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State Counsellor visits U Tin Oo at Yangon General Hospital bedside

State Counsellor visits U Tin Oo at Yangon General Hospital's cardiac ward. **PHOTO: BBC**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited NLD Patron U Tin Oo yesterday evening at Yangon General Hospital's cardiac ward where the nonagenarian was recovering from a recent stroke.

The Nobel Peace laureate also solaced other patients at the heart surgery ward of the hospital.

At U Tin Oo's bedside doctors briefed her on the patron's condition, informing her that the stroke had paralyzed a part of his body on 18 March.

U Tin Oo is on a restricted diet and is fully conscious. He has also regained use of parts of his body affected by the stroke.

He can sit upright for about 30 minutes at a time. U Tin Oo will undergo rehabilitation to regain mobility and clear speech.

U Tin Oo co-founded the NLD and served for many years as its chairman. —Myanmar News Agency

Cyclone Mora damaged or destroyed 20,000 houses

Mora-hit victims receiving relief aids delivered by officials of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Maungtaw. **PHOTO: MOSWRR**

THERE have been no reported deaths in Myanmar as a result of Cyclone Mora, the storm that swept through the western coast on Tuesday, but 4,702 houses were destroyed and 13,595 homes were damaged in Rakhine State, Chin State and Ayeyawady Region, according to a statement released Friday from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

The report said that 325 schools, 32 office buildings and 57 religious buildings were also destroyed, while 429 non-residential buildings were damaged. Twenty-three hospitals and clinics, 23 government buildings, three bridges, 38 utility poles and 22 motorboats were also damaged by the cyclone, the ministry said.

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WEEKEND SPECIAL

Today's issue contains an 8-Page special pull-out supplement

Children's Literature Festival Taunggyi attracts people

THE Children's Literature Festival in Taunggyi turned into second day yesterday, attracting crowd of local people.

The festival is co-sponsored by the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Education and Shan State Government was held yesterday at Taunggyi University in Taunggyi, Shan State.

Students, teachers and local populace participated in the second day of Children's Literature Festival. At the game event, 1,647 participated in the Team Building Game, 950 in paper folding event, 621 in proverb contest, 806 in picture puzzle, 585 in model home construction contest, 707 in painting and 83 in story-telling. 72 prizes will be awarded in the closing ceremony it is learnt.

At the literature talk in the morning, writer Inle Thanda Khin and writer Thu Naung Inn (Inle) delivered talks titled "Children songs and poems from Inle" and "Little stars of the future" while Myaykhetaung Maung Maung Win, Dr. Aung Kyaw Khin (Taunggyi), Yebaw Mya Thein (Hopong) and Thu Naung Inn (Inle) held a children's literature development workshop discussion titled "Increase reading to cultivate good physical, verbal and moral characters in children" in the afternoon that were attended by interested visitors.

Students from basic education high school performed 43 entertainment programmes to entertain the visitors.

Self-study books on specific subjects, story books and books on politeness and manners are the bestsellers in festival bookshops it is learnt. —Aung Min Han ■

Youngsters showing keen interest in the Literature Festival. **PHOTO: AUNG MIN HAN**

YSX trade value Ks1.5 billion in May

THE Yangon Stock Exchange increased slightly to 1.5 billion kyats last month after several months of declining values, according to the monthly report of the YSX issued on Friday.

This year, the monthly stock trading values on the YSX were more than Ks2.8 billion in January, Ks3.1 billion in February and Ks3.4 billion in March. Stock trading declined to Ks1.2 billion in April, after which it slightly increased to Ks1.5 billion in May.

Total stock trading values on the YSX was 82 billion kyats this year. Last year, the trading values amounted to over Ks70.7 billion.

Currently, there are four listed companies trading shares on the YSX. The First Myanmar Investment Co, Ltd joined the YSX on 25 March 2016 as the first listed company, followed by Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd, Myanmar Citizens Bank and First Private Bank.—Wai Mar ■

Ayeyawady river bank in Bago west to be strengthened

THE Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department is renovating a 28-mile section of the eastern Ayeyawady river bank between Moe Nyo township and Letpadan township with regional government funds, according to a Friday report in Myanma Alinn Daily. The bank was damaged by floods in the 2015-2016 raining season. The Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department will conduct the repair with assistance from local residents.

The department has already renovated the bank between milestones 0/0 and 3/0 in fiscal 2015-2016 with regional government funds and milestones 3/0 to 8/4 and 19/4 to 22/6 in fiscal 2016-2017 with Union funds. Future work will focus on milestones 8/4 to 19/4 will be renovated with regional government funds in fiscal 2017-2018. The funding source for the remaining section – from 22/6 to 27/6 – has yet to be identified.

The section of the Ayeyawady river bank under repair was first built in 1959. Government officials hope the renovation will protect 50,000 acres of agricultural land.—MMAL ■

Two infant turtles produced by captive breeding program. **PHOTO: MMAL**

Myanmar's turtle breeding programme hatches success

A breeding programme for the Myanmar eyed turtle has, for the first time, produced two hatchlings and at least 200 turtle eggs in a lake within the compound of Myaing Galay Monastery in Hpa-an, Kayin State, according to a report by Myanma Alinn Daily on Friday.

The turtle, Morenia ocellata, is a threatened species alternatively known as the Bengal eyed terrapin and the Myanmar peacock turtle. Conservationists believe the turtle is mainly found in Myanmar and possibly in Yunnan Province, China.

The breeding programme is being supported by the monastery, the U.S.-based Wildlife Conservation Society and the Myanmar Turtle Survival Alliance, a local conservation organization.

"Myanmar eyed turtles are one of eight species of turtles which can be found only in Myanmar," said Dr. Kalyar, director of the Myanmar Turtle Survival Alliance. "Therefore, there is no research concerning the history of Myanmar eyed turtles, the food they eat, their living habits and their favorite weather. So, we have to focus on taking care of Myanmar eyed turtles".— MMAL ■

HAGL, City Mart to jointly develop complex with offices, retail and residences

VIETNAM'S Hoang Anh Gia Lai Group (HAGL) and Myanmar retail giant City Mart Holdings Company will jointly develop a retail, office and residential complex, according to an announcement by City Mart Company.

The two companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop the store on Tuesday at Melia Yangon Hotel.

The market will be built on a plot of land near Myanmar Plaza in Yangon.

Vietnam's HAGL Company opened Myanmar Plaza Myanmar Center and Melia Hotel in 2015.

The new market will include a shopping center, cinema, playground, office complex and two 360-unit residential towers.

The project is schedule for completion in 2019. —Min Min ■

Correction

Please read "the Seniors" instead of "the senior", and "without financial hardship" instead of "financial hardship" in the last paragraph of the opinion titled "Social Pension and the Aged" in the 3rd June-2017 Issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar. Ed

President U Htin Kyaw visits Sao San Htun Hospital radiation department

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw visited the Radiation Therapy Department in the Sao San Htun Hospital, Taunggyi, in Southern Shan State yesterday morning to inspect new therapeutic machines and treatments provided.

The President was greeted by the hospital's medical superintendent, specialists and staff.

The President also visited the Radiation Therapy Department and was shown new radiation treatment equipment as Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Department of Medical Services Director General Dr Myint Han, Medical Superintendent Dr. Soe Tun Aung and Cancer Ward Specialist (Radiation) explained how the equipment operated.

The President met with trainees from the Nursing Training School (Taunggyi) and Head of Training School Daw Nwe Nwe Cho described subjects taught at the institution and the status of the trainees. During the meeting, the President offered encouragement. The Sao San Htun Hospital radiation department provides radiation treatment to about 50 cancer patients daily. It is a 500-bed hospital situated on a 29.664 acres of land and has 14 wards including out-patient, emergency, treatment, surgery, orthopaedic, ophthalmology, ENT (ear, nose and throat), dentistry, maxillofacial, oncology, narcotic drugs and psychiatric, radiation therapy, rheumatology and rehabilitation and dermatology. The President was accompanied on his visit by Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin and Shan State Chief Minister Dr. Linn Htut.—MNA ■

President U Htin Kyaw views radiation equipment at Sao San Htun Hospital. **PHOTO: MNA**

Officials promote Business for Peace at YUE conference

SPEAKERS at the Business for Peace conference offered their perspectives on ethical business practices and sustainable entrepreneurship during yesterday's Business for Peace (B4P) conference at Yangon University of Economic (YUE).

"We must make peace while doing business for national progress." said Dr. Tin Myo Win at the talks held at the university. "Actually it's the Business-for-Peace process. B4P highlights the national interest, rather than self-interest. We must especially assure safety, health, education and occupation for the displaced persons".

Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) Vice President U Thein Han stressed the importance of imparting knowledge, professional skills, economic opportunities and human resources to promote social progress and peace.

UMFCCI is organizing B4P talks in regions and states to encourage regional business associations to participate in the peace process.

Attendees at the conference included promient economist Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win, YUE Rector Dr. Khin Naing Oo, and other notable officials.—Ye Khaung Nyunt ■

Dr Aung Tun Thet gives talks at the Business for Peace conference. **PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG**

Cyclone Mora damaged or destroyed 20,000 houses

FROM PAGE-1

The most damage and destruction occurred in Maungtaw, in northwest Rakhine State, the ministry said.

The storm began in the Bay of Bengal, then gained strength and headed north, making landfall in Bangladesh and brushing by the western coast of Myanmar, bringing with it high winds and heavy rain and leaving a trail of destruction.

Bangladesh suffered a direct hit from the cyclone, causing at least three deaths as the storm flattened coastal villages and refugee camps. More than 500,000 people were displaced as a result of the storm, it was reported.

Police in Bangladesh said a woman and a man were crushed under trees fallen by strong winds in Cox's Bazar.

Another woman died of panic, officials said, adding that several thousand houses were damaged in the area, most of them huts constructed out of mud.—GNLM ■

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi consoles a patient receiving treatment at the Yangon General Hospital yesterday. **(NEWS ON PAGE-1)** **PHOTO: MNA**

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Shwezigon Pagoda in this photo is one of the most visited religious edifices in Bagan. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Travel website: More travelers visited Bagan in May

A travel website says Bagan saw the nation's greatest increase in its online reservations in May.

Reservations in Bagan grew 40 per cent in May compared to April, while reservations increased 15 per cent in Mandalay and Pharan, and 10 per cent in Kyaikhtiyo, Yangon and Kalaw, according to Jovaco.net, a travel website that operates in Burmese, English and French.

According to Jovaco, most of the travelers using its website are domestic tourists.—GNLM ■

1,000 new YBS buses to hit YGN roads

YANGON Bus Service (YBS) is expanding its ride service with the addition of 1,000 new buses within the next two weeks, according to an announcement by the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) in Friday's editions of The Mirror Daily.

The Yangon region government purchased 500 new buses from China Yutong company and 500 buses from Ankai car company.

"A total of 1,000 new buses will arrive in three consignments," said Dr. Maung Aung, a secretary of YRTA. The bus yard will be located at People's Square, he said.

The Yangon region government guaranteed the buses would be manufactured at a high industrial standard, according to YRTA.—The Mirror ■

YBS will add 1000 new buses it has ordered from China. **PHOTO: THE MIRROR**

Compliant taxpayers honoured in Minbu

THE largest taxpayers of FY 2016-2017 in Minbu Township, Magway Region were honoured on 31 May for their voluntary compliance with Myanmar's laws at a ceremony intended to encourage broader tax compliance. U Nyi Nyi Win, general administrator of Minbu Township delivered an opening speech at the Hall of General Administration Department. Daw Lae Lae Aye, a tax officer of Minbu Township, explained the importance of various kinds of government revenue including commercial tax, income tax, special goods tax, the Aung Bar Lay lottery and sales tax. Myanmar has struggled to collect and record tax payments in recent years and has encouraged greater participation of sub-national entities, which have traditionally depended on Union government support for the overwhelming majority of their income, in levying taxes.—200 ■

British NGO pledges support to Taninthayi environmental conservation

AN international non-governmental organization called on residents of Taninthayi Region, Myeik district to help monitor negative environmental impacts, according to a 31 May report in The Myawady Daily.

Fauna and Flora International Preservation Society (FFI), a United Kingdom-based that is one of the world's oldest conservation organisations, urged people in the area to speak out against investment and development projects that hurt the environment.

Taninthayi is a major mining area in southwest Myanmar where extractive industries have engaged in land-grabbing and environmental degradation that has led to major population displacement and other challenges. Unsanctioned dredging, fishing by explosive, clear-cutting of mangroves and waste water runoff from tourism industry operations have also jeopardized Taninthayi's environmental health.

FFI pledged to assist Taninthayi residents in liaising with Myanmar authorities to prevent environmental damage in the region.—200 ■

Over 14,000 motorbikes imported via borders in one week

Myanmar workers assemble motorcycle at a factory in Ruli, a Chinese border town with Myanmar. **PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

MORE THAN 14,000 motorcycles worth US$7.02 million were imported within a week in May over land ports of entry, according to the official figures issued by the Ministry of Commerce on Friday.

Myanmar bought a total of 14,330 bikes from China, Thailand and India via border trade camps between 13 and 19 May of this year, an increase of more 800 bikes compared to the previous week.

The Muse border entry was the busiest with importers bringing in nearly 12,800 motorbikes worth $4.119 million into the country. Two-hundred-seventy-five bikes worth $79,000 arrived through Kanpiketee border, 1,760 bikes worth $2.749 million arrived through Myawady border and 18 bikes worth $28,000 from Tamu border.

Importers say that motorcycle imports through Tamu, between Myanmar and India, slightly declined that week as cross-border deals with China and Thailand increased.—Shwe Khine ■

Generating Rubber Opportunities-GRO for Myanmar Rubber

A SWISS international aid agency will assist Myanmar's rubber industry by introducing new production techniques, processing approaches and improved linkages between farmers and rubber refiners.

Generating Rubber Opportunities (GRO) is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), an agency of Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, intended to "strengthen the rubber market system to improve the incomes and livelihoods for women and men smallholder farmers (WMSHF) and tappers in southern Myanmar", said U Win NaingThein, Senior Advisor to the project.

CARE International in Myanmar is implementing the project.

"GRO plans to support businesses in the rubber sector with innovative ideas, investment and regulatory reform that will increase business performance, stimulate sector growth and ultimately provide benefits for the poor – farmers, labourers, and consumers", U Win Naing Thein, Senior Advisor, said.

The Kyike Ma Yaw Rubber Planters and Producers Association (KRPPA) is planning to establish a rubber factory which would buy latex from the farmers to produce high-quality smoked rubber sheets.

The GRO project is currently helping by identifying, analysing, coaching and advising them on how to develop effective business plans.

Another GRO partner, Paung Rubber Planters and Producers Association (PRPPA), has been running a rubber factory for the past two years.

GRO is supporting both factories to build a stronger business case for domestically produced rubber and ensure better income for the farmers.

GRO seeks to expand its efforts in rubber through a challenge grant in Mon State.

More than 90 percent of Myanmar's rubber is exported, mostly to China, but the industry has struggled recently to produce enough quality product. According to the Myanmar government, rubber plantations occupy 734,436 acres of land.—GNLM ■

Agricultural exports up by US $68 million this fiscal year

MYANMAR exported agricultural goods at a total value of US$522 million in the first two months of FY2017-2018, an increase of $68 million over the same period in the previous fiscal year, according to a Commerce Ministry report issued Friday.

Total exports were $1.711 billion in the current fiscal year, including $422 million from the government sector and $1.288 billion from the private sector.

This fiscal year, the government sector also exported $10.744 million worth of minerals, $1.462 million worth of forestry products and $345.603 million worth of manufacturing goods, while private exporters sold agricultural products worth over $500 million, animal products worth $1.989 million, fisheries products worth $81.775 million and $480 million in minerals, forestry and manufacturing products.

Agricultural commodities are among Myanmar's largest exports. The country exports a wide variety of marketable fruits, vegetables and crops including rice, beans and pulses, mangoes, coffee and other kitchen crops.—Khine Khant ■

Trade deficit reaches US $1 billion in April-May

MYANMAR's external trade value for FY2017-2018 is US$4.4 billion so far, with a widening trade deficit of $1billion, the Ministry of Commerce reported Friday.

Between 1 April and 26 May, the foreign trade value reached $4.462 billion in total, an increase over the same period last year of $970 million. Exports were $1.711billion and imports were $2.750 billion. Myanmar's trade deficit was $1.039 billion.

Total trade this fiscal year included $3.476 billion from normal trade and $985 million from border trade.

Trade authorities are attempting to decrease the deficit by promoting Myanmar's export sector and reducing imports of luxury goods, but the deficit appears to be widening.

Myanmar recorded a trade deficit of over $91 million in FY2012-2013. The trade deficit rose to $2.555 billion in FY2013-2014.

The trade deficit increased to $4.109 billion in FY2014-2015 and $5.441 billion in FY2015-2016. Myanmar registered trade deficits of $5.5 billion in FY2016-2017.—Swe Nyein ■

Commodity exchange service counter of MAEX Ltd to be launched on 6 June

MYANMAR Agro Exchange Public Ltd (MAEX) will launch on 6 June in Yangon to enhance commodity trading, according to a company announcement on Friday.

The new commodity exchange service counter is being supported by the Yangon City Development Committee and MAEX and will open on the ground floor of Dagon Center II in Sanchaung Township in Yangon to facilitate wholesale trading of Danyingon fruit, vegetable and flower.

Services are available from 9 am to 2 pm on official working days except public holidays. The counter will accept orders before 2 pm.

The exchange will follow standards and practices similar to the Yangon Stock Exchange's.

For further information, call 01 503928 and 01 503929 during office hours.

The company is located at Room (04-03), 4th floor, Block A, Dagon Center I, Pyay Road.—Lynn Lynn ■

Top Philippine lawmaker labels casino attack a 'terrorist' act

A security man stands guard outside Resorts World in Pasay City, Metro Manila Philippines on 2 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

MANILA — A gunman who stormed and torched a Manila casino, killing 36 people, was a "lone wolf" terrorist, a top Philippines lawmaker said on Saturday, contradicting the police's assertion that the man had merely wanted to steal gambling chips.

The gunman, whose identity was still unknown, killed himself in a hotel room after being shot by security officers at the Resorts World Manila entertainment complex, police said.

A second "person of interest" who was in the casino at the time is cooperating with the investigation, police said.

Pantaleon Alvarez, speaker of the lower house of Congress and a close ally of President Rodrigo Duterte, said he was not convinced the incident was a criminal case of armed robbery and arson.

"This is a clear example of a 'lone wolf' terrorist attack targeting civilians to inflict maximum loss of life and damage to property, as what has happened in other countries," Alvarez said in a statement.

Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack, but that was rejected by Philippines officials, who said it appeared to have been a botched robbery.

Duterte's spokesman, Ernesto Abella, said on Friday there was no proof linking it to a protracted urban battle between government troops and Islamist militants in the country's south, while his security adviser, Hermogenes Esperon, said all the evidence pointed to an attempt to steal casino chips.

"We must draw up a clear and better plan to secure Metro Manila and other urban centres from IS-linked groups that we already know will attempt to kill and maim in pursuit of their jihadist ideology," Alvarez said.

The Philippines has been on heightened alert amid a crisis in the city of Marawi, on the southern island of Mindanao, where troops have been battling Islamist rebels since 23 May and martial law is in place. The attack at the casino hotel complex, which is close to an airport terminal and air force base, lasted more than six hours.

Security experts and patrons at the casino on Friday expressed alarm at the apparent ease with which a lone gunman was able to enter the building, open fire and start a blaze whose smoke killed more than 30 people.

Firefighters discovered the bodies in the main gaming area, hours after the country's police chief had said the situation was under control.

Police have also corrected earlier statements about the attacker.

They originally said he arrived at the hotel in a car, but changed that to a cab, and they had described him as Caucasian and English-speaking but the cab driver told them he spoke in the local language.

"Our authorities should get their act together and put in place the highest level of security measures to prevent this to happen again, here or elsewhere in the country," Alvarez said.

"This incident should be a wake-up call for the police and the military to cooperate closely in making the seat of government and our financial and business centre safe from any terrorist attack." — Reuters ■

Senior Chinese military official calls for enhanced strategic mutual trust between China, US

SINGAPORE — China and the United States should enhance strategic mutual trust and make greater contribution to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and beyond, a senior Chinese military official said on Saturday.

Lt Gen He Lei, vice president of the Academy of Military Science of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, made the remarks at a press briefing on the sidelines of the ongoing Shangri-La Dialogue.

China highly values and cherishes the relations with the United States, He said, stressing that as two major countries in the world, relations between China and the United States have an impact on the security and stability not only between themselves, but also in the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

The senior Chinese military official said the friendly and fruitful talks between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump in April at the Mar-a-Lago resort in the US state of Florida have laid the foundation and charted the course for development of relations between the two countries.

Noting that the relations between the militaries of China and the United States are an important part of the ties between the two countries, he called on the two sides to stick to the principles of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation; strengthen strategic mutual trust and enhance risk control.

At the press briefing, the senior Chinese military official also touched upon the issue of freedom of navigation.

"I think the freedom of navigation can't equate to close-in surveillance," He said, stressing that freedom of navigation has never been a problem in the South China Sea.

He noted that neither the Australian prime minister nor the French and Australian defense ministers mentioned any problem concerning freedom of navigation in their respective speeches during the ongoing dialogue.

China firmly opposes close-in surveillance conducted by military aircraft and vessels in waters and above the airspace close to Chinese islands, the general said, noting that such military activities do not fall into the category of freedom of navigation. He is in Singapore to attend the three-day 16th Shangri-La Dialogue which started on Friday. —Xinhua ■

Philippines, Japan coast guards hold anti-piracy drill off Mindanao

DAVAO GULF, (Philippines) — Coast guard vessels from the Philippines and Japan on Saturday held an anti-piracy drill off Mindanao, the Philippines' southernmost main island.

"Holding it here is very relevant because there are 14,000 vessels traversing the Sibutu passage, which is the southern tip of the Philippines," Philippine coast guard spokesman Armand Balilo told Kyodo News regarding the drill held near Talicud Island, about 32 kilometers southeast of Davao, the hometown of President Rodrigo Duterte.

On 13 May, Philippine coast guard vessels and a Japan coast guard aircraft also conducted an anti-piracy exercise in the Sulu Sea south of Mindanao. In a statement, the Japan coast guard said it is very concerned "about incidents involving the abduction of crew from ships in the Sulu-Celebes Sea and waters off eastern Sabah" on Borneo. The drill, part of annual joint exercises that began years ago between the coast guards of the two nations, were held for the first time off Mindanao island. All previous drills were held near the capital Manila.

Participating were the Japanese coast guard patrol vessel Echigo, two Philippine multi-role response vessels newly acquired from Japan, a Philippine search and rescue vessel, and the surveillance vessel of the Philippine fisheries bureau. Around 40 Japanese and 150 Filipino coast guard personnel took part in the half-day event. —Kyodo News ■

Japan defence minister backs all US options on N Korea, seeks deeper alliance

SINGAPORE — Japan's defence minister on Saturday backed the United States using any option to deal with North Korea, including military strikes, and said Tokyo wanted to build a deeper alliance with Washington that could play a regional security role.

"The United States is making clear through both words and deeds that all options are on the table. I strongly support the US position," Japanese Minister of Defence Tomomi Inada said during a speech at a regional security conference in Singapore.

Pyongyang's accelerating nuclear and missile programmes are stoking fear in nearby Japan and prompting a harder line on North Korea from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

A Japanese helicopter carrier and destroyer are concluding three days of drills with two US aircraft carriers in the Sea of Japan that also included simulated combat sorties between US Navy F-18s and Japanese air force F-15s.

The exercise followed three ballistic missile tests by Pyongyang in as many weeks. The latest on Monday reached an altitude of 120 km (75 miles) before falling into international waters in the Sea of Japan, but inside an exclusive economic zone where Japan has jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of maritime resources.

Apart from using the US alliance to tackle its belligerent neighbour, Japan also wants the military partnership to exert influence on other parts of Asia, including the highly contested South China Sea, Inada said.

China claims almost all the disputed waters, which is one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, and its growing military presence has fueled concern in Japan and the West.

"The robust, long-standing Japan-US alliance now functions as a public good that contributes to the peace and stability of the region," she said.

Beijing often rails against the United States, Japan and other countries for what it sees as interference in the South China Sea, insisting it is for claimant countries involved in disputes to work them out.

Inada also called on European navies to provide "a regular and visible presence" in the region.

A French amphibious assault carrier visited Japan in April after sailing through the South China Sea. Japan's military later trained with the French force alongside US and British contingents in what sources earlier told Reuters was meant as a show of force aimed at China.—Reuters ■

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Japan urges N Korean restraint after fresh UN resolution

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Saturday urged North Korea to refrain from further nuclear tests and missile launches following a fresh sanctions resolution adopted overnight by the UN Security Council.

"We hailed the fact that it was adopted unanimously," Abe said in a statement. "We strongly call on North Korea not to conduct further provocative acts such as nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches."

Japan will continue to work closely with countries concerned to add pressure on North Korea and ensure the implementation of the Security Council resolution, he said, adding Tokyo will ask Pyongyang to take concrete steps in resolving issues related to the country, including the abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korean agents.

Separately, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida affirmed with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that the two countries will cooperate in putting more pressure on North Korea.

Kishida and Tillerson also agreed to keep urging China and Russia to do more to discourage Pyongyang from provocations, noting their importance in resolving the standoff over North Korea's nuclear and missile development, Kishida told reporters in Kanazawa city.

The 15-member Security Council unanimously adopted a new sanctions resolution Friday that will add 14 North Korean individuals and four entities to its blacklist over the country's weapons program.

The resolution, the first of its kind since US President Donald Trump took office in January, subjects all of them to travel bans and asset freezes. — Kyodo News ■

S Korean court denies arrest request for daughter of key corruption case suspect

SEOUL — A South Korean court on Saturday denied a prosecutors' request for an arrest warrant for Chung Yoo-ra, the daughter of a key figure in a corruption scandal that led to ouster and arrest of ex-president Park Geun-hye.

Chung, 20, fled to Europe last year to avoid being prosecuted by South Korean authorities for her involvement linked to alleged crimes of her mother, Choi Soon-sil, a long-time confidante who is accused of colluding with Park to collect bribes from the country's top businesses.

Choi and Park are currently being held at detention centres undergoing trials for extortion and abuse of power to extort millions of dollars from big companies and pressure them to donate to foundations controlled by Choi.

"With the essential evidence being collected, and her (Chung's) involvement in the scandal has been investigated, it is difficult to acknowledge the reason, necessity, and appropriateness of an arrest at this stage of the investigation," the Seoul Central District Court said in a statement, without elaborating.

Chung dropped her extradition appeal last week in Denmark, where she had been detained, and returned to South Korea on Wednesday.

"As my baby son has not been able to spend time with the family, I thought it would be better for me to return to South Korea to sort out misunderstandings over the scandal," she told reporters upon her arrival in Incheon on Wednesday.

She was arrested without a warrant by prosecutors aboard a Korean Air Lines flight en route to South Korea and taken into custody for questioning. She was released early on Saturday morning.

Chung is accused of charges including criminal interference related to her academic record and acceptance into a South Korean university with questionable qualification.

"I never wanted to go to college and I did not even know what my major was since I never went to school," Chung said on Wednesday, adding she will fully cooperate with the investigation.

Prosecutors are expected to reapply for an arrest warrant.—Reuters ■

Never Be Reluctant To Return Something Similar To What We Get!

Khin Maung Oo

Since our school days we have heard this statement from Physics which reads, "Every force of action has an equal and opposite force of reaction." After our school days have passed, we have come to ascertain its truth more and more, especially in our social lives. Generally speaking, when we give smiles to others, our smile will be reciprocated in the same way we give, on one condition that our smiles need to be genuine or heartfelt or unforced ones. Contrariwise, our anger and hatred will be returned to us. Some people say that the above-said scientific-cum-natural law does not follow the truth, depending upon what they find in their daily lives or in their surroundings. In fact, the law of nature is always right. For example, the sun is always shining, and our planet is going around the sun, rotating on its axis, as known by all. Only if we face the shining sun, can we see the sunlight while the other part cannot. Sometimes, we may be on the part of the globe facing the sun. However, even in the daytime we cannot see the sunlight due to the sun being covered by heavy clouds.

Presently, we are experiencing similar events. Being totally exhausted by bitter experiences of living under very difficult situations for several decades, we tried to liberate ourselves from these sufferings, electing the people's government. And, we accepted that it would take us to get to our destination. It must not be assumed that only the government is responsible for implementing the whole task of building the nation. We are all required to join hand in hand with the government.

Admittedly, the country had seen success to a considerable extent, just after one-fifth period of the incumbent government's tenure. Not only most of the populace in the country but also the international community came to acknowledge it. But some people tried to misunderstand the government's activities, performances and strenuous efforts. For example, people generally came to accept that the YBS transport system has been convenient for us, now more convenient for us as new city buses imported recently, entered some bus lines. At such a time, we need not blame the authorities asking when we would have all bus lines equipped with new cars, why these cars were still crammed with passengers, and so on. As regards this, we also are responsible for these new cars to be able to ply on the roads undamaged. The general opinion, which is free from bias and partiality, is that the country has achieved substantive success in every sector, such as health, education, agriculture, trade and commerce and such. Concerning the UPC—2nd Century Panglong, we must say that it was rather successful. Knowing that these are the hard facts, we should not blame or accuse anyone. Now is the time for us to change our minds. We should not be reluctant to reciprocate something similar to what we are getting. ■

Hailing

Debut Launch of Sunday Special in the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

ON the 7th May 2017 Sunday, the day before the writer left to attend an international forum in China, appeared in the highly esteemed Daily the Global New Light of Myanmar, Debut launch of Sunday Special which ran into 8 pages alphabetically A to H. The writer's delight was beyond measure. The esteemed paper had already announced about that Special some weeks ahead. An article translated by U Khin Maung U [Tada U] epitomized the aims and objects of the Global New Light of Myanmar. English being a lingua franca of the world today and Myanmar people already well acquainted with English since British colonial days, were quite at case with English language that was used as a second language in daily life-bazaar, market, schools everywhere. But due to nearly five decades of break with English on the unfortunate policy of extreme anti English colonialism, generations who grew up in those dark five decades had difficulties in learning English.

The Sunday Special targets new Myanmar generations. As the writer began his careful perusal, he saw English Grammar Lesson 1 on page B for Basic students "of any age and any entry level". "The very Basic Level of English Grammar which is essential for you to read, to speak and to write your correct English Basic students- any student from any class and any school or institution who wants to study English grammar, so explained in the headlines.

The lesson 1 began with Eight Parts of Speech with a diagram. Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjection, with examples and Exercise.

The writer was transported back to his primary and middle schools' days when English was taught directly by very efficient teachers some of whom were Anglo-Myanmars. The text book was English Grammar and Composition by P.C Wren [Wren and Martin] which was used up to High School Level. Even when we became college students we often referred to that book.

Turning to other pages, the writer was encouraged and delighted to read the contributions of new generations. Judging by the style and standard, the writer noticed that they belonged to different age groups and different socio-cultural standards. Ranging a wide variety-essay, articles, travelogues, commentaries in prose, translation and comics, the writer found to much of his delight and praise that they made a good start. The writer being a late octogenarian could not understand or appreciate some of the comics on page F. But their proses are excellent. They must be written by University students or junior teachers.

But no verses appeared in this debut launch. Paraphrasing and appreciation of poems and composing couplets, triplets, quatrains and sonnets were lessons we had to learn in middle school and post middle school classes in our days. For such lessons, specially qualified teachers are needed. Rhyme, metre, syllables and musical scale and timing are basics of verse composing. The writer looked forward to reading poetic pieces of new generations in next issues. Read simple English poems, you'll come to love them and feel like composing poem yourself, young ones keep going.

It is too early to expect drama or play from the young generations. But the writer does not mean to say that young ones cannot write plays. The writer had one or two of his classmates who won prizes for one-act play writing competition [တခန်းရုပ်-ပြဇာတ်] very popular at that time. So young writers, try your pen at writing short plays. You have new ideas, new themes and new experiences. But bear in mind that plays are mostly social satires, mocking at human vanities and frailties but with a good heart to improve human society. The writer has found that some of his students possess inborn humour. They could create jokes about any difficulty or in any situation. Such humours release stress and strain and can lead to find a way out from an impasse. Perhaps next Special will bring out such young play wrights. In our younger days at school or at collage, the urge to write was stimulated by extra-mural activities such as picnic, excursion, talk by outside speaker, extempore short talk ကျဘမ်းစကားပြော on every weekend, brain trust and debate, bill board newspapers [နံနက်ခင်းစာစောင်] autographs, and annual magazines. We used to write about our extra mural activities in these media. Every month there were debating competitions held between hostels. Besides we kept autographs to pass around among our teachers and classmates to write anything in them. Teachers write their advice, quotations from famous authors, proverbs, old sayings and sometimes their own short rhymed poems. Some friends' writings contained jokes, nostalgia and remembrances with colourful sketches. Some male students would take the chance of writing a love letter in the autograph of the lady student of amorous beauty. The writer still has one autograph of his college days which luckily escaped ants and Nagis. It contains writings of Zey Ya Maung U Ko Lay, principal of Mandalay Collage, Mr. John Moonie and Daw Hla Shwe of English Department Saya U Ba Thaung and Daw Than May of Burmese Department, Dr. Htin Aung, U Myo Min, U Ba Nyunt and Daw Mya Sein of Yangon University and Dr. Maung De, who passed away a couple of years ago. Their writings in my autograph do have good impacts upon my pen to write both English and Burmese. The writer would like to suggest that such kinds of extra-mural activities should be resumed in today's Myanmar education. Young generations, keep corresponding among yourselves by means mentioned earlier and turn your pens to all media at hand.

The last suggestion for new generations of English writers is please keep press cuttings for future reference. Chronologically file them. News, Editorials, Articles, Poems, Translation, messages, speeches even advertisements and announcements. You'll find it very rewarding. The writer is doing it every day.

Finally in hailing the Debut Launch of The Global NLM Sunday English Special the writer wishes to request the Editors of this esteemed Daily to compile these Special and English grammar lessons in book form and circulate them with affordable price for the benefit of Anglophile teachers, students and readers. ■

Thank you

Russian, French astronauts return from space station stint

CAPE CANAVERAL, (Fla) — A Russian cosmonaut and a French astronaut returned to Earth on Friday aboard a Russian Soyuz capsule after six months at the International Space Station, while their US crewmate remained on the orbiting laboratory for an extended stay, a NASA television broadcast showed.

Russia's Oleg Novitskiy and Thomas Pesquet, with the European Space Agency, strapped themselves inside the spacecraft and left the station at 6:47 am EDT (1047 GMT) as the complex sailed 250 miles (400 km) above Earth.

They made a parachute landing southwest of Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, at 10:10 am EDT (1410 GMT).

One seat aboard the capsule was empty as US astronaut Peggy Whitson, who flew to the station with Novitskiy and Pesquet in November, will remain in orbit until September. She is filling a vacancy left after Russia scaled down its station crew size to two members from three.

The Soyuz MS-03 capsule carrying the International Space Station (ISS) crew of Oleg Novitskiy of Russia and Thomas Pesquet of France descends beneath a parachute just before landing in a remote area outside the town of Dzhezkazgan (Zhezkazgan), Kazakhstan on 2 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"We of course are going to miss Oleg and Thomas. They are exceptional astronauts," an emotional Whitson said during a ceremony on Thursday, where she turned over command of the $100 billion station to Russian cosmonaut Fyodor Yurchikhin.

"Peggy is a legend," Pesquet said. "We're a little bit sad to leave her behind, but we know she's in very, very capable hands."

Whitson, Yurchikhin and astronaut Jack Fischer, also with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, will manage the station until a new crew launches in late July.

"That will be a little challenging," Whitson said during an interview with Reuters on Wednesday. "I was up here on my previous two expeditions and it was only a three-person crew, but it was a much smaller station at that point in time."

"Still, I think it's quite doable," she said.

Whitson, who is serving on the station for a third time, broke the US record in April for cumulative time in space. By the time she returns to Earth in September, she will have accumulated more than 660 days in orbit.

Russian cosmonaut Gennady Padalka, with 878 days in orbit, is the world's most experienced space flier.—Reuters ■

High school boys fear looking 'weak' if they report concussions

OHIO — Male and female high school athletes have moderate levels of knowledge about concussion symptoms, but the boys are much more likely to not report concussions for fear of seeming weak, a small US study suggests.

The reasons boys gave for not wanting to report a concussion tended to center around not wanting coaches or teammates to think they were weak or to "get mad," researchers report in the Journal of Athletic Training.

"Although males and females have similar concussion symptom knowledge, we still see a negative stigma" with reporting them, lead author Jessica Wallace told Reuters Health by email.

"Especially within male dominated sports, we are seeing that many male athletes are not reporting because they are highly sensitive to how their peers and coaches view them," said Wallace, an athletic trainer and researcher at Youngstown State University in Ohio.

Wallace thinks better concussion education programs are needed to teach kids the dangers of continuing to play with a concussion. Concussion symptoms can include headache, dizziness and difficulty concentrating or sleeping. In all, 22 concussion symptoms are typically included in sport-related concussion education programs, the study team writes.

Athletes who continue to play with a concussion risk re-injury and a longer recovery time.

To determine how well high school athletes recognize these symptoms and how likely they are to report a concussion, as well as why they wouldn't, the researchers enrolled 288 athletes (198 boys and 90 girls) at three Michigan high schools.

The participants answered a single survey that included a test of recognition of concussion symptoms. The survey also asked whether the student had ever experienced a concussion, how many concussions they had reported to a trainer, coach, parent or other authority figure, and reasons for not reporting the symptoms.

Of the 58 participants who had sustained a concussion, 25 reported having had two or more. Knowledge of symptoms was similar between the sexes, with scores ranging from about 11 to 18 out of a possible 21 on the test.

The top reason for both boys and girls to not report a concussion was because they did not think it was serious. Other common reasons included not wanting to lose play time and not wanting to let the team down.

The boys were anywhere from four to 11 times less likely than girls to report concussions, for reasons having to do with how they were perceived by peers and coaches.

It is important for athletes, parents, and coaches to understand that concussion is a treatable injury, but "an athlete has to report the injury for it to be treated," Wallace said.

"If an athlete fails to report the injury and continues to play while symptomatic, it can either delay recovery or potentially result in a catastrophic outcome," she said. Coaches need to emphasize that concussions are serious and that reporting concussion symptoms is expected, Wallace added.—Reuters ■

Pfizer hikes US prices of 91 drugs by average 20 percent in 2017: Financial Times

NEW YORK — Pfizer Inc (PFE.N) has hiked the price of nearly a hundred drugs by an average of 20 per ent so far this year in the United States, the Financial Times reported on Friday.

The US drugmaker raised the list price of 91 medicines – including that of its erectile dysfunction treatment, Viagra, and its pain drug, Lyrica — on June 1 by 5-13 per cent, according to figures seen by the Financial Times.

Pfizer had also raised prices in January and, including those hikes, the average price of many of its drugs has risen by 20 per cent this year, the FT said.

"For Pfizer's US biopharma business, as of the first quarter, the weighted average net selling price increase year-to-date is 4 per cent," a spokesman for Pfizer said, referring to prices after discounts and rebates, rather than list prices.

Drug pricing has become a contentious issue as a wave of new treatments for cancer and other serious conditions reach the market, some costing tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Pfizer logo is seen at their world headquarters in Manhattan, New York, US on 1 August, 2016. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

But the row is particularly fierce in the United States, where prices are higher than in Europe and where there have been highly publicized price hikes of some older drugs, such as Mylan's EpiPen.

In a bid to placate US payers, patients and politicians, several companies, both domestic and foreign, have pledged to limit price rises.

French drugmaker Sanofi in May said it would not raise prices beyond the rate of healthcare inflation, which would cap hikes at 5.4 per cent this year.

Other companies such as AbbVie, Allergan and Novo Nordisk have said they would raise prices in the single-digit percentage range this year.—Reuters ■

Amid Trump climate turmoil, France to push stability in India talks

PARIS — France and India will seek to show a united front to tackle climate change when the their leaders meet on Saturday with President Emmanuel Macron likely to underline his country's stability in talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Modi's arrival in Paris comes after US President Donald Trump announced his decision to withdraw from the 2015 Paris climate agreement and at a time when uncertainty in the European Union prevails following Britain's decision to leave the 28-nation bloc.

"Climate will obviously be one of the first topics discussed. It's a personal commitment from Modi so it's crucial that this engagement is reiterated in the current context," said a senior French diplomat.

Modi, whose country is the world's third-biggest emissions generator, said in Russia on Friday that he would continue to back the deal. Macron's call on Thursday for the accord's remaining 194 countries to fill the void left by the US may see the two sides push for greater cooperation.

"Trump's decision is very bad news, but we have to move on with world's key actors, starting with India," said the diplomat. "We need to show that we are stable, not unpredictable and have convictions that we aren't afraid to stick to."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is greeted by French President Emmanuel Macron on the last leg of his four-nation visit at the Elysee palace in Paris, France on 3 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Prior to the visit Modi had already hailed Macron's victory over the far-right as an opportunity to reinforce ties between the two countries almost 20 years after agreeing in 1998 a strategic partnership.

"Within a lot of uncertainty and instability where we don't know in which direction the world's great powers are going, it's important to show that the relationship between France and India is stable," said the diplomat.

Ties between the two countries have grown in recent years most notably in the defence sector with New Delhi ordering 36 French-made Rafale fighter jets to modernise its ageing warplane fleet.

The two are also in talks over nuclear power and renewable energy deals, although the Paris visit is not aimed at sealing contracts.

France's foreign ministry says more than 1,000 French firms operate in India in sectors ranging from defence to new technologies employing some 300,000 people.

"The Indians had a vision of Europe over the last couple of years that was a bit cataclysmic partly because of the crises we went through, Brexit and the far-right wave.

"Brexit especially traumatized them and there was a real worry that Europe would explode so Macron's victory has provided a boost," the diplomat said. —Reuters ■

US hackers could have framed Russia in election hack: Putin tells NBC

MOSCOW — American hackers could have planted false evidence that Russia interfered in the US presidential election, President Vladimir Putin was quoted as saying by NBC News on Saturday.

US intelligence officials have said Russia tried to interfere in the US election by hacking the Democratic Party to sway the vote in favor of Donald Trump, a charge the Kremlin has repeatedly denied.

In an interview with NBC News' Sunday Night with Megyn Kelly, a preview of which was released to media, Putin said hackers in the United States could have made it look like Russia was behind the hack for political reasons.

"Hackers can be anywhere. They can be in Russia, in Asia ... even in America, Latin America," Putin said. "They can even be hackers, by the way, in the United States, who very skillfully and professionally, shifted the blame, as we say, on to Russia."

"Can you imagine something like that? In the midst of a political battle. By some calculations it was convenient for them to release this information, so they released it, citing Russia. Could you imagine something like that? I can."

Speaking at Russia's flagship St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday, Putin said the hacking accusations were no more than "harmful gossip" and any evidence cited by US intelligence could easily have been faked. —Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Blasts near funeral in Afghan capital, at least 12 dead – witness

KABUL — At least 12 people were killed in three explosions on Saturday in Kabul near the funeral for a victim of violent clashes between Afghan police and protesters a day earlier, a security official and a witness at the scene said.

The witness, who did not want to be quoted by name, said 12 people had been killed and 18 wounded. Afghanistan's Tolo News television reported that as many as 18 were killed. —Reuters ■

S Africa's main opposition suspends ex-leader Zille after colonialism tweet

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's main opposition Democratic Alliance has suspended Helen Zille, a former DA leader and now premier of Western Cape province, for a tweet about colonialism, the party said on Saturday.

Zille said on Twitter in March: "For those claiming legacy of colonialism was ONLY negative, think of our independent judiciary, transport infrastructure, piped water etc."—Reuters ■

US-led fight on Islamic State has killed 484 civilians- Pentagon

WASHINGTON — At least 484 civilians have likely been killed in US-led coalition strikes against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria since the operation began in 2014, the US military said in a statement on Friday, in its monthly update of the total.

The US-led coalition figure, which is lower than estimates by non-governmental groups, such as Air Wars, represents an increase of 132 civilian deaths over its previous report released on 30 April. The coalition has denied loosening standards meant to protect civilians and blamed the growing total partly on an increase pace of operations in dense, urban terrain.—Reuters

Syrian army advance helps secure Aleppo road

BEIRUT — The Syrian army said on Saturday it had seized mountainous territory from Islamic State to the east of the road linking Damascus to Aleppo, helping to secure a critical lifeline for the government that has often come under IS attack.

The army also said it had seized 22 villages and farms from IS near Maskaneh, the last major IS-held town in Aleppo province. The capture of Maskaneh will bring Russian-backed government forces to the border of Raqqa province, much of which is held by US-backed groups that are also fighting IS.

Government forces supported by Iranian-backed militias and the Russian army have stepped up attacks on Islamic State on several fronts in recent weeks as a "de-escalation" deal brokered by Russia and Turkey has reduced fighting in western Syria.

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighters ride on vehicles in the north of Raqqa city, Syria on 5 February, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

The army said it had captured the northeastern and central portions of a mountain range to the east of the Khanaser-Ithriya road. "It certainly widens the circle of security around the Damascus-Aleppo road," a military source told Reuters.

The Khanaser-Ithriya road is the only government-controlled route linking Aleppo to other government-held cities of western Syria. Sections of the main highway to Aleppo, which runs through western Syria, remain in rebel hands.

The town of Maskaneh is located on the western banks of the River Euphrates in Aleppo province some 10 km from the provincial border with Raqqa. The next major urban centre to the east is Tabqa, which was captured from IS by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in May.

The United States has so far ruled out cooperating with the Russian-backed government in the fight against IS in Syria, where the group has been forced into retreat by the separate campaigns being waged against it.—Reuters ■

Supermarket blast in Iran injures 37, gas leak possible cause — reports

LONDON — An explosion in a supermarket in the southern city of Shiraz injured 37 people and may have been caused by a gas leak, Iranian state media reported on Saturday.

The blast occurred at 12.45 am (2115 GMT) in the city's Hypermarket centre, the reports said. The head of fire department in Shiraz, Mohammad Farokhzadeh, told state television that a gas leak or an explosion of flammable items stored in the supermarket could be the cause. He said an investigation was underway.

None of those injured was in critical condition, the head of the medical emergency centre of Fars Province was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA. The explosion was loud enough to be heard in most neighbourhoods of Shiraz, the official news agency IRNA reported, adding that walls of the supermarket had collapsed.

Videos published on social media showed fire had reached the second storey of the building which is partly residential. Windows were shattered in shops and buildings on the street.—Reuters ■

Afghan authorities lock down Kabul after protest clashes

KABUL — Streets in the centre of the Afghan capital Kabul were closed on Saturday as authorities tried to prevent a repeat of a demonstration that degenerated into clashes between protesters and police and left four people dead.

A rally against the government on Friday following this week's devastating truck bomb attack in Kabul saw hours of angry confrontation between protesters and police, who fired into the air to drive back crowds trying to cross security cordons and reach the presidential palace.

At least four people were killed and 15 wounded in the gunfire, drawing condemnation from human rights group Amnesty International and leading the United Nations envoy in Afghanistan to appeal for calm.

A small group of protesters remained near the blast site in the centre of town, sheltering from the sun in open tents.

But otherwise security authorities in Kabul banned protests and demonstrations, citing the risk of attacks on large gatherings of people.

Although Saturday is a normal working day in Afghanistan, large parts of the city were blocked off, with armed checkpoints set up and armoured vehicles patrolling the streets.

The unrest has heaped pressure on the government of President Ashraf Ghani which has faced increasing public anger over its inability to ensure security in the capital following a string of high profile suicide attacks.

Wednesday's truck bomb, which killed more than 80 people and wounded some 460, was one of the worst since the US-led campaign to oust the Taliban in 2001 but in other respects it scarcely differed from a long series of previous attacks.

In the first three months of the year at least 715 civilians were killed, after almost 3,500 in 2016, the deadliest year on record for Afghan civilians. —Reuters ■

Afghan protesters set a fire during a protest in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 2 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Mattis praises China's efforts on N Korea, dials up pressure on S China Sea

SINGAPORE — The United States is encouraged by China's efforts to restrain North Korea but Washington will not accept Beijing's militarisation of islands in the South China Sea, US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis said on Saturday.

The comments by Mattis, during the annual Shangri-La Dialogue, show how US President Donald Trump's administration is looking to balance working with China to restrain North Korea's advancing missile and nuclear programmes while dealing with Beijing's activities in the South China Sea.

US allies have been worried by Trump's actively courting Chinese President Xi Jinping to restrain North Korea, fearing Washington might allow China a more free rein elsewhere in the region.

Some allies have also expressed concern that Washington's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific trade partnership and the Paris global climate accord signals the United States is diluting its global leadership role.

Speaking at the dialogue, Asia's premier security forum, Mattis said the United States remained fully engaged with its partners.

"Like it or not, we are a part of the world...What a crummy world if we all retreat inside our borders," he said.

"Once we have exhausted all possible alternatives, the Americans will do the right thing," Mattis added, paraphrasing a quotation by British wartime leader Winston Churchill. "So we will still be there and we will be there with you."

US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Nevertheless, reversing or slowing North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes has become a security priority for Washington, given Pyongyang's vow to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the US mainland.

The Trump administration has been pressing China aggressively to rein in its reclusive neighbour, warning all options are on the table if North Korea persists with its weapons programmes. "The Trump administration is encouraged by China's renewed commitment to work with the international community toward denuclearisation," Mattis said.

"Ultimately, we believe China will come to recognize North Korea as a strategic liability, not an asset."

However, Mattis said seeking China's cooperation on North Korea did not mean Washington would not challenge Beijing's activities in the South China Sea. The UN Security Council on Friday expanded targeted sanctions against North Korea after its repeated missile tests, adopting the first such resolution agreed by the United States and China since Trump took office. In another sign of increased pressure on North Korea, Japan's navy and air force began a three-day military exercise with two US aircraft carriers in the Sea of Japan on Thursday.

Japanese Defence Minister Tomomi Inada, speaking at the Singapore forum, said Tokyo backed the United States using any option to deal with North Korea, including military strikes, and was seeking a deeper alliance with Washington.

But she also said she was concerned about the situation in the South China Sea and in the East China Sea.

China's claims in the South China Sea, through which about $5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes each year, are contested by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. China and Japan both claim islands in the East China Sea. —Reuters ■

Close aide to Brazil's leader Temer arrested in corruption inquiry

BRASILIA — Former Brazilian lawmaker Rodrigo Rocha Loures, a close aide and friend of President Michel Temer, was arrested at his home on Saturday in a corruption investigation that also targets the president, a federal police spokesman said.

Loures was seen in a video released in May carrying a bag with 500,000 reais ($154,000) in cash that prosecutors say was a bribe from executives of meatpacking giant JBS SA, whose plea bargain testimony has implicated Temer and other politicians in graft.

The Supreme Court has authorized the investigation of Temer and Rocha Loures for corruption, criminal organization and obstruction of justice.

Rocha Loures, a businessman turned politician, is expected to seek a plea bargain deal with prosecutors which could damage the president's case that he did nothing illegal.

Temer, who took over from impeached president Dilma Rousseff last year, is facing calls for his resignation or impeachment, and an electoral court investigation of his 2014 election for illegal campaign funding that could oust him from office.—Reuters ■

UK Conservatives pledge no tax hike for top earners as vote nears

LONDON — An ally of British Prime Minister Theresa May has said income tax will not rise for higher earners, making a new promise to voters less than a week before a national election with opinion polls showing a narrowing of May's lead.

The comments from Defence Minister Michael Fallon in an interview with the Daily Telegraph suggested that the ruling Conservative Party would not increase the top rate of income tax, striking a contrast with main opposition Labour Party. "You've seen our record. We're not in the business of punishing people for getting on. On the contrary we want people to keep more of their earnings," Fallon told the newspaper.

"The only way they can be sure their taxes won't rise is to vote Conservative. We already know your tax will go up if you vote Labour on Thursday," he said.

May has left open the possibility of higher income taxes by only promising no increases in value-added tax before Thursday's vote. That marked a break from the Conservative pledge under former Prime Minister David Cameron in a 2015 election campaign not to raise income tax, national insurance contributions or VAT.

Earlier this year, May's government was forced into a U-turn when it dropped a plan to increase national insurance contributions on self-employed workers after Conservative lawmakers protested that it broke the 2015 pledge.

Finance minister Philip Hammond has said that promise makes it harder for him to bring down Britain's budget deficit.

Labour said Fallon's comments showed the Conservatives were protecting higher earners at the expense of the less well off.—Reuters ■

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte talks to soldiers during a visit to a military camp in Zamboanga, Sibugay in southern Philippines on 2 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Duterte says Philippines will stop taking second-hand US military equipment

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte promised on Friday to buy brand-new military equipment to fight twin Maoist and Muslim rebellions, and no longer accept second-hand weapons from the United States.

Over the last two weeks, some 3,000 security personnel have been battling about 400 pro-Islamic State militants who had taken over a southern city. The forces are using refurbished US planes, armoured vehicles and assault rifles.

"I will no longer accept second-hand military equipment," Duterte told soldiers at an army base on the southern island of Mindanao. "I do not want those given by the Americans. During my time, I will not have second-hand ships. It has to be brand new."

Duterte said he would acquire new and modern weapons systems "even if I have to spend double the money," and would look at buying equipment such as planes, boats, drones and guns from China and Russia, traditional rivals of its closest ally, the United States.

Since 2000, Washington has given Manila military aid worth nearly $800 million worth of drones, helicopters, assault rifles, and combat gear including tactical radios, night-vision devices and spares.

The Philippine budget allocates more than 100 billion pesos ($2 billion) to modernise the military's equipment under a five-year plan, spending 25 billion pesos this year on acquisitions from South Korea and Israel.

Manila has ordered two large strategic sealift vessels from Indonesia and 12 FA-50 light fighters from South Korea.

"By the time I am out of office, you will have about 24 jet planes," Duterte said. "I will acquire 12 more." —Reuters ■

Thai police track down soldier selling small munitions to make money

BANGKOK — Thai police said on Saturday they have arrested a person — a corporal in the Thai army — who recently sent three parcels containing small munitions to buyers in three different provinces.

On Friday, a private parcel express delivery company reported to police finding one package containing four grenades at one of its stores in Bangkok. Checking its records, it then found the same person had also sent two other parcels, which were opened and found to contain four more hand grenades and 100 bullets.

The discovery raised alarm bells in Thailand, which has been rocked by a series of explosions in recent years, including three around Bangkok in just the past two months.

But Thai police believe the man arrested for mailing the small munitions was purely motivated by the aim of making money rather than any anti-government or anti-social objective.

The man, Israpong Promboot, had used a slightly misspelled version of his own name and another person's 13-digit government identification number on the package registration forms when sending all three parcels, the police said.

The police were able to use that information to identify the lowly ranked corporal as the possible sender, and said he admitted he was when police later questioned him at his home. It has not been revealed how Israpong acquired the munitions, and the police said they will continue to investigate the incident.

If formally charged, Israpong is likely to be tried by a military court and, if convicted, sentenced to time in a military prison.

The three incidents around Bangkok the past two months involving explosives — at the Government Lottery Office early in April, in front of the National Theater in mid May, and inside a military-run hospital in central Bangkok on 22 May — caused no deaths and only minor damage.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV ANDAMAN STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANDAMAN STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINETAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV GSS YANGON VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GSS YANGON VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GLODEN SEA

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV MCC'S PORE VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC'S PORE VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

US singer Grande delights fans with UK hospital visit

Singer Ariana Grande arrives at the 56th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, California on 26 January, 2014. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

LONDON — US pop singer Ariana Grande has paid a surprise visit to young fans who were injured in a suicide attack on a concert she gave in Manchester last month, posing with them for selfies and signing t-shirts.

Grande returned to Britain on Friday to lead an all-star benefit concert on Sunday and quickly headed for a hospital in the northern English city where many of the injured are being treated.

The Manchester Evening News newspaper said she brought presents and chatted with young fans, including 10-year-old Jaden Farrell-Mann, who suffered fractures to both legs and shrapnel wounds and has undergone two operations.

"Jaden was just sat there watching TV and she walked in. She was absolutely amazed! It was a complete surprise," her mother, Sharon, told the newspaper. "She'd met Prince William earlier today and then Ariana walked in."

Adam Harrison told the BBC his daughter Lily "felt like a rock star" after meeting her idol late on Friday and was "chomping at the bit" to attend the concert.

The "One Love Manchester" concert will also feature Coldplay, Justin Bieber, Miley Cyrus, Katy Perry, Pharrell Williams, Take That and the Black Eyed Peas. It will take place at the Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground.

Fans who attended Grande's show that was targeted by the bomber are being offered free tickets to the concert which will be broadcast on British television. Proceeds from tickets sold will go to the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund set up to aid grieving families and victims of the attack.

The attack by suicide bomber Salman Abedi on 22 May killed 22 people and wounded 116. Eleven people are in police custody as part of the police investigation into the attack. —Reuters ■

Comedian Kathy Griffin says her career is over after gory Trump photo

LOS ANGELES — Comedian Kathy Griffin tearfully apologized in a Friday press conference for posing with a fake bloodied and severed head depicting US President Donald Trump, saying that she felt her career was now over and that Trump "broke" her.

Griffin has lost sponsorships and jobs, including her role as co-host of CNN's New Year's Eve coverage with journalist Anderson Cooper, since a photograph and video from the shoot appeared on social media on Tuesday.

President Trump said the image of Griffin with the gory mask resembling him was "sick" and that it had traumatized his family, especially his youngest son, 11-year-old Barron. Trump's oldest son, Donald Jr, called for employers to drop the comedian.

"I don't think I will have a career after this. I'm going to be honest, (Trump) broke me," said Griffin, 56, a two-time Emmy-winning performer known for her deliberately provocative brand of humor. She added that she had received death threats.

Griffin reiterated the apology she posted on social media late on Tuesday, but remained defiant, saying, "I'm not afraid of Donald Trump, he's a bully," adding that she intended to continue making jokes about the president.

Comedian Kathy Griffin. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

She also described herself as a provocative woman who has often had to deal with older white men in positions of power.

"What's happening to me has never happened ever, in the history of this great country, which is that a sitting president of the United States and his grown children and the first lady are personally, I feel, trying to ruin my life — forever," she said.

Griffin said the photo was intended to mock Trump's comments during the presidential campaign, when he told CNN that Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly had "blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her - wherever" when she moderated a 2015 presidential debate.

Trump's remark was widely interpreted as referring to menstrual blood, implying that Kelly was in an unfriendly mood because she was menstruating.

At his daily briefing on Friday, White House spokesman Sean Spicer declined to respond to Griffin's remarks, saying that the president, the first lady and the Secret Service had made clear their views on the photo.

Katrina Pierson, a former Trump campaign spokeswoman, criticized Griffin on Twitter after her appearance on Friday, saying that Griffin had had a nervous breakdown about "misogyny & mean white men" at the press conference.

The US Secret Service, which is responsible for presidential security, has opened an inquiry into the photo of Griffin posing with the severed-head replica.—Reuters ■

Singer Chris Cornell had anxiety drugs, sedatives in system before suicide

DETROIT — Soundgarden frontman Chris Cornell had several prescription drugs in his system when he committed suicide last month in a Detroit hotel, according to the results of an autopsy released on Friday.

Cornell, 52, had anti-anxiety drugs, sedatives, barbiturates and sinus congestion medication in his system, a toxicology report from the Wayne County Medical Examiner showed.

The medical examiner last month determined that the grunge singer died by hanging himself on 17 May with an exercise resistance band in his hotel bathroom. He was found dead hours after playing a concert in Detroit with the band.

Cornell had spoken openly in interviews of his struggles with drugs as a teenager and later with alcohol. But he said in 2007 that he had been sober since checking himself into rehab in 2002. He also spoke of periods of depression and agoraphobia.

Cornell's wife, Vicky Cornell, has said her husband could not have been in his right mind when he died, saying his judgment may have been impaired by taking anti-anxiety drugs.

In a statement issued on Friday after the toxicology report was released, she said that those who knew him well "noticed that he wasn't himself during his final hours and that something was very off."

"After so many years of sobriety, this moment of terrible judgment seems to have completely impaired and altered his state of mind. Something clearly went terribly wrong, and my children and I are heartbroken and are devastated that this moment can never be taken back." —Reuters ■

Original Disney-land map could fetch

Walt Disney's first map of his planned Disneyland theme park in Southern California is going up for sale in June and could fetch up to US$900,000, auctioneers said on Friday. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

LOS ANGELES — Walt Disney's first map of his planned Disneyland theme park in Southern California is going up for sale in June and could fetch up to $900,000, auctioneers said on Friday.

The 1953 map, hand-inked and hand-colored, was created by Disney and artist Herb Ryman and used to present to investors in order to secure funding to build the first Disney theme park in Anaheim.

It clearly shows the layout of the park with the now iconic Sleeping Beauty Castle and railroad, and sections for Fantasy Land, Land of Tomorrow, and Frontier Land.

Disney's map has since passed down through employees and friends, and the current seller wishes to remain anonymous, auctioneers Van Eaton Galleries in Los Angeles said.

The map carries an estimate of $700,000 to $900,000 and will be the centerpiece of the 25 June auction.

Auctioneer co-owner Mike Van Eaton said the map was created over a single weekend.

"It's a very important piece in Disneyland history," he said.

"It's very similar to what it looks like now. Main Street is the same, Fantasy Land is very similar, the Rivers of America looks very much the same. Some things have been moved around, but the whole concept of the park was right there in 1953, two years before the park opened," he said. The sale will include some 1,000 other Disneyland items, including an original ride car from the Autopia attraction ($18,000 to $20,000) and a rare 1955 opening day Disneyland guidebook signed by Walt Disney that is expected to sell for $7,000 to $9,000.

The map and many of the artifacts will be on public exhibition at Van Eaton Galleries from Friday until 24 June. —Reuters ■

Artists from China, US hold exhibition for World Environment Day

BEIJING — Flying egrets, slothful capybaras, mighty llamas are just some of the works presented by a Chinese and American artist duo after they visited Ibera Wetlands, Argentina. The exhibition is being held to highlight environmental issues.

"A Summer Rendezvous," which opens in east China's Xiamen City on Saturday — two days before World Environment Day on 5 June, features 45 pieces of work by painter Liu Zhong and photographer Steven Rockefeller Jr.

Liu and Steven went to the Ibera Wetlands Provincial Nature Reserve in March 2016 for seven days.

Elegant and slender marsh deer, howler monkeys, and Argentina's national emblem the rufous horneroes all come alive in works by the two artists.

Liu said he used his work as a platform to reflect on environmental protection. "As an artist, I have the responsibility to advocate actions that make our environment better," Liu said. "Only in a sound environment can we produce beautiful works; in return, beautiful works propel us to create a sound environment."

This is the second time Liu and Steven have worked together. In 2015, the pair spent a week in Jackson, Wyoming, to capture the natural charm of western America.

"Liu and Steven's works manifest Argentina's picturesque natural scenery and Argentineans' unremitting awareness of environmental protection," said Liu Dawei, chairman of China Artists Association.

"Through communication and exchanges, Liu and Steven are exploring the mission and responsibility of artists," he said.

Gong Tingyu, vice chairman of the International Council for Caring Communities, said the exhibition transcends art and stands as a declaration of support for environmental protection and lives.

"The governments and people of China and the United States both care about environmental protection. Our efforts to improve the environment will be bound to benefit all human beings and Earth," Gong said.—Xinhua ■

mitv Myanmar International
Programme Schedule

(4-6-2017 07:00am ~ 5-6-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	An Ardent Aficionado of Traditional Design
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	Creative Hands
08:48	Am	A Tea Business Pankwan (Part-1)
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Bagan: The Land of Pagoda
09:51	Am	Next Weekend
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Black Gold (Part-1)
10:34	Am	The Richly Blessed Gem Land

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-2)
07:48	Pm	Today Myanmar: Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong (Second Session)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Architect: U Thaw
08:51	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Phyu Mon

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

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

Rotating wooden drum aims to help child development

WARSAW — A Polish musician has created an unusual interactive instrument — a larger-than life music box bristling with xylophones and drums — that he says can help educate children and aid their development through musical play.

The Musicon comprises a rotating wooden drum fitted with removable smaller instruments.

Children play notes by placing pegs in holes on the rotating drum's surface — much like a music box — but one that allows children to play any melody they like.

"Musicon is not only music, it is only a tool for learning, for development," said Kamil Laszuk, who invented the instrument and has developed it with the help of a team of close friends.

"There is also programming here, learning physics, cooperation in a team and also the development of manual skills. Music is the reward."

Laszuk developed the instrument for a project during his industrial design studies at Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts.

Following a positive reaction to his creation, his parents sold their house to help fund its development.

Warsaw's Synapsis Foundation, which helps children with autism and Asperger syndrome, suggested the instrument could be enjoyable for children suffering from those conditions.

"It is very important that there is no possibility of failure, that they can freely experiment in their own way", psychologist Joanna Burgiell said.

The instrument is due to go into production by the end of 2017.—Reuters ■

Inspirational Djokovic key to my tennis return — Agassi

PARIS — Andre Agassi would not have come back to tennis if it weren't for Novak Djokovic, a player he believes still has many other grand slam titles to win, the American said.

The 47-year-old agreed to coach Djokovic, who has been through a crisis of confidence since winning his 12th major title at the French Open last year, last month.

Asked by French sports daily L'Equipe on Saturday if any other player could have drawn him back to a sport he once hated, Agassi said: "I don't know. Novak inspired me, he gave me the desire to make that effort.

"Many other players have approached me before, I cannot say who. Novak is 30, he won 12 grand slam titles and I know he has the capacity to win many others."

Agassi, who won eight grand slam titles himself, retired in 2006. The former world number one is in Paris where Djokovic is defending his title, but will leave on holidays with his family next week.

"Novak is a good guy, and he's a chance for this sport. And I can help him. I think he will get better every day," he said.

"It's inspiring to be with him. Sometimes you follow your heart and I think it's the time for me to take care of this guy." —Reuters ■

Serbia's Novak Djokovic in action during his third round match of French Open against Argentina's Diego Schwartzman at Roland Garros in Paris, France on 2 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Venus makes swift work of Mertens to roll back the years again

PARIS — Evergreen Venus Williams stayed in contention for a shot at a maiden French Open crown, continuing to roll back the years with a 6-3 6-1 third-round demolition of Elise Mertens on Friday.

American Williams, seeded 10th and competing in her 20th French Open, powered 22 winners and converted six of 13 break points as she picked apart the 60th-ranked Belgian in just over an hour.

Momentum appears to be building for Williams as she attempts to win a title she came closest to lifting in 2002, when she was beaten in the final by her younger sister Serena.

Williams, a seven-times grand slam singles champion who turns 37 this month, will play Switzerland's Timea Bacsinszky for a place in the quarter-finals.—Reuters ■

Giroud treble boosts France ahead of Sweden qualifier

PARIS — Olivier Giroud's hat-trick inspired France to a 5-0 friendly victory over Paraguay on Friday, boosting Les Bleus' confidence ahead of a potentially decisive World Cup qualifier against Sweden next week. Arsenal striker Giroud, playing in his favoured central forward position, struck twice before the interval and once in the second half to lead France to an emphatic victory in Rennes. Moussa Sissoko and Antoine Griezmann added goals in the last 15 minutes.

France are top of World Cup qualifying Group A and three points ahead of Sweden before they travel to Stockholm next Friday. Giroud volleyed home from Ousmane Dembele's volley in the sixth minute.

He doubled the tally seven minutes later with a diving header after being perfectly set up by Dimitry Payet and he made it 3-0 in the 69th to become the first France player to score a hat-trick since David Trezeguet in 2000. Giroud was replaced in the 73rd minute by Alexandre Lacazette and the Olympique Lyonnais forward had an immediate impact, finding Sissoko who tapped in from close range.—Reuters ■

Murray fells Del Potro in Paris

PARIS — Top seed Andy Murray eased into the last-16 of the French Open 7-6(8,) 7-5, 6-0 on Saturday, over a flagging Juan Martin Del Potro.

Murray did enough to keep his nose in front throughout, while the giant Argentine was unable to reprise the heroics that saw the pair produce such magic in last year's Rio Olympics gold medal match.

While Murray won that affair too — and their only previous grand slam meeting — Del Potro had triumphed in their most recent clash, so the Scot was alert to the dangers.

Del Potro, whose career has been blighted by a recurring wrist injury, needed a good start against the world number one, but when he lost a tight first set tiebreak, the stage was set.

Losing that opener on a disputed linecall cut Del Potro deep. Murray jogged to his seat at the changeover, the Argentine stood at the net, bent at the waist, his head resting on the netcord. There he stayed until the umpire called time.—Reuters ■

SUNDAY SPECIAL
4 June 2017

The Global New Light of Myanmar

Skills and knowledge today's youths should have

Min Htet Ko Ko
B.E.H.S(1),Meiktila

Youths are would-be leaders of the future world. Youths are precious human resources. Youths are priceless treasures. Youths must be well-informed. Youths must be dedicated. They must be independent. They must be energetic. To become such youths, we need to have skills and knowledge.

Today youths are quite different from those of centuries ago. They need (18) manly skills. Such as martial art, riding horse, riding elephant and etc. Now it is not like this. So, skills today's youths should have are ICE skills. "I" stands for Internet. "C" stands for Computer. "E" stands for English. In ICE skill for first and foremost. English skills are mean having 4 skills. They are writing, reading, listening and speaking. Among four, listening skill is most difficult. I think that three other skills are easy. We must watch English movies, listen to English songs and read English newspapers. For speaking skill, we need a supportive environment. It is essential. This may be a problem for us. English is an international language. It is medium to communicate. It is mighty language. Youths with English skills get more job opportunities than youths without English skills. Another skills we should have is Computer skills. Computers play an important part in everybody lives in developed countries. They have become useful in many fields such as education, medicine, engineering and etc. Computer technologies become more advanced. We must catch up with it. We must have at least a basic knowledge about computers. We must understand how to use a computer since we are young. We must attend the computer courses. Those courses are expensive but worth. We must be good in using computers. Another skills we should have is Internet skills. Nowadays, Internet is accessible to all of rich and poor. The influence of Internet is growing bigger and bigger. It is a world wide web. Internet is a bank of knowledge. However, using the Internet must be correct. Instead of wasting the time, using the social media. We must seek knowledge about various factors on google. Google is a place where we can seek a variety of knowledge. We must empower ourselves through knowledge as knowledge is power. We must be well-informed. Apart from these skills, we need social skills. Only if we have these skills, we will be able to keep abreast of the youths from other countries. We will be able to raise our living standard with these skills.

To sum up, youths are the shining stars. They are priceless. We must use it wisely and effectively. Only then, We will be able to create a better future. We will become contributors to our community and then to our society by using the skills and knowledge today's youths should have. ■

How to control anger in your mind's eyes

Myo Myo
Chaung Zon Village,
Myaing Township

Aversion is a kind of dangerous thing which leads to ugliest attitude. If someone throw harsh words, responses some physical action when we make a mistake, we'll amuse to generate greatest anger on him (or) her instead of forgiveness. Out of this, the quarrel start to burn as possible as it used to be. The more our faces become red, the less control we make within ourselves. In that respect, we forget to blanket full of comfort on our hostility.

It is said that we mostly can see a number of forensic news in the papers which carry cases of killing one another because of unstoppable situation.

One example can be highlighted that two people who played guitar on the pavement with their friends were killed by the group of people who bring the knife in their hands in Bago. The original sense that of become destroyed, and insist it on thinking outside the box of sympathy. They didn't know their anger would create their quarrel into critical condition. Moreover, many bad guys have already been behind the bar. Their repents for their past stories were so late that even the celestial king do not sense how to save. Some mostly question on unstoppable anger were below mention."Why anger can attach to mankind when it is impossible for you to swallow them." The responses over the above question were revealed in brief that because habit of controlling anger are less than habit of drinking water in a day. To mention it clearly, our thirst for water are a day of seven and eight times. We, however, never fail to satiate our thirst, provided that we are in the busy moment. Likewise, the incident of oversion overwhelm our body for six or five times in a day. Such miserous anger can be melt down by our happiest thinking in our yesterday or the day before angry day. His or her mind bitting for anger become totally diminished. Besides, we've to substitute such happy thinking to our every angriest thinking. Thus the satisfaction, sooner, cover the whole body; peace and harmony sparkle and glister in order to decrease our aggressive behavior miraculously.

SEE PAGE-C

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to **dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com** with the following information: **(1)** Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), **(2)** Real name and (if different) your penname, **(3)** Your level of education, **(4)** Name of your School/College/University, **(5)** A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, **(6)** A color photo of the submitter, **(7)** Copy of your NRC card, **(8)** Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

Basic English Grammar for Basic Students

Lesson 5: Articles

From Lesson 2 to Lesson 4, we have studied about "Nouns".

There are words that we use together with "**Nouns**". These are called "**Articles**". There are only three Articles: .. "**a**" , "**an**" and "**the**".

We put these articles before the Nouns. "**a**" and "**an**" are used for Singular Nouns and "the" is used for both Singular and Plural Nouns.

We can classify the English alphabets into two categories: "Consonants" and "Vowels". These are categorized according to their sounds.

"**a, e, i, o,u**" are Vowels and other alphabets from "**b,c,d, f, g, h**…….**z**" are called "**Consonants**".

For words that begin with consonant sounds, we use the Article "**a**".

e.g. a boy , a girl, a teacher, a horse, a cat, a dog, a table, a chair

And for words that begin with vowel sounds, we use the Article "**an**".

e.g. an apple, an ant, an elephant, an inkpot, an owl, an opportunist

But, there are exceptional cases.

If a word is pronounced in a vowel sound although it begins with a consonant, we use the Article "**an**"

e.g. an hour, an honest man

If a word is pronounced in a consonant sound although it begins with a vowel, we use the Article "**a**"

e.g. a European, a usual way to do, a useful idea

These "**a**" and "**an**" are used for Singular Nouns about which we say for the first time. (for the unknown Singular Nouns)

But, when it is already mentioned or known, we use the Article "**the**".

e.g. I met a girl on the way. The girl is my friend's sister.

There was a bird on the tree. The bird flew away.

The Article "**the**" is also used for special things which are unique.

e.g. the Shwedagon Pagoda , the NLD Party, the Ayeyawady River, the Mount Everest, the White House of USA

Exercise 5.

I. Underline the Articles in the following passage.

Once upon a time, there was a little girl in a small village which was at the foot of a high mountain. There was a big river which flowed near the village. The little girl was an orphan and she lived with her Grandpa. The Grandpa was a farmer. The farmers in that village grew paddy and sold the paddy to other towns and villages.

II. Fill in the following blank spaces with suitable Articles, "**a**", "**an**" or "**the**".

In ……. Far far away country, there was ……. King who had ……. beautiful Queen. They had …… daughter who was very pretty. ……. King and ……. Queen loved their little daughter very much. ……pretty little Princess was very good-hearted and very kind to others.

There was …….. river named …… Blue Danube in their country.

One day, ……. Princess strolled along …… river bank together with her maids.

Suddenly, she saw …… very big fish swimming in …. river . …… fish was golden and bright in …….. sunshine. She went to ….. river bank and talked to the fish .

"Golden Fish , Golden Fish , where did you come from?"

…….. big fish stopped swimming for awhile , as if it heard …… Princess talking.

III. Fill in the following blank spaces with suitable articles, "a, an or the".

(a) ……. Boy and ….. girl came into the classroom.
(b) What is ……. name of ……..teacher who teaches you English?
(c) I have ……. good book . ……. book is on …… table near ….. window.
(d) …… school we went to at that time was ……..missionary school on ….. hill near our village.
(e) I saw …… apple on ….. tree, and I want to pluck …… apple.
(f) When I was …… little girl, I used to dance with …….. song, sung by my mother.
(g) She will go on ……. Trip tomorrow and will go to ….. village near …….. sea-shore.
(h) He can speak English well to …… foreigners with whom he works.
(i) …….. mother and ….. father of Mi Mi are rich.
(j) …… farmers in the village owned twenty cows and …… hundred chickens.

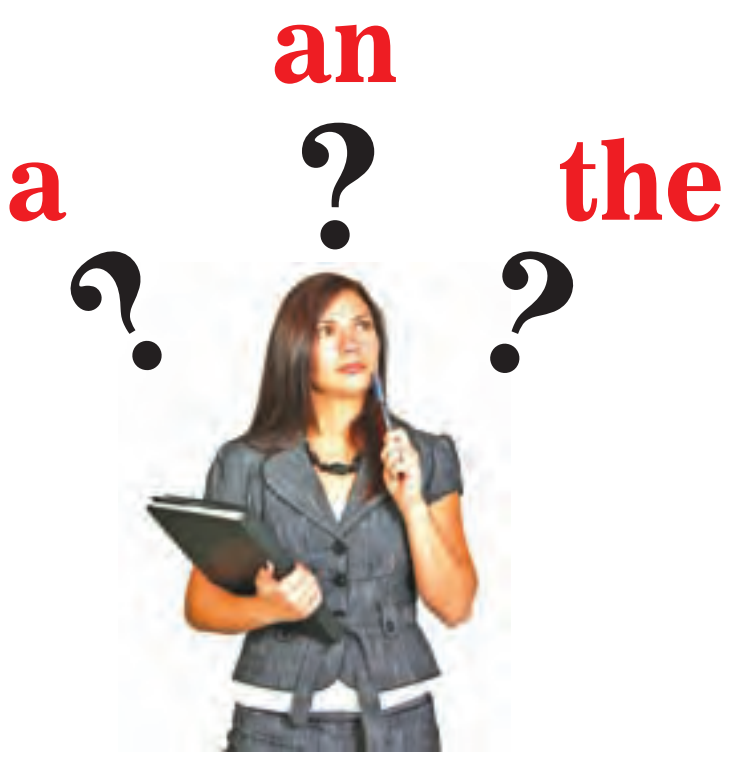
Hope that all of you can do all these Exercises very well !

We have studied the Articles "a" , "an" and "the" today.

Bye for now class! See you next Sunday!

Your English Teacher, GNLM.

Email: dr.nunuwintin.rose.dawn@gmail.com



Here's the answers to the last week's exercises .

Exercise 4.1

	Underlined	Double-lined
I.	(a) tree	girls , flowers
	(b) boy	chocolates
	(c) man	houses
	(d) Mary, lamb	
	(e) moon	stars
	(f) garden, mango tree, orange tree	trees, apple trees
	(g) home, mother cat, mother dog	kittens, puppies
	(h) family, Grandpa, father, mother, uncle	aunts, children
	(i) teacher,	boys, exercises
	(j) man, a loaf of bread, a cup of milk	eggs, sandwiches

Exercise 4.2

II. Examples of ten different Singular Nouns are:…

man , woman, lady, girl, dog, flower, apple, banana, chair, bag

III. Examples of ten different Plural Nouns are: ..

men, women, ladies, girls, kittens, puppies, cows, farmers, tables, cups

IV. Plural of the words are as follows:..

(a) girls, cats, kittens, cups, laptops, princes, houses
(b) princesses, ashes, sandwiches, buses, classes, kisses
(c) flies, skies, cries, ladies, babies, puppies
(d) sheep, deer, lions, tigers, fishes
(e) children, mice, men, women, policemen

V. Change the Singular Nouns into Plural.

(a) I saw boys riding the horses.
(b) We will meet the children in the schools.
(c) Who can catch the sheep and deer ?
(d) The policemen caught the thieves.
(e) There are lions, tigers, birds, sheep and deer in the zoo.
(f) The little girls broke the glasses.
(g) We can find sea-shells on the sea-shores.
(h) Our families had little lambs.
(i) The children ate the cakes on the tables.
(j) Have you got the data for our curricula?

Bye Bye Class ! Hope you are all happy in my English Grammar Class!

Your English Teacher.

The Role of Teachers

Dr. Nu Nu Win

If we want to upgrade the Education of our country, we need to have teachers who are of high quality. Here, "high quality" means not only their expertise in the subjects they are going to teach , but also they should have other qualities as teachers, such as understanding children and youths, genuine love for children and youths, patience , alertness to the Education of the time, having self-discipline, responsibility , capability , and so on .

Here, one important point is that all these teachers should have incentives to carry out their duties well. What should be the incentives?

Both material and psychological.

For material incentives , teachers should have enough salaries for their dignity and their ranks , a place or a house to live in according to their dignity as teachers which also have security, and other materials which they need not only for their jobs but also for their families, school uniforms decent enough to be presentable before their students and parents, and so on .

Do you think Myanmar teachers have enough of these material incentives?

Mostly, but not at all .

Because of the low salaries of teachers which cannot meet the ends for their families' needs, most of the teachers give tuition classes to their students or some other students in their free time after or before class hours and during weekends. These tuition classes can lead to corruption in their jobs.

Some teachers who do not want to give tuition because it is against the rule, have to find some other ways to meet the ends of their families' needs. They sell something like food or snacks at school or do some other extra work which is not related to the work of a teacher. I've heard some teachers who do fishing and sell fish, frying and selling some crisps, and so on. As teachers are persons of dignity, the writer never encourages other teachers to do such things which can hurt a teacher's dignity. But, when they have to face poverty and hunger, they have to dare to do anything they can.

And imagine how a teacher who is always worried and frightened for his or her own family can have interest and concentration on his or her teaching.

Then, how can we upgrade our Education with such kind of teachers?

Psychological Incentives are more important than material incentives. Although he is poor or hungry, if a superior (may be a headmistress or a TEO) encourages and praises his teaching and his job very well , that teacher would have enough incentive to carry on his work well. If not, who wants to go on well in this profession with no encouragement , but just being looked down , and always being scolded with threats of losing their jobs. They are great enemies of psychological incentives .

One more thing is "Security".

Here , the word "Security" means how much they were taken care of by the school and the society they are working for; by their colleagues and co-workers, by the authority concerned in the field of Education. For example , if the Minister of Education threatened them to send them away to far far places in the border areas, and to the remote regions , if their students fail in their examinations , what will happen to the teachers ? Can you guarantee whether your whole class will pass in the coming exams? No, not at all.

In every class, there can be students who cannot follow what they are taught, some slow learners, some children with down syndrome, some disabled children, some children who never take care whether they pass or fail, and so on. Then, how can a teacher guarantee that all in his class will pass in the coming examination? Even in my own case, although I am now a Ph.D. degree holder, mostly I have some students who fail in the exam every year. When I was a Senior Assistant Teacher, I taught Mathematics and English and Geography. If they studied hard, and if they learnt by heart they could pass the Examination in Geography. But imagine for Mathematics and English. There could be pupils who were weak in Mathematics, who had no Maths Brain and so also with English too. Some students had no developed brain for foreign languages. So, it is sure that I could have students who could fail in Mathematics and English every year. It is so natural.

So , I hereby request to all persons in authority not to threaten teachers that they will be transferred to remote areas if their students fail in the examination, and that they would lose their jobs if they could not fulfill the results percentage , which can cause much insecurity to teachers to continue to work in this field of Education.

There is no teacher who wants their students to fail.

But, the practical field is more difficult than imagining and making plans on the table.

And to work with living humans is much much more difficult than working with non-living materials.

Teachers need encouragement not only from the persons in authority, but also from parents and the government too. The writer saying this just because most of the time for long long years, teachers had to participate on every occasion, such as to welcome any person in authority when he or she paid a visit to the regions , when a new bridge or a new road was opened, when an international sports and games were to be celebrated in our country , when our great Election was held, and so on . But, after the successful completion of the occasion, who thanked them up to this day? Everyone thought as if teachers and students have the responsibility to participate in all these occasions.

For example, after the successful Free and Fair General Election, has any teacher got any certificate of thanks for participating very seriously to make this Election fair and correct? Everybody knows very well that it is a great adventure for the teachers who were government staff at that time under the previous government. Even our beloved National Leader, Ahmay Suu accidentally forgot to give any certificate of thanks or to say any words of thanks to the teachers who had struggled a lot to make all elections fair and correct, although she remembered to give cakes with thanks to all those sidecar- drivers who had put NLD flags on the sidecars. She may not realize that it made these teachers very sad. May be she thought there was no need to do so, because they were government staff , and so it was their duty to carry out their assignments successfully .

That is only one example. But teachers are so used to such neglect and indifference for long long years.

But, the writer wants to ask one question, "Why do people think like this?"

The people in our country are so used to forget about the role of teachers. They thought wherever it is necessary to do so, teachers are the scape goats or staff (if I use the word "slaves" , I could have gone too far , but , sometimes, we feel like that.) who should be always alert and ready to contribute our energy for any occasion as needed.

So, please drive away all these discouragements from our teachers and give them no more Psychological discouragements. Instead, we should give them incentives which will lead them to carry out their duties actively with joy.

To upgrade the status of teachers both materially and psychologically is the very first step to success in upgrading our Standard of Education. ■

Dr. Nu Nu Win (Retired Professor and Head of Department)
Department of Educational Psychology, SUOE.

How to control anger in your mind's eyes

FROM PAGE A

Another point of view to deteriorate our anger can be suggested according to Buddha's teaching. This is just equanimity technique from Buddha who is enlightened one of all time. He said "nothing but keeping equanimity over the problem and unwhole some action can be able to grab real peace, and which'll eradicate all of cravings, aversion and ignorances within you and yourself. Life will be beautiful; we'll receive a real happiness throughout this in this regard.

It seems to people that either fights or some mischievous manners are not because of anger but because of rules of law. They just blame both government and its policies, thought it is not base on fact. In fact, anger have been creating a great deal of unrise, and making religious slip, political derailment, civilization we appreciate turning upside down.

From now on, I would like to suggest all my readers "anger are a dangerous satan that can isolate your life and direct you to the hell true to Buddhism. Anger let you suffer full of immortal diseases so called sickness, bug, virus, infection, syndrome and mental disorder together with the cancer, diabetes, uphighest blood pressure, especially heart attack. As a final consequences, expecting for long live'll become fall flat, and you've to buy your caskets just during 50 on the condition of "in the air". ■

Gohteik Viaduct is a railway trestle in Nawnghkio, northern Shan State. **PHOTO: MAUNG KYIN NAR**

Death-Railway between Thanbyuzayat of Myanmar & Ban Pong of Thailand. **PHOTO: MAUNG KYIN NAR**

Two World Famous Railroads in Myanmar

By Kaung Sithu

1st May 1877 saw Myanmar's first-ever train plying along 161-mile long rail track between Yangon-Prome (now known as Pyay), which commenced to have been built in 1876. Thenceforth, rail tracks have been being built in Myanmar for transportation of goods & passengers, till now.

Out of rail tracks in Myanmar, Gohteik Viaduct in Nawnghkio, northern Shan State built by the British before gaining the Independence & Death-Railway in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State built by the Japanese during the Second World War were known as world-famous railroads.

To Gohteik

Gohteik Viaduct built at the height of 300 feet in Nawnghkio township is the longest and 2nd highest among the viaducts across the world. We can reach the world-famous Gohteik viaduct by train or in a car via Nawnghkio. It is situated at the milestone (436/09), 7 miles far from Nawnghkio railway station, between Nawnghkio & Naungpein railway stations.

Due to the suspension of trespassing over the bridge for pedestrians since last year with a view to the maintenance of its strength, all passengers had to pass it by Mandalay-Lashio train, whereas those who came by car had to come first to Gohteik railway station, 8 miles far from Nawnghkio, thence to Gohteik bridge on foot.

Myinkhon Bridge

Gohteik viaduct was called "Myinkhon Bridge" in Myanmar, rendered from Trestle. "Hokwut" village, 60 miles north-east far from Mandalay is situated in Hsipaw township, having been a huge village-tract governing 48 villages in 1898. "Nampsay" river flowed through 3 stone caves nearby Hokyut village, then diving into the ground and thence appearing again at one place. So, the place Nampsay river started to disappear, thus it got the name of "Ngoehteik—meant for starting to disappear." With the passing time, Ngoehteik became Gohteik.

In 1897, British government built a rail road between Mandalay and Kwonlon for carrying minerals from Namtu mining, creating a world-famous rail road. Bridge government commissioned Burma Railroad Company taking responsibilities of the then transportation work of Myanmar to build the bridge Gohteik. Burma Railroad Company hired Pennsylvania & Maryland Companies in 1899, with Sir Arthur Rendel, an engineer of Burma Railroad Company and Myanmar engineers working in-charge.

Sir A Arm-ring Del & Company had drawn the bridge's design. The 2260-feet-long bridge has a pile of 320 feet in height at the utmost, a post of 45 feet at the lowest level and the width of the viaduct is 120 feet. Some of metal posts at the bottom of the bridge had been erected at 1000 ft far from the lowest valley. The average height of the viaduct is at 820 ft above the flowing river water under the bridge. The rail track over the highest pile is 335 ft high from the floor of the bottom.

Out of 16 piles which support the bridge, no-8 & no-9 posts are the highest. Altogether, 4311 tons of iron & steel, one million pieces of iron nails were used for the whole viaduct. The construction of the bridge came to a completion on 1st January, 1900, costing K 1698200.

Due to the destruction of the Aligned Forces during the 2nd World War, Gohteik Viaduct which commenced to have been used in 1903, Piles no 2 & 5 were demolished. At their retreat from Myanmar, the Japanese army had bombed 4 piles, with lower part of no 11 pile completely ruined and piles no.10 & 12 made to have collapsed. 120-feet-long 4 iron frames spanning with each other installed on these piles plunged onto the ground.

Myanma Railways (MR) renovated the ruined Gohteik viaduct in May, 1948, and renovation work lasted for 3 years, due to the shortage of materials and inconvenience of transportation, coming to a finish in August in 1951, at the expense of K 32 lakhs.

In the world, Gohteik viaduct in Myanmar and Leth viaduct in Alberta of Canada are the highest among the viaducts built of iron and steel bars. The latter's length is twice that of the former, thus Leth viaduct became the longest one, while Gohteik became the highest and 2nd longest one in the world. Gohteik bridge stood tall as a world-famous viaduct, the fusion of its grandeur and the beauty of northern Shan State since many years ago. On account of successive renovations, it had been attracting many travelers, existing as 100-year-old historic antique.

Death-Railway

The rail built spanning between Thanbyuzayat of Myanmar & Ban Pong of Thailand claimed many lives, thus becoming well-known as Death-Railway. The rail built in November 1942 was inaugurated on 25th October 1943. The track stretches up to over 250 miles, of which 70 miles is in the part of Myanmar. In the year 1940-41 when Japanes retreated from Myanmar there were a total of 2852 miles of rail tracks in Myanmar. Of them, 150 miles of track between Yangon-Taungoo and another 150 miles from Myingyan and other parts had been unfastened for applying in building Myanmar-Siam rail track.

At the time of building rail road, over 80000 Myanmar nationals & more than 10000 aligned forces lost lives. In building the rail track starting from Thanbyuzayat, Myanmar through Phayar Thonezu valley to connect with Bangkok-Singapore rail, shortage of food, severe weather and atrocious torture pushed many to death.

World-famous Sweat Army

Japanese authorities formed the committee for recruitment and care of laborers for building Siam-Myanmar Rail, with U Ba Saw, secretary as chairman.

In answer to the shortage of laborers, the committee asked for the help from the Office of Provisional Myanmar Government in December 1942. Secretariat Office of Information announced that it would set up a Laborer Force comprising 20000. In the announcement, it urged people to join the force with incentives such as salary and fringe benefits.

In transporting laborers recruited from Taungoo, Insein, Hinthada, Pathein, Dawei, Myeik, Mawlamyine, Thaton, Bago districts to Thanbyuzayat, many fled on the way. So, a new program was laid down for forming voluntary forces and transportation by the no 15 Army of Japan.

Under the instruction of Japanese Military Administration Department on 9th March 1943, more than 30000 Myanmar laborers were recruited for construction of Siam-Myanmar Rail road. BDA (Burma Defense Army) was called Blood Army, so conscripted labor force was named Sweat Army. Later it was renamed Burma Armed Force (ဗမာ့လက်နှိုက်တပ်မတော်).

Originally 9 districts were designated for recruiting laborers, but later 5 more districts, namely Kyaukse, Maubin, Minbu, Pakokku and Thayet were added to the former ones. Making healthy Myanmar people from various regions of the country join the labor groups by force, it was known as the Conscripted Labor Force. Most of Myanmar citizens lost their lives and much sweat in it.

It was described in the personal records of experiences on Thai-Myanmar Rail that in building the Death-Railway, 61000 POWs of Aligned Forces worked for the construction and 12399 lost their lives. Out of Asians amounting to 270000 including Myanmar, more than 90000 died. Writer Linyon Thit Lwin put on record that construction of 260 mile-long rails claimed 47 prisoners of war and 346 Asians per mile.

The museum of death-rail, a scourge of war was built and opened in 1994 by the then government, with the new museum was inaugurated on 21st April 2016. There had been being shown rare photos and utensils and equipments used by conscripted laborers in the museum, plus the first-ever driven locomotive together with others. A monument commemorating the place death-railway started was erected.

The novel "Nha Ba" the work of our respected writer Maung Htin made the incident known to Myanmar people and the work "A Bridge on the River Kwei" made the event known to the world. Thus, the death railway became an attraction for globe trotters.

Gohteik Viaduct and Death Railway are historic symbols for Myanmar, hence the need for all of us to conserve for the survival in the long run and to boost our tourism industry as two world-famous railroads in Myanmar.—*Translated by Khin Maung Oo (Tada-U)*

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SUNDAY COMICS

Myanmar and Russia have the same goals to achieve peace, security and stability

A wide-ranging interview with Ambassador of Russia to Myanmar Mr. Nikolay A. Listopadov by the Global New Light of Myanmar and MRTV touched upon democratic and economic reform, peace process and bilateral relations between Myanmar and Russia.

Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Nikolay A. Listopadov speaks during the interview at the Russian Embassy in Yangon. **PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

Q: Myanmar and Russia have had relations for almost 70 years now. What factors contributed to this long-lasting relationship?

A: The relations between the two countries will reach its 70th year on 18 February 2018 and we will celebrate that day when it arrives. The foundation for this relation was laid by Bogyoke Aung San and we value it. Our relation is inherently amicable and there are no unresolved issues between our two countries.

We are continuously working on collaborating together in different sectors such as politics, economics, commerce, education, culture and defense among others. In May of last year, President U Htin Kyaw and President Vladimir Putin met and discussed state matters and collaboration between the two countries. There have been good results and our leaders established excellent personal ties. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also met with our Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Sergey Lavrov in Laos last year and discussed bilateral affairs. Our leaders have mutual respect and we will continue working to uphold our relations in the future.

The leaders of both countries have built close relations with each other but it is also important that citizens of both Russia and Myanmar have mutual respect, trust and understanding. We value those aspects.

Q: Myanmar is currently in transition to democracy. As an ambassador who is serving under the new government's administration, what significant changes do you see?

A: I have been serving as Ambassador in Myanmar for nine months by now but this is actually the third time I came here. My first posting here was in 1982 and I served as a diplomat in 1983-1986 and 1990-1994. I have a lot of experience concerning Myanmar.

When I returned to Myanmar in August last year, I was greatly impressed with the amount of changes in the country. There has been considerable improvement in the socio-economic sector in many of the cities, including Yangon. New residential buildings have been built in Yangon and other big cities, telecommunication services have improved. However, the gentle and compassionate nature of the people of Myanmar has not changed.

> The success of the peace process depends on all sides' truly wanting peace and no more desire for armed conflicts.

Under the new administration led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, there have been many positive changes in many spheres and I think that is commendable. There are equally numerous difficulties but I firmly believe that the people of Myanmar can overcome them.

Q: In the last four-five years we have led many efforts to promote peace and unity between the ethnic groups and the whole country. Do you see any progress with the peace process?

A: Peace is tremendously important, as there can be neither development nor security without it. I have observed that the incumbent government has made the peace process a high priority. Coincidently, I arrived on 28 August last year in time to attend the first meeting of the Union Peace Conference -21st Century Panglong. I see this as a sign of good luck and I also attended the second meeting on 24 May and I saw that there are more attendants than the previous meeting.

Inclusive dialogue is important. The road to peace may have its ups and downs. But as a proverb says 'A big wave requires the boat's strength, a foothill requires nature's strength.'.

It is important to achieve mutual understanding, respect and trust between the government, the Tatmadaw and ethnic groups. That is why Russia fully supports the peace process. The success of the peace process depends on all sides' truly wanting peace and no more desire for armed conflicts. As someone said in the Union Peace Conference, Myanmar could not achieve peace for 70 years and this resulted in the socio-economic sector not developing as much as it should have.

The Russian Federation is also made up of many ethnicities living together and there is also diverse religions. So we understand why internal peace, security and unity are important and we also recognize the challenges Myanmar is facing.

Q: Russian Government has relations with the Myanmar Military. What kind of program do you have with the Military?

A: Myanmar needs a strong military as it has to face many challenges. We sell aircraft and other defensive military equipment to Myanmar's military and there have been sharing of information between the militaries of the two countries. We also give precedence to cooperation in educational sphere. More than 6,000 graduates have attended the best technological universities in Russia and there are 600 Myanmar students and some have already achieved post-graduate degrees. So, as I said, there is considerable cooperation between the Governments and the Military of Russia and Myanmar.

Q: Could you tell us more of the collaboration between Russia and Myanmar?

A: Commerce and economy are important sectors and if you look at the history some projects were completed with aid from Soviet Russia. In the 1960s, we helped build the Yangon Insein Technological Universtiy, the Inya Lake Hotel, the Sao San Htun Hospital in Taunggyi, the Kyekmauktaung Dam and you can see that all of these facilities are still in use and are immensely beneficial. We will work on future collaboration in the economic sector, while taking strength from our past successes. We are currently in the middle of building a steel factory near Taunggyi.

Myanmar is rich in natural gases and resources and there are Russian companies interested in oil and gas exploration. We are ready to participate with Myanmar in this sector and also to help in other industries. Myanmar is an agricultural country and I believe Russian technology can help even further. So I see many opportunities for business and cooperation between Myanmar and Russia.

Our two countries have mutual understanding and collaboration in the arts and cultural sectors. An example would be the two Russian musicians performing in the National Theatre in Yangon just a few weeks ago. I hope performers and musicians from Myanmar will be able to come to perform in Russia too. I will try my best to make it possible too because I believe arts and culture are important to foster understanding and respect between our people.

Q: Russia has been more involved in collaboration with its eastern neighbors in the past five years. What is the level of the current political cooperation between Russia and Myanmar?

A: You're right. Russia is a big country with parts in Europe and most of it in Asia. That is why we try to cooperate with countries in East and Southeast Asia. Last year we held the ASEAN-Russia Summit to promote politics, economics, defense and other sectors between the participating countries. Myanmar and Russia have the same goals to achieve peace, security and stability and we are working together for it.

SEE PAGE-H

FROM PAGE-G

Our two countries are also ardent in counter terrorism as we oppose all forms of terrorism. We respect the Charter of the United Nations and we don't interfere in other countries' affairs. However there are still many opportunities for cooperation between our two countries. We hope that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs will attend the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) which will be held in Nay Pyi Taw this November. There we will discuss on economics and commerce among other things.

Q: Russia can be said to be a valuable ally to Myanmar. What advice would you like to give on Myanmar's path to a federal union?

A: Russia is a Federation and it has many diverse ethnicities, living together in harmony. So I think Myanmar can learn a lot from Russia and we are always willing to help in that. But it is up to the people of Myanmar to decide on their future. They know what is best for the country and what is not and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's government knows better too. We don't want to interfere in internal affairs. There is a Myanmar proverb that says, "Phoenix live in Phoenix country, and Dragons live in Dragon Country,' but there is a common policy everyone can agree on. There must be equality between the ethnic groups so there has to be equality in socio-economics and politics too.

It needs time to restore peace and harmony because Myanmar has around 135 different ethnic groups living here. There are also many armed groups and sometimes they do not have the same interests. So I think it is important for all the ethnic nationalities to harmonize interests. Myanmar has vast natural resources and a beautiful natural environment. It is possible for ethnic groups to live peacefully and there are good examples of that now too. Besides some border areas, most of Myanmar is peaceful and has security and stability. But on a nationwide scale, it is important to strive for national peace, security and stability.

President U Htin Kyaw (left) shakes hands with Russia's President Vladimir Putin (right) during a meeting on the sidelines of the Russia-ASEAN summit in Sochi, Russia, on 19 May 2016. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

I believe Myanmar will be able to establish a truly democratic federal union.

Q: I am amazed that you can speak so fluently in Burmese. Other people have said that Burmese is a difficult language to learn so I want to know what you have to say about that and for what reason did you learn Burmese and when did you start speaking it?

A: I love the Burmese language and I have been continuously learning it for almost forty years now. Russia's Ministry for Foreign Affairs has a University for International Relations that teach a wide range of languages. I attended the university in 1977 and took Burmese language. I can't really explain my reasons for taking that language, I didn't know much about Myanmar back then but I felt compelled to study it. I think having an interest for the language helped me learn it and I studied Burmese for 5 years in that university. When I first arrived in Myanmar in 1982 I had no experience in speaking in Burmese so the native speakers didn't understand my Burmese. I had to systematically learn Burmese and I really enjoy reading short novels and poems in Burmese. I especially like Mae Kway. I also participated in the Thingyan festival and I like the famous songs and poems celebrating Thingyan. I also read more modern poems and I am fond of the works of Sayargyi Min Thuwun. I also know much about the actors and actresses from the previous era and my favorite actress is Cho Pyone. I was lucky to meet her again in front of Yangon city hall this Thingyan. It's a continuous process learning Burmese and you have to be determined, especially it concerns. A lot of students in Myanmar are studying Russian and Universities in Moscow are teaching Burmese language too. We have four officials in our embassy who can speak in Burmese and I think it helps in better understanding each other so I urge diplomats to learn Burmese. I am fond of Burmese proverbs and I always buy books on them. I want to wish all of Myanmar health and peace of mind and I hope the Union Peace Conference is will be successful. ■