

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Monday, 1 January 2018

President's New Year Message



President U Htin Kyaw.

My fellow countrymen,

ON this auspicious occasion of the New Year, I send my good wishes to all countrymen and brothers and sisters of the ethnic national races.

My fellow countrymen,

From the time our Union Government took office, we have steadfastly worked hard with special zeal in accordance with the objectives

and policies laid down for the good of the country for internal peace, national reconciliation, emergence of a Democratic Federal Republic, improving the socio-economic life of the people. We were able to achieve a certain degree of success.

My fellow countrymen,

At this time we are organizing various levels of the 21st Century Panglong Conference

for the emergence of a Democratic Federal Republic which the people are yearning for. With this in mind, the Union Government, the People, the Hluttaw, the Tatmadaw, Political parties, Civil Society Organizations, Ethnic Armed Organizations have been working very hard collectively.

As we work for a peaceful, prosperous and developed country, it is natural to en-

counter challenges and difficulties. To overcome these challenges and difficulties, I wish to solemnly urge the entire people to work with us with full force and enthusiasm.

In this New Year, I pray for the health and happiness of all our countrymen and brothers and sisters of ethnic national races. May all your good wishes be fulfilled. — MNA ■



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Sitagu Sayadaw sends New Year Message



Sitagu Sayadaw, one of the eminent monks of Myanmar sent New Years' Message for the entire Myanmar.

In his message, the Sayadaw pointed out the Buddha's concept of impermanence as changes never change. "You cannot step into the same river twice," he noted, saying the water that touches your feet is constantly flowing, so every second the-going-and-the-coming process goes on. What the Sayadaw means is that changes constantly occur as the new is filling the places the old has left. Humans must aware of the

process, he noted. So people who do everything in time win the race against the time. The Sayadaw said if a person fails to accomplish a task according to schedule, he in fact is wasting his time.

Buddha has already taught mankind about the abilities to win the race against the time. So people must be always active and alarm. They should also have the resolution. Without resolution and hope, a person cannot have the activeness and awareness. People must control their actions, words or in other words they should have

the discipline. So there must be the regiment and discipline in everything including in the religion and country.

There is local discipline and it depends on location and time. The Sayadaw also stated the importance of mental and physical stability. If a person has the alertness, activeness, awareness, attentiveness, discipline and politeness he can create a base from which immense power can be generated.

The Sayadaw wishes everyone a peaceful and pleasant New Year and the base of immense power. — MNA ■

New Year Greeting Message from Dr. Bhaddanta Nanda Marla Bhivamsa

1/ I hereby sent my New Year Blessing to all beings on the auspicious occasion of the New Year 2018.

2/ Each and every individual including the monks in the religious order living in the Union of Myanmar are required to make efforts by abiding by rules and regulations in accord

with the noble principles so that we can put the new year on record as the auspicious year.

3/ Only if there are loving-kindness and pity to each other, freedom from grudge and hatred among each other and paying mutual respect and honesty, will we be able to overcome

all the difficulties we encounter. 4/ By cleansing our minds, morality and souls, and by upgrading our intellect, skills and abilities I hereby urge you to shape your beautiful life and future.

May you all be blessed with good health, wealth and pleasure. — MNA ■



To abstain from the foolish,
Not to be yourself as foolish.

To associate with the wise,
To be yourself as wise.

To pay respect to those who are worthy of honor,
To be yourself a person worthy of honor.

To live under suitable place for prosperity,
To let the place to be suitable.

To have done meritorious deeds in the past,
To do everything to be meritorious every moment.

To cultivate yourself develop,
To cultivate your mind better than before.

To be well versed in everything,
To share your knowledge and wisdom.

To learn technical know-how
To teach your technical know-how to others and so on....

May realize the true meaning of auspiciousness Discourse profoundly.
May the whole world filled with auspiciousness.



Volunteers for Literary Conference 2017 honoured

Those who volunteered for the Literary Conference 2017, conducted with the theme of "Free Literature, Free Voice" were honoured in Yangon yesterday.

The ceremony to honour them was opened with greetings by U Aung Soe Oo, Chairman of the committee on holding the conference.

As a gesture of passing down the heritage of literature to the new generation at the ceremony, flags representing 11 Myanmar literary organizations which jointly organized the conference, were handed over to U Myo Myint Nyein, Secretary of the committee on holding the conference, by film director U Myint Maung Kyaw who took a role in raising awareness of promoting literature.

Youths representatives of the 11 literature organizations shared their experiences in vol-



The ceremony to honour Volunteers for Literary Conference 2017 in progress. **PHOTO: MNA**

unteering for the conference.

Before the dinner, officials concerned presented certificates of honour to the volunteers.

The conference was held for four days from 13 to 16 December, and the decisions from the

conference will be submitted to the government and respective departments via the Ministry of Information. The Literary Conference 2017 was jointly organized by 11 Myanmar literary organisations.—Myanmar News Agency ■

New Year Greetings from Vice President U Myint Swe for 2018

Dear ethnic nationals and citizens,

I hereby send good wishes and greetings on this auspicious 2018 New Year Day for the good health and auspiciousness of all ethnic brothers and sisters who were born in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

2017 the old year has ended and we are now in the New Year. In the New Year I hope all

union citizens will be able to exert concerted efforts in unity to achieve Peace and Development very soon.

As we work for Peace, we need to take lessons from the old year. In the New Year, we need to continue our efforts based on unity with renewed strength and new spirit to complete the peace process smoothly and quickly.

Our country will develop and prosper only if we work hard with

unity using the power of our intellect and mind.

No matter how many difficulties there may be, if we work hard with the power of the people, we shall be able to build the Democratic Federal Republic successfully and the fruits thus produced will be enjoyed equally by all Union citizens.

May all Union citizens be blessed with good health and happiness in the New Year. ■



Vice President U Myint Swe. PHOTO: MNA

New Year Greetings from Vice President U Henry Van Thio for 2018

Dear Union citizens of all ethnic races,

On this auspicious occasion of the 2018 New Year, I wish to first of all send greetings and good wishes to all Union citizens for their good health and happiness. May you all be blessed with auspiciousness.

Today is the beginning of

2018 during which all Union citizens should work in unity and friendship for development of the people's socio-economic life, emergence of a Democratic Federal Republic and for Peace which is one important requirement for national development. We need to take lessons from the old year and turn the challenges of the New Year into opportunities

and then to reap good results. Since all the efforts of the Union Government for the State and the Union citizens can succeed only if there is public support, I would therefore like to urge all Union citizens to join in and participate. I also take this opportunity to send greetings and good wishes and may all your good wishes be fulfilled. — MNA ■



Vice President U Henry Van Thio. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister inspects Myanmar International Radio



Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint meets staff of Myanmar International Radio. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint inspected preparations for English program broadcasting of Myanmar International Radio of

Shwe Than Lwin Company in Yangon yesterday.

Chairman of the committee, U Kyaw Win said, Shwe Than Lwin is playing a role

in fulfilling the requirement of the people. It is serving the interest of the nation, the people and the peace process in cooperation with the Information Ministry. Officials of the Myanmar International Radio explained radio programs.

The minister looked into the requirements of the preparations for life programs, studios, and the central control room.

The ministry and the company will jointly launch the Myanmar International Radio from 6 am to 11 pm daily. The distribution of authentic news about Myanmar, the development of tourism in Myanmar, and the promotion of foreign investments in the country are the main goal of the Myanmar International Radio. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Dream World Lighting Festival launches in Mdy

DREAM World Lighting Festival, the international standard lighting festival has officially launched along Industrial Park Road in Pyigyitagon Township in Mandalay this Saturday. Beginning on 30 December, the lighting festival will last until the end of January, 2018.

Organizers say that they used more than 100 million light bulbs for the festival, featuring light sculptures including a light peacock, tower, giraffe, U Bain Bridge and shapes of significant places in PyinOoLwin and Mandalay, and an array of designs

inspired by Myanmar's culture.

Entrance fees is Ks2,000 per adult and Ks1,000 per child. Monks, nuns and children under the age of five years old are allowed to celebrate the festival of light free of charge. An organizer said that more visitors are expected to come to the lights festival.

Present on the occasion were U Sai Kyaw Zaw, Mandalay Region Minister for Shan Ethnic Affairs and cabinet members of the region government, and the event organizers.—002 ■



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More than 1,000 tons of watermelon likely to be shipped to Hong Kong this FY

MORE than 1,000 tons of watermelon is expected to be exported to Hong Kong in current fiscal year, according to a recent report of Myawady Daily.

Last year, about 500 tons of watermelon was exported to Hong Kong. Seedless watermelon is started exporting this month.

This year's export volume will increase more than that of last year, U Naing Win, chairman of Myanmar Watermelon and Cucumber Growers and Exporters Association, said Myawady Daily.

About 100 12-wheeled trucks load of watermelons are exported to China a day. Sometimes, over 200 trucks load of watermelons are entering China a day.

Last FY saw over 660,000 tons of watermelon export. Majority of My-



PHOTO: AUNG WIN (PYAPON)

anmar's watermelon went to China market through Muse border trade while they are also exported to Singapore

and Malaysia. Agro products such as rice, peas, dried tea leaf, muskmelon, watermelon, mangoes are exported to Chi-

na and capital goods such as agriculture equipments and consumer goods are imported into the country. -GNLM ■

MOLIP shows approval for Chinshwehaw as International Land Border Checkpoint

May Thet Hnin

UNION Minister U Thein Swe for Labour, Immigration and Population said that ministry is ready to approve Chinshwehaw gate as International Land Point of Entry at 13th regular meeting of Vice President U Myint Swe with businessmen on 30th December.

To transform into International Land Border Gate, related region and state governments must submit a proposal to the Union Government and continues to seek approval from the related ministries. It will proceed to the Security, Peace and Stability and the Rule of

Law Working Committee under no objection, through which will go on the President Office. Upon approval of the President Office, the two ministries of Foreign Affairs also need to reach an agreement.

Chinshwehaw is Sino-Myanmar border gate, flowing in and out of around 4,000 Chinese and about 10,000 Myanmar citizens.

In order to set International Land Border Checkpoint, cross-border demarcation, cross-border security, good transportation and agreement of two countries are required.

Of about 8 border gates between China and Myanmar,

Chinshwehaw border gate performs the second largest trade. Main export items are various pulses, corns, sesame, rice, rubber, fisheries, sugar and sugarcane whereas seasoning powder, fertilizer, construction equipments, and consumer goods are mainly imported into the country.

Chinshwehaw has a good potential in trade and tourism depending on peace and stability of this region. Kwanlon-Hopan-Chinshwehaw-Laukkai Cross-Border Merchants Association requested the Union Government to improve Chinshwehaw as international land border gate which allows the

cross-border trippers to be in and out under visa, passport and other required documents.

Border trade will turn to soar if Chinshwehaw is recognized as International land border gate. However, there are challenges like lack of economic zone and warehouses and a small number of trucks. China is reportedly preparing to set up a zone, said Daw Kyu Kyu, the secretary of the aforementioned association.

Chinshwehaw trade has remarkably risen since 2013-2014. Last FY, Chinshwehaw trade reached US\$537 million. This FY intends to receive over \$640 million. ■

Coconut export to Thailand up by 15 per cent this year

VOLUME of coconut export to Thailand has increased about 15 per cent this year, according to yesterday's report of Myawady Daily.

During this year, about 700,000 coconuts is monthly exported to Thailand. Last year's export saw only 500,000 -600,000

coconut per month, Daw San San Han, general secretary of Myanmar Coconut Group said Myawady Daily.

Coconut export was halted when Thailand scaled up tax rate on coconuts between May and September. And the trade resumed in the end of Sep-

tember. Thailand hikes up the tax rate on imported coconuts during which the country itself produces coconuts. This is why, the export volume usually decreases that particular time of the year.

In 2015-2016 fiscal year, about 65 tonnes of coconut worth

Ks12million were exported to Ranong, Thailand whereas 275 tonnes of coconut worth about Ks55million were exported from April to December in this FY 2016-2017 through Kawthoung border trade camp, according to the Commerce Ministry. -GNLM ■

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



Thriving stable maize in Yesagyo, Magway Region. PHOTO: PE TUN ZAW

China increases import of corns from Myanmar

CHINA, the world's most populous nation, increased its import of corns from Myanmar during the week commencing 9 December via four cross-border points, according to border trade authorities.

According to the official statistics, Myanmar exported more than 54,000 tonnes of corns with a value of US\$11.318 million to the neigh-

bour from 9 to 15 December, including 52,835 tonnes from Muse border gate, 813 tonnes from Lwejel, 804 tonnes from Chinshwehaw and 85 tonnes from Kanpaiktee. The import volume increased by 9,488 tonnes in comparison with the previous week.

According to wholesalers, the prices of corn increased to Ks282,382 per tonne from

Ks281,633 within one week while the transportation charges along Mandalay-Muse route were Ks62-Ks66 per viss (a viss is equivalent to 3.6 pounds).

The Kingdom of Thailand also imported 200 tonnes of corn seeds amounting to \$45,281 from Tachilek border during the same week.—Swe Nyein ■

Myanmar Real Estate Services Association requests the gov't to slash income tax

May Thet Hnin

CHAIRMAN U Khin Maung Than of Myanmar Real Estate Services Association requests the government to reduce income tax and stamp duty to previously set rate at 13th regular meeting of Vice President U Myint Swe with Businessmen on 30th December.

Real estate market is heavily burdened with 30 per cent of income tax and 4 per cent of stamp duty.

"Real estate dealers are hesitating over high tax rate. Some deal are working on the previous contract.

A sole agent is forced to change the job for the living while some companies are shut down. They were not able to survive from cool market",

said U Khin Maung Than.

Previously, a levy of 15 per cent tax, comprising 8 per cent of income tax and 7 per cent of stamp duty, shook down well the real estate sales market.

The market was dramatically strong due to decrease of income tax. And the year between 2012 and 2014 could be marked as golden age of the real estate market.

FY 2014-2015 received Ks160 billion from income tax and stamp duty of real estate deal while real estate revenue fetched up to Ks170 billion during FY 2015-2016.

A hike in income tax rate and stamp duty led to a drastic plunge in tax income in FY 2016-2017.

Myanmar Real Estate Services Association called

on the government to transparently set the price of the house per square feet in other states and regions like Yangon and Mandalay.

Additionally, they asked for a chance to participate in setting a square feet price of the real property.

"Some regions and states are lack of transparency, putting heavy burden on the local residents to pay tax. Moreover, they are still not accustomed to tax culture", said U Khin Maung Than.

U Khin Maung Than responded that the director-general of the Internal Revenue Department said that we have a plan to make tax revision. Some ASEAN countries do not impose an income tax but only stamp duty. ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့တိုင်း: **"Sunday Special"** အချပ်မီ (၈)
မျက်နှာပေါင်သော The Global New Light of Myanmar
နေ့စဉ်ထုတ် သတင်းစာကို အောက်ပါမြို့များတွင် ဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

"Sunday Special"
အချပ်မီ (၈) မျက်နှာ
ပေါင်သည့်

နေပြည်တော်
မြန်မာ့ရေးရာဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ် (၇) နေပြည်တော်၊
သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်)၊
စီမံရေးရာဌာန၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇ ၄၁၂၁၀၈

နေပြည်တော်
နေပြည်တော်သတင်းစာတိုက် (တပ်ကုန်း)
ဧပြေသာသနီရိပ်သာလမ်း၊ ခရိုင်လမ်းမ၊ နေပြည်တော်၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇ ၃၆၁၄၈၊ ၀၆၇ ၃၆၁၂၉

ရန်ကုန်
The Global New Light of Myanmar သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊
ဦးထင်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း၊ ဗဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၁၀ ၂၁၂၁၀၆၄၊ ၀၉၅၂၁၄၄၇၇

မန္တလေး
လမ်း (၂၁ x ၂၁) ကြား၊ (၁၂ x ၈၃) လမ်းကြား၊ မုလ်ဇွေ
ရောင်ရမ်းမန္တလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၂၃၂၇၂၉၊ ၀၂၃၂၅၅၀

တောင်ကြီး
ရုံးကြီးလမ်း၊ သစ်တောရပ်ကွက်၊ တောင်ကြီးမြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၈၁၂၁၁၀၆၄၊ ၀၉၅၂၁၄၄၇၇

မကွေး
နတ်မောက်လမ်း၊ တပ်မ (၈၈) တပ်နယ်ရေးအနီး၊
မကွေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၃၂၃၇၁၂

ဘူးသီးတုံ
မြို့သစ် (၃-၈) အမှတ် (၁) လမ်းသွယ်၊ မြို့နယ်လမ်း၊
ကျိုင်းတုံမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၄၂၂၄၉၂

ကလေး
အောင်ဇေယျာရပ်ကွက်၊ မြို့နယ်အားကစားကွင်းအနီး၊
ကလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၃၂၂၁၃၃

မြင်းခြံနား
အမှတ် (၄၁)၊ ရောရပ်ကွက်၊ အောင်ဆန်းလမ်း၊
မြင်းခြံမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၄၂၂၄၆၂

ဝင်္ကေ
ရဟန်းတိုင်းနှင့် တက္ကသိုလ်ရိပ်သာလမ်း၊
မီးစက်ကြီးအနီး၊ မန်ကျည်းမြိုင်ရပ်ကွက်၊ ဝင်္ကေမြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၄၃၂၃၀၆၈

လားရှိုး
ဟူးမွန်ကျေးရွာတိုင်း၊ ဟူးမွန်ဆည်ဘယ်ဘက်ခြမ်း၊
(၁၂) ရပ်ကွက်၊ မန်ဆူဘုရားရှေ့ အဝေရာလမ်း၊
လားရှိုးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၂၂၄၀၆၇

ခြောက်
မေတ္တာလမ်း၊ ရှမ်းရောင်းရမ်း၊ ကလေးကျေးရွာအုပ်စု၊
ခြောက်မြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၅၉၄၂၁၈၃

မော်လမြိုင်
ကြာအင်းကျေးရွာ၊ မော်လမြိုင်မြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၅၇၂၇၂၅၊ ၀၅၇၂၇၂၆

ပုံရွာ
နန္ဒဝန်ရပ်ကွက်၊ ဆက်သွယ်ရေးတပ်မတော်အနီး၊
ပုံရွာမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၁၂၆၇၃၅၊ ၀၇၁၂၆၇၃၃

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New Year Greeting Message from U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw

I hereby sent my New Year Wish to you all living in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the New Year 2018, to be blessed with good health, wealth and happiness.

Now is the time when the entire populace is making concerted efforts for the success of the national reconciliation, internal peace and democratic transition. And, we are trying our best to build up our nation into the Federal Democratic Union that all the national populace greatly hoped for. For the success of the said process, it is greatly in need of developing the democratic practices and the Unity Spirit in us all.

The State Government is making its concerted efforts to successfully overcome potential crises, difficulties and challenges on our way to our long-awaited democratic goal, with the encouragement and supports of the national



U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw. **PHOTO: MNA**
populace.

May our citizens be healthy and happy on the auspicious occasion of the New Year Day. May the peaceful and developed Union emerge as soon as possible. —MNA ■

New Year Day Message from Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw

DEAR ethnic brothers and sisters living in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and all Myanmar nationals living abroad. At this auspicious time of the New Year, first of all let me send greetings and good wishes for your good health and happiness. May the blessings of auspiciousness be with all of you.

At this auspicious time when we are entering into a New Year after the passing of the old year with the change of many seasons, all Union citizens should learn lessons from the experiences, difficulties and challenges encountered during the old year.

They should seek better opportunities, better methods, and better conditions and use these innovatively for future progress.

Beginning from the New Year in implementing all undertakings, they should work with “Cetana”, due diligence and good character with renewed strength, new attitudes and new personalities.

In the same way, as we walk the path towards the common goal of a prosperous and developed Democratic Federal Republic, which is the aspiration of all Union nationals, peace is the critical element. We can work for development only when we have peace. I therefore wish to



Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

urge all Union citizens to work in any capacity they may be needed in unity and hand-in-hand for the cessation of all armed conflicts within the Union and to also participate in all aspects of the peace process so that we can achieve eternal peace which is based on “Metta” and good will.

I send prayers and good wishes for all Myanmar citizens to have peace in their hearts and to be able to lead peaceful and happy lives. May they all have the wisdom to always keep in their hearts the teachings of each of their religions.—MNA ■

New Year Message of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on January 1, 2018

Esteemed people, I would like to extend my greetings to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and all national people to be graceful and auspicious on the occasion of the New Year 2018.

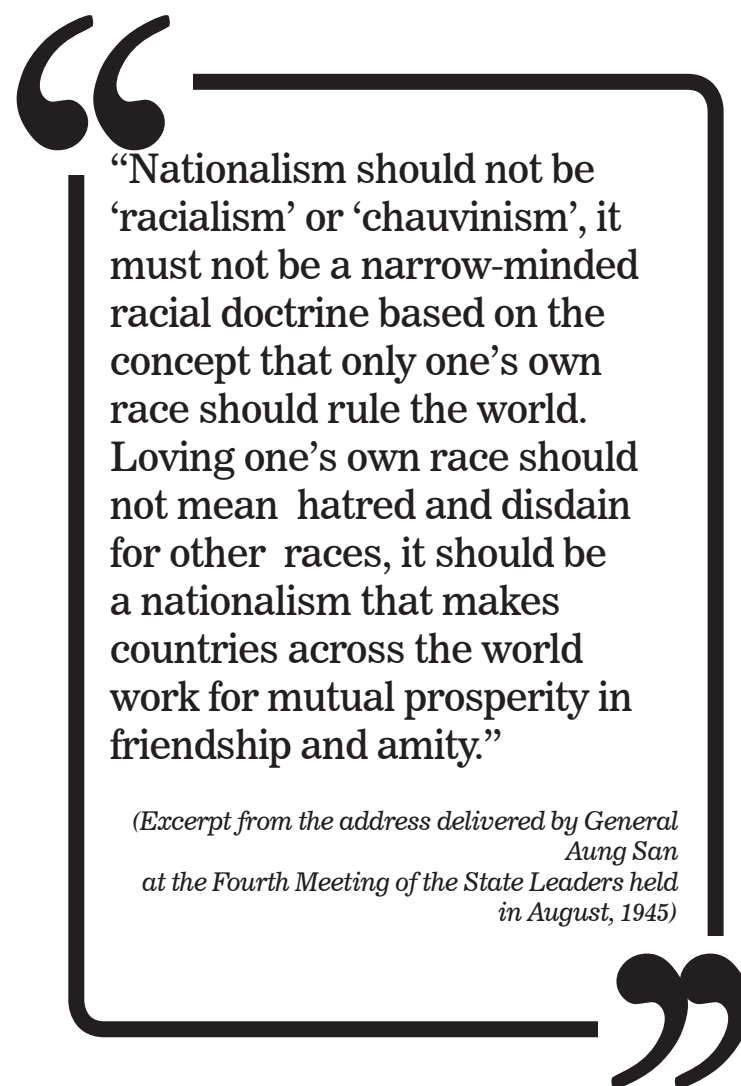
Now the year 2017 has come to an end. During this year, we encountered many cases. We achieved successes in some cases and could overcome some others. It is sure that we would certainly achieve

successes if we do our works better by taking lessons from the past.

The day which falls on coming 4th January will turn 70 years of regaining Independence of our country. In looking back the history we have passed, three points—the first for ensuring peace and stability of the State, the second for development of the State and the third for unity of the State—can

be seen as tasks which need to be carried out by all our people in unison. Everybody has many desires on improvement of their socioeconomic status. So I would like to totally express my wish the Tatmadaw will give a helping hand to all for carrying out the tasks to be able to achieve success.

I wish again may you all enjoy physical and mental wellbeing in this New Year! —MNA ■



“Nationalism should not be ‘racialism’ or ‘chauvinism’, it must not be a narrow-minded racial doctrine based on the concept that only one’s own race should rule the world. Loving one’s own race should not mean hatred and disdain for other races, it should be a nationalism that makes countries across the world work for mutual prosperity in friendship and amity.”

(Excerpt from the address delivered by General Aung San at the Fourth Meeting of the State Leaders held in August, 1945)

A Pleasant and Joyfull revel night



Photo: Win Zaw Oo (Minbu)



C-in-C Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. **PHOTO: MNA**

New Year wishes by religious leaders



Cardinal Charles Maung Bo.

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo sends New Year message

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Yangon sent New Year message.

In his message, the cardinal said all must start the new year with new mind and body and thanksgiving. No one can reach future by sticking in the present. All can acquire unity in diversity if they can forgive the past and have respect for every race and religion in 2018. Diversity is



Yan Ko Paung.

not a danger but a strength.

He continued to say that Myanmar is a multi-racial and multi-religious community. All religions represent love, peace and tranquility. All must uphold loving kindness and avoid all kinds of hate speech. He prayed all to live as a family in peace beginning from the New Year.

Rev. Dr. Yan Ko Paung (Secretary General of Myanmar Anglican Association)

My first hope for the



Dr Hla Tun.

new year is peace. I wish for all the people of the country and for them to overcome all the obstacles and enter the international community with confidence.

Dr. Hla Tun (Association of Myanmar Hindus)

On behalf of the Association of Myanmar Hindus, I would like to wish all the citizens of Myanmar and my brothers and sisters a blissful 2018. May it be filled with good health and prosperity for all.



U Tin Kyaing.

U Tin Kyaing (National Bahá'í Association)

Myanmar is developing at a good pace. Some of the armed ethnic groups have participated in the ceasefire agreements but we are not at a satisfactory point in development yet. I believe that instead of everyone arming themselves and fighting, we can help each other and solve problems together hand in hand. Bahá'í people have been involved in community building and peace works in the country, no matter



Jon Saw Yaw Han.

how small it may seem. Instead of harbouring hatred why not extend your hands for people to help each other. On behalf of the National Bahá'í Association I pray that Myanmar, the elected government and all the citizens receive the blessings.

Jon Saw Yaw Han (Assitant Rev. of Yangon Catholic Association)

I pray for Myanmar to become more peaceful, united, and be able to keep in stride with the world and the interna-



Patric Loo Nee.

tional community.

U Patrick Loo Nee (Chairperson of Myanmar Christians Council)

I wish for peace not only in Myanmar but also around the world. Only when there's peace will there be development and accomplishment. If you look at any country in the world it's difficult to develop if there is no peace. So my wish for Myanmar and its citizens is for a 2018 filled with peace and end of strife.—MNA ■

New Year Greetings by celebrities

Dr. Aung Thura (CEO, Thura Swiss Ltd.,)

I want to develop my country all-round sectors such as economy, social affairs, peace process and so on. I mean it is important to get gradual and sustainable development in the long run. Government, businessmen and the public should work hand in hand to promote the economy. We need a lot of foreign investment which plays an important role to operate the business with the entrepreneurs in our country, thereby they can know better how to cooperate with them. We should try not to lag behind in the development.

U Thet Lwin Toe, Chairman of Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association

I hope that the year 2018 will be a new dawn for the development of Myanmar Tourism. "Tourism



Dr. Aung Thura.



U Thet Lwin Toe.



Writer Ponnya Khin.



Actor Khant Sithu.



U Zin Wine.



Vocalist Aung Htet.

in the relief camps, in the northern part of Myanmar. They need to return to their respective places peacefully. I think it is due to the lack of peace which can cause these conflicts in this region. I share my loving-kindness to all readers across the country.

Actor Khant Sithu

As we celebrate the New Year, I wish everyone success, a healthy long life and a fresh new start. Happy New Year!

U Zin Wine, chairman of Myanmar Motion Picture Association

Wishing you healthy, peaceful and joyful New Year full of fun!

Vocalist Aung Htet

This 2018 New Year, may you have happiness, good health and prosperity. May all your dreams come true very soon.—MNA ■

For All" as it comes, it is essential to form Public-Private-People Partnership in the country. I wish all the foreign and local visitors physical and mental well-being in the

New Year.

Writer Ponnya Khin

I wish all the people in Myanmar healthy and wealthy. I also wish for the ordinary people who

are getting into financial troubles and other difficulties to overcome easily. Moreover I want to cease the conflicts and restore peace, especially for the people who are staying

New Year weather forecast



U Tun Lwin.

U Tun Lwin, an expert in meteorology and hydrology said Myanmar faced hardships, especially in politics and economy in 2017, and expressed hope to overcome them in 2018.

He said the entire nation hopes for a new state in 2018 after overcoming all kinds of hardships. Hopefully, the country could make a good move forward. The people, the government, and the technicians will make greater cooperation for alleviating the adverse effects of climate.—Thi Thi Min ■

Meaningful Independence

“OF VITAL importance is the Code of Conduct for monks in the Buddhist Religious Order, fence for a village and discipline for a race,” as a Myanmar saying goes. If a monk violates the Vinaya and commits a serious offence, he has to leave the religious order. A village-fence plays an important role for the security of the village. A village with its fence in deterioration will be no longer useful to provide security. It will likely become an easy prey to robbers and dacoits anytime. Likewise, discipline is very important for the eternal survival of a race and a country. A highly disciplined race can raise its living standard to a modernized and prosperous state. Simultaneously, the sovereign nation where such kinds of people reside will become a well-developed and high-powered country.

A well-known ancient Myanmar bard, “Achetetan Sayar Pe” composed in his last poem saying “Due to lack of discipline, Myanmar lost her throne, living under an evil regime.” The bard seemed to have written the poem sorrowfully after seeing Myanmar lose her king and sovereignty due to lack of discipline. The worst thing was

Bogyoke's speeches and the event of our country's achievement of the Independence now lasted for 70 years. We are still seeing offences causing hindrances for the public. We are yet to try ourselves to be well-disciplined and well-behaved citizens.

Discipline is defined in dictionaries as the practice of training people to obey rules and orders and punishing them if they do not. Our Independence architect, Bogyoke Aung San had once addressed, “Only if there is discipline, can the Independence we want be achieved. At the time when we have achieved we must be well convinced that our country need to be more disciplined.” After enjoying the taste of freedom which our ancestors achieved at the risks of their lives, to what extent had we been able to keep discipline? We need to make a careful assessment of ourselves to learn how much we have had observed the teachings of ethics and discipline. Our national leader Bogyoke Aung San had defined freedom as the ability to pursue one's own personal interests without infringing upon the freedom of others. He gave the example of a person using a public road to dry tobacco leaves. This is not the way to use your freedom. Indeed this is a wrong understanding of having independence.

Bogyoke's speeches and the event of our country gaining Independence now lasted for 70 years. We are still seeing Myanmar citizens causing public nuisance. We still need to train ourselves to become well-disciplined and well-behaved citizens. ■

Pledging Allegiance to the Flag

By Yone Phyu Lay

FOR the eternal longevity of our nation, Myanmar it is necessary for us to swear loyalty or allegiance to the country. Our mother land that existed for several millennia during which our forefathers နို့တော်ဘီဘင် built, protected, led and developed their nation up to the present stage, going past different eras and political systems throughout the history.

Over hundred percent of in-born patriotism

Undeniably, all the individuals—men or women, those who went to primary schools or basic education high schools, graduates, those who dropped out while learning middle schooling, total illiterates—love their country. At a conservative estimate, their in-born spirits, that is, patriotism, putting a high valuation on the country, readiness to take risks for the nation and loyalty to the country can be said to be hundred percent. Though being different in educational status, all the people including neo-literates and total illiterates similarly will love and be loyal to the country, along three phases of the time—past, present and future.

Enjoying long-lasting admiration

Depending upon ways of living and kinds of careers chosen, people's occupations and jobs differ from each other such as merchants, intellectuals, farmers, employers, civilian and military service-men and et.,.

If asked as to where you are from, to which national race you belong and where you were born, you yourself would have known the best concerning what you are to reply.

While eking out our lives in different kinds of careers our arduous efforts to keep body and soul together in fair ways is like trying our best for our nation and national people to survive in the planet.

People who are always considerate towards others' benefits while working for the sake of themselves are famous and successful in their respective spheres whereas those who are too selfish will find it difficult to maintain their success for long.

That is, their success will

be brief, coming to destruction with the bitter responses of the environment. Contrariwise, philanthropists become famous and receive people's admirations from the people for ever.

Obedying policies, rules and regulations wholeheartedly

Unavoidably, civil service personnel are required to abide by rules and orders of the consecutive governments. If they perform their duties energetically with good intention, the administrative mechanism will run smoothly, and vice versa.

In the sphere taking the responsibility of the national defense as well, they have to live on full alert and perform their duties peremptorily, not perfunctorily.

As known by all, they must be ready to defend the country at the risk of their lives. Any mistake cannot be let to be done.

The person who demands for the 'stick' only

In a Myanmar legend, there is a man who demands only for the stick instead of the carrot from the king, without taking the bounty to be awarded for his marvelous deed, with a view to educating a guardian of the palace gate who demands the bribe from the said man to have an access to meet the king.

Taking a lesson from the legend

We should not regard the story as just a mere legend. All mortals are full of greed, anger and ignorance. We must keep these under control with mindfulness and senses of shame and guilt cultures, never letting them wander. We must assume in our minds that duty and responsibility are of vitality for us.

We must keep it in our mind that it is necessary for us to be loyal to the nation and our national people, rather than the government and the king so that we can become noble citizens.

Keeping civil ethics

Since childhood repeatedly enough we had recited 4 solemn commitments at morning assembly hours every school day, that we would try our best to become good ones, to make our classes, schools and country proud. When grown up, we abandoned our solemn promises for our egos, thus we were deprived of social ethics, becoming rascals for our societies.

The more we—entrepreneurs, government service personnel, intellectuals, writers, journalists—keep respective ethics, the more national development will increase, and vice versa.

Responsibility and loyalty

Self-actualization, self-centeredness and excessive attachment toward an organization will lead a person to making wrong decisions which will push him again to commit malpractices. Committing such malpractices can spoil the national images and they cannot be erased. Events of

assassinating Bogyoke Aung San and national leaders and refusal of Saw Loo King in trying to save him from enemies by Kyansitha were in fact attributed to wrong decisions. Bayintnaung's determination to destroy rafts and bridges for his forces so as not to be able to retreat in advancing toward the frontier area had shown senses of responsibility and loyalty.

Persuasion Management

The Government has been exercising the practices of persuasion for good results, needing to raise it up.

These days, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission invited the public to inform any matters related to the commission.

The commission needs to call for the public to actively take part in finding out truth without neglecting as if injustices, violations of human rights, malpractices and corruption cases are not concerned with them.

Implement through judgment

As known by all, the government as well is making concerted efforts in every way for peaceful co-existence sharing throes, woes and joys, by inviting entrepreneurs to invest in the State, and youths to contribute voluntary labor in the UEHRD in Rakhine State. Present events happening in the country are favorable ones, it is assumed.

Political, financial, economic and social affairs to be dealt with by the government are presently happening and will happen in the future as well. At that time we, the whole national populace need to contribute our physical and mental abilities outstandingly, based upon our rightful judgment.

By getting rid of our egos, we respectively should perform responsibilities assigned upon us, keeping senses of loyalty to the country and public interest in our minds, for the sake of the national development. ■

Translated by Khin Maung Oo



Fullmoon of Pyatho: Adittapariyaya Sutta Day

Maha Saddhama Jotika Dhaja,
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

THE month of Pyatho in Myanmar Lunar Calendar roughly corresponds to January. This year Pyatho Fullmoon falls on Monday 1st January 2018. Myanmar traditional monthly festival of Pyatho is the festival of equestrian tournament. But its fullmoon day is religiously auspicious because it was on Pyatho fullmoon day that Lord Gotama Buddha preached Adittapariyaya Sutta. But Pyatho Fullmoon day is more well-known as Shin tahtaung Day to Myanmar Buddhists because, on listening the preaching of that Sutta by Lord Gotama Buddha, altogether one thousand beikhu monks became Saint monk. The following is its background history.

In the Maha Sakarit Era of 103, Gotama Buddha became enlightened. After he had attained the first year of Buddha hood [visa] he came to the Forest of Uruvela. Where dwelt three Rishi [Hermits] brothers constantly practicing their religious rites. The eldest brother Rishi Uruvela Kassapa had 500 follower disciples. The younger brother Rishi Nadi Kassapa had 300 follower disciples and the youngest brother Rishi Gaya Kassapa had 200 follower disciples, totalling 1000 Rashi disciples. Lord Gotama Buddha wishing to preach them his Dhamma [Truth] first showed his miracles so as to make the Rishis listen to his preachings. When the Rishis were subdued by his miracles, Lord Gotama Buddha delivered to them Adittapariyaya Sutta. After listening and understanding Buddha's Dhamma all Rishis attained Arahathood [Saint monk].

Lord Gotama Buddha had first delivered the Dhammacakya Sutta to five Rishis in the Migara Wunna Forest. They attained arahat hood [Saint monks]. Next, Lord Gotama Buddha delivered his Dhamma to the man named Yasa and 30 brothers who also became saint monks. Now his resounding success in bringing one thousand plus three Rishis under his Dhamma and helping them to attain arahat hood [Saint monk] was the greatest number of saint monks as a result of Buddha's preaching. From the full moon day of Tazaung mon [November] to the full moon day of Pyatho [January three months]. Therefore the full moon day of Pyatho was important and auspicious in the history of Buddha Sasana.

The Buddhists annually commemorate the full moon day of Pyatho. In Myanmar this day is commemorated as Shin Tahtaung Akhataw Nay [Sifwaxmif tegawmfaeY]. The Day of one thousand Saint monks. Its background history is told at the monasteries, and preaching halls and Adittapariyaya Sutta is delivered by monks or chanted by lay devotees.

Shin Tahtaung Akhartaw Nay should be revived and promoted because in these days younger generations of Myanmar Buddhists are hardly aware of it, let alone its history and religious significance. ■

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

Peace Commission working towards achieving more progress

NATIONAL League for Democracy-NLD held its eighth central committee meeting in Yangon yesterday, after which a press meet followed.

The meeting held on 30 and 31 December discussed reports of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee, Central Economic Committee, Central Information Committee, Central Women's Work Committee, Central Labour Affairs Committee, Central Farmers Work Committee, MPs Complaint Centre, Second All Myanmar Youth Commission, and Central Social Support group.

The meeting made six resolutions including the substitution of committee members at different levels, the acceleration of party organization activities, harmonious activities among the party, the Hluttaw and the government, the reformation of committees, the reinforcement

of the task forces, and the provision of the assistance to the people.

Members of the Secretariat of the NLD Central Committee U Win Htein, U Nyan Win and U Han Tha Myint met the press in the afternoon. In response to the media questions, U Nyan Win said the NLD has provided a lot of assistance to the displaced persons. The women's team visited Kachin State, and will visit it again. Although the NLD could not make concrete promises, it assures to alleviate the situation there to the most possible degree.

As regards the peace process, he said the 21st Century Panglong Conference has approved 37 resolutions. The Peace Commission is working towards achieving more progress. "We assure that our efforts for peace are developing with high momentum," he said.—Zaw Gyi



Members of the Secretariat of the NLD Central Committee U Win Htein, U Nyan Win and U Han Tha Myint meet the press. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**

Peace makers' New Year wishes

Ye Khaung Nyunt,
Photo: Phoe Htaung

Dr. Tin Myo Win

Chairman, Peace Commission

All Myanmar people want peace. As all know, We all have been working hard with compassion and loving kindness to achieve eternal peace in our country. There is no doubt that all Myanmar people want to achieve peace because we all understand that we can not see stability and development individually and nationwide without peace.

We strongly believe that if all of us work together with one ambition, we will reach our goal of peace.

I strongly believe that if we build trust, compassion and loving kindness, we, together with all stake holders for peace, will reach the goal of peace in 2018. Only then, we can show the model of peace making to the world which brings peace and development to our peoples.

U Hla Maung Shwe
(Member of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee Secretariat)

We worked hard with commitment for peace in 2017. I can say that we achieved progress in 2017. In 2017, we



Dr. Tin Myo Win.

held national-level political dialogues at six locations. Thirty-seven points of the outcomes from those dialogues were agreed as a part of the Union Agreement.

This is our achievement in 2017. Besides, in October, November and December in 2017, the government and the Tatmadaw held meetings with those who will attend the peace conference and conducted negotiations with them several times in attempts to achieve success in the coming Union Peace Conference. At the end of 2017, the Peace Commission and the delegation for peace negotiation of the United Nationalities Federal Council-UNFC held negotiations and now we are putting finishing touches on our final negotiations.

That's why, what we hope is that we can do more prepa-



U Hla Maung Shwe.

rations for the Union Peace Conference to be held at the end of January in 2018.

We also hope that those members of the UNFC will sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement before the coming Union Peace Conference.

We also hope that those ethnic armed groups which have not yet signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement would sign the NCA in 2018.

Yebaw Myo Win

Vice Chairman, All Burma Students' Democratic Front-ABSDF

In 2018, we must make efforts for finding best answer for peace of our country. In 2017, we all did our best to make peace for our country. It is not easy to solve political problem happened in our country for decades within a



Yebaw Myo Win.

day. We understand that we will face difficulties.

But, when we solve the political problem with political ways, we need all-inclusiveness.

We all should take lessons from the past. Without participation of those who involve in political conflicts, we can not find the answer for the political problem.

Currently, we are implementing peace process based on the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement as part of efforts for all inclusiveness of the peace process.

NCA is not perfect one. But, it can guarantee reducing armed conflicts.

It opens the door to political dialogues for solving political problems. While walking on the road of NCA, we all need to work hard to open the door of peace wide.

Prices of shrimp paste high in domestic market

SHRIMP catchers say that the prices of shrimp paste have been on the rise in domestic market due to low production, according to a report of the Myawady Daily issued on Sunday.

The majority of residents in Zeegyaung Village-tract in Hainggyikyun Town in Ayeyawady Region conduct shrimp catching and shrimp paste production on a commercial scale, said one of residents.

However, this year saw a decrease in number of shrimp catchers in the villages.

A shortage of raw materials is a main reason why the region saw a significant decline in production.

Currently, the prices of shrimp paste has been sold between Ks6,000 and Ks8,000 per viss.

A viss is equivalent to 3.6 pounds while a viss of shrimp paste produced from village along the coastal area is worth Ks1,500-Ks3,500.

Normally, shrimp paste produced from the village-tract is mainly sent to nearby villages in Hainggyikyun Town, Patheingyi and Yangon.—GNLM

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

2018

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Global New Light of Myanmar sends its best wishes to our valued readers, distributors, advertisers, media agencies and all the people of Myanmar for good health, happiness, and success. May you be greeted every day with auspiciousness in the New Year.



31st convocation ceremony of Yazin University of Veterinary Science held

THE 31st Veterinary Science convocation ceremony of Yazin University of was held yesterday morning at the golden jubilee hall of the University, Zayar Thiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw.

At the ceremony, the graduate students took the oath in front of rector and then the rector Dr Mar Mar Win presented the certificates to each convocation students. Then, Dr Mar Mar Win delivered congratulation speech in which she said that the Yazin University of Veterinary Science was established in 1975 and a total of 5,225 vets were produced during the 60-year period.

Then, Dr Aung Thu Union Minister for Agriculture, Live-stock and Irrigation gave the awards to the outstanding teachers, deputy rector Professor Dr Ye Htut Aung, Associate Professor Dr Hlaing haling Myint

and lecture Dr Min Aung and outstanding students Ma Thae Su Nyaing, Ma May Mi Htwe and Ma Pyone Mar Lwin.

Yesterday convocation certificates to six Ph.D graduates, 198 BVSc graduates, nine MVM graduates and 79 MVSc graduates. Present at the convocation ceremony were Union Minister Dr Aung Thu, permanent secretary Dr Khin Zaw, Directors-General, rector and deputy rector and invited guests.

In the afternoon, supervised by Myanmar Veterinary Council, the 18th veterinary certificate granting ceremony was held and the outstanding students of 2016-2017 academic year, Ma Thae Su Nyaing, Ma May Mi Htwe and Ma Pyone Mar Lwin were awarded again by Myanmar New Hope Farm Co.,Ltd. — Zin Oo (Myanma Alinn)



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu awards outstanding teacher Professor Dr Ye Htut Aung. **PHOTO: THIHA SITHU**

More village-owned fishponds for Maungtaw region



Director General of Fishery Department and party inspect the fishponds in Maungtaw region. **PHOTO: NAY WIN TUN**

MORE village-owned fishponds will be dug in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, for ensuring fish sufficiency in the region, according to U Khin Maung Maw, Director General of Fishery Department who inspected the fishponds in Maungtaw region yesterday morning with his party.

“With the state program, digging of fishponds in the villages of Maungtaw region is underway. We requested the budget allocation for 82 villages to the state government. Ponds for five villages, Mawya Wadi, Shwe Baho, Khaye Myaing, Phar Rut Chaung and Aung Zaya were already dug. All villages had already dug one acre each. Our fishery department will dig more ponds, depending on the budgets allowed by state

government. The fingerlings will be distributed by Myo Thu Gyi larval fish reproduction station”, said U Khin Maung Maw.

Although Maungtaw region is a place where inshore and offshore fishing can be done, freshwater fish and prawn breeding should also be done partly. During this year, nearly half or two-third of fishponds of 82 villages can be completed. If the fish and prawn can be bred in the old creeks and lakes, fish supply of Maungtaw Township can meet the demand, he added.

Fishermen in the region are more interested in offshore fishing as the region is close to Bay of Bengal and Naf River.

“Our region is close to Bay of Bengal and both inshore and



offshore fishing can be made. However, fishermen are afraid of dangers in the sea. Fish and prawn are plenty in the sea. Currently, it is difficult to catch fish and prawn as the regional security is not in safe condition. Digging fishponds is indeed beneficial for the villages’ long-term fish consuming”, said Ko Tin Aung, leader of Shwe Baho Village.

Director General and party inspected the fishponds of Shwe Baho and Kha Ye Myaing villages and also went to the Fishery Department in Maungtaw Town. The Director General and party also gave words of encouragement and provided dried fish and peas to the staff of fishery department. — Myint Maung/ Zaya

Thandwe District Association (Yangon) holds annual gathering

THANDWE District Association (Yangon) held its annual gathering yesterday at the U Ottama Park in Yangon yesterday.

The association is formed with Rakhine communities in Yangon especially from Thandwe, Gwa, Taunggup.

Those who took part in the gathering were treated with traditional cuisine of Thandwe.

“The gathering turns 15th anniversary this year. The association holds the gathering every year for peoples from, Taunggup and Gwa townships who are staying in Yangon,” said U Htin Kyaw Lin, Vice-Chairman of the

Thandwe District Association (Yangon). Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint also contributed Rakhine traditional cuisine to this gathering, he added. “We are very happy to see our relatives and old friends from Rakhine,” said Ko Te Zar Aung, a Thandwe resident and has been living in Yangon for 7 years.

At the gathering, shops selling Rakhine traditional foods, costumes and crops from gardens are crowded with the peoples.

Thandwe District Association (Yangon) was founded in 1945.— Min Thit (MNA)



PHOTO: YE HTUT

Children's literature festivals to be held



U Kyaw Kyaw Tun.



U Thein Swe.



U Khin Maung Oo.



Daw Aye Thandar Chit.



Daw San San Wai.

CHILDREN'S literature festivals were held in many towns including Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Mawlamyine, Taunggyi and Monywa. Botahtaung Township No. 6 Basic Education High School will host the festival from 6th to 8 January, 2018.

The festival, which is jointly organized by Ministry of Information and Yangon Region Government, is aimed at improving the children's creativity, cultural skills and building book reading habits through which they can find happiness in their ways of live.

Following is the excerpts of the interview with those who are arranging the festival.

U Kyaw Kyaw Tun,
Headmaster, BEHS-6,
Botahtaung

The first reason why we hold this festival is we want to hone the intellectual skills of the children because they are future leaders of the country. The second reason is, to develop their creativity and the third is to improve their verbal and physical manners. We hope they will have a habit of reading and can find happiness in reading.

The festival includes, poem reciting, story telling, extempore talks, literary talks, literary discussion, painting contest, several games including team building, science and house building.

In the festival, publish houses will sell books on child literature.

As a special program, several events including story

telling, extempore talks and poem reciting for the disabled children are also included.

U Thein Swe
Chairman, School Board of Trustees

Not only children but also parents should participate in this festival. Only then, parents will know ideas for how to nurture and cultivate their children.

When children get the habit of reading, they will have patriotic spirit and gain general knowledge through reading. The festival is the investment for our children who will become leaders of our country in the future.

For their amusement, folk games are included in the festival. Traditional orchestra and

Kyaukse elephant dances will perform in this festival. Old students of this school will also entertain the visitors with songs.

Daw Aye Thandar Chit
Botahtaung Township Education Officer,

We assisted in decorating the rooms and the regional government has also funded the festival. We have worked together with the old students for the success of the festival.

Daw San San Wai,
Assistant Director, Yangon Region Education Officer

My duty is to supervise the poem reading, storytelling and extempore talks competitions of children. MRTV and dailies are extending invitations to the festival. The Office of the Yan-

gon Region Education Officer has also sent invitations. The festival ensures closer teacher-student relations. Moreover children will know more about the benefits of reading and enhance their habit of reading. The festival will give satisfaction, enjoyment and intellectual development.

U Khin Maung Oo
Old Student
St. Paul School

We, St. Paul Old Students' Association, will stage a booth in this festival. This school began in 1880, and turns 157th anniversary this year. Leaders, intellectuals and intelligentsia emerged from this school. so, we will stage a booth so that new generation can envy them.—MNA

Businesspersons request gov't to reduce lending and deposit rates

May Thet Hnin

UNION of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) has requested the government to lower the maximum bank lending interest rate and minimum bank deposit rate at the 13th regular meeting between local businesspersons and Vice-President U Myint Swe on Saturday.

The businesspersons asked the authorities to reduce the maximum bank lending interest rate from 13 % to 10 % and the minimum bank deposit rate from 8 % to 5 %.

The existing 13-per-cent bank lending interest rate has become a major burden for entrepreneurs. Local businesspersons are not in a position to compete with foreign companies due to high interest rate.

Businesspersons said

the bank lending interest rate should be acceptable to private entrepreneurs in order that they can compete with those in ASEAN member countries along with the implementation of ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

U Zaw Min Win, president of the UMFCCI, said: "According to the current economic condition, the country will see an increase in productivity and more employment opportunities and the economy will bounce back only after banks reduces their lending interest rates to a reasonable level. We would like to request officials to decrease the interest rate after seeking advice from scholars."

Entrepreneurs say that Myanmar's economy is expected to be active again next year if private firms get bank loans at

a reasonable interest rate.

High interest rate hampers the availability of loans although the current government has prioritized the access to finance for the businesspersons obtain loans.

Due to the 8-per-cent bank deposit rate, the majority of people choose to deposit their money at banks instead of making investments in businesses.

U Than Lwin, senior consultant of the Kanbawza Bank, who also served as Former Vice-Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) and Technical Assistant to Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said: "It is the right time to reduce bank interest rates.

Entrepreneurs are facing difficulties as the current interest rates are higher than those in the neighbouring countries.

Based on the market conditions and responses, the central bank is to reduce interest rates gradually.

It is impossible to reduce interest rates from eight to five per cent immediately. Thanks to the gradual reductions in interest rates, a bank run will not occur. It should be done after consultations with experts."

U Shein Win, vice-chairman of Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association, requested the authorities to revive the new rules and regulations issued by the Central Bank in July that allows entrepreneurs to borrow banks' three-year term loan with the rule to pay back the loan plus interest every three months. There will be huge impacts on the majority of businesses although rules and regulations are good in the long run.

YBS-16 express bus catches fire on Yangon-Mandalay expressway

AN express bus No. 16 operating under the Yangon Bus Services, bus transport network system burst into flames on Yangon-Mandalay expressway in Kyaukdaga Township in Bago Region on Saturday early morning. Heading towards Bagan from Yangon, the bus being driven by Min Min, 29, with other 40 commuters, including four monks and 17 women, on board was badly damaged by fire between mile posts No. 99/3 and 99/4 at around 1 a.m. on that day. All people from the bus including the driver escaped from the fire. However, wide parts of the bus engulfed in flames. The loss due to the fire is estimated to reach about Ks20 million. The fire was believed to have started from the engine, investigators say.—Min Ma Naing (Sittoung)

Colin Trevorrow planning 'Jurassic World 3'

LONDON — Director Colin Trevorrow is game for a third movie in the "Jurassic World" series and says the manner which the forthcoming film, "Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom" ends, it makes way for another movie.

The 41-year-old filmmaker said the second feature will not end on a cliffhanger but give rise to the trilogy in the franchise, FemaleFirst reported.

"At the end of this movie, it's not a cliffhanger, but it's

designed for people to want to know what's going to happen next, whereas the earlier 'Jurassic Park' movies had pretty clear definitive endings. They were much more episodic.

"In working with Derek Connolly, my co-writer, we were also thinking about where it was going to go in the future," Trevorrow said in an interview published on YouTube by Sebas Tabany.

Asked about a third chapter,

he said he knew the direction he wanted the story to move in and also discussed it with original "Jurassic Park" franchise director, Steven Spielberg.

"Yes, absolutely... I knew where I wanted it to go. I remember telling Steven even while we were still making the first movie, 'This is the beginning. Here is the middle. And here's the end of the end. This is where we want to go'.

— PTI ■

James Norton says he is not in race for Bond role

LONDON — Actor James Norton has once again said that he is not in the race to take on the role of James Bond after Daniel Craig's last outing as the beloved spy.

The "Happy Valley" actor, who is being considered as one of the top contenders for the iconic role, said he feels humbled to be considered along side

Tom Hardy and Michael Fassbender, reported Metro.

Talking about the opening scene of his new show "McMafia", where the actor wears a tuxedo, Norton said, "I did say to James Watkins, the director, are you just baiting me and stoking the rumour fire with scenes like that? When it's reported in the press, people assume that I've

co-ordinated the scene, but I promise you I didn't. The truth is that it's total speculation."

"It's really humbling and flattering, but to have my name next to the likes of Tom Hardy and Michael Fassbender is just mad. If you're thinking of putting a bet on me, keep your money in your pocket," he added.—PTI ■



Ed Sheeran performs during the 2017 Jingle Ball at Madison Square Garden in New York, US, on 8 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Ed Sheeran is 'little obsessed' with Robbie Williams

LONDON — Ed Sheeran said he has developed a "little obsession" for singer Robbie Williams.

The 26-year-old singer said that his career path has similarities with that of Williams'.

"I feel a weird affinity with Robbie. We email now and then

but I've been reading up on him and his career is so similar to mine," Sheeran told The Sun.

"Like the way the album's going, the way it went to stadiums, the way it was just like one lone man... a very lonely sort of life. I have a little obsession with him and working out how he did stuff.— PTI ■

Yearender: Bollywood stars came crashing down to earth in 2017

MUMBAI — Bollywood ends another lacklustre year with fewer box office hits and no solution in sight to address falling theatre footfalls. The industry's woes were compounded by falling data costs in a booming mobile phone market, the increasing popularity of streaming services and the crumbling of the star system used for decades to ensure a film's success.

As of last weekend, only one Bollywood film (Golmaal Returns) had crossed the 2 billion rupee (\$31 million) mark at the box office in 2017. Salman Khan's "Tiger Zinda Hai" is expected to reach that figure in the next few days given its bumper opening last week. The highest grossing film in India this year wasn't even a Bollywood film. The Hindi dub of Telugu film "Baahubali 2: The Conclusion", an epic fantasy about warring kingdoms, grossed more than 5 billion rupees (\$78 million), an unprecedented figure even for the dominant Hindi film industry.

Bollywood's combined rev-



Cinema-goers wearing 3D glasses watch a movie at a PVR Multiplex in Mumbai in 2013. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

enue fell to 23 billion rupees (\$360 million), from 27 billion rupees (\$423 million) last year. This figure does not include the box office figure for "Tiger Zinda Hai", which is expected to cross at least 2.5 billion rupees in ticket sales.

"For the last four years, growth has been static, and this year, considering inflation etc, it has gone down almost 10 per cent," Shailesh Kapoor, who

heads media consulting and research firm Ormax Media, said.

What made matters worse for the industry was that the once safe option of casting an A-list star failed to draw audiences. Shah Rukh Khan's two films - "Raees" and "Jab Harry Met Sejal" - had tepid collections. Salman Khan's big Eid release, "Tubelight", where the star played a well-meaning but dim-witted man, barely man-

aged to collect 1.1 billion rupees when it was expected to earn double that figure. Ajay Devgn's "Baadshaho" also failed to impress audiences, although the actor redeemed himself with the comedy "Golmaal Returns" - the festival hit of the year.

"Smaller films will keep getting made and doing well, but it is the big films not doing well where the real impact is," Kapoor said.

Top Indian actors like the Khans, Akshay Kumar and Ajay Devgn usually charge astronomical fees, raising overheads and making any star vehicle an expensive film. Since the success or failure is also largely dependent on these actors, it's a tradition in Bollywood for them to compensate producers and exhibitors if their films don't do well.

"The content economics cannot be lopsided. Whatever little I know, Salman and Shah Rukh have returned a certain percentage of money to their partners. Everyone down the line has to make some amount

of money and no one has a lion's share, no matter what the size of the revenue," trade analyst Girish Johar said.

Filmmaker S S Rajamouli's "Baahubali 2: The Conclusion" showed that Bollywood could put its money to good use (read: technology) other than splurge it on big stars.

Rajamouli, a director from the South Indian state of Telangana, made a two-part epic mythological series, the first of which released in 2015 to bumper ticket sales. The second installment, which released in April this year, saw audiences flocked to see CGI-enhanced palaces, rampaging armies and magical kingdoms, all woven into a story around Indian mythology. "If a genre doesn't need a star, then it needs technology. We don't have that genre. In Hollywood, out of the top 15 films, 10 will be superhero or franchise films. There, the dependence on the star system has reduced because they've made technology the hero," Kapoor said.— Reuters ■

Fans flock to Space World as amusement park reaches final frontier

KITAKYUSHU, (Japan) — Fans queued from 4 am to enter the Space World amusement park in southwestern Japan on Sunday before the facility closes its gates for the last time after 27 years of business.

Space World, which opened in April 1990 in the city of Kitakyushu in Fukuoka Prefecture, drew 2.16 million visitors at its peak in fiscal 1997. However, customer numbers have since been declining and its operator decided to close the park at the end of 2017.

Families with children were among those lined up in front of the gates before the park opened at 8 am Shingo Aramaki, a 26-year graduate student from neighboring Yamaguchi Prefecture, waited from shortly before 4 am with his friends.

Noting that Space World has been in operation for nearly the same period as his own age, Aramaki said, “I also had my coming-of-age ceremony here. Although I regret that the park will be closed, I want to enjoy it fully today.”

A 60-meter replica of the US space shuttle Discovery became the symbol of the amusement park built on an unused lot at the Yawata steelworks by Nippon Steel Corp. A predecessor of Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp., the company created the amusement park as it tried to diversify its business amid sluggish demand for steel products.

The amusement park is scheduled to host a New Year's Eve fireworks display before officially closing at 2 am Monday. — Kyodo News ■



Fans flock to the Space World amusement park in Kitakyushu in southwestern Japan's Fukuoka Prefecture, on 31 December 2017, before the facility closes its gates for the last time after 27 years of business. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Greek bakers wish Happy New Year with 2.5-ton special cake



The special cake “Vassilopita” is on display in a street in Athens, Greece, on 30 December 2017. Greek bakers sent their wishes for a Happy 2018 to the world on Saturday by making and offering for free to the citizens of Athens a 2.5-ton “Vassilopita”, the special cake usually served at all households in Greece after midnight on New Year's day. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

ATHENS — Greek bakers sent their wishes for a Happy 2018 to the world on Saturday by making and offering for free to the citizens of Athens a 2.5-ton “Vassilopita”, the special cake usually served at all households in Greece after midnight on New Year's day.

The 70-meter-long and 3-meter-wide “Vassilopita”, which was cut in 15,000 slices at a central square in Athens' suburban municipality of Peristeri, is the largest ever made in Greece, according to organizers.

Forty people worked hard for three days to prepare the record-breaking, delicious cake, Panagiotis Sachinidis, President

of the Association of Athens' Bakers who took the initiative, told Xinhua. “I am a professional for over 30 years and I have not seen anything big like this,” he said.

The previous record was held by the same association since 2015, when they had baked and served a “Vassilopita” weighing 350 kilos. The municipality of Peristeri hid 200 “lucky coins” inside the cake. Those who found the coins will have blessings throughout the year, according to Greek customs. “Vassilopita” named after Saint Basil, the Santa Claus for Greek Orthodox Christians, always contains a hidden coin which brings good luck to the find-

er. The lucky citizens were given also small gifts by the Mayor of Peristeri Andreas Pachatouridis who helped slice the cake. “We are cutting the Vassilopita of the love and solidarity,” he said addressing the event.

“This is the message we want to convey, that there should be solidarity among us these difficult days,” Sachinidis added, referring to the debt crisis which has hit hard Greece since 2009.

“All people living in Greece these days need a taste of optimism, joy and happiness,” Mary Tsiota, deputy mayor of Peristeri, in charge of culture, told Xinhua. —Xinhua ■

Polish group aims for history by winter scaling of world's second highest peak

ISLAMABAD — A group of Polish mountaineers set off for northern Pakistan on Sunday to start an attempt to be the first to scale K2, the world's second highest peak, in wintertime.

K2, in the Karakorum mountains along the border between China and Pakistan, is notorious for high winds, steep and icy slopes — and high fatality rates for climbers. In winter months, scant snowfall means the summit approach can turn into bare ice.

More than 70 people have died climbing the peak, many of them at the Bottleneck, where a wrong step can send a climber hurtling off the South Face, where bodies are unlikely to be recovered. Team member Adam Bielecki, 34, told Reuters

that the chance to make history is a “strong motivation” for the Polish group.

Polish climbers have written a “beautiful chapter” of exploring peaks of more than 8,000 metres (26,247 feet), and scaling K2 in winter would “the last chapter of this book”.

The Polish team comprises 13 mountaineers led by Krzysztof Wielicki, 67, who in 2003 headed a winter expedition of K2, which was unable to clear the 8,000 meter threshold.

K2, slightly shorter than Mount Everest, is 8,611 meters (28,251 feet) high. Wielicki told Reuters that his team would begin their ascent on 8 or 9 January and, if successful, expect to return to base camp by mid-March. —Reuters ■



Polish mountaineers pose for a team photo prior their departure for the expedition to scale K2 in the winter, at an airport in Warsaw, Poland, on 29 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Salah fires Liverpool to victory, Chelsea close gap at top

LONDON — Mohamed Salah took his goal tally to 23 in all competitions with a second-half double to help Liverpool come from behind to beat Leicester City 2-1 at Anfield in the Premier League on Saturday.

Chelsea had no such struggles at home to Stoke City, with Mark Hughes' men thrashed 5-0 at Stamford Bridge, as the league's most porous defence couldn't cope with their rampant hosts.

Chelsea climbed to second, above Manchester United, after Jose Mourinho's men were held to their third successive draw following a 0-0 stalemate against Southampton at Old Trafford in Saturday's late kickoff.

Romelu Lukaku was carried off on a stretcher in the first half and United looked toothless in attack in the Belgium international's absence, mustering just three shots on target.

A win for neighbours Manchester City at Crystal Palace on Sunday will see Pep Guardiola's men move 16 points clear at the top of the standings and 17 ahead of United.



Liverpool's Ragnar Klavan in action with Loris Karius and Leicester City's Vicente Iborra at Anfield, Liverpool, Britain, on 30 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

One of the performances of the day came at Vicarage Road where Swansea City netted two late goals to come from behind to beat Watford and climb off the bottom of the table, as Carlos Carvalhal's tenure got off to a winning start.

However, the spotlight once

again was on Liverpool striker Salah, who continues to look unstoppable in front of goal.

Jamie Vardy once again scored against a "big six" side after being picked out by Riyad Mahrez in the first half at Anfield, and Leicester held on until Salah took centre stage.

Two neat second-half finishes took the Egypt international to 17 for the season, one behind Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane, with the goals sealing the victory that sees Liverpool move to 12 unbeaten in the league – their best run under Juergen Klopp – and opens up a

four-point gap over Spurs in fifth.

"He (Salah) can keep this standard for sure, he's young, improving – it's not only about scoring goals," Klopp said.

"He's so important for us. He knows and I know he couldn't score so many without the fantastic support from the other boys. I think he can keep the standard."

Four points ahead of Liverpool, Chelsea were out of sight after 23 minutes against Stoke with goals from Antonio Rudiger, Danny Drinkwater and Pedro putting the champions in command.

Willian's second-half penalty and a Davide Zappacosta goal put the seal on a fourth win in five league games for Antonio Conte's men.

"We know we must continue to work and improve, and prepare for a very difficult game against Arsenal," said Conte, whose second-placed side are now 13 points behind Manchester City. "Every win is important for us, today it was important to get three points to continue our positive run." —Reuters ■

Sharp Federer gives Switzerland winning start at Hopman Cup

PERTH — Roger Federer dismissed Japan's Yuichi Sugita 6-4, 6-3 in just over an hour on Saturday to give Switzerland a winning start at the Hopman Cup and send out a signal to his opponents ahead of next month's Australian Open. Coming off a fruitful year which yielded two grand slam titles, world number two Federer looked fit and sharp while other members of tennis's 'Big Four' are grappling with injury issues.

Federer hurried to save a break point in his first game but otherwise did not have any trouble against the 29-year-old Sugita, whom he broke in the fifth game, and there was no looking back from there. "It's been an absolute dream run," the Swiss said, looking back at the year. "It's gone by too fast to be honest, you know. When you're having fun things go too fast but what a year it has

been, (I) could not be happier.

"Such a huge surprise. I'm healthy, had a great off-season, so pleased to have the year that I had." The 19-times grand slam winner, who will be defending his title at Melbourne Park next month, was happy with the way he coped with the demands of the game. "I feel the game has evolved again in the last 10 years or so. I have made some adjustments to my game, I'm trying to hit through the backhand a bit more, maybe I have a bit more pop on the serve and naturally the whole rally has changed because you have different options.

"I think I'm playing very well, otherwise I wouldn't be having the results that I'm having. I'm happy I'm still playing at this level. I was always hoping to play for a long time and I'm doing that." —Reuters ■

Ederson's penalty save preserves City's unbeaten record

LONDON — Crystal Palace, who missed a stoppage-time penalty, became only the second team to take points off Manchester City in the Premier League this season when they held the runaway leaders to a 0-0 draw at Selhurst Park on Sunday.

City, who drew 1-1 with Everton in August, extended their unbeaten run to 21 matches but their winning streak was halted at 18 by a resolute Palace defence despite throwing everything at them in a dominant second half.

Palace earned a penalty in stoppage time when Raheem Sterling brought down Wilfried Zaha but the normally reliable Luka Milivojevic had his spot kick saved by Ederson.

With Palace defending high and breaking fast, the closest that City came to a goal was when substitute striker Sergio



Crystal Palace's Luka Milivojevic misses a penalty, saved by Manchester City's Ederson at Selhurst Park, London, Britain, on 31 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Aguero's shot took a slight deflection off a defender and hit the post midway through the first half.

Aguero had come on for Gabriel Jesus, who was the

second player to come off injured after Palace captain Scott Dann – and the third altogether with City playmaker Kevin De Bruyne carried off in added time. —Reuters ■