Ma Aye Aung on board into the entrance of Napha village on Lashio-Mong Yaw road in Lashio on 18

April and found 800 yaba pills from Ma Aye Aung's blouse. Police have taken action against EaikOo, 35, and Ma Aye Aung, 52, under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force

Stimulant pills seized in Kalaw Tsp

ANTI-DRUG squad from Taunggyi searched a vehicle driven by Sai Setai followed with Takyout on board and seized stimulant pills worth K 7.8 lakh packed with two plastic bags and one gunny sack including one handset which were put on the back-seat cushion of

the vehicle near Bahwa Tantaya Bridge on the highway road of Taunggyi-Meikhtila in Heho, Kalaw Township yesterday.

The men are being charged under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force

AD Van crashed into road-divider on Highway

A white AD Van driven by Nang Naing Win en route from Nay Pyi Taw to Yangon hit a road-divider when the front wheel burst out on the early morning of 19 April between mile posts 97/3 and 97/4 on Yangon-Mandalay Highway.

No one was injured in the accident but the vehicle was damaged, losses amounting to Ks 2 lakh. Local police have taken action against the driver under sec-

tion 279 of the Penal Code.

There were 17 car accidents on Yangon-Mandalay Highway during this Water Festival according to Police Major Yan Naing of Highway Police Force. The vehicles that met with accident are one express, one light truck, eight privately owned vehicles and seven motorbikes. Four people were killed while 14 others injured in the accidents.—Nyi Nyi Than (Nay Pyi Taw)

LOCAL Business

US dollar exchange rate dips with lower US dollar index

WITH the US dollar index weakening since 10th April, the US dollar exchange rate fell to Ks1,351 eight days later, according to the local currency exchange market.

The US dollar index reached 101.22 on 10th April and continued to fall. The dollar index was above 100 points before 13th April, then slipped to 99 points. The dollar index was on the rise as of early March in the global market. However, it was remarkably on the decline in late March.

Meanwhile, the US

dollar exchange rate in the local currency market was around Ks1,360 between 16th and 27th March. The rate decreased to under Ks1,360 from 28th to 4th April.

The exchange rate was found to experience a downward trend later 6th April. After that, it reached three-month low of around Ks1,351 on 18th April.

The Central Bank of Myanmar scaled down a bit the US dollar exchange rate from Ks1,359 to Ks1,356 on 19th April.

—Mon Mon



PHOTO: REUTERS



Gold jewelry seen at shop in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAH

High global gold price hikes up domestic gold price

THE domestic gold price reached a record high of about Ks912,000 per tical as the global gold price has risen since 18th April, according to the local gold market.

The gold price continued to rise quickly during April in the global market,

ranging from US\$1,256 to 1,289 per ounce between 11th and 18th April.

The domestic gold price is fluctuating, aligned with world market. The price fell under Ks900,000 per tical in early March, then back to

above Ks900,000 per tical, in keeping with a hike in global gold market.

With a slump in global gold price, the domestic gold price again slipped to below Ks900,000 between 31st March and 3rd April. The local gold price

remained on the rise to around Ks900,000 on 4th April. After the Thingyan festival holidays, the gold price hit a high of about Ks912,000 per tical on 18th April, according to the gold and jewellery shops.—Mon Mon

Local grapes cannot compete against imported varieties

LOCAL grapes are offered at a reduced price compared to those imported from China and Thailand in the market.

Prices for locally produced grapes declined by about one third against the foreign varieties. In a bid to compete with the

imported grapes in the market, grapes of quality and high market demand should be grown, said a vineyard owner of Sae-palaegon village in Yame-thin Township, Mandalay Region.

“We need to grow only grapes of good quality in order to grasp a firm market. We need to switch to better grape varieties. Growing techniques with the use of seeds is still lacking in Myanmar. Efforts are being made to produce grapes by grafting in the coming grape season. Only grapes of good quality can compete against the product from Thailand and China in the domestic market”, he added.

Black Queen, Big Black, Shweni, Cardinal and other grape varieties are cultivated in Myanmar. Currently, there are about 5,000 acres of grape farms across the country.

—200



Grapes are seen at a farm in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Region on 13 April 2017. PHOTO: MEIKTILA MK

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegonedine



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မတ်စ်နိုင်ပါပြီ။

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Performances in One-Year Period

Introduction

THIS article is based on the statistics sent by data collection board, but it mainly depended upon my own findings and hypothesis, hence the need to assume that critics and conclusions included in the article should be regarded to be the assumption of the writer.

Only if there has been progress in the sector of social affairs, has a country or a race achieved development. The progress of a country or a race can be assessed by using the progress of its social affairs as a criterion. Progress in peace and stability, economic progress and political progress can drive the progress of social affairs to its success, but it cannot make an effect directly. Provided that law and order restoration & rule of law develop, social affairs can develop. Yet, whenever the former develops, the latter cannot be said for sure to become developed. As regards politics and economy, it is in the similar way. It is worse as there are not any standardized criteria for assessing the progress of politics, economy and social affairs. It will be a big question, as to who can say that there has gained the above-said progress, if any kinds of progress have emerged.

Economy at the very first step

Undeniably, social existence is really connected with economy. But, social existence of the public (social life) and economy of the country are not in the same way all the time. As regards this, the necessary explanation will be made in the following paragraph. Because, we have to answer the question as to whether the public will be full of basic needs if the country's economy becomes better, for now. For answering the question, we must reassess by which criterion the economy of a country can be measured. Generally, it is commonly used the Gross Domestic Production. If and when our currency is devalued or commodity prices inflate or there includes fabricated statistics or the country depends upon foreign loans as the government spending rises unnecessarily, the GDP cannot represent in the right way. At that time, only the adjustment of PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) can become the considerably acceptable GDP, especially Per Capita GDP.

There is an easy way to assess the progress of the social affairs of the public, that is, looking into the spending connected with social affairs. It is ways of looking into the spending as to how much budget had been used in the sector of the social affairs or how many percentages of the

Looking into the Progress of Social Affairs in One-Year Period

Kyaw Saw Min



Upper left, a child peeks in on Pa'O women attending a class as part of the literacy campaign. PHOTO: MNA

budget had been used in the sector of social affairs. We had ever had years in which 2.2% of the budget had been allotted for education, 1.2% for health and 0.8% for social welfare, rescue and resettlement. For a country enlisted in the least developed countries, 4.2% of total spending for the 3 major sources of the social sector points out at the only answer that social development of the country will continue to drop.

It is regretful to criticize the progress of the social affairs during the previous one-year period of the new government. A financial year starts at 1st April every year. The budget of a new financial year has to be compiled in the old year. Under the procedure, it can be said that the old regime draws a budget for the new government. But, due to extraordinary concessions, the new government has the right to revise the budget whereas as for the departments that earn little but spend too much, it is not easy to carry out development projects according to their desires, for social sector in spending their Lion's Share.

If we want to study the progress of the social sector during the previous one-year period of the new government, we are to examine how much the budget had been allotted in the sectors of social affairs in the financial year 2016-2017. With the increasingly rising commodity prices, demands for the commodity of the grass-root people are decreasing. We must take this into consideration.

“As regards the politics, we should be well convinced that there are two parts in politics—the affair of the country and the party politics.

Politics at the middle step

In the country with unstable politics or in the country with stable-but- conditionally restrained-politics, the people may be full of their needs in every way but they will partially live in anxiety or in dissatisfaction. Such a person under the said situation cannot be named the citizen with high status in social affairs.

A good political system gives a good administrative one. Its upper reach is the Constitution. If there is a hole of toxin, there will be no good places along the river. Had equality and enjoying human rights been broken in some way or other, there can arise impacts in the social class of taking people's finance, that is, government servicemen and citizens residing in the country. Such impacts are apt to lead to social conflicts.

As regards the politics, we should be well convinced that there are two parts in politics—the affair of the country and the party politics. We have seen that such leaders are rare in the history of Myanmar until now

since the time of gaining Independence. In the eras when the de facto governments took offices, there were cases that could not distinguish personal benefits and national benefits. Therefore, there emerged breakdown of social affairs in Myanmar, which was greatly respected not only by neighboring countries but also by the whole world.

It reached only one year period that the new government which was appointed by the people took office. Yet, limitation of budget and restriction of authority caused no results of social development as expected.

It is not an easy task to heal the destructed conditions that had been ruined for 50 years, just in one year. Any creator cannot afford to do so. Political deterioration can be cured in two years, with economic deterioration cured in next two years. It will take 6 years to cure educational and health defects. But we need to fight for social deterioration to the extent of changing people's mindsets. It is a long journey we must move on to drive out our evil minds, ill spirits and the blankety-blank behaviours as said by Bogoyoke Aung San.

Social Affairs at the last step

The State guarantees not only for the security, provision of food, shelter & clothing of its citizens, but also for the stability of social existences such as education & health. It is undeniable that the new government has been making its concerted effort

of its social sector during the previous one-year-period, unlike in the past 70 years. We can see these obviously, just by glancing at the performances of the ministries and respective regions and states. Some places were found to fail to have achieved remarkable progress due to the budget limitation.

Natural disaster can harm social lives of the people. Under the current situation, there were many fire outbreaks in Myanmar. The fire services department short of fire-brigade members and fire-extinguishing equipments, unsafe system of wiring electric wires carrying electricity, illegal storage of fuel oil, expanded construction of dwelling houses on public roads so that fire-engines cannot go into paths, cause fire to break out more than normal. We can take lesson from the incident which saved the whole town from the inferno, thanks to the invention of motor-cycle engine as an emergency fire extinguisher.

Early warning system is of great importance in the time of natural disasters of floods and storms. Just after outbreaks, rescue and resettlement works have to be done. Had disasters been great, the government cannot manage these works alone. Then, it is necessary for people to take part in these campaigns. Just for now, those who contribute voluntary labor for rescue works were seen to have been supervised by emergency management groups comprising of government servicemen in respective regions and states.

International rescue teams and internal Samaritan groups are more capable of performing than the government, for example in time of the Nargis storm. Contributions of well-wishers, people and philanthropist teams from home & abroad are enormous. Afterward, such people and institutions played an important role in following disasters, acquisition of water in villages, having an access to learning and setting up economic lives.

In Australia, there was a Civilian Army formed in the nationwide scale. It is not an armed force. Well-wishing civilians are recruited and trained for rescue works. When the government happens to need helps in time of natural disasters, civilian army forces are gathered by broadcasting instructions. Premier of the province leads the rescue teams, helping victims in disaster-stricken areas by land, air and water. This is a matter of for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement to consider.

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PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

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In my opinion, central control center is urgently needed for these rescue works. From the establishment of a website to opening facebook, arrangements are needed to have been done broadly. Relations must have been made with all the philanthropic teams from home and abroad. If emergency cases happen, news and information are required to have been made known to people in accord with changing times. Needs for transport and news on route clearance must have been made known to rescue teams as well as the whole populace. Sometimes, rescue teams are apt to assemble at some places only with no one seen in many places. Had the government arranged for these giving aids and subsidies can be more effective. It is not necessary to say that the government elected by the people will avoid such mischievous deeds as forbidding rescue teams from going to disastrous places, confiscating things donated by well-wishers, misappropriation of donations, dishonest ways of selling things donated from foreign donors and making fabricated information that donations were done by the government.

Our country can be likened to a runner who is going to start for the race on the run-way for the progress of social affairs. It is not an easy work for the one-year-old government left with a legacy of complicated problems such as political and economic problems, empty vault with national finance in and un-peaceful state and violation of rule of law, to keep pace with social development of fellow citizens from neighboring countries. For these reasons, I hereby will make suggestions instead of blaming and disclose the truth instead of praising.

A Country of Grandeur

If a country has good governance and every citizen has rights of equality, it will be the one of grandeur. Only if there exist peace and rule of law in the country will social sufferings alleviate. Provided that modernized industrial country can be built up, the economy will develop and campaigns for social affairs from education to literature and culture can be expanded. Our nation will become the one of great grandeur only if every individual can enjoy respectable human rights.

What are respectable human rights? It can be said we can make an initiative to an access to respectable human rights if we come to possess rights to express freely, honestly and without anxiety. There are only a few nations which can guarantee all 30 rights included in the declaration of human rights promulgated by the United Nations. Hence, there is a scarcity of countries with full percent respect as regards human rights. However, in the era of the well-wishing government



Ariel view of the completed Panzin Creek Bridge connecting Yathedaung and Buthidaung Townships. PHOTO: MNA

appointed by the people, we can move on our destination step by step.

Without social development, dignity of all subjects residing in the country drops. If so, dignity of the country does similarly. So, it needs to amend things which will make the citizens' dignity plunge.

During one-year period when the new government took office, it has been a good performance to have enacted the elderly-related law to provide special rights and protections for elderly individuals. The main objective of Myanmar News and Media Council Law & Communications Law enacted in the reign of the previous regime but sharply applied only in the present government's rule is to protect people's rights. It is the responsibility of the people's government to protect people by controlling spreads of fabricated news as every individual is within the reach of communication websites. Yet, it will take time to amend restrictions by regulations in some laws.

TV broadcastings and the public-owned newspapers under the ministry of information have been found to have changed remarkably. It reaches the public in the most effective way, assumed to increase visions and outlooks for the freedom and human rights and simultaneously to reduce feelings of disappointment and worries. And I assume that there should be an organization that will adjust the broadcasts of private media. If scrutiny and suggestion concerning from placement of advertisements to ways to dress and speak can be made, it will be like leading to the cultural destination of the country.

It must be put on record of the concerted effort of the archaeology department under the ministry of religious affairs and culture for the work of finding out traditional culture. It has been learnt that 289 collapsed stupas and pagodas due

to earthquake had been renovated by the people under the leadership of the ministry, with 224 out of them finished.

In maintaining ancient cultural heritages, it is vital for not losing national heritage, but if tourism industry is developed based on the area the country's economy will develop, as will that of the area. For that, dubious ways of businessmen in the region must be strictly prohibited. Construction of hotels and golf clubs in the midst of pagodas can harm the national image.

In assessing the progress of social affairs of a country, the commonly used index is Human Development Index (HDI). Though not being a perfect index, it is mostly used, as it is measured depending upon life expectancy, education, literacy and per capita income.

According to HDI collected in (March 2017), Norway 0.949, Australia 0.939, Singapore 0.925, America 0.92 and Japan 0.903 were enlisted in the top list whereas our country still stood at the lowest level, gaining 0.4.

Inequality adjusted HDI is the index of social affairs acquired by adjusting the favorable advantages of each country such as differences of buying capacity of currency between countries. On account of calculation in such a way, Norway went to 0.898 HDI, standing first, with America to 0.796, China 0.727, Thailand rising up over 0.7. Myanmar rose up 0.536, still standing 3rd of the 10 least HDI & at the bottom of ASEAN countries.

The situation is the position we unavoidably must hold. To rise up to a higher level, in other word, to become a dignified one, the people and philanthropist groups from home and abroad must help the government to develop the social life of citizens, systematically. In the reign of the new government it has been learnt that

health, education and communication for rural development were developed, according to the statistics received. We can see how much effort the ministries and regional governments had exerted. There is a principle that a government need not be praised if it performs the responsibility which is worth doing, but it must be blamed critically unless it does not perform its duty it should carry out. Under the above-said principle, the new government overcame the barrier of being criticized. In the phase of culture, there can be ways and means to revive Myanmar Puppet, Saing Waing (Myanmar Orchestra Group), Anyeit, Kwetseit and Zat before its demise, with no need to spend too much money like spending for the Myanmar's national performing arts competition.

Individual existence of the citizens

Individual existence of the citizens is related to the social life of their family and political life. Skyrocketing commodity prices, weakness in giving service to public health, wrong concept of education and exercising bias on jurisdiction of the law can harm the social life of the citizens.

Hluttaw (Parliament) promulgates the law that will help for the national progress. Strict management is needed to emerge rules and regulations as soon as possible, so that authority can come into effect.

According to previous experiences, we have found out that law exists only on paper as do cases of Hluttaw committees.

International relation committee, committee for labour affairs and etc., have been formed, hence the need to show extraordinary performances in the sphere of social affairs.

Just the development of the urban area cannot bring about

the social development. I firmly believe that Hluttaw must accomplish the task of developing hilly regions and flat land equally.

Conclusion

Usually, social conclusion follows economic and political conclusions. I want our readers to notice that this conclusion is not the one assessed on social viewpoint alone.

In the countries that rule by exercising respectable constitutions, what are the most important things are 3 "Chote" & one "Oat". 3 Chotes are Union Attorney General, Union Chief Justice and Union Auditor General whereas one Oat is Chairman of the Central Bank. Provided that their skill, sharpness, dignity and good-will are at the high level, politics, economy and social affairs of the country will be high.

Besides IHDI, EQ (Emotional Quotient) is assumed to be easier to assess. Happiness and Healthiness of citizens are categorized under the system. In fact, it is not easy as expected. EQ does not represent rightfully for a social class or a country, though it may be easy for a person.

If we really want social progress, the government has an actual authority and power.

I want to assert that we will be able to stand tall only if peacocks scream. For disclosing the word, "peacock" I do not want you to think that I mean NLD. In the Yadanarbon Era,

*Time to return home,
as the daylight becomes gloom.
Peacocks are screaming,
Send a person to pick me up
If peacocks scream
Peacocks will fight against
our yellow-robed lad.*

It was once very popular. Here peacock means a coin with the symbol of a peacock. It is a poem composed about young monks persuaded by paying money as an incentive.

Only if the economy of the country makes progress, will more budget be able to be used for social welfare activities. So, it is necessary for peacocks to scream, that is, the country will be more powerful only if it is wealthy.

Although the civilian government was left with a legacy of empty finance vaults it has been trying its best for the development of social progress with its meagre amount of finance.

Yet, it is still necessary to cultivate the culture of welcoming forces of philanthropist groups warmly. I hope it will be able to perform emergency rescue works, plus education, health and survival of displaced nationals in the long term plan.

The journey to proceed is still far away. As it is, we have our feet to use as vehicles. I want to say that Cetana and our confidence can bring about enthusiasm and zeal.

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.

Make hay while the sun shines

Khin Maung Oo

A well-known saying we have heard repeatedly "Make hay while the sun shines" means "To make good use of opportunities, good conditions, etc. while they last." We have a similar Myanmar saying, "လဘာတုန်း ဝိုင်းဝင်" "Make yarn while the moon shines." Opportunities are not all the time within our reach. It may come to us occasionally. Had a socially and morally acceptable opportunity reached us, we should have seized it. Failing that, we cannot guess how long we will have to wait for it to come again. Opportunities give us sometimes material things such as wealth and properties and sometimes intangible things such as fame, dignity, respect, pleasure and happiness. Academic learning is usually undertaken when we are young. If we missed that opportunity, we are required to take adult education. While acquiring academic learning, we have school life, then university education under the close guidance of savants and prestigious professors and enjoying merry-making hostel life at university and colleges. Unless we savor the taste of these opportunities, we will never ever get these again, after leaving our Alma Mater.

Some people know that they have many opportunities to better themselves, but they fail to use these opportunities to their best advantage. For example, some eligible voters fail to go to voting booths on purpose, with some people rush there at the last minute. In fact, it can be said that they lack the knowledge on how to use one's opportunity, because any one can cast a vote in favor of their favorite candidate. Every four or five years, we have such an opportunity only once. As a sexagenarian, I have had the opportunity to vote only 5 times, including two times to vote for the referendums for approving our Constitutions. Now we can use our opportunity to freely express our desires, without fear and anxiety.

Here, I would like to express a kind of opportunity we are having all the time, unlike voting. For this, we need not go anywhere, such as voting booths. Sometimes in our lives, we know that our deeds and performances are going astray, but we are reluctant to get rid of our evil-minded wills, beliefs, deeds and mindsets. Simultaneously, we do not want to have our names recorded on the gloomy pages of history. Not everyone lives in this society with a completely clean slate. We still have the time and opportunity to change or cleanse our minds in the New Year. The moment we join to take an active participation in building up our nation into a modern and developed Federal Democratic Union, our leaders will give us a warm welcome with open arms. Let us stop interfering in someone's movement towards the same goal we are heading for. Though we hinder him from going straight, he will reach the destination if he goes on without giving away his hope. While trying to interfere, only we will become exhausted on the way, failing to reach the goal. Now the sun is shining. Let us make hay while the sun shines. Here is the last chance we have!

It was already 8 a.m, a little later than the appointed time, when Ko Kyaw Swa in his car reached the cafeteria we sat awaiting his arrival. I, together with my two sisters, hurried into it. As soon as I had seated myself, a breath of cool air pressed out of the car air-conditioner caressed my cheeks. The car raced along Kaba Aye Pagoda Road until it got to Nawadei Junction where the Jambusiri Dhamma Beikman stood itself in a large precinct. Then it followed Oak-pon-seik Road and turned into the road hugging the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and the Buddha's Tooth-relic Pagoda. As the 3-day long incessant rain ceased that morning, everything on both sides of the road were clearly visible to us. The Kalaywa Forest-Retreat Monastery, the Office of the Total Petroleum Company, the Ngahlwet Lake and the Mahasi Meditation Centre had passed quickly out of view. It came to the junction of Shwehnin-si Road and Pyay Road at 9am.

Now, we, as members of the Kalyanamitta Philanthropic Association, were making for the Mahavihara Dhamma-Vinaya University near Hmawbi to make alms-donation to the students. I saw many cars of various shapes, sizes and models streaming slowly along Pyay Road. As it was the hush-hour, the traffic was heavier. Our car, therefore, had to edge along the road, sometimes zigzagging through the vehicles, big and small, and sometimes making long pauses. Only after our patience had been worn out many times, we found our car free from that very cursed nuisance. When it came to 9:30 am, our car got to the Sehmaing-gon (Ten Mile Hill). It was caught again in the traffic jam. Oh, What a murder on us! . I at Sawbwagyi-gon Junction saw a lot of commuters hectic-some running after the buses they wanted to take, some forcing their way into the congested buses and some jumping out of the buses which were about to leave to be able to catch the buses they were to transfer to . At this, I felt myself out of breath.

The traffic became noticeably lighter, when we had passed the junction. When I looked right, I saw the Yangon International Air-port with some planes

taking off, some landing, some being loaded with cargo and passengers and some new buildings constructed. With the shady trees lining the road, the traffic lighter and vast stretches of lands on both sides of the road, I felt much relieved and my mind more relaxed. At 10 am, our car reached the Kha-yay-bin (Star-flower tree) cross-roads. The Kyaikkalei and the Kyaikkalaw Pagodas, the Common Wealth Memorial War Cemetery, etc left behind quickly. At 10:30 am, we arrived at the Htaukgyan Junction. Our car took the road leading to Hmawbi. On the right of the road was the wooded Hlawkar Sanctuary Park.

Soon we came to the Air Force Base outside Hmawbi where we saw a sign-board reading "To Mahavihara Monastery" standing at the top of a lane off Pyay Road. The monastery was said to be three miles from Pyay Road. Our car followed the lane . On the right was seen a green golf course taking on a green velvet and on the left a plantation of teak trees. Then we saw two helicopters standing in the grounds before the air-base at some distance from the lane. We on the right also found some beds of rosella and lady-fingers in some patches of land adjacent to the lane and on the left fields filled with grass growing wild. At one turn, we passed a Basic State High School standing in a large compound shaded by large perennial trees. Across it was a lane leading to the Air Force Base.

Then the lane went on skirting round the Bo-daw-na-gon Village. I looked over grassy moors studded with shrubs and bamboo groves on the right side. The wild grass and trees were stirring merrily with every movement of fresh morning breeze. The morning was far advanced. The white-washed Mahavihara Pagoda in the copy of the Maha Ceti in Sri Lanka, surmounting the Mahavihara Monastery, was clearly seen against the morning sky. It is said that Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijjananda wanted to follow the practice of the Mahavihara Sect, the earliest genuine Theravada Sect founded by Ven. Mahinda at the plea of Sinhalese King Devanampiyatissa in Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka during the 3rd century BC, that he, therefore, established and named his monastery after this sect in 2003, aiming at preserving and enhancing the Vinaya Sasana of the Lord Buddha, that the monks and novices at this monastery have today totaled over 1200 and that he again opened the Mahavihara Dhamma-Vinaya University inside the precincts of the monastery in 2016 to turn out virtuous, learned missionary monks.

Our car made its way slowly along the lane and reached the gate into the Mahavihara Monastery on the fringe of Daw-na-gon Village at 10: 45 am. I noticed some branches of the big trees growing near the gate were bending down to the arched gate. Upon the entry into the precincts, we were welcomed by a feeling of coolness and our anxiety subsided remarkably. We saw some monastic buildings scattering all over the precincts. It is known that the precincts covered a total area of 165 acres of various landscapes – hills, lakes, brooks, moors, plains, forests, etc. The whole precinct was wrapped in total silence, which was occasionally broken by the resonant calls of wild birds which flew casually over it. After parking the car under a shady tree, we walked towards the covered passage leading to the monastery of the Presid-



Monks and novices are collecting alms-meal in their alms-bowls. PHOTO: DR. SAW MRA AUNG

A Temporary Escape from the Hustle-bustle of City Life

Dr. Saw Mra Aung



Monks and novices are perusing Buddhist Teaching in queue.

ing Sayadaw. All of a sudden, we all were taken aback by a long queue of monks and novices countable by the hundred awaiting the alms to be offered by the donors in silence. All monks and novices were properly robed, bare-footed, with their faculty clear and serene and their eyes cast down. No movement, no hurry was there among them. I thought that they all observed the Indriyasamvara Sila (Restraint of sense faculties). It is learnt that Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijjananda banned all the resident monks and novices from using money, hand-phones, computers, electronic devices of such sort, etc which can arouse sensual thoughts in their minds and from riding bicy-

cles, motor-cycles, trucks, trishaws, etc which can be regarded as ill-manners by the lay people and fruit-bearing trees from being grown inside the precincts which may lead to commercial transactions. Out of great reverence for the far-sighted Sayadaw, I spontaneously happened to pay mental obeisance to him for his invaluable contributions to the Buddha's Sasana, seeing that the Vinaya is the lifeblood of the Buddha's Sasana (Vinayo nama Buddha sasanaya). When we approached the monastery of the Sayadaw, we found the door standing close.

Not wanting to bother the meditating Sayadaw with our visit, we proceeded to the Mahavihara

Dhamma-Vinaya University where we were to donate alms-meal to the university students. We took a foot-path leading east, with thick forests on the right and grassy moors separated by a line of trees on the left. The path took us about five minutes. At its end was a wide stretch of land. Standing in the western – most part of it was the Mahavihara Dhamma-Vinaya University, a three –storeyed brick building. Although we found the alms-meal ordered by us ready to be offered, the class not yet finished. So U Ko Ko Naing , Assistant Registrar of the university conducted our team around the precincts. We followed him along a track through the trees stretching to the east. After a few minutes, we found two students' hostels under construction in clear-ance in the forests. Both were one-storeyed buildings. The buildings were big halls with no partition. We were told by U Ko Ko Naing that all students monks were to be housed together in the hall so that they would be deprived of privacy which could help the students do evil actions. Electric fans were found fixed on the walls. Behind the hostels were seen rich wooded land sprawling down west wards. Then we went on along the track. At one spot, on the right side of the track was found an ordination hall

being built. Some minutes afterwards, we found ourselves on the side of a bare-hill sloping eastwards. We saw a flight of concrete , steps . So we descended by it. Down at the foot was a roofed passage running north-south. A small wooden monastery stood at one end of the passage and a cave on the side of the rock hill at the other. There lay only a wooden chair inside the cave. We were told that Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijjananda meditated alone at this wooden monastery and inside the cave every night from 10 p.m to 3 a.m. I observed around and saw a monastery inside a wide precincts fenced with trees of thick foliages on the north and thick forests on the other three sides. I noticed there reigned a pin-drop silence except chirpings of birds. No doubt, the seclusion of that place would help a meditator establish his concentration.

When we were back at the university, we personally donated cooked rice and curries to the 38 pre-diploma student-monks processing into the alms-offering hall. They accepted the cooked rice and curries (alms-meal) in their alms-bowls. Then in the refractory, they seated themselves on the floor, with their alms-bowl containing the rice and curries together in front and partook of them serenely. To my surprise, no dish-bowl, no plate, no table etc, were to be used by the monks. Partaking of cooked rice and curry put together in an alms-bowl at one sitting is said to be one of the Thirteen Austerities (Duttinga) allowed by the Buddha.

A great reverence for these strict Vinaya observers gushed through me. After that, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijjananda preached a discourse in appreciation of joy over the donation and return alone with a palm-leaf fan in his hand to

his room. We all left behind in a respectful manner, gazing at the back of the Sasana hero until he disappeared from our view.

On the return of the Sayadaw , I went alone up to the second-floor of the university and looked around down. Everything on the north and the west was wild with thick forests rolling away into the distance. At some distance inside the precincts on the south was found a Mahabodhi Tree growing on a well-fenced high plinth.

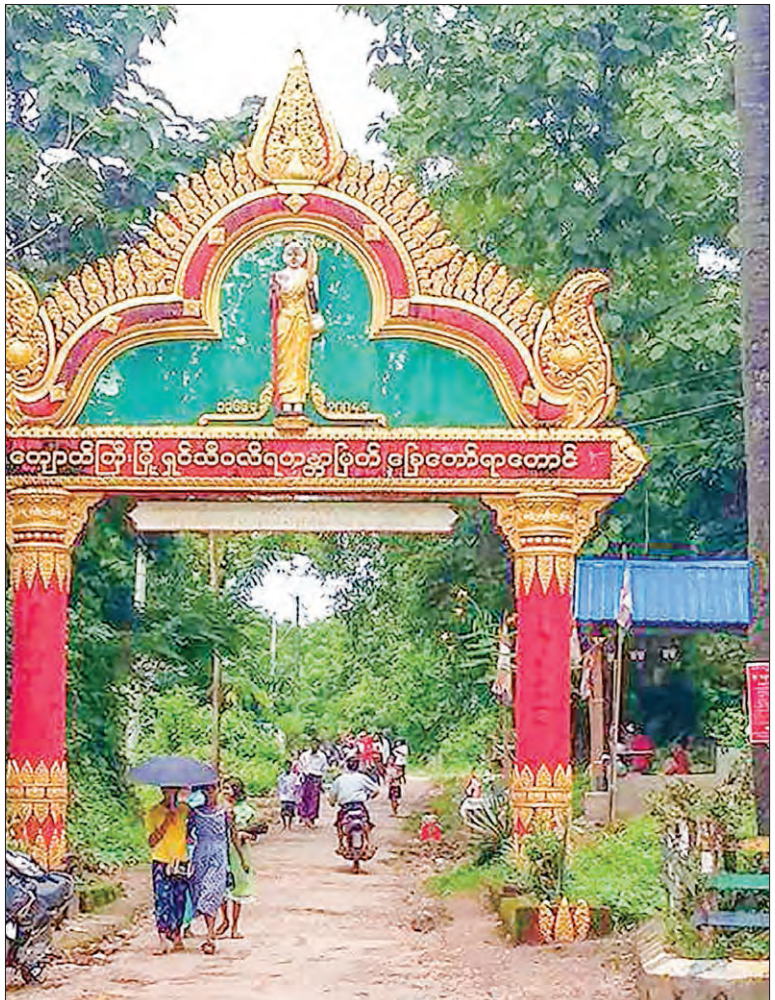
On the east was also seen a new university building in its back-ground with many acres of fields and virgin land extending miles and miles.

Deeply breathing fresh-air coming across the fresh forests and fields, I felt satisfied with myself in the thought that I had today participated in a great donation and escaped from the hustle-bustle of my city life temporarily.

In fact, we are blind to the facts that we ordinary worldlings are suppressed daily by gross mental defilements every moment from sunrise to sun-set , that however, deluded by greed (lobha), anger (dosa) and ignorance (moha) , we do not notice that we , after death, may be dragged by these defilement into the Four Inferior Realms (Apaya)-hell (Niraya), animals (Tirachana), every-hungry ghost (Peta) and demi-god (Asurakaya) .

O my dear readers, I would like to suggest you that you, leaving behind your routinely works for some hours or for a few days, should take to a forest-retreat and engage yourselves in donation, if possible in meditation.

Then only will you see how your mind is being tortured by gross mental defilements and how you can control these mental impurities and attain real peace of mind.



File photo shows an entrance of the mountain that has sacred footprint of Rev Thiwali, an arahat, in Kyaukkyi. PHOTO: DR. SAW MRA AUNG



Mahavihara Dhammawinaya University. PHOTO: DR. SAW MRA AUNG

One Landmine Explodes in Mansi

AT 5:05 pm on 19 April, one landmine exploded at map index (289), east of Mansi, in Bhamo District, Kachin State, hitting 3 daughters of U Wafai Branan and Daw Alemee residing in Pyin Oo Lwin Ward while going to hill-side cultivation. Out of them, Ma Htu Taung aged 9 was killed with the whole body wounded, it is learnt. Ma Jarsaipan aged 22 was injured on her left thigh, left chest and right calf, with Ma Jipan aged 15 wounded under her left arm, waist and left thigh. It is learnt that they were hospitalized at the Mansi general hospital for medical treatment.—District IPRD



Ma Jipan receives treatment at the hospital. PHOTO: DISTRICT IPRD

Organic markets to open in townships of Yangon

ORGANIC vegetables and organic produce shops will be opened in townships in Yangon Region. Shares will be also invited by the organic market implementation committee for emergence of the organic markets in all townships.

People can buy shares at a

price of Ks 0.5 million per unit. The organic shops will be opened in every township in Yangon Region with an aim to ensure good national health, to sustain the environment and to create the organic markets for organic vegetable farmers. Currently,

selling the organic products is meant for keeping good health of the public. After opening the organic shops in townships in Yangon Region, the organic market implementation committee is planning to open similar shops in other regions and states.—200

Loilem paints itself a rosy picture

Thae Naing Oo (Myanmarsar)

WITH its many twists and turns, the road to Loilem is flanked by views so breathtaking that it makes me forget how tired I am.

This is the first time for me to visit Loilem, though I visited nearby Taunggyi many times. I became refreshed again when I saw the Myakanthar Lake, which is situated in Namhsan, on the way to Loilem. In fact, Loilem and Myakanthar Lake are inseparable.

Loilem connects eastern and western Shan State and is a peaceful city with Shan, Pa-O and other ethnicities living in harmony. In the past a five-hour trip from Taunggyi to Loilem could only be made twice a day with a security convoy. But now with technological advancements that have allowed mountain roads to be paved and rays of peace to shine, the roads are filled with endless numbers of travelling vehicles. Travelling from Taunggyi to Loilem now only takes 2 hours, and it's only 15 minutes from Loilem to the historical city of Panglong six miles away, where one can view the Panglong memorial pillar commemorating the signing of unification of the nation. The three cities of Panglong-Loilem-Namhsan are developing into economically beneficial areas.

With a total population of over 5.8 million and an area of 61,000 square miles, Shan State is home to various national races — Shan, Danu, Intha, Palaung, Padaung, Pa-O, Kokang, Wa, Kachin, Bamar, Ahkhar, Lahu,

Lisu and others.

I got a chance to talk to local ethnic people at a reception marking the opening of Kanbawza Bank in Loilem.

Among the people in attendance was U Tung Wai, a resident who runs a publishing house and a sports gear shop.

"We thought our Loilem was under a curse for lagging behind in development. But, today we can transfer money to towns nationwide with the opening of Kanbawza Bank in our town and our businesses are on the road to booming," said U Tun Wai.

Locals including civil service personnel and businessmen in Loilem no longer need to go to other towns to transfer money to other areas.

It was a pleasant moment for U Nyo Myint, Senior Executive Director of the KBZ Bank Ltd, who inaugurated the bank in Loilem. U Nyo Myint grew up in Loilem, attending kindergarten to

matriculation at the Basic Education High School-1 in Loilem.

Speaking on the occasion, he also took pride in the KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation's achievements in fighting water scarcity in Loilem.

A drilling in Loilem, which had been experiencing water scarcity due to a lack of access to water sources, struck water five days after the work started last year.

The water gushed out of the well being drilled at the Dattaw Monastery in Loilem by KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation (BFM) at the depth of 225 feet, at a rate of 2,000 gallons of water per hour.

With the success of the drilling, the well has quenched the thirst of thousands, from Buddhist monks to local people.

With several achievements in a short period of time, Loilem has a rosy future ahead for development.



With striking water five days after the work started last year, the tubewell has benefited the local people in Loilem. PHOTO: THAE NAING Oo

Energy management courses to be provided free by experts

ENERGY system optimization and energy management system courses will be provided free of charge by experts from America and Denmark, according to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The Steam Energy System Optimization (SSO) user level two-day training course No.7 will be opened free of charge in the training hall of Yangon Region Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department on Kaba Aye Pagoda road on 2 and 3 May.

The experts from America will provide a course on the need of steam system optimization, Thermodynamics and Heat Transfer, and the use of Steam Best Practices Software Tools among others.

The applicants must be holders of Bachelors in Engineering or have minimal two-year experience working with boilers and be able to communicate in English language. The applicants have to download the form from www.ieemyanmar.com/?Page-id=4452 and submit it to email: A.ZIN@unido.org, T.OO@unido.org not later than 27 April.

Moreover, Energy Management System (En MS) user level two-day training course No.9 will be opened on 15 and 16 May and EnMS user level two-day training course No.10 will be opened on 18 and 19 May free of charge in the training hall of Yangon Region Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department on Kaba Aye Pagoda road. — *The mirror*



Local people in Maungdaw enjoy the last day of Rakhine traditional Thingyan festival on 19th April. PHOTO: TIN SOE

Rakhine traditional Thingyan festival in Maungdaw ends

Rakhine traditional Thingyan festival in Maungdaw was successfully completed yesterday. Rakhine traditional Thingyan festival in Maungdaw started on Myanmar New Year Day (April 17) and a closing ceremony was held on the last day, yesterday afternoon, with performance of dance troupes. Afterward ethnic Rakhine vocalists entertained the huge

crowd and the Rakhine traditional Thingyan festival in Maungdaw was successfully concluded at 6:30 p.m.

District and township officials, military and civil authorities, ethnic Rakhine vocalists, dance troupes, local elders and revelers from Maungdaw district attended the closing ceremony. —*Yamanya*

Alaungdaw Kathapa to be closed because of bad weather

ALAUNGDAW KATHAPA will be closed beginning from 21 April because of erratic weather, said an official from Yinmabin township general administration department.

The Alaungdaw Kathapa was opened to pilgrims on 27 January. On 20 April, the presiding monks and members of the pagoda board of trustees will discuss their progress of work as well as the future plans.

The ova-dacariya sayadaws and eminent monks from four townships will recite partitas at

the closing ceremony of Alaungdaw Kathapa on 21 April.

During the rainy season, the path leading to Alaungdaw Kathapa becomes muddy and dangerous. The number of local and foreign visitors coming to Alaungdaw Kathapa has increased this year. Alaungdaw Kathapa can be visited via Monywa town. Currently, Thayaw Kyin village section of the road is being upgraded and not completed yet.

Most of the Europeans visit Alaungdaw Kathapa.—200

On freight trains, migrants in Greece seek new routes north

THESSALONIKI, Greece — It was Mohamed Khaleuf's third attempt to cross the Greek-Macedonian border hiding in a freight train and he had no plans to give up trying.

"I promised myself I would try five times. If I'm not successful, I will try to cross from somewhere else," said Khaleuf, a migrant from Morocco in his early twenties.

Khaleuf is among dozens of migrants, mostly young Moroccans, Tunisians and Algerians, who arrived in Greece in the last year and found shelter in old rusting carriages around a station in the outskirts of Greece's northern city of Thessaloniki.

From there, they monitor freight trains heading to central Europe. Whenever trains stop in the station, the migrants try to sneak into their compartments or jump in between wagons.

If they're lucky, they make it across unnoticed. Some said they

plan to get off before the border and continue on foot. Often, they are arrested by Macedonian guards and sent back to Greece. No one can say how many have made it. A Greek government spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

More than a million refugees and migrants arrived in Europe in 2015, landing in Greece from Turkey and then streaming through the Balkans, heading north to Germany or Austria.

But that route shut in March last year following an agreement between the EU and Turkey, stranding about 60,000 people in makeshift and formal camps across Greece.

In the abandoned trains where Khaleuf and others live, conditions are grim, without electricity or running water.

For food, they queue up at a nearby camp in a former toilet paper factory.

People come and go, leaving



An Algerian migrant smokes inside an abandoned railway wagon used as a shelter by stranded migrants, in the northern city of Thessaloniki, Greece on 5 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

piles of garbage behind. Some carriages burned down in accidents when migrants tried to warm up in freezing winter temperatures.

"Here we live like animals," said Habib, a 22-year-old Algerian who crossed from Turkey to the island of Rhodes and then hid

under a truck on a ferry to Athens. Together with a friend, he had made an attempt to leave Greece days earlier, leaping onto a train with his blue rucksack. Without documents, the pair were arrested in Macedonia and sent back.

Despite the dire conditions, many migrants choose the car-

riages over the camps as they can keep an eye on passing trains, they said.

Mustafa, a 32-year-old Algerian who arrived in Greece last October and in Thessaloniki in March, hoped to get out of there soon. "Tomorrow I hope to be in Macedonia!" he said.—Reuters

Rwanda seeks to digitize education system

KIGALI — Rwanda has announced plans to digitize education system to further innovation, social inclusion, job creation, education quality and national competitiveness, the education minister said Wednesday.

Musafiri Papias Malimba told reporters that the country entered an agreement with Microsoft Corporation to digitize Rwanda education through a "smart-classroom" project.

"We are looking at adopting digitized based education system which will lower the cost of delivering the curriculum and learning materials to schools and improve learning. Students in schools across Rwanda will be exposed to an education system that emphasizes computers and internet use in classrooms to impart knowledge," he noted.

Malimba stated that digitization will provide plenty of alternatives to address the socio-economic challenges facing many emerging economies, particularly in terms of improving access to education.

In 2014, the ministry of education entered a partnership with Microsoft to incorporate information and communication technology into various aspects of the education sector, ranging from helping students access computers and basic Microsoft software such as Word and Excel to digitizing subject content

delivered in schools.

It is planned under the partnership that by the year 2020 all schools in the country will have two smart classrooms and all subjects will have been digitized, according to the ministry.

The ministry further said the first batch of the schools will be having smart classrooms by the end of 2017.

Available statistics from the Rwanda Education Board indicate that only 9 per cent or 531 schools in Rwanda currently have access to the Internet.

In 2010, the small central African country rolled out more than 3,000 kilometres of fiber optic cable across the country to enable better access to internet services. The optic cable seeks to boost access to various broadband services, including applications such as e-governance, e-banking, e-learning and e-health. It was expected to become a key enabler of the set target to ensure Rwanda achieve middle-income status by 2020.

The 2015 global ICT report released by the World Economic Forum ranked Rwanda among top ten countries in Africa that are most dynamic performers when it comes to ICT development. Rwanda plans to establish an ICT park that will be a base of technological investments, including training, industries, research and development.—Xinhua

Venezuelan opposition to hold 'mother of all marches' against Maduro

CARACAS — Venezuela's opposition says it will stage the "mother of all marches" on Wednesday, accusing President Nicolas Maduro of resorting to dictatorial measures to quash popular outrage over a deepening economic crisis.

In the culmination of a fortnight of violent demonstrations that killed five people, marchers around the country will demand the government present a timeline for delayed elections, halt a security crackdown on protests, and respect the autonomy of the opposition-led legislature.

Maduro, who says recent protests have been little more than opposition efforts to foment violence and topple his government, has called on sympathizers of the ruling Socialist Party to hold a competing march in Caracas.

"This is a government in its terminal phase," two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles told Reuters on Tuesday evening.

"This is going to escalate ... and force Maduro, and his regime, to hold free and democratic elections."

Venezuelans have for years been furious about a collapsing economy in which basic food products are a struggle to obtain and triple-digit inflation is steadily eroding consumer spending

power.

But a Supreme Court decision in March to assume the powers of the opposition-led Congress sparked a wave of protests that have not ebbed, even though the court has partly reversed the measure in the face of international condemnation.

Further spurring outrage was a decision by the national comptroller's office earlier this month to disqualify Capriles from holding office for 15 years, dashing his hopes for the presidency.

The elections council, which is sympathetic to the government, has delayed votes for state governors which were supposed to take place last year. The opposition says this is because the ruling Socialist Party is likely to fare poorly in such a vote.

Eleven Latin American countries issued a joint statement this week calling on authorities to set a time frame for elections to "allow for a quick solution to the crisis that Venezuela is living through."

Marches have repeatedly ended in clashes between demonstrators and security forces, with rock-throwing youths squaring off against tear-gas-lobbing security forces in confused melees that drag on well into the evening.

The opposition will con-

gregate at more than two dozen meeting points around Caracas and attempt to converge on the office of the state ombudsman, a guarantor of human rights.

Previous efforts to march there have been blocked by the National Guard, resulting in clashes.

As has become common in recent weeks on protest days, Venezuelan authorities will close 27 metro stations and likely set up checkpoints to slow entry to the city.

Socialist Party officials dismiss the opposition marches as efforts to destabilize the government, pointing to protester barricades and vandalism, and have called on supporters to rally around Maduro.

"The great Chavista mobilization towards Caracas has begun," wrote Socialist Party Vice President Diosdado Cabello on Twitter, referring to late socialist leader Hugo Chavez.

"Let's all go conquer the peace, defend the fatherland, the constitution, the revolution."

But pro-government marches no longer have the fervor or numbers of those of Maduro's predecessor.

Opposition leaders also accuse the government of infiltrating marches with violent protesters as a way of discrediting them.—Reuters

Melenchon: France's fiesty Castro fan and would-be president

PARIS — He admires the late Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro and Venezuelan former president Hugo Chavez, and he has little time for German Chancellor Angela Merkel: Jean-Luc Melenchon, French would-be president, is a true tax-and-spend leftist.

If elected, the 65-year-old leader of the small Left Party says France would spend 100 billion euros of borrowed money on vast housebuilding and renewable energy projects to stimulate economic growth and job-creation.

He would impose a 90-per cent supertax on earners of 400,000 euros a year upwards, reject EU rules on deficit reduction and call a "Frexit" referendum to quit the European Union if Merkel and other leaders refuse to radically change course, notably by turning their backs on years of financial austerity.

If French voters pick any of the other three top contenders in a presidential vote that comes to a head on 7 May, Melenchon warned a rally on 12 April: "You'll be coughing blood".

The rivals are centrist Emmanuel Macron, favourite in polls, Francois Fillon, a right-winger who wants to slash public spending and the public employment workforce, and Marine Le Pen, whose biggest difference with



Jean-Luc Melenchon of the French far left Parti de Gauche and candidate for the 2017 French presidential election, attends a political rally in Dijon, France on 18 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Melenchon is her stand against foreigners.

Like Le Pen, he is a member of the European Parliament, but no fan of the direction the European Union has taken. Poverty and poor economic growth, he says, are a result of laissez-faire economics and an allergy to deficit-spending that he blames on Merkel's Germany.

By spending heavily and hiking public sector wages, he

says, the French economy will grow faster, knocking the jobless rate from 10 per cent to six percent by end of term in 2022, buoying tax income for the state and social services.

The man who left the Socialist Party after three decades in 2009 to pursue a tougher brand of socialism wants to nationalise key sectors like airports and motorways, create a public banking giant and legalise cannabis.

He wants to devalue the euro to boost trade competitiveness. He promises to veto free-trade pacts, end European Central Bank independence from politicians, quit the International Monetary Fund and pull France out of the NATO military alliance.

The quest for environment-friendly agriculture, industry and alternatives to nuclear and carbon-based power is an opportunity France and Europe

must seize, he says; hence the pledge to spend much of his 100 billion euros stimulus on new power projects.

Instead of the free trade agreements he denounces, Melenchon advocates alternative forms of cooperation. His manifesto lauds a Latin American accord under which Chavez sent oil to Cuba and Castro dispatched eye-doctors to treat thousands of Venezuelans blinded by cataracts.

A distrust of traditional media has led him to rely heavily on social media to reach out to voters. He boasts a bigger YouTube following than US President Donald Trump has during the race to the White House.

He uses hologram technology worthy of Star Trek movies to address rallies, usually sporting a hybrid of traditional proletarian jackets, while a virtual-reality Melenchon does the same job at rallies elsewhere.

Born in the Moroccan port city of Tangiers, Melenchon attributes his fiesty character to his Mediterranean roots.

He is naturally more muted about his rise to fourth place in polls, days from the 23 April opening vote. He surged in the same way in 2012 but was knocked out with a less impressive score on voting day. —Reuters

Pence shows willingness to cut trade deficits with Japan

TOKYO — US Vice President Mike Pence showed a willingness to cut trade deficits with Japan on Wednesday while also expressing hope to launch bilateral free trade negotiations.

The United States "seeks a strong and more balanced bilateral relationship with Japan," Pence said in a speech at a meeting with Japanese business leaders.

He also said President Don-

ald Trump has made it "clear our administration strengthens international trade relationships using a bilateral approach."

Pence, who was visiting Tokyo to attend the first meeting on Tuesday of a high-level economic dialogue between the two countries, underscored that the talks are an opportunity to deepen bilateral economic ties.

The countries agreed Tues-

day to discuss a bilateral framework for trade and investment rules, with Pence raising the prospect of a free trade agreement.

They said in a joint statement that they will intensify talks on three aspects of the relationship, including trade and investment rules, at a time when the new US administration is seeking bilateral rather than multilateral deals.—Kyodo News

Slovenia ombudsman asks court to examine new migration law

LJUBLJANA — Slovenia's human rights ombudsman asked the country's top court on Wednesday to rule whether some changes in laws related to foreigners, passed in January, are in line with the constitution.

The changes allow the police to close the border to most illegal migrants for a limited period if parliament deems it necessary for reasons of national security.

The changes "are making foreigners an object rather than a subject of the (migration) procedure", the ombudsman, Vlasta Nussdorfer, said in her request to the Constitutional Court, and she believes they breach human rights.

The Council of Europe and the Amnesty International also said in January the law was a backward step for human rights in Slovenia.

Parliament changed the law after almost 500,000 migrants passed through Slovenia in 2015

and early 2016, coming mostly across Turkey and into the Balkans. Once in Slovenia, a member of the visa-free Schengen area, they could go virtually anywhere in Europe. That route was shut off by in March 2016 by an agreement between Turkey and the European Union.

The government claims Slovenia would not be able to endure another large influx of migrants, particularly since its northern neighbour, Austria, and other west European states were closing their doors to migrants.

The legal changes have not been used so far because it had not seen any significant illegal migration through Slovenia in recent months, the government said. It also said the changes are in line with the Slovenian and European legislation.

The Constitutional Court did not say when it would rule on Nussdorfer's request, but its procedures usually take several months.—Reuters

Indian bus crash kills 44 after plunge off mountain road

NEW DELHI — A bus fell off a mountain road in a northern Indian state and plunged into a river on Wednesday, killing 44 people, officials said.

There were just two survivors from the 46 on board, its conductor and a passenger who jumped off just before the mishap in the state of

Himachal Pradesh, said Anil Chauhan, a local government official.

Rescue efforts have been launched at the accident site near Nerwa, a town about 110 km (68 miles) from Shimla, the state capital, he added.

Deadly traffic accidents are common in India, where

driving standards are poor and roads and vehicles badly maintained, but Wednesday's crash was unusual for its heavy death toll.

India has the world's deadliest roads, with almost 150,000 people killed in accidents in 2015, the latest government data shows.—Reuters

US VP Pence says working with allies to put pressure on N Korea

TOKYO — US Vice President Mike Pence said on Wednesday that Washington would work with its allies and China to put economic and diplomatic pressure on North Korea but added that America would defeat any attack with an “overwhelming response”.

Pence arrived in Tokyo on Tuesday from South Korea and reassured Japan of US commitment to reining in North Korea’s nuclear and missile ambitions in a series of meetings with Japanese leaders, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Speaking aboard the USS Ronald Reagan, a Nimitz class aircraft carrier undergoing scheduled maintenance at its home port of Yokosuka, Pence said US intentions remained unwavering in the face of the threat posed by the reclusive North, which has conducted a series of missile and nuclear tests in defiance of UN sanctions, most recently with a failed missile launch on Sunday.

“Those who would challenge our resolve or readiness should know, we will defeat any attack and beat any use of conventional or nuclear weapons with an overwhelming and effective American response,” Pence said to loud applause, reiterating that all options are on the table in dealing with Pyongyang.

Pence made his remarks as the White House grappled with controversy over the location of the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier strike group that US President Donald Trump said last week had been sent to near the Korean peninsula as a warning to North Korea, but which headed towards Australia instead.

Pence did not mention the



US Vice President Mike Pence (R), flanked by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, attends a listening session with US and Japanese-based companies in Tokyo, Japan on 19 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Carl Vinson or the controversy.

Pence said he had spoken with Trump and by 2020 some 60 per cent of the US naval fleet would be in the region and Japan’s role would grow. “The United States will strengthen its presence in the Asia Pacific,” he said. “Japan will assume a larger role and responsibility in our alliance in the years ahead.” A senior North Korean official said in an interview with the BBC this week that North Korea would conduct missile tests “on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis”, and any military action against it by the United States would prompt “all-out war”.

North Korea’s deputy representative to the United Nations, Kim In Ryong, accused the United States on Monday of creating “a situation where nuclear war could break out at any time” and said the North’s next nuclear test would take place “at a time and at a place where our headquarters deems necessary”.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said all parties should make efforts to resolve the situation. “China expresses serious concern with recent trends about North Korea’s nuclear and missile development,” he said.

The situation was tense and China was resolutely opposed to any words or actions that could further raise tension, he added.

North Korea regularly threatens to destroy Japan, South Korea and the United States and it showed no let-up in its belligerence after the failed missile test on Sunday, a day after putting on a huge display of missiles at a parade in Pyongyang.

Pence also said the United States would protect freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, where Beijing is entangled in territorial rows with several Southeast Asia nations.

Pence heads for Indonesia later on Wednesday. —Reuters

China relaxes some cross-border capital curbs as yuan steadies — sources

SHANGHAI — China’s central bank has relaxed some of the curbs on cross-border capital outflows it put in place just months ago to shore up the yuan currency, banking sources said on Wednesday.

The first easing of the measures comes as China’s leaders and financial markets feel more confident that pressure on the yuan and the country’s foreign exchange reserves has diminished, thanks largely to a pull-back in the surging US dollar.

The yuan slumped around 6.5 per cent against the dollar last year, but has firmed nearly 1 per cent in 2017, defying — for now — many analysts’ expectations of further depreciation.

Indeed, a Reuters poll earlier this month indicated investors likely increased their bullish bets on the yuan to the most since July 2015.

With less incentive for capital flight and the economy on steadier footing, China’s foreign exchange reserves have clawed back above the closely watched \$3 trillion level.

Premier Li Keqiang said on Tuesday that market confidence in the yuan has significantly improved, Xinhua news agency reported.

As of last week, the People’s Bank of China (PBOC) is no longer demanding that banks match outflows with equal inflows, the sources said.

The South China Morning Post first reported the relaxation of the capital controls earlier on Wednesday.

There was no immediate comment from the People’s Bank of China when contacted by Reuters. The State Admin-

istration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) did not have an immediate response to Reuters’ questions on the SCMP report.

Expectations of further yuan depreciation have eased in recent months, opening a window for authorities to relax recent measures, but Beijing is not likely to let go totally, said Raymond Yeung, chief Greater China economist at ANZ in Hong Kong.

In addition to checking exchange rate expectations, the authorities were also using capital controls to control where Chinese money flows, limiting investments in foreign sectors deemed undesirable, he noted.

“The current macro environment obviously favours an easing of the (rules on) fund flows, but that doesn’t mean that it is going to have solved the structural issue of the mismatch between the corporate desire to go out versus the central government’s centrally-driven approach when they talk about off-shore investment,” Yeung said.

While the world’s second-largest economy still has the largest stash of forex reserves by far, it had burned through over half a trillion dollars since August 2015 trying to support the yuan.

The government reacted by intensifying capital controls late last year, making it harder for individuals and companies to move money out of China.

Those measures are credited with quashing speculative outflows and helping to stabilise the currency, but have also hampered legitimate outflows as China Inc goes more global. —Reuters

South Korea to keep importing eggs despite bird flu downgrade

SEOUL — South Korea is set to keep importing eggs from overseas for the next few weeks despite downgrading the country’s worst-ever bird flu outbreak by one notch from the highest level.

The downgrade was introduced from Wednesday as no new cases of the virus have emerged for about two weeks, but government sources said egg imports would keep pouring into the country as it would take time for domestic output to recover after more than a fifth of the nation’s total poultry population was culled.

An agriculture ministry official said local supply would return to normal in the second half of the year, but that in the meantime imports would continue, mainly from Australia.

The official, who asked to remain anonymous, said the government was also looking to clear egg imports from Thailand. Shipments from the United States were halted after a bird flu outbreak there.

break there.

Jeju Miyin Corp, a trading and distribution company, will ship in around 400,000 of Australian brown-shelled eggs, or 20 tonnes, of eggs per week until local egg prices stabilize, said company head Mark Yun.

The average retail price of 30 eggs was at 7,671 won (\$6.71) as of Tuesday, up 35.6 per cent since the first bird flu outbreak was confirmed on 18 November, according to data from state-run Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Corp.

The first batch of seaborne imports by Jeju Miyin is scheduled to arrive on Wednesday at the port of Busan, Yun said. Previously most cargoes had come by air.

The imported eggs will be mainly distributed to restaurants and grocery stores.

“A total of 1 million eggs are en route to South Korea and will arrive within the next three weeks,” he said, referring to imports by his company. —Reuters



A man shops for eggs imported from the US, as South Korea scrambled to boost imports to relieve a shortage amid its worst-ever bird flu outbreak, at a market in Seoul, South Korea on 23 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kevin Spacey to host Broadway's Tony Awards for first time

NEW YORK — Stage and screen actor Kevin Spacey will step up to host Broadway's Tony Awards, organizers said on Tuesday, less than two months before the national broadcast of the annual theater honours.

It will mark Spacey's first time hosting the Tonys, which will take place in New York on 11 June, broadcaster CBS said.

Recent hosts Neil Patrick Harris, Hugh Jackman and James Corden all won raves from critics but apparently were unavailable to do the honours again this year, prompting a wry bit of self-deprecating humour from Spacey.

"I was their 2nd choice for 'Usual Suspects,' 4th choice for 'American Beauty,' and 15th choice to host this year's Tony Awards. I think my career is definitely going in the right direction," he said.

"Maybe I can get short-listed to host the Oscars if everyone else turns it down," he added.

British actor and talk show host Corden, who helmed the show a year ago, went on to host the Grammy Awards in February.

Spacey, 57, himself a Tony winner for "Lost in Yonkers" as well as a two-time Oscar winner, currently stars in the Netflix political drama "House of Cards."



Actor and presenter Kevin Spacey arrives at the 86th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 2 March, 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

He also served for 10 years as artistic director of London's Old Vic theater company.

"We can't wait to see the energy he brings to Radio City on Tony night," said Charlotte St Martin, president of the Broadway League, and Heather Hitchens, president of the American Theatre Wing, in a reference Spacey's wry, sometimes sardonic humour.

Nominations for the Tony Awards, which cover plays, musicals, actors and creative teams on Broadway, will be

announced on 2 May. Hip-hop historical musical "Hamilton" swept the board last year with 11 wins.

Stars appearing on Broadway this season included Bette Midler in a hit revival of "Hello, Dolly!", as well as Sally Field, Jake Gyllenhaal, Nathan Lane, Glenn Close, Mark Ruffalo, Kevin Kline and Laura Linney.

The 71st Tony Awards will be broadcast live on CBS in a glittering three-hour show from Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan.—Reuters

I always ask about the fairness of the pay: Jessica Chastain

LOS ANGELES — Actress Jessica Chastain says before accepting any role in the film she always makes sure to ask the producers and concerned people about how much her male counterpart is getting paid for the same movie.

In an interview with Variety, the Oscar-nominated actress spoke candidly about how she negotiates her contracts to make sure her wages are on par with her male co-star.

"I'm not taking jobs anymore where I'm getting paid a quarter of what the male co-star is being paid. I'm not allowing that in my life. What I do now, when I'm taking on a film, I always ask about the fairness of the pay."

"I ask what they're offering me in comparison to the guy. I don't care about how much I get paid; I'm in an industry where we were overcompensated for the work we do. But I don't want to be on a set where I'm doing the same work as someone else and they're getting five times what I'm getting," Chastain said.

The 40-year-old actress says she may be losing a lot of money by not accepting some offers but she is glad that she has created a "boundary", which will educate people in how to treat female actors.

"There was something huge that I recently turned down. For me, it wasn't about the money; it was an old-fashioned problem of the wage gap. I turned it down, and they didn't come back."

"I remember afterwards I was like, 'What did I do? Maybe it was a mistake.' But it wasn't, because everyone in the studio system heard what I did. So what you're doing is creating a reputation: Don't bring Jessica something where she's not being fairly compensated compared to the male actor. Even though I lost that film, I've created a boundary."—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

Drake profits are sought in New York lawsuit

NEW YORK — The record label Cash Money Records was sued on Monday by Drake's former label for a share of the profits from the Toronto rapper's first six solo albums, potentially totaling tens of millions of dollars.

Aspire Music Group, which claimed to have signed Drake in 2008, said it has received only "a few modest advances" from Cash Money and co-owners Bryan "Birdman" Williams and Ronald "Slim" Williams, despite a 2009 contract to let Drake record for that label in exchange for one-third of album profits.

The complaint filed in a New York state court in Manhattan also accused Cash Money of inducing Drake in 2013 to break his "exclusive artist" agreement with Aspire by signing a competing agreement, depriving Aspire of more than \$10 million.

"Defendants have brazenly engaged in a systematic and pervasive effort to cheat plaintiff out of its contractual entitlement to tens of millions of dollars in profits and royalties, and to its one-third ownership interest in the copyright to Drake's first six albums," the complaint said.

A lawyer for the defendants did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Drake,



Drake performs "Hold On, We're Going Home" during the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards in New York on 25 August, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

whose given name is Aubrey Drake Graham, is not a defendant.

Aspire is represented by Marc Kasowitz, a longtime lawyer for US President Donald Trump.

The six Drake albums are "So Far Gone," "Thank Me Later," "Take Care," "Nothing Was the Same," "If You're Reading This It's Too Late" and "Views," and the last five

entered the Billboard 200 list of popular US albums at No 1, the complaint said.

Drake's current album, "More Life," also entered that list at No 1, and is in its third week there.

The case is Aspire Music Group LLC v Cash Money Records Inc et al, New York State Supreme Court, New York County, No 652029/2017.—Reuters

Universal Studios in Osaka unveils world's biggest Minion area

OSAKA — Universal Studios Japan on Wednesday unveiled the world's largest amusement area featuring the popular animated movie characters the Minions ahead of the area's official opening on Friday.

The Minion Park, the Osaka amusement park's newest movie-themed area built on about 8,400 square meters of land at a cost of some 10 billion yen (\$92 million), features a street show and a ride

dubbed "Despicable Me Minion Mayhem" as well as the requisite merchandise store and food area.

The park is "filled with fascination and is the only place where one can enjoy the world of the Minions," local TV personality Shofukutei Tsurube told guests and members of the media at a ceremony. "Everyone, please come and visit."

Around 1,500 fans of the diminutive yellow creatures from the "Des-

picable Me" movie franchise were invited to attend the ceremony.

"I love the movie, I want to meet the Minions as soon as possible," said Hiara Nishiyama, 7, who visited from Wakayama Prefecture as a guest.

USJ Co, which operates Universal Studios Japan in Osaka's waterfront area, opened an amusement area based on the "Harry Potter" movie series in July 2014. —Kyodo News



The opening ceremony is held for Minion Park at Universal Studios Japan in Osaka on 19 April, 2017, two days before the opening of the attraction based on the popular animated film "Minions." PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Summer-like conditions sweep across eastern Japan

TOKYO — Temperatures rose to around 30 C for the first time this year in parts of eastern Japan on

Tuesday as the northwards passage of a rapidly growing low-pressure system brought warm air from the

south, the weather agency said.

The temperature rose as high as 30.6 C in

Takasaki, Gunma Prefecture, marking this year's first "mid-summer day." Highs of more than 30 C were expected for semi-tropical regions of Japan's southwestern island chains of Okinawa and Amami, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

Multiple locations in central and eastern Japan also saw summer-like conditions, with the temperature hitting 29.3 C in Otsuki, Yamanashi Prefecture, 27.7 C in Shimizu, Shizuoka Prefecture, and 25.7 C in downtown Tokyo, temperatures normally seen only in late June to early July, according to the agency.

In northern Japan, the low-pressure system which is heading northeast over the Sea of Japan is expected to bring a cold air mass, with the weather agency warning of heavy rainfall Tuesday evening along the Pacific coast. —Kyodo News



People eat ice cream to cool down in the northeastern Japan city of Takasaki on 18 April, 2017, where the temperature exceeded 30 C, marking the first "midsummer day" of the year. Multiple locations in central and eastern Japan also saw conditions normally seen only in late June to early July. Photo: Kyodo News

UK's Prince William says shock of mother's death lingers 20 years on

LONDON — Britain's Prince William has said the shock of losing his mother Princess Diana two decades ago still lingers within him, days after his younger brother Harry spoke about his own struggles coming to terms with her death.

Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris in August 1997 when William was aged 15 and Harry was 12. The princes' comments this week have been their most intimate to date on the subject of their grief for their mother.

"The shock is the biggest thing and I still feel (it) 20 years later about my mother," William said in a BBC documentary to be aired on Thursday about mental health sufferers who will be running the London Marathon.

"I still have shock within me. People go 'shock can't last that long' but it does. You never get over it, it's such an unbelievably big moment

in your life that it never leaves you. You just learn to deal with it," William said in excerpts released on Wednesday.

Both royal brothers have spoken out as part of their campaign to raise awareness of mental health challenges and to encourage people to speak openly rather than bottle up their emotions.

On Tuesday, William released a video chat with US pop star Lady Gaga, who has battled post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after she was raped aged 19, and warned British men that keeping a "stiff upper lip" and not speaking about their feelings was detrimental to mental health. Harry said in a newspaper interview on Monday that he had come close to a "complete breakdown" on several occasions and had sought counselling in his late twenties to help deal with the grief of losing his mother. —Reuters



Britain's Princess Diana holds Prince Harry during a morning picture session at Marivent Palace, where the Prince and Princess of Wales are holidaying as guests of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia, in Mallorca, Spain on 9 August, 1988. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv

Myanmar
International
Programme Schedule

(20-4-2017 07:00am ~ 21-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03 Am News
07:25 Am SHWE SETTAW (Minbu)
07:43 Am The Art of Making Glaze Ware
08:03 Am News
08:26 Am Horse Cart Driver
08:37 Am A May Yay Yin Nat Festival (Ep - I)
08:53 Am Black Gold (P - II)
09:03 Am News
09:26 Am Myanmar's Traditions and Culture
"Myanmar Pottery"
09:50 Am Sagaing: Youth Leader
10:03 Am News
10:26 Am A Worth Studying Site For Ancient
Myanmar Heritages
10:44 Am History of Mrauk U Pagoda

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

Prime Time

07:03 Pm News
07:26 Pm Travelogue: Chaung Tha at its peak period
07:41 Pm Myanmar Weaving
07:53 Pm A Girl Guide
08:03 Pm News
08:26 Pm Mosaic Painting (Precious Stones & Gems)
08:42 Pm Goldsmith
08:48 Pm A Simple And Peaceful Life

(09:00 Pm~11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00Pm~03:00Am)-Wednesday Repeat(07:00Am~11:00Am)
(03:00Am 07:00 Am)-Today Repeat(07:00Am~11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Madrid see off Bayern in controversial thriller to reach semis



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring their first goal during the UEFA Champions League Quarter Final Second Leg between Real Madrid and Bayern Munich at Estadio Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid, Spain on 18 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

MADRID — Cristiano Ronaldo scored a hat-trick to send Real Madrid through to the Champions League semi-finals with a 4-2 extra-time win against 10-man Bayern Munich to seal a

6-3 aggregate victory in controversial circumstances.

A bizarre Sergio Ramos own goal forced the extra period after Robert Lewandowski opened the scoring for Bayern from the pen-

alty spot and Ronaldo equalised.

Marcelo twice cleared off the line for Madrid and Jerome Boateng did the same for Bayern in a thrilling game, which was tilted in Madrid's favour

by Arturo Vidal's dismissal for two yellow cards, the second of which was harsh.

Ronaldo put Madrid level at 2-2 on the night in the first period of extra time when he scored his 100th Champions League goal, from a clearly offside position, before he wrapped up his treble and Marco Asensio added a fourth.

Carlo Ancelotti's Bayern began well, with Thiago Alcantara's close-range shot brilliantly blocked on the goal line by Marcelo. Arjen Robben lashed the rebound into the side-netting.

Vidal crashed a strike inches over the crossbar and Real goalkeeper Keylor Navas had to be quick off his line to beat Ribery to a through-ball.

Madrid began to find their feet and were soon dominating, with the effervescent Marcelo crossing for Karim Benzema, who headed wide, and Dani Carvajal also firing an effort just off target.

Ramos nearly put the hosts ahead after the otherwise superb Manuel Neuer spilled a shot, but Jerome Boateng somehow blocked his effort on the line to keep his side in the tie.

Toni Kroos fired over and Ronaldo shot when he should have passed to Benzema as Madrid ended the first half looking far more dangerous than their opponents.

However, it was Bayern who took the lead when Casemiro fouled Robben in the area and Lewandowski sent Navas the wrong way from the spot.

Ronaldo levelled the score, heading beyond Neuer in the 76th minute from a fine cross by Casemiro, but Bayern restored overall parity within a minute.

Ramos, so used to being Madrid's hero, turned villain when he shinned the ball into his own net after a scramble in the area.

With the game heading towards extra-time Vidal was sent off for a second booking after appearing to win the ball cleanly from Asensio.

It gave Madrid the upper hand going into the added 30 minutes and they took advantage when Ronaldo scored the crucial second from Ramos's cross, despite being in an offside position.

Madrid added two more late on, leaving Bayern exhausted and angry.—Reuters

Boro better than Premier League position suggests — Clayton

LONDON — Middlesbrough are not one of the three worst teams in the Premier League despite languishing at 19th in the standings, midfielder Adam Clayton has said.

With six games to play, Middlesbrough are six points adrift of safety after Monday's 2-1 defeat by Arsenal at the Riverside Stadium.

Following a spirited display against the North London side, Clayton still harbours hopes of top-flight survival despite the club's winless run of 15 league games.

"If you asked the other

teams 'Are Middlesbrough one of the three worst teams in the league?', I don't suppose many would say we are," the 28-year-old told reporters.

"We've played against teams and we have been in most games and have been pipped by that extra bit of quality that we need to have.

"There are more points to play for and nobody in the bottom three is pulling up trees and running clear...you have to keep believing."

On Saturday, Middlesbrough visit 16th-placed Bournemouth, who have

slipped into the relegation scrap having failed to register a victory in their last four league games.

Clayton said his side were targeting three points at the Vitality Stadium to put pressure on other relegation candidates.

"Bournemouth will be a bit twitchy because they haven't won that many recently," Clayton added. "We need to put the pressure on them and see how they deal with it.

"And let's see what Swansea and Hull do with a bit of pressure on them. Three points will do that." —Reuters

Murray back from layoff to reach Monte Carlo round three

PARIS — World number one Andy Murray beat Luxembourg's Gilles Muller 7-5, 7-5 to reach the third round of the Monte Carlo Masters as he made his return from a five-week injury layoff on Wednesday.

The Briton, who had a first-round bye, had not played competitive tennis since injuring his elbow in March.

The 29-year-old Murray dropped serve twice but was still a cut above in the first European claycourt tournament of the season, with the 28 May -11 June French Open already looming.

Three-time grand slam champion Murray next takes on 15th seed Albert Ramos.

Sixth seed Dominic Thiem of Austria lost only four first

service points as he beat Robin Haase 6-3, 6-2 to set up a meeting with Belgian 10th seed David Goffin.

Fifth seed Marin Cilic of Croatia destroyed France's Jeremy Chardy 6-3, 6-0 and Swiss third seed Stan Wawrinka survived a second-set blip to defeat Czech Jiri Vesely 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.—Reuters

Leicester's Champions League dream over as Atletico power into semis

LEICESTER, England, — Leicester City's fairytale Champions League journey came to an end at the King Power Stadium on Tuesday when they were held to a 1-1 draw by Atletico Madrid, who reached the semi-finals for the third time in four seasons with a 2-1 aggregate win.

A first-half goal by Saul Niguez proved enough to ease the Spanish side through to the last four despite Leicester's spirited revival in the second half when Jamie Vardy equalised on the night.

Diego Simeone's side, who won the first leg in Madrid 1-0, had the better of the opening exchanges, but after Leicester finally found their feet, Shinji Okazaki firing over from

close range, Saul extended Atletico's overall lead in the 26th minute, heading home powerfully from Filipe Luis's superb cross. The Premier League champions, in their



first Champions League campaign, responded strongly, dominating the second half, and England striker Vardy equalised on 61 minutes after Ben Chilwell's shot was blocked, but it was not quite enough.—Reuters

Leicester City's Jamie Vardy. PHOTO: REUTERS