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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Japan aid for peace, upgrading railways, reconciliation

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Foreign Minister of Japan Mr. Taro Kono conducted a joint press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, at which a faster railway and aid for Rakhine State was discussed.

In his message at the press conference, the Foreign Minister of Japan expressed his delight over meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, saying that he had a "very beneficial exchange of views on Myanmar and regional situations."

Among the issues he discussed with the State Counsellor, he highlighted Japan's assistance programme aimed at raising the living standards of the Myanmar people, and a railroad upgrade programme that will cut travel time between Yangon and Taungoo to three-and-a-half hours. The project is targeted to be completed in 2020.

"By 2023, the travel time between Yangon and Mandalay will be eight hours, and this will help the people's travel as well as easing and speeding trade," said Mr. Taro Kono.

Views were also exchanged on the situation in Rakhine State. Requests were made to increase ways to provide humanitarian assistance, providing more access to local and foreign media, safe and voluntary return and resettlement of displaced persons and to implement the recommendations made by Mr. Kofi Annan. SEE PAGE-2

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Foreign Minister of Japan Mr. Taro Kono in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Plans made for systematic repatriation of refugees

According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Myanmar and Bangladesh, preparations are being made for the return of refugees to Rakhine State, said Deputy Chairman of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State Dr. Win Myat Aye.

"Plans are being made for the returnees to make systematic repatriation, which will begin from January 23, 2018", said Dr. Win Myat Aye, also Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, at the coordination meeting in at the Rakhine State Government Office in Sittway yesterday.

"We have already built relief houses for the displaced persons, and it is very important for everyone to participate in the UEHRD, which is a union-level project as well," he added.

The Union Attorney-General's office has suggested that relief camps and houses should be built in accordance with the standards and rules prescribed by the ministry.

"To cope with the current issues and challenges in Rakhine State, we should make concerted efforts. It is of vital importance to address the issues and challenges in Rakhine by using correct

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State Counsellor receives Professor Richard Boucher

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets the delegation led by Prof. Richard Boucher, Professor of Diplomacy and Foreign Policy of Brown University in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received 35-member delegation led by Prof. Richard Boucher, Professor of Diplomacy and Foreign Policy of Brown University, and Retired Ambassador and wife Ms. Carolyn Brehm, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The delegation comprised of 32 chief executive officers and professionals in the law, education, human resources development and business sectors based in Los Angeles, California. The delegation visited Myanmar from 3 to 12 January 2018 to study economics, politics, society, arts and culture. They visited Mandalay, Bagan and Inlay regions.

During the meeting, State Counsellor apprised the delegation of Myanmar's democratic transition, peace and national reconciliation and the development situation in the economy, education, tourism, and investment sectors. State Counsellor also answered the questions raised by the delegation members.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Japan aid for peace, upgrading railways, reconciliation

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Arrangements were made to provide $20 million worth of assistance and aid to increase the humanitarian situation, especially providing education as well as livelihood training for women through international organizations. This will be officially announced only when the agreement of Japan National Diet is obtained, said the Japanese Foreign Minister.

In the same way, Japan plans to aid and support as much as possible in Myanmar's undertakings. Confirmation was made with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to continue the Thilawa Special Economic Zone and the work of securing regional connectivity. We discussed the State Counsellor attending this year's Mekong-Japan summit meeting that will be held in Japan. Japan will remain as a friend of Myanmar and will increase relations with Myanmar, said the Japanese Foreign Minister.

The State Counsellor said "I'm happy to greet the new Foreign Minister. I warmly welcome a representative of Japan, our good friend. Myanmar's relations (with Japan) were always warm and Japan had provided assistance whenever we are in need. In today's meeting with the Minister, much was discussed on helping in our country's road communication and electricity requirement. Discussions were made on completing ongoing bilateral cooperation projects speedily and to increase development. We also discussed on properly receiving the returning displaced persons and the development of Rakhine State."

"We are much thankful to Japan for its willingness to support both the short and long term needs. We all know that development takes time. However, we value the support and understanding of Japan on our wish to have this as soon as possible. As H.E. Kono had told all that we had discussed, I have nothing more to say. But I would like to add that Japan and we were through similar difficulties and we understand each other. Based on this understanding, the two countries' status as close friends is expected to be increased. That is why I expect to meet again in a short time."

"In conclusion, I expect H.E. and party's trip to Rakhine State to be smooth. We have also made the best arrangements we can for this" said the State Counsellor.

Questions raised by the media were then answered.

Replying to a question on Rakhine State development, the Japanese Foreign Minister said "I think it is important to resolve the root of the problem of all the people living in Rakhine State for Rakhine State to develop. Recommendations of Mr. Kofi Annan's advisory committee to increase the education and health sector, including the living conditions of the people in the region should be implemented as a priority."

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said that development works were started after UEHRD was formed. In addition to Japan's emergency assistance, roads were laid and power distribution lines constructed in Rakhine State with an aim to raise the living standard. These will be done properly.

NGOs from Japan in addition to the government plans to construct 100 schools. In some schools both Buddhists and Muslims are studying together. We earnestly pray that such schools are reopened and expanded.

Private companies are also constructing 28 communication towers in northern Rakhine State for mobile phone communication and this is expected to increase the mobile phone communication in northern Rakhine State.

Japan will do the best it can to resolve the issue of poverty as this is the root of the problem in Rakhine State answered the Japanese Foreign Minister.

Responding to a question on assistance provided by Japan for Myanmar the Japanese Foreign Minister said "Since two years ago, Japan had set a policy of public-private partnership assistance totaling Japanese Yen 800 billion in a five year period to help peace and reconciliation of the people in Myanmar that will enable democracy to take root and for economic development. Especially assistance will be provided to Yangon urban development, improving transport, power supply, Yangon-Mandalay railroad improvement programs that will practically raise the living standard of the Myanmar people."

"In addition to these, cooperation will be made in education, health and agriculture sector proposed by the Sate Counsellor. We are discussing cordially with the Myanmar government to conduct the aid and assistance programs. In order to invite investments, I would like to request reduction in the work processes in other sectors including the electricity sector. Japan will cooperate with Myanmar to establish a democratic country" said the Japanese Foreign Minister.

On the question of international criticism directed at Myanmar government on human rights and resettlement of displaced persons, the Japanese Foreign Minister said "The status of Rakhine State involves human rights, humanitarian matters and tension in communities and is very much complicated. The priority is on how to implement reconciliation within communities. Resettling of displaced person is not to differentiate communities but to implement reconciliation in communities."

With this view, Japan will provide assistance to the Myanmar government led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as much as possible. Assistance will be provided for resettling displaced persons, for reconciliation of the communities in Rakhine State and to improve humanitarian situation.

In doing this, Japan will review and find sectors where more assistance can be made and how. We strongly hope to implement peace, stability and reconciliation of all the communities in Rakhine State said the Japanese Foreign Minister.

Replying to the questions of international criticisms, Bengalis killed during security operations in Inndin village and works conducted on resettling of displaced persons, the State Counsellor said "I know there is much interest internationally on Rakhine State. But what we need to do is very much wide. Our country's affairs could not be viewed only through Rakhine State. Rakhine State is part of our union. But in addition to the present problem, we must not lose sight of our long term aim. As mentioned earlier by H.E. Kono, the main thing is the long term reconciliation of peoples living in Rakhine State, building friendship and trust. We will emphasize on this. There will be criticisms. Criticisms can be positive or negative. We need to study this thoroughly and decide what to do. The outcome of the decision will be felt by our people. Another thing is the Inndin village matter. There were killings in Inndin village. The Tatmadaw had conducted an investigation and will be taking action so this is viewed as a new step taken by our country. In the end, rule of law in the country is the responsibility of that country. It is a positive indication that we are taking the steps to be responsible. However, some may worry. But I believe that our investigation will prevent such things from happening again. H.E. Kono had mentioned comprehensively about accepting displaced persons. All preparations have been made."—Myanmar News Agency ■

President, First Lady visit Kaunghmulon Pagoda in Machanbaw, Kachin State

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin arrived in Machanbaw in PutaO Township, Kachin State yesterday by Tatmadaw special aircraft and visited Kaunghmulon (Shwe-Sat-Min) Pagoda.

The Kaunghmulon Pagoda is located about nine miles from PutaO on the eastern bank of the Malikha River.

During the visit, the President and First Lady donated cash to the pagoda's board of trustees.

The pagoda is believed to have been constructed about 2,300 years ago by three missionary Buddhist monks sent by King Ashoka of India, enshrining three holy relics of the Buddha.

Before the visit to Kaunghmulon Pagoda, the President and First Lady visited Gubar Guest House located on the banks of Malikha River.

During the trip, the President and First Lady were accompanied by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, U Win Khaing and officials.

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin were welcomed at the PutaO airport by Kachin State Chief Minister Dr. Khat Aung, Speaker of Kachin State Hluttaw U Tun Tin, Kachin State Chief Judge U Tu Ja, Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Nyi Nyi Swe, ministers of the Kachin State Government and members of the local ethnic literary and cultural groups from Jinphaw, Rawan, Lisu and Shan and local people.—Myanmar News Agency ■

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin look around Kaunghmulon Pagoda in Machanbaw, Kachin State. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw and First Laday Daw Su Su Lwin arrive at the PutaO airport, Kachin State. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady visit Kaunghmulon (Shwe-Sat-Min) Pagoda, in Machanbaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Plans made for systematic repatriation of refugees

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methods and means; therefore, cooperation efforts must gain momentum to cope with the difficulties", the UEHRD vice chairman said.

According to the MoU, arrangements are being made to resettle the returnees in their former hometowns or in the nearest locations available after they return to the region.

"Moreover, construction projects, including for police stations, schools, clinics and markets, will be implemented in accordance with international standards. The construction projects must be finished in time due to the time limitations", the minister said.

To implement the requirements, cooperation among the ministries, such as the ministry for construction and the ministry for electricity and energy, is important, he said.

"We will provide the necessary assistance to the government service personnel who will be working in this region," he stated.

Rakhine Chief Minister U Nyi Pu further clarified the ongoing process to carry out the projects in Rakhine State.

Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung, departmental heads and other officials gave suggestions on relevant matters during the meeting. —Myanmar New Agency ■

Correction

A story titled "VP U Myint Swe returns from Cambodia" on Page 3 of the 12 January edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar contained several errors. In the article's first paragraph, the acronym for Mekong-Lancang Cooperation should be "MLC", not "LMC". In the second-to-last paragraph, the amount of the MLC cooperation fund should be "US$300 million", not "US$300". In the last paragraph, the announcement made by Cambodia should be the "Phnom Penh Declaration", not the "Phnom Penh proclamation". The GNLM regrets the errors.—Ed

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Some 200 tonnes of turmeric roots exported to China last month

Myanmar exported nearly 200 tonnes of turmeric roots to China last December, according to border trade authorities.

According to official statistics, Myanmar sent some 52.5 tonnes of turmeric roots to its largest trade partners during the week ending on December 29, mainly through the Muse border point, earning some US$37,537. The figure shows a decline in volume by 28 tonnes compared with the previous week's total of more than 80 tonnes.

A tonne of turmeric root is worth Ks968,825 (US$715), according to wholesalers trading at the Muse (105th-mile) Trade Zone. Myanmar also exports turmeric roots to India, Singapore and Malaysia.

Turmeric roots are widely used to make medicines. The spice is an important ingredient in treating arthritis, stomach ache and diarrhoea. Turmeric is used not only as a principal spice but also as a component in religious ceremonies in Southeast Asia.—Khine Khant ■

Turmeric roots.

Myanmar entrepreneurs to attend National Dairy Festival 2018 in Thailand

Following an invitation by the Dairy Farming Promotion Organisation (DPO), the Myanmar Livestock Federation (MLF) said local entrepreneurs will attend the National Dairy Festival 2018, to be held in Thailand later this month, according to a report in Myawady Daily's Friday edition.

This year's National Dairy Festival will be held at the headquarters of DPO in Muak Lek, Sarabuti Province. The event will start on January 30 and will last until February 5.

Manufacturers of dairy products from across the world will participate in the event to introduce their products and services. Animal feed, medicines and a wide range of farming equipment will be displayed for sale during the five-day event.

Besides these, artificial insemination techniques will be shared by the organisers with the attendees through a seven-day training programme, and the participants will have the opportunity to observe dairy production methods in Thailand.—GNLM ■

Bangladesh increases import of ginger from Myanmar by sea

Myanmar's South Asian neighbour Bangladesh increased its ginger imports from the country in the final week of last month, according to border traders.

According to a report by the commerce ministry, Myanmar exported some 108 tonnes of ginger with an estimated value of US$23,000 to Bangladesh between December 24 and 30 through the sea route, up by 15 tonnes against the previous week's exports.

Myanmar sold 93 tonnes of ginger to Bangladesh in the week ending on December 23. The country also exported tamarind weighing 75 tonnes to the neighbour via sea during the same week and earned $8,250.

Bangladesh also imports locally-produced bamboo, dried fish and prawns, rice, palm, peanuts, mung beans, dried plums, garlic, saltwater prawns and fish, blankets, candy, plum jam and footwear from Myanmar.

According to the monthly statistics of the ministry of commerce, Myanmar-Bangladesh bilateral trade by sea exceeded $72 million in the current fiscal year (FY). The total bilateral trade was worth $43.96 million last FY, including $33.366 million from non-border trade and $10.594 million from border trade.—Swe Nyein ■

Individual trade at Myawady border exceeds Ks24 billion this FY

TRADE through Myawady, a border gate between Myanmar and Thailand, using individual trading cards (ITCs) topped Ks24.726 billion in the current financial year, according to the ministry of commerce.

Individual trade from 12 border entry points in the past nine months of this fiscal year (FY) reached Ks32.615 billion, including Ks29 billion in imports and more than Ks3 billion in exports.

The Myawady border gate was ranked first, both for the volume of trade conducted and its value, followed by the Mawtaung border gate with Ks2.054 billion, Tamu with Ks1.7 billion and Kanpaiktee with Ks1.5 billion. The ministry's statistical report showed that the value of trade through the remaining border gates was lower than Ks1 billion.

The commerce ministry has issued ITCs to border merchants, as part of its efforts to boost cross-border trade since the 2012-2013 FY. Since the beginning of the programme to date, there are some 1,402 ITC holders at the cross-borders. The trade authorities have issued 138 cards to individual traders in the current FY.

The ministry is working to expand trade through regional and international cooperation, adopt export promotion measures and enhance trade by means of advanced ITCs, formulate trade policies in line with the market economic system, and improve the trade environment under its trade policy objectives.—Shwe Khine ■

Workers unload sacks of rice from a ship at a jetty in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Sea trade, border gates see increase in rice exports in December

More than 218,700 tons of rice with an estimated value of US$75.9 million was exported through border gates during December, while sea trade saw rice exports of over 73,450 tons, according to the Commerce Ministry.

The figure is up by over 2,500 tons for border trade and 34,160 tons for sea trade compared to November.

More than 6,960 tons of broken rice with an estimated value of $2.1 million in December was exported to China through the Muse and Lweje checkpoints, which decreased about 1,300 tons less than that of November.

Through sea trade, a total of 40,655 tons of broken rice worth over $10 million in December was shipped to foreign countries, which is 25,265 tons more than that of November.

Previously, 72 per cent of rice and broken rice export went to foreign trade partners via border checkpoints. Rice trade via sea routes has now improved. This fiscal year, sea routes account for 60 per cent of rice exports, whereas 40 per cent went from border gates.

Last year, there were only 29 foreign rice buyer countries. Myanmar's rice is now shipped to 48 countries through sea routes.—KoKhant ■

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13 JANUARY 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Japan will support the peace building efforts in Myanmar to the best of its abilities: Mr. Toro Kono

Following is the exclusive interview with Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Toro Kono, who arrived in Myanmar on Thursday.

What is the aim of your visit to Myanmar?

During President U Htin Kyaw's visit to Japan in December, he and Prime Minister Abe of Japan had candid exchange of views over Japanese assistance for Myanmar's nation-building efforts as well as the situation in Rakhine State, among others. The main objective of my visit is to reiterate Japan's commitment to extending full support for the democratic nation-building of Myanmar, and to follow up on the President's visit to Japan by discussing specific measures with the senior leaders of the Government and the Tatmadaw. I also look forward to visiting the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, where I hope to help facilitate further investment by highlighting, to the domestic and international audience, examples of successful cooperation between the public and private sectors of both countries. I want to use this visit as an opportunity to reflect further on ways in which Japan can work with Myanmar for the peace and prosperity of this country.

Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Toro Kono

How do you think about the future vision of bilateral relations between Japan and Myanmar?

Under the "Free and Open India-Pacific Strategy,"Japan aims to achieve peace and stability throughout this region, by maintaining and strengthening the rule-based, free and open maritime order and making it a global commons that brings stability and prosperity to all countries without discrimination. Japan hopes to shape ideas for cooperation with Myanmar under this strategy, and extend our utmost assistance to the efforts by the Myanmar Government for democracy, progress in the peace process, and economic development.

The Thilawa Special Economic Zone is an important symbolic project precisely from this viewpoint. Anchored in Yangon, the public and private sectors of Japan and Myanmar work together to bring in foreign investment, trigger economic boost for growth which would lead to the creation of a region-wide economic sphere in the Indo-Pacific, which would in turn enhance the connectivity between Myanmar and other regions. I believe that it is in both our national interest for our two countries to work together so that this success story can be expanded to tie into a wider development of Myanmar's and the region's economy as a whole.

Furthermore, attaining peace and national reconciliation in Myanmar will be extremely important for the peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. I strongly hope to see the Government of Myanmar, Tatmadaw and armed ethnic groups concluding the national ceasefire agreement and making progress in the peace process, so that more and more people would be able to taste the fruit of peace. Japan will support the peace building efforts in Myanmar to the best of its abilities, as this is something that the Myanmar people aspire to.

Could you specify the usage of 800 billion Japanese yen that Japan pledged to provide as an aid to Myanmar?

In 2016, the Japanese Government announced plans to contribute 800 billion yen over five years at public and private levels, based on the "Japan-Myanmar Cooperation Program",to support Myanmar's efforts for peace, national reconciliation and economic development. Particularly in the area of economic development, we regard the urban development in Yangon Region, transportation sector and electric power sector as the three main pillars of cooperation.

By implementing cooperation under these three pillars, Japan will aim to get to a point by 2020 where Myanmar people can actually feel the difference in their lives. For example, we plan to provide new train cars that will run at the maximum speed of 100 kilometers per hour between Yangon and Taungoo by September 2020, and to start operation all the way up to Mandalay by 2023. This will shorten the travel time between Yangon and Taungoo by half from the current seven hours to three and a half hours, and we will be able to reach Mandalay in as few as eight hours. As a result, the flow of goods and people between the biggest and second biggest commercial capitals, namely Yangon and Mandalay, will become smoother and push up people's living standards as well as the economy itself.

Japan is also advancing the Yangon Circular Railway Line Upgrading Project, under which 18 new train coaches will be operated by September 2020 and the number of trains operated per day will increase from 120 to 180 in 2022. With this,we can expect a significant drop in traffic congestion in Yangon. Through these projects and the development of Yangon Central Station area etc. being planned by Japanese companies, I believe we will be able to present a new image of urban life to the people of Myanmar. We will continue to support Myanmar's efforts of nation-building in other areas too, and consult the Myanmar Government closely.

What is Japan's assistance in Myanmar's agricultural development?

Agriculture is a key industry in Myanmar, and the Government of Myanmar considers agricultural development as an economic policy priority. For its part, the Japanese Government is undertaking efforts to raise agricultural productivity in Myanmar, in order to improve the livelihoods of farmers who account for 60% of the population and to ensure that the rural areas share the prosperity of urban cities like Yangon. To be more specific, Japan will provide assistance to the Myanmar Government-led Agricultural Income Improvement Project for the Shwebo irrigation area of Sagaing Region, located northwest of Mandalay. Japan's assistance includes the development of irrigation facilities, fields and related infrastructure such as roads linking farms to markets. Japan also plans to carry out technical cooperation, including agricultural water management and support to model farmers. Our intention is to demonstrate agricultural development models whilst calling upon private investments. If this project implemented by Myanmar becomes successful with the support of Japan,we hope that it can be expanded to include other regions and contribute greatly to rural development in Myanmar.

How does Japan see the situation in Rakhine State, and how do you intend to assist in the future?

The Japanese Government has been continuing direct dialogue with the Myanmar Government and the Tatmadaw on the situation in Rakhine State. Japan considers it important for the Myanmar Government to restore security and safety on the ground in a manner that takes account of human rights. It is also Japan's strong hope and expectation that, under the Committee for the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine, formed by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, good progress can be seen on:1) better humanitarian access including by the UN; 2) safe and voluntary return and resettlement of displaced persons;and 3)addressing the root causes of this issue through the implementation of the Kofi Annan Report's recommendations.

It is the policy of the Japanese Government to support these efforts by Myanmar Government. Last month, Prime Minister Abe conveyed to President U Htin Kyaw Japan's assistance for the construction of tarred roads, the upgrading of electric power lines and the construction of 15 schools in Rakhine State. Moreover, taking the opportunity of my visit, the Japanese Government has decided to provide an emergency assistance focusing specifically on the imminent return and resettlement of those who have fled, providing 3 million dollars' worth of necessary supplies for returnees through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. Japan has also been providing, and will continue to provide, assistance urgently needed by the people in Rakhine State through international organisations.

I would like to mention that Japanese Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been doing good work in Rakhine State for some time. Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ) has been providing vocational and skills training, as well as assistance to maintain community infrastructures. Further, the BAJ, funded by the Nippon Foundation, has constructed 100 schools. These activities are designed to provide opportunities for the youth and children from various communities, including Buddhists as well as Muslims, to learn together and deepen mutual understanding. It is my strong desire to see this kind of grassroots activities continue to be expanded.

I am convinced that Japan's assistance will contribute to advancing the efforts of the Government and the people of Myanmar.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Htin Kyaw

The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State / Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw, on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa
President of the Portuguese Republic
Your Excellency,

On the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to convey to Your Excellency my congratulations and sincere wishes for your personal well-being and for the progress and prosperity of the people of Myanmar.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets with Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Taro Kono at Zayarthiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing held talks with Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Taro Kono at Zayarthiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, they exchanged views on promoting bilateral relations between the two countries; Japan's assistance in promoting democracy in Myanmar; Tatmadaw's efforts to promote the internal peace process and mutual cooperation between Japan and Myanmar; promotion of cooperation between the Japanese self-defence forces and Myanmar Tatmadaw; and the problems in Rakhine State related to agriculture, production, job opportunities, infrastructure and technical aids.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Sitagu Asia Royal eye specialist team to visit Maungtaw District, Rakhine State

THE Sitagu Asia Royal eye specialist team will visit the Maungtaw Town People's Hospital from January 23 to 26 to treat eye patients in Maungtaw District.

Maungtaw Town People's Hospital Superintendent Dr. Kyaw Maung Maung Thein said, "The team will be equipped with equipment to treat cataracts, conduct eye operations, and prescribe and make spectacles.

Maungtaw Town People's Hospital. **PHOTO: AUNG MIN**

"Patients who want to obtain treatment need to register in time, and vinyl posters with notifications of the team's visit will be displayed in Maungtaw Township. The eye tests and operations will start on January 24. Eye patients living in the vicinity of Maungtaw Township can also come for treatment."

This is the first time an eye specialist team is visiting Maungtaw Township, and patients seeking treatment have to register in Maungtaw Town People's Hospital.—Aung Ye Thwin, Ko Min ■

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State / Government sent to State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From H.E. Mr. Peter Szijjarto
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary
Excellency,

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Your Excellency on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a trusted friend and an important partner of Hungary in Southeast Asia. My recent visit to Myanmar and our talks in Nay Pyi Taw last November convinced me that we have a lot in store to develop our bilateral cooperation. I would be greatly honoured to welcome you in Budapest in order to continue our fruitful discussions on a range of international and bilateral issues of our mutual interest.

I avail myself of this opportunity to wish Your Excellency good health and further success in your highly responsible duties.

Public Announcement for remonstration

NATIONAL Progressive Party that had been allowed to set up as a political party headquartered at No. 888, 3rd floor, Myitta Road, Ward No.10 in South Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, has submitted its application for the registration as a political party to the Union Election Commission on 7 November 2017, along with the following party's name, flag and emblem.

In their application they mention that they will use the name, the flag and the emblem as described hereunder.

In accord with Section 14 (d) of the Political Parties Registration Rules, it is hereby announced that those who want to remonstrate with the UEC about the party's name, flag and emblem may submit a complaint along with the supporting evidence within seven days starting from issuance of this announcement.—Union Election Commission ■

Flag of National Progressive Party

Emblem of National Progressive Party

A Socio-Economic Reform

THE proposal for changing Myanmar Budget Year was approved in the 6th session of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held in October 2017. Concerning this, the President of the State addressed the arrangements to be carried out by respective sectors at the National Planning Commission meeting 1/2018 and Finance Commission meeting 1/2018 held on 9th January 2018.

Myanmar fiscal year, which runs from 1st April to 31st March, has been being used consecutively in the times of the previous regimes in Myanmar. Yet, starting from the coming fiscal year 2018-2019 it will be designated as Myanmar Financial Year Period from 1st October to 30th September. Such a change must be said to be a remarkable reform in the economic sector in the reign of the civilian government.

In re-designating the financial year, the remaining period between the present financial year 2017-2018 and the new fiscal year 2018-2019 is the 6-month transitional period. Plans for bridging fiscal year gap—policies, objectives, process and prioritization programs will be implemented by promulgating 6-month national planning law.

> In addition, there were requirements not only in the projects but also in people's socio-economic lives, hence the need to collectively make effort for successful national development.

The Myanmar Budget Year Change was made with a view to bringing about the benefits of the nation and its national populace. In doing so, the transitional period is of great importance. The objectives of 6-month transitional planning are the ones to be urgently performed and the ones to be arranged in advance for the new financial year.

As regards the financial year change, it was found that former planning and finance process did not agree with the then parliamentary election system and administration system. In addition, there were requirements not only in the projects but also in people's socio-economic lives, hence the need to collectively make effort for successful national development.

With the change of Myanmar Budget Year Period, it need not suspend agricultural routines during June to November because of Myanmar's season and rains. As a result, there will be no longer delays in the open season of Myanmar. And the end of budget will never coincide with long public holidays, causing jobs and monetary flows to easily run.

In the past, production was hurriedly made to keep up with the end of budget year so qualities of the products were under-qualified. The unfinished works had to be carried to next year. Now Myanmar fiscal year will be adaptable to international practices of finance systems and people in agricultural sector will have time enough for preparation in monsoon season. As for construction site, they can avoid monsoon season.

Accordingly, we must collectively make efforts for success of budget year change, assuming that the 6-month transitional period of budget year change is an important initiative for a change. ■

SMEs and a Variety of Myanmar Economic Patterns

By Maung Myo Chit
[University of Economy]

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

ACCORDING to the statistics of the department of SMEs under the Ministry of Industry, the Union of Myanmar SMEs occupied 90 percent of the driving force of Myanmar Economy, managing to create 96 percent of job opportunities as estimated initially. In other word, SMEs play an important role in the national economy, being the major driving force for the national development. Occasionally, it is called industrial factories which cause adjustable social development.

SMEs include farmers, agro-industry businessmen, manufacturers and producers, retail and whole-sale sellers, logistics businesses and those who run service industries of delivering goods to customers in some ways or other. On a nationwide scale, there are altogether 40700 SMEs from the private sector registered at the department of supervision and examination under the Ministry of Industry, with out of them, 6650 located in Yangon Region. Enterprises are categorized into 13 groups such as foodstuff, textile and garment industries, lodging houses, kitchen utensils, literary and artistic industries, factories producing raw materials, produce from agriculture and gardening, mining industries, vehicles and accessories production, electrical equipment production and general industrial factories. Among them, mostly-registered industries are foodstuff industries, it was learnt. According to the data of the department of supervision and examination under the ministry, registered industries amounted to over 58.5 per cent.

Being a country rich in natural resources, job opportunities may be created greatly, provided that high-valued products can be produced by using modernized techniques. Nowadays, opportunities were caused by cooperating in economic sectors among the global countries. As for Myanmar which had already related with global countries in trade, production and service industries, it had more opportunities to enter the global production channel as it had already set up the ASEAN circle. Therefore, Myanmar had more opportunities for the development of SMEs.

Challenges for SMEs

In building up SMEs entrepreneurs may face challenges and difficulties. U Pyay Nyein, the manager of Thuriya Win Company Ltd, which produces "Flying Green Tea Leaves," said that lack of power supply was the major difficulty for the production of tea leaves. But, very recently power supply problem was solved to some extent. Due to the utilization of power generators, it cost much less than before, in production, but compared to other countries are overhead costs, unable to compete with other countries for the acquisition of markets. For example, it cost K 200 for one kilogram production in Vietnam, with in Myanmar costing double for one kilogram production. Hence local production had to yield to foreign ones in market competition.

Challenges and disadvantages which today's SMEs are experiencing are lack of start-up investment money and weakness to penetrate into technical market, poor quality in standardized production, inability to acquire news and information changing all the time, weakness of respective departments which will support for economic development, scarcity of infrastructure, weakness in laying down principles, rules and regulations for promising developments, invasion of reasonable taxes and privileges, and lack of opportunities for just and fair competitions.

According to experts on sales and marketing promotion, for local SMEs to penetrate into the global market it is the major necessity to designate standardized prices for locally-made products. For the time beings, so as to deal with the existing problem the government and civil societies are making concerted efforts. Meanwhile, local SMEs are solely depending upon local markets, simultaneously facing challenges of foreign imports in quality.

Daw Hnin Lei Wai, assistant marketing manager of City Mart Holding Company Ltd., which tried hard to acquire markets across the world since 2013 said, "Failure to supply the demands, weakness in sustainable production, poor knowledge in package system and lack of knowledge on market economy are challenges we are experiencing."

Strengthening local markets

Concerning imported foodstuff, with the increasing amounts of foodstuff products can reduce production costs much for market competition. But, contrariwise local products are too much smaller, costing much than that of foreign imports. Even if qualities are similar, Myanmar products cannot compete with foreign ones in prices. Survival of local SMEs wholly depends upon the entire Myanmar populace amounting to over 50 million. At such a time when the government is making efforts to link with global markets, it needs to make arrangements for local businesses to firmly survive in the local markets as well.

"Had the project been urgently implemented successfully consumers would take Myanmar products with great trust," said some people. But, SMSs alone cannot perform the task.

As for policy-makers, they need to use skills in manipulating the process, simultaneously requiring to make economic enterprises leading local and foreign markets cooperate energetically in the project so that local SMEs can get strengthened markets in the land as expected as well as to gain development.

Penetration into the sphere of market economy

Due to various reasons including wrong administration some 50 years ago, Myanmar plunged into the bottom of the poorest countries in the world. Now the incumbent government is striving hard for Myanmar to become a developed nation. In trying to achieve the national development without any hindrance, the State is seeking for rightful ways, means and systems for the development of SMEs, making concerted efforts influx of local and foreign investment come into the country.

For the emergence of the national economic development, it needs to support for the development of SMEs in such a time when economic enterprises are being established. SMEs are the most fundamental factors for the national development, causing the per capita income to increase. Hence, the government is encouraging the SME's development.

As for Myanmar which abounds with various kinds of natural resources, it needs to upgrade by constantly monitoring situations of small economic enterprises, because the national economic development is directly proportional to the development of SMEs. Only if there is a strengthened foundation in any kinds of economic, political or administrative system, will it be helpful for emergence of highly powerful infrastructures. In a democratic nation civil societies are the most fundamental foundation, with the people taking part in the important role. As for ward and village-tract committees and organizations representing the people, they need to monitor and examine actualities of socio-economic development, that is, to constantly fulfill basic requirements of the people and the national economic development. Yet, there are still other requirements for the success of SMEs. Especially, it is far away from success and not firm yet to penetrate into promising markets.

Requirements for the betterment of economy include efforts to export more and to reduce imports. As it is, Myanmar is depending less-valued imports and high-valued ones. Moreover, local SME's products are still finding it difficult to penetrate into the promising markets. Imports from the neighboring countries are still occupying local markets because of their qualities, reasonable prices and efficient supplies to the internal demands. Myanmar can mostly export raw materials only. What is worse for us is that we have to import the refined products of our exported raw materials.

To sum it up, it is necessary for local organizations to constantly monitor the requirements of SMEs and to support. Similarly, businessmen and economic entrepreneurs should collectively make efforts for SMEs' products to penetrate into the global market, without focusing their own benefits only. ■

Translated by
Khin Maung Oo

Towards a New Global Compact on Migration

By António Guterres

MIGRATION powers economic growth, reduces inequalities and connects diverse societies. The majority of migrants live and work legally. But migration is also a source of political tensions and human tragedy as a desperate minority risk their lives in the face of discrimination and abuse.

Demographic pressures and the impact of climate change are likely to drive further migration in the years ahead. The global community has a choice. Do we want migration to be a source of prosperity and international solidarity? Or do we want it to be a byword for inhumanity and social friction?

This year, governments will negotiate the first-ever overarching international agreement on migration – the Global Compact on Migration – through the United Nations.

This will not be a formal treaty; nor will it place any binding obligations on states.

Instead, it is an unprecedented opportunity for leaders to counter the pernicious myths surrounding migrants, and lay out a common vision of how to make migration work for all.

This is an urgent task. The recent video of migrants being sold as slaves is evidence of what happens when large-scale migration is not managed effectively.

How can we prevent and end these injustices?

Our thinking should be guided by three fundamental considerations.

First: we must recognize and reinforce the benefits of migration, so often lost in public debate.

Migrants make huge contributions to both their host countries and countries of origin. They take jobs that local workforces cannot fill. Many are innovators and entrepreneurs. Nearly half of all migrants are women, looking for better lives and work opportunities.

Migrants also contribute remittances to their countries of origin that added up to nearly $600 billion last year -- three times all development aid.

The fundamental challenge is to maximize the benefits of migration while stamping out the abuses that make life hell for a minority of migrants.

Second, states need to strengthen the rule of law underpinning how they manage and protect migrants.

Authorities that erect major obstacles to migration – or restrict migrants' work opportunities – inflict needless economic self-harm and can unintentionally encourage illegal migration.

Aspiring migrants who are denied legal pathways to travel will fall back on irregular methods that may put them in danger and undermine governments' authority.

The best way to end illegality and abuse is for governments to put in place more legal migration pathways. States also need to work together more closely to share the benefits of migration, for example through partnering to identify skills gaps in one country that can be filled by migrants from another.

Third, we need greater international cooperation to protect vulnerable migrants, as well as refugees, and we must reestablish the integrity of the refugee protection regime in line with international law.

The death of thousands of people attempting to cross seas and deserts is not just a human tragedy. Unregulated mass movements in desperate circumstances fuel a sense that borders are under threat and governments are not in control.

This leads in turn to draconian border controls which undermine our collective values and help perpetuate the tragedies.

We need urgent action for those trapped in transit camps or facing abuse, whether in South America or North Africa. We must envisage ambitious action to resettle people with nowhere to go.

We should also take steps – through development aid, climate change mitigation and conflict prevention – to avoid unregulated large movements of people. Migration should not mean suffering.

It is within our power to achieve a world in which we can celebrate migration and its positive contributions. This year can be a milestone on the road to making migration truly work for all.

The author is Secretary-General of the United Nations

Vice President U Myint Swe attends 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference

VICE President U Myint Swe attended and delivered an opening address at the opening ceremony of 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference held yesterday morning in Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-II).

Vice President U Myint Swe delivers an opening speech at the 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Vice President said "I wish the union ministers, the chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, Deputy Ministers, members of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, Chairmen of Pyithu Hluttaw Health and Sports Development Committee and Amyotha Hluttaw Health, Sports and Culture Development Committee, Permanent Secretaries of the ministries, ambassadors, Directors-General of the governmental departments, resident representatives of the UN agencies, officials from the Non-Governmental Organisations, members of the Traditional Medicine Council, advisers for Traditional Medicine, traditional medicine producers and the delegates to the 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference health and happiness. The Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference has been held annually since 2000, and this year marks the 18th anniversary of the conference. The 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference is being held with the objective of promoting the knowledge of Myanmar Traditional Medicine and the quality of traditional medicines, improving the code of conduct of Myanmar traditional medicine practitioners and providing more health care services to the public through traditional medical science.

Myanmar Traditional Medicine, which is the traditional heritage of the Myanmar people, we need to give encouragement to ensure that the traditional healing practices are preserved and that the potency of the cures remains intact. While we give encouragement to ensure that the healing methods develop systematically, we must work towards uplifting the standard of Myanmar Traditional Medicine healing practices and traditional medicines to international standard, by using modern equipment and modern methods and conducting systematic research to develop standards.

Today, the Union Government has been making efforts on all fronts to save Myanmar traditional healing practices which are on the brink of extinction by encouraging well-experienced and learned traditional healing practitioners, and making efforts to rediscover traditional treatises and therapies written on ancient palm leaf manuscripts called "Pay parabaik", highly effective traditional healing practices, valuable herbs,highly valuable medicinal plants and natural herbal and mineral resources of medicinal value. Furthermore, the Union Government has organized the convening of Annual Conferences and Seminars for traditional medicine practitioners from around the country annually so that they can exchange and share their medical knowledge with each other.

For promoting research works and research areas to develop Myanmar traditional medicine, 26 research projects, which is one of the proposals submitted at the last year's conference, are being carried out with government budget. Besides, the government is scrutinizing traditional medicine production as part of its efforts for encouraging advertisements of traditional medicine which meet medical ethics and traditional medicine production industries which meet the required standards. It is also learnt that modern traditional medicine production industries with international packaging systems have emerge in the private sector. In relation to the Myanmar traditional medicine and nutritional health supplements, we need to prepare to the best of our ability so that they can meet the requirements of the ASEAN Economic Community and to make sure they are in accordance with the Free Trade Agreements. Besides, all are obliged to make efforts for getting intellectual property rights for Myanmar traditional medicine, which possesses intrinsic properties, firm foundations and highly effective remedies.

Let me conclude my opening address by wishing you success in implementing these conference objectives: to save the treatment methods of traditional practitioners for every disease and to practice them at the traditional medicine hospitals and clinics; to promote cooperation with international organizations to be able to promote the standard of Myanmar traditional medicine; to disseminate health knowledge to the housewives through Myanmar traditional medicine; to preserve the healing practices and methods of Myanmar traditional medicine, which is based on the Four Great Nayar as a national heritage; and to review and test the old Myanmar traditional medicine teaching methods which have been used throughout the ages.

Next, a Message of Greetings sent by President U Htin Kyaw to the 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference was read by Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe after which the opening ceremony was concluded.

After the conclusion of the ceremony, Vice President U Myint Swe, Union Ministers, guests, conference organizing committee members, Hluttaw affairs committee members, departmental heads, representatives from foreign embassies, Myanmar Traditional Medicine Council members, advisors for traditional medicine, Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioner (Central) Association chairman and member, traditional medicine producers and conference representatives took a commemorative group photo.

The Vice President and guests then visited the exhibits of Myanmar traditional medicine producers in the hall.

The 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference was held with the aim of promoting the standards of Myanmar traditional medicine, enhancing the quality of Myanmar traditional medicine, improving the code of conduct of Myanmar traditional medicine practitioners and providing more health care services to the public through traditional medical science it is learnt.

In the evening the Vice President attended the dinner hosted in honor of the 18th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference in Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-II).—Myanmar News Agency ■

Foreign Minister of Japan visits Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

A DELEGATION led by Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Taro Kono visited Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

Deputy Minister For Ministry of Planning and Finance and Chairperson of Thilawa SEZ's Management Committee U Set Aung and CEO and President of Myanmar Japan Thilawa Development Ltd Mr. Tomoyasu Shimizu explained to the Japanese Foreign Minister about how the Thilawa projects are gaining momentum. The delegation observed the One Stop Service Centre, which produces speakers and earphones, which was made possible because of an investment by Japanese companies.

Zone A of Thilawa started on 1 December, 2013 and 100 hectares of Zone B was implemented on 24 February, 2017. There are investors from 17 countries among the 89 registered factories , 39 of which are being operated.

Japan is giving aid with an Overseas Development Assistant Loan (ODA) for ease of infrastructure, electricity and transportation, it is learnt.

In the evening, the Japanese Foreign Minister and delegation arrived at Melia Hotel in Yangon and met with Japanese business groups. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Japan Thilawa Development CEO explains to Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. Taro Kono about the Thilawa Project. **PHOTO: MNA**

Notification on unpredictable earthquakes that could cause deaths and damages

1. Myanmar is a country where natural disasters such as fires, floods, storms, earthquakes, tsunamis, and landslides can occur. Of those natural disasters, earthquakes are perhaps the most unpredictable and have the potential to cause major damage and loss of life.

2. If there is a strong earthquake, damages can occur not only from the initial shock, but also from the aftershocks. The temblors can cause inundation and flooding from broken dams, landslides, tsunamis, and fires from electric short circuits, ruptured fuel tanks and gas pipelines.

3. After a big earthquake, smaller aftershocks can occur for the hours, days, weeks and sometimes months after the initial quake. Damaged buildings, roads and bridges can collapse due to these aftershocks. Plaster, glass, bricks and other debris falling from buildings and broken electric cable are additional dangers that are to be aware of.

4. From January to December 2017, there were 70 earthquakes of low to moderate intensity. There were many earthquakes during November, December and this January and people need to be aware of the dangers of earthquakes. As such, people are notified to do the following..

- Secure things in your house that can fall, break and cut.
- Collect important documents and prepare emergency family kits.
- Regularly inspect your house and make it structurally strong.
- Run out of a building within five seconds when an earthquake occurs. If this cannot be done, take shelter under a strong table or bed in a corner of the room.
- Run away from high-rise buildings, power cables, electric poles, trees and places were debris can fall. Take refuge in an open field.
- If there is an earthquake, put out (cooking) fires and switch off lights.
- If there is an earthquake while driving a motorcycle or car, slow down and stop in a safe place.
- Don't run into a building when there is an earthquake and don't use the lift. Don't jump off high rise buildings.
- Don't enter a building after an earthquake without checking the building's structural stability. Don't stay near a riverbank or a mountainside. There can be landslides. Don't stay near a dam or reservoir. Dams and reservoirs can break, causing flooding. Don't go near towers and high rise buildings, as they can collapse.
- Attend talks on earthquakes. Observe and share notifications and information.

– Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Merkel deal with social democrats opens way to new German government

BERLIN— Chancellor Angela Merkel struck a deal with Social Democrat (SPD) rivals on Friday to open government coalition talks, easing months of uncertainty that has undermined Germany's global role and raised questions about her political future.

But the deal to revive a "grand coalition" that has governed since 2013 must be approved by an SPD congress planned for January 21. Some members fear further association with Merkel's chancellorship could erode the influence of the party which suffered the worst result in September's election since the modern Federal Republic was founded in 1949.

"We have felt since the elections that the world will not wait for us, and in particular... we are convinced we need a new call for Europe," Merkel, who has played a central role tackling crises over the euro and refugees, said after exploratory talks that had run through the night. A 28-page blueprint pledged close co-operation with France to strengthen the euro zone. It also contained a promise, apparently targeting Saudi Arabia, a major buyer of German arms, not to export arms to countries involved in the war in Yemen.

Acting German Chancellor Angela Merkel, leader of the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU) Horst Seehofer and Social Democratic Party (SPD) leader Martin Schulz arrive for a press conference after exploratory talks about forming a new coalition government at the SPD headquarters in Berlin, Germany, on 12 January 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

The blueprint will form the basis for formal coalition talks if SPD members give the go-ahead, but it is open to revision.

Weakened by an election setback in September, Merkel turned to the left-leaning SPD to renew their grand coalition after the collapse in November of talks on a three-way coalition with the Greens and Free Democrats (FDP). Germany is unfamiliar with the long negotiations that mark coalition building in many neighbouring countries. The dominance of the SPD and the conservatives long ensured smooth government transition. But elections last September saw the rise of the right-wing Alternative for Germany which upset the arithmetic.

Merkel was eager to avoid any repeat election or attempt at a minority government.

"There will be difficult tasks to come," Merkel said. "The coalition negotiations probably won't be easier than the exploratory talks." —Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Train drivers in Australian state vote to strike following days of commuter chaos

SYDNEY — Train drivers in Australia's New South Wales state voted on Friday to go on strike if their demands for a pay rise are not met, at the end of a week hit by commuter chaos including major delays and widespread trip cancellations in state capital Sydney, local media reported.

Members of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union in the state voted to take industrial action if they do not get satisfactory wage increases, The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported.—Xinhua ■

US city San Francisco to receive extra federal funds to combat homelessness

SAN FRANCISCO — The western US city of San Francisco will get an extra 9 million US dollars from the federal government to fight homelessness, local media reported Thursday.

With the 9 million dollars, which is part of two-billion-dollar grants announced by the government Thursday, the city will obtain a total of 41.5 million dollars in homelessness grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, second only to Los Angeles in southern California that receives 109.4 million dollars.—Xinhua ■

Hundreds of Australians mourn death of 14-year-old cyber bullying victim

CANBERRA — Hundreds of mourners on Friday attended a memorial service for Amy "Dolly" Everett at a Northern Territory school following her death by suicide which her parents said was a result of cyber bullying.

Attendees from across rural Australia wore blue, Dolly's favorite color, to the funeral in solidarity with her family.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Thursday night issued a statement on social media, saying his heart was breaking for the Everett family.—Xinhua ■

Fires and mudslides have some rethinking the California dream

MONTECITO, (Calif) — A few who live amid the usually serene beauty and year-round warmth of Santa Barbara County say nature's recent onslaughts of wildfires and mudslides have dampened their California dreams.

For Hannah Troy, the twin blows of the Thomas Fire, which scorched parts of Santa Barbara last month in the biggest wildfire in the state's history, and this week's deadly mudslides only deepened her unease about the landscapes around her.

"California to me feels like it's just becoming a flourishing tinderbox," Troy said at a Red Cross shelter at a college in Santa Barbara, a wealthy city a couple hour's drive up the Pacific coast from Los Angeles.

Troy, a legal worker in her 50s, was born in New York's Long Island but moved as a child with her parents to Los Angeles. In 2006, she moved to the Montecito area to live with her sister and brother-in-law on a half-acre property, which survived this week with only some uprooted fences.

A search and rescue worker with a dog scours through properties after a mudslide in Montecito, California, US, on 11 January 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"California is not my favourite place, it never has been," she said, lamenting the state's drought and fires and citing Oregon and Canada's British Columbia as places she would rather live.

As the Thomas Fire crept slowly west towards them, Mark Drost, his wife, Zefea Samson, and their two children, Indira, 7, and Ravi, 4, left behind their Montecito rental and moved to Kailua, Hawaii.

Drost and Samson lead yoga teacher training courses in Hawaii, Florida, New York, Bali and Costa Rica, but the plan for now is to stay in Hawaii for at least six months.

"For me, it was protection of my family and livelihood," Drost said by telephone. "So many people want to live in California, but it comes with these huge risks."

The family still loves Santa Barbara County, and will start reassessing whether to move back in the coming months.

But for any who have doubts about California as home, there are many more staying put. Local realtors said most people factor in nature's terrifying fury as a cost of living in an archetypal Californian landscape of sandy beaches and forested mountains.

"We didn't see an uptick in sales, we didn't see a downtick in sales, things just kind of maintained," Bob Hart, executive officer of the Santa Barbara Association of Realtors, said of the impact of previous natural disasters. "But we never ever had anything this devastating."

Nevertheless, he was not expecting an exodus. "I'm looking out the window right now and I'm in paradise," Hart said by telephone, describing his view a few miles (km) down the road from the devastation in Montecito.

Renee Grubb, a realtor in Montecito, said her inbox was filling up with emails from neighbours seeking a place to rent in town while they clean up or rebuild.

"For most of the people, if you can afford to live in Montecito, you're going to have great insurance and you're going to rebuild," she said by phone.

After previous devastating fires, a few older residents might move from the canyons down to the relatively unperturbed beach-side parts of Santa Barbara, Grubb said. But Montecito's wealthier residents tended to own multi-acre tracts and were not inclined to give up on their million-dollar views, she said.

Garrett Speirs, a 54-year-old artist, has been living in Montecito for 20 years. He had to evacuate for the Thomas fire, and the wall of mud came up to his back door, but his family's 19th-century house was spared further damage.

"The hiking is amazing here, the beaches, Santa Barbara's got it all but it's a little bit of a dangerous element too," he said. Nevertheless, Speirs said he would stay put.—Reuters ■

China provides post-flood recovery assistance to Nepal

KATHMANDU — More than 31,800 households in southern Nepal's Terai region, which was affected by severe floods in August last year, will receive humanitarian aid from China, according to an agreement signed here Thursday.

The agreement was signed by Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Yu Hong and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Nepal Country Director Renaud Meyer.

"We hope that we could help the flood affected people to get back to their normal lives," Yu said.

She noted that the Chinese government has already provided assistance to Nepal for disaster relief right after the massive floods last year. The Chinese aid comes in response to the extensive damage and displacement caused by the floods in the country's southern part. A post-flood assessment conducted by the government of Nepal found that 1.7 million people were affected by the disaster. The China funded project will be implemented by the UNDP and is expected to complete within three months. The project will be effective from early next week. Meyer told Xinhua that "We are very happy to partner with China and receive the generous contribution for the recovery of people after the floods. We are very grateful for their willingness to provide additional funding to the work that UNDP has been doing."

Meyer said since the people in Terai region are severely affected by poverty, the project will enable them to resume their work while the children will be able to get back to schools.—Xinhua ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SPAR RIGEL VOY. NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SPAR RIGEL VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 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 CA SHIPPING PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER ABLE VOY. NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER ABLE VOY. NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Acropolis treasures on display in Shanghai

SHANGHAI — Two items from the Acropolis Museum were put on display on Thursday at the Shanghai Museum for the exhibition "Treasures from the Acropolis Museum," which runs until April 8.

They are a marble statue of a Kore (520-510 BC), one of the most beautiful and well-preserved sculptures of the Acropolis, which retains traces of its old colors, and a red-figure Lekanis Lid with a Dionysian scene (350-325 BC).

"Behind the two items, we have displayed a picture of the Acropolis site to create a better visiting experience," said Yang Zhigang, curator of the Shanghai Museum, at the exhibition's opening ceremony.

The Athenian exhibits are part of a cultural exchange program, as the Acropolis Museum displayed two Shanghai Museum treasures from October 2017 to April 2018.

The Shanghai Museum signed a cooperation agreement with the Acropolis Museum in December 2015. This exchange of items between the two museums is the first of many steps outlined in their cultural exchange agreement.—Xinhua ■

400 passengers stranded on train amid heavy snow in Niigata

Passengers walk off a train on East Japan Railway Co.'s Shinetsu Line on 12 January, 2018, on which they spent the night after it was stranded between stations by heavy snowfall the night before in Sanjo, Niigata Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

NIIGATA, (Japan) — Around 430 passengers were forced to stay the night aboard a local train stranded since Thursday evening amid heavy snowfall in Niigata Prefecture on the Sea of Japan coast.

According to rescue workers, five of the passengers -- a man in his 40s and four women in their teens and 20s -- felt unwell and the man was taken to a hospital. The train resumed service Friday morning about 15 hours after it became stranded, with many passengers exhausted after standing all night in crowded cars.

More than half of the passengers on the four-car train on East Japan Railway Co.'s Shinetsu Line evacuated earlier in the morning with their relatives coming to pick them up by car.

The operator said the interior lighting and heating systems had worked properly and it had distributed water and nutrition bars, but the train only had one toilet requiring people to wait in long queues and the toilet paper ran out, according to passengers. Some said passengers took turns sitting on seats.

"I was standing and looking down the entire time," said a woman who came out of the train around 4:40 a.m. when her family arrived. "I just want to sleep," said a male passenger.

A 50-year-old man who came to pick up his daughter vented his anger against JR East, saying, "Tomorrow, she will sit for university entrance exams so I want her to rest as soon as possible. The operator kept saying the train would start moving, but it was wrong."

The train bound for Nagaoka from Niigata became stranded at around 6:55 pm. Thursday at a rail crossing between Tokoji and Obiori stations in the city of Sanjo, where snowfall reached 77 centimeters around that time.

Due to delays and cancelations of train services caused by the snow, the train was crowded at the time. JR initially said 600 people were stranded but later lowered the figure.—Kyodo News ■

Declaration for Mr. Chong Dae Seong, Executive Director of SEOGWOO E & C Co., Ltd and Public Notice

Under the assignment and directive of Yadanar Shwe Pin Sint Co., Ltd (represented by its Managing Director, Dr. U Tun Win), having placed its office at No. (466), Thitsar Street, Ward (3), South Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region, it is declared as to the following.

Our client's company has been operating the construction businesses throughout the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with good reputation.

In operating the said businesses, as SEOGWOO E & C Co., Ltd has offered our client's company to operate the following construction works with the following work values such as;

(1) masonry works with the work value Ks. 487,026,000/-, road and drainage construction works with the work value Ks. 213,359,000/-, walling works with the work value Ks. 46,000,000/-, iron pole erection works with the work value Ks. 24,536,557/-, brick fencing works with the work value Ks. 39,140,000/-, iron grille and brick fencing works with the work value Ks. 9,368,000/-, car parking lot/sun shade and stair construction works with the work value Ks. 13,654,000/- and granite flooring works with the work value Ks. 4,942,080/-, totalling to Ks. 838,025,637/- for (8) works in ASEAN Eco Brick Factory Project and its associated businesses situated at Block No. (C/26), Zone (A), Thilawa Industrial Zone, Yangon Region;

(2) masonry works with the work value Ks. 1,045,715,000/-, road and drainage construction works with the work value Ks. 172,320,000/-, temporary fencing works with the work value Ks. 6,748,000/- and iron structure construction works for principal rafter of roof with the work value Ks. 357,000,000/-, totalling to Ks. 1,581,783,000/- for (4) works in Construction of Rural Development Training Center for The Saemaul Undong Project at Agricultural Education and Rural Development Training Center, Nay Pyi Taw;

(3) road and platform scales construction works with the work value Ks. 642,746,000/- and stair construction works with the work value Ks. 25,020,000/-, totalling to Ks. 667,766,000/- for (2) works in Merubeni Fertilizer Factory Project situated at No. (B/23), Industrial Zone, Thilawa Special Economic Industrial Zone, Yangon Region, and;

(4) masonry works with the work value Ks. 364,000,000/-, iron structure construction works for principal rafter of roof with the work value Ks. 280,000,000/- and enamel sheet flooring works with the work value Ks. 15,173,000/-, totalling to Ks. 659,173,000/- for (3) works in Farmland Project situated at No. (916), Shweli Street, Shwe Kyar Pin Ward, Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw;

and our client's company has accepted the said offers, the Contracts have been executed respectively for the said works by fixing the agreements.

Although our client's company has accomplished the said (17) kinds of work for the above (4) Projects in time according to the agreements stated in the Contracts and the businesses have been running with that accomplished (17) kinds of work, SEOGWOO E & C Co., Ltd has to pay the following remaining work values such as;

(1) the total remaining work value for (8) kinds of work in ASEAN Eco Brick Factory Project and associated businesses is Ks. 156,595,788/-;

(2) the total remaining work value for (4) kinds of work in Construction of Rural Development Training Center for The Saemaul Undong Project is Ks. 88,283,243/-;

(3) the total remaining work value for (2) kinds of work in Merubeni Fertilizer Factory Project is Ks. 83,149,156, and;

(4) the total remaining work value for (3) kinds of work in Farmland Project is Ks. 34,643,650/-;

totalling to Ks. 362,671,837/- including the maintenance fee for (17) kinds of work for (4) Projects within (1) year payable to our client's company for (17) kinds of work for the above (4) Projects.

SEOGWOO E & C Co., Ltd, without having paid the full amount of work values payable to our client's company for each work till today, has been openly breaching the agreements stated in the Contracts. Apart from it, although the authorised persons of our client's company have frequently negotiated with you and claimed the remaining work values according to social nature, you have frequently failed to pay the remaining work values on the due dates.

Therefore, it is hereby declared for Mr. Chong Dae Seong, Executive Director of SEOGWOO E & C Co., Ltd and public notice that, within (7) days commencing from the declaration date of this notice, SEOGWOO E & C Co., Ltd shall pay the remaining work values Ks. 362,671,837/-, payable to our client's company in concern with (17) kinds of work for above (4) Projects, to the authorised persons of our client's company, without failure, and if your company fails to do so or denies this notice, the legal action will be taken under the existing Laws.

Under the directive,

U Moe Min Swe (LL.B, D.B.L) (Sr. 28641) **Daw Khin Mar Nwe (LL.B, D.B.L)** (Sr. 31070) **U Aung Myo Thu (LL.B)** (Sr. 46545)

Higher Grade Pleaders
Royal Ruby Law Firm
No. (36), Moemakha Street, Mont/South Ward, Sanchaung Township, Yangon.
Ph : 09421022112, 0943167296

Yu Bing (R), a pipa (a four-stringed Chinese lute) player, performs Chinese music theater "Overload" at Asia Society in New York city, on 11 January 2018. Chinese music theater "Overload", a music-focused, interdisciplinary performance, was staged on Wednesday and Thursday at Asia Society in New York City. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Chinese music theater "Overload" staged in New York

NEW YORK — Chinese music theater "Overload" was staged on Thursday at Asia Society in New York city. The music theater is a music-focused, interdisciplinary performance created by Pipa (a four-stringed Chinese lute) player Yu Bing, who is joined by an ensemble of some of the most talented young musicians in China, playing both Chinese and western instruments.

"Overload," inspired by two traditional Chinese Pipa masterpieces: Ambush on All Sides and King Chu Doffs His Armor, tells the life story of Chinese warlord Xiang Yu and uses music to explore his inner world at different moments of his life.

Unlike other film and traditional Chinese opera adaptations, "Overlord" avoids focusing on retelling the whole life story of Xiang Yu. Instead it attempts to find the humanity inside this complex figure, which is often been portrayed as a ruthless leader, a notorious killer and a gruesome enemy.

"By exploring what Xiang Yu was thinking and feeling in the important moments of his life through music, what we really want to present are the emotions everybody goes through in daily life, such as happiness, anger, sadness, and panic," said Yu.

He said his team added contemporary vocabulary to traditional Chinese music when arranging it. When playing the Ambush on All Sides, the ensemble makes special emphasize on people shouting and creaming, and drum beating, in order to zoom in on brutality of the war.

When asked whether traditional Chinese music and ancient Chinese story would be difficult for foreigners to understand, Yu said, "Music knows no borders and emotions are universal."—Xinhua ■

Working with Shah Rukh comes naturally to me: Kajol

MUMBAI — Having featured in over half a dozen films and being considered one of the most sought on-screen pair, Kajol says working alongside Shah Rukh Khan is always a pleaure as the superstar makes the experience easier.

Kajol and Shah Rukh shot for a special sequence for Aanand L Rai's next, "Zero".

While Katrina Kaif and Anushka Sharma will be seen in lead roles alongside Shah Rukh, Kajol and Rani Mukerji shot for a special sequence. Rani had called the experience as "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai part two".

Kajol, who last worked with Shah Rukh on "Dilwale", praised the actor for his dedication to cinema.

"We actually shot for half-an-hour but it was great. It's always fabulous to work with him. He is a really amazing man to work with because he is 300 per cent involved in whatever he is doing. "It's great fun because he is such a fine actor that it comes very naturally to work with him and alongside him," says Kajol in an interview to PTI.

The actor may have been around for close to three decades in the industry but says her dedication to give it all for work hasn't reduced.

"I've come from a time when we used to work from 7 in the morning till 9 in the night on a daily basis without the comforts of sitting in an AC room. Somewhere down the line, you realise that work is God. You have to take it seriously everyday, it's the most important thing," she says.

Much of the discipline, Kajol says, comes from her mother who taught her early in childhood that no work is lesser or bigger.

"As a kid my mother made me sweep the house and clean the bathroom. She said if at any point you don't have servants in your house, you should be able to look after the house. I did it.—PTI ■

Robert Downey Jr hated me: Hugh Grant

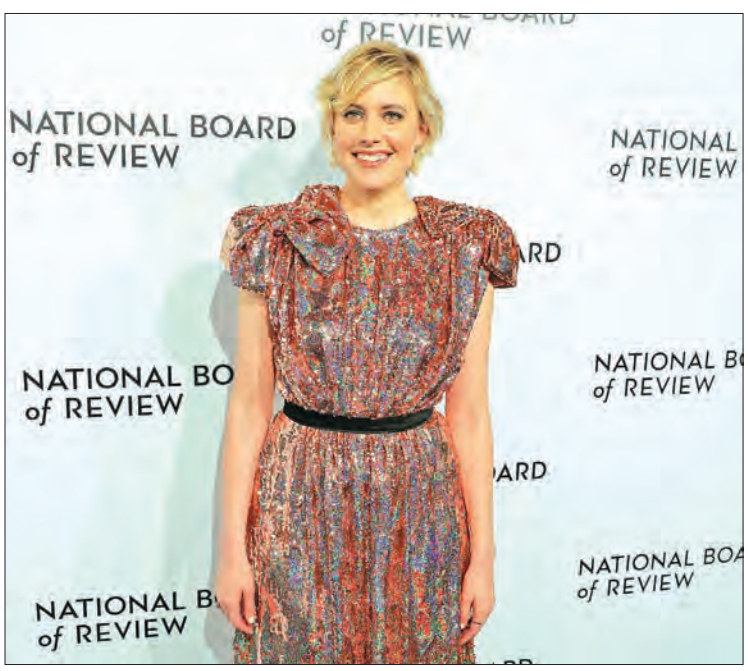
LOS ANGELES — Actor Hugh Grant has said that "Iron Man" star Robert Downey Jr "hated" him when they first met.

The two stars collaborated for the 1995 drama "Restoration", which also starred Sam Neill, David Thewlis and Meg Ryan.

"He hated me. He took one look at me and wanted to kill me," Grant told People magazine.

However, the "Paddington 2" actor sounded positive about his other co-actors such as Emma Thompson, whom he called a "genius".

"She is not remotely sane. She's nuttier and nuttier as the years go," Grant said.—PTI ■



Director Greta Gerwig arrives to attend the National Board of Review awards gala in New York, US, on 9 January 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Director Guild embraces women, minorities in awards nominations

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood directors nominated a woman and two people of colour for their 2018 movie awards on Thursday in a line-up that favoured newcomers over veterans like Steven Spielberg.

"Lady Bird" director Greta Gerwig was among four first-time nominees announced by the Directors Guild of America (DGA), one of the most influential groups in Hollywood because many of its members also are voters in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which chooses the Oscars.

Only one woman - Kathryn Bigelow - has ever won a best director Oscar despite efforts by women to make inroads into behind the camera positions in Hollywood in recent years. Several Latino men and Taiwan's Ang Lee have won the award.

Gerwig, 34, was joined by Mexican Guillermo del Toro for "The Shape of Water," black first-time director Jordan Peele for racial horror satire "Get Out," and Britain's Martin McDonagh for dark comedy "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri." British director Christopher Nolan won a fourth DGA nomination for his war drama "Dunkirk."

Spielberg, whose press freedom movie "The Post" attracted strong Oscar buzz last month, "Wonder Woman" director Patty Jenkins, and Italian Luca Guadagnino, whose gay romance "Call Me by Your Name" is high on critics' list, were all passed over by the DGA. —Reuters ■

One hundred trainees received retail service and social skills at the 3rd Basic Retail Training Course (3/2017) which concluded last month, according to City Mart Holding Co Ltd which conducted the training joining hands with City Love & Hope Foundation and NLD education Network. The training course started from 6 November 2017 and concluded on 9 December conferring certificates on qualified 100 trainees. **PHOTO: CMHL**

The Second Sakura Festival, Myanmar to be celebrated soon

THE second Sakura Festival, Myanmar will commemorate the relationship between Myanmar and Japan; it will be celebrated between 13 and 14 January in Nay Pyi Taw.

With the sponsorship of Japan Yokosakura Friendship Association, the festival will be led by the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism.

One hundred cherry trees were planted at the 1st Sakura Festival that was held on 29 January in Nay Pyi Taw last year and the State Counsellor attended the cherry tree planting festival.

"Planting cherry trees should not be thought of as hard work because it symbolizes the growing and nurturing relationship between Myanmar and Japan. So the cherry is emblematic of supporting the peace process" said the State Counsellor.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Chinese, Dutch students build world's tallest ice tower

HARBIN — Students from China and the Netherlands have built an ice tower that, at 30.5 meters tall, has been recognized as the world's tallest ice shell construction by the World Record Association.

The "Flamenco Ice Tower," which looks like a flamenco dress, opened to tourists on Wednesday near the Maple Village outlet center in Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

Architecture students from the Eindhoven University of Technology and the Harbin Institute of Technology participated in building the tower.

Arno Pronk, assistant professor at the Eindhoven University of Technology, said the tower was built using ice reinforced with paper fibers.

Harbin is known as China's "ice and snow city" with an international ice and snow festival held every winter.—Xinhua ■

Foreign tourists to Japan reach record high 28.7 mil in 2017

TOKYO — The number of foreign tourists to Japan reached a record high 28,690,000 in 2017, up 19.3 per cent from the previous year and rising for the sixth straight year, the transport minister said Friday.

Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Minister Keiichi Ishii attributed the growth to an increase in low-cost carrier flights from South Korea and other Asian countries and cruise ship services between China and Japan as well as relaxed visa requirements for Chinese and Russian travellers.

"In 2017, there was a sharp increase in tourists from Asia, and we need to make more efforts to attract tourists from a wide range of countries and regions," Ishii told a press conference.

The government will release a regional breakdown and other details next week.

The government targets 40 million foreign visitors by 2020, when Japan hosts the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

It plans to use revenue from the 1,000 yen departure tax it will impose on every traveller leaving Japan from January 2019, to promote tourism.—Kyodo News ■

Wheelchair-bound Lai Chi-wai climbs the Lion Rock in Hong Kong, China, on 9 December 2016. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Wheelchair-bound athlete honoured for climbing up mountain

HONG KONG — A car accident seven years ago stripped professional Hong Kong rock climber Lai Chi-wai of his ability to walk, but this did not stop him climbing up a mountain that is roughly the height of New York's Empire State Building.

The 35-year-old, who is paralysed from the hip down, recently became the first Chinese athlete to be nominated for the Laureus World's Best Sporting Moment of the month after he successfully scaled Lion Rock - a 495 metre tall (1624 feet) mountain which symbolizes a "Hong Kong spirit" of persistence, resilience and unity.

The Laureus World Sports Award honours the best sportsmen and sportswomen of the year, as well as sporting moments of the month.

The awards organisation was founded by Swiss-based luxury goods firm Richemont and German carmaker Daimler.

Lai lost the December award to a viral video which showed a packed sports stadium of 70,000 people in Iowa turning and waving to children in an adjacent hospital.

But he said he was surprised he was nominated to begin with, and hoped his story could inspire Chinese people and athletes with disabilities.

"To me climbing to the top was accomplishing a dream of mine," Lai said.

"It also - by climbing the mountain - meant that I could show to my friends and supporters that I have overcome one of the lowest points in life: even though I'm in a wheelchair I can challenge other sports and still be able to do what I love most."

A four-time champion of the Asian Rock Climbing Championships and the world's first Chinese winner of the X-Game's extreme sports, Lai climbed up Lion Rock on 9 December 2016, upon the 5th anniversary of the car accident.—Reuters ■

Current MNL Champion Shan United draws Zwekapin United

On the second day of MPT Myanmar National League 2018, defending champion Shan United played to a draw against Zwekapin United at Thuwunna Stadium yesterday.

Both teams gained a point in the standings with the scoreless draw.

Shan United lined up with goalkeeper Thiha Si Thu, Htike Htike Aung, Win Min Htut, Hein Thiha Zaw, Lee Hankuk, Tin Win Aung, Nay Lin Tun, Zin Min Tun, Yan Naing Oo, Biassi Nyakwe William, and Asare Patrick.

Shan United was led by head coach U Soe Myat Min.

Zwekapin United lined up with keeper Naing Zayar Tun, Doe Sackie Teah, Phyo Maung Maung Swe, That Lwin Win, Maung Maung Win, Dos Santos Bunze Pauto, Yan Kyaw Htwe, Pyone Cho, Zin Min Tun, Anderson West and Nyi Nyi Tun.

Zwekapin United is headed by head coach U Min Tun Lin.

Despite the failure of both teams to score, Shan United seemed to dominate the match from the start. Although Shan United gained many opportunities around the penalty area, their strikers could not convert as Zwekapin defenders blocked the ball well with good approaching tactics.

Zwekapin played better in the second half with deft passing and handling. With the better play of Zwekapin, the match went back and forth as both teams took turns attacking.

With both teams tiring, play slowed in the last minute of the match, and the game finished in a draw.—KyawZin Lin ■

Players from Shan United and Zwekapin United vie for the ball at yesterday's match in Thuwunna Stadium. **PHOTO:ZAY THU AUNG (MNL)**

Ceremony to open Monywa Stadium as home of Sagaing FC

A ceremony to open Monywa Stadium as the home of Sagaing FC was held in Monywa, Sagaing Region on Thursday with fans, entertainers, politicians, officials in attendance.

Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr Myint Naing, Sagaing FC owner U Myo Chit Htike, officials from the Myanmar National League (MNL), Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT), and the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF), including U Zaw Zaw, township elders and enthusiastic Sagaing United fans were present at the ceremony.

"Sagaing FC is representing the Sagaing Region, it is not just representing on an organisation", said Sagaing FC owner U Myo Chit Htike.

"It is auspiciousness not only for the region, but also for Sagaing FC. Our Monywa Stadium is a point of pride for the city. In the previous year, the stadium was crowded with a tremendous amount of fans of Zeyya Shwe Myay FC, the very first and very successful team of our region. But the FC disappeared because of different cases and our Monywa Stadium was silenced. But from this moment on, our stadium will be active with our new team Sagaing United. I feel very happy with that", said Ar Kar Soe from Monywa, who works in Yangon.—KyawZin Lin ■

Federer still the man to beat at Melbourne Park

MELBOURNE — It might be argued that 36-year-old fathers of four have no business winning grand slam titles but try telling that to Roger Federer as the evergreen Swiss bids to claim a record-equalling sixth Australian Open crown in two weeks' time.

Federer will saddle up for a 19th time in the main draw at Melbourne Park, looking to frustrate 'Generation Next' once again and defend the title he won last year during a stunning comeback from knee surgery.

No such queries hang over his fitness this year and if bookmakers are to be believed the other 127 men in the draw will be fighting for the scraps from Federer's plate.

Switzerland's Roger Federer stretches to hit a shot during a practice session on Rod Laver Arena ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament, Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, on 11 January 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

On immediate form, few could argue. Federer, seeded second, arrives for a first round match against mid-ranked Slovenian Aljaz Bedene after cruising through an undefeated run at the Hopman Cup.

His major rivals, meanwhile, are either carrying injuries or returning from them, or in the case of 'Big Four' cohort Andy Murray, ruled out because of them.

A magical 20th slam might seem a formality for a player who did it all in last year's tournament with the shortest of run-ups, but on closer inspection, Federer's path through the draw is far from straightforward.

Danger lurks at almost every corner, with former Wimbledon finalist Milos Raonic and a resurgent Juan Martin Del Potro, the man who beat Federer for the 2009 US Open title, looming as threats before the quarter-finals.

Yet few would be surprised if the tournament ends in a repeat of last year's final with Federer up against his great Spanish rival and top seed Rafa Nadal.

The pair split the four grand slam trophies between them last year, with Nadal, at 31, finishing the season as the ATP rankings' oldest world number one. —Reuters ■

Dominant Kerber to face Barty in Sydney final

SYDNEY — Former world number one Angelique Kerber registered her eighth win in as many matches in 2018 with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Italian qualifier Camila Giorgi as the German advanced to the Sydney International final on Friday.

Giorgi, belying her ranking of world number 100, had defeated US Open champion Sloane Stephens in the first round, ousted twice Wimbledon and former Sydney champion Petra Kvitova and raced past Agnieszka Radwanska 6-1, 6-2 in the last eight.

But Kerber, currently ranked 22nd in the world after a disappointing 2017 campaign, proved too strong for Giorgi despite the Italian racing to a 3-0 lead in the second set.

The 29-year-old Kerber, who won the Australian and US Open titles in 2016, was resolute in defence against her aggressive opponent and advanced to a first individual final since Monterrey in April last year. —Reuters ■