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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives at the airport in New Delhi to attend the 25th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. **PHOTO: MNA**

# State Counsellor in India

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived in New Delhi yesterday to attend the 25th Anniversary of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. **Photo: MNA** **(Article on Page-3)**

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# Union ministers, advisors witness repatriation readiness

A DELEGATION comprised of Union ministers and members of the Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visited repatriation camps in Rakhine State yesterday.

Together with journalists from independent media organisations, the delegation toured the camps in Hla Phoe Khaung, Nga Khu Ya and Taung Pyo Letwe.

The delegation consisted of Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, and members of the Advisory Board. The independent media group included journalists from TV Asahi, Nikkei, Kyodo, Asahi Shimbun, Fuji TV, NHK, Nippon TV, Yunan TV, Xinhua and ZVE TV.

The delegation was met at Sittway Airport by Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu.

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> .... there will be additional housing and roads built: Maungtaw District Deputy Commisioner

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

# Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves 5 million euro loan from Austria

PYIDAUNGSU Hluttaw has approved a 5 million euro soft loan and grant package from Austria to fund public projects.

The loan was approved yesterday following a discussion among seven lawmakers.

"The loan is aimed at promoting bilateral friendship, assisting in projects which will directly benefit the people, buying materials which will be used for the projects at reasonable prices, and attracting investment from Austria," said Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win.

The loan, provided by Austria's Unicredit Bank, extends 25 years, with 15 per cent of the loan being a grant and 85 per cent to be reimbursed with no interest, according to lawmakers.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convinced in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

According to those involved in the discussions last week, the loan will be used to build the King Chaung bridge in Yanbye, Kyaukpyu District, in Rakhine State.

The bridge will provide direct access between Kyaukpyu and Yanbye townships and will link up with the Yangon-Kyaukpyu Road.

The bridge will be helpful in attracting foreign investment to Rakhine and will also benefit the socio economic development and job opportunities for the local population, said lawmakers.

The Ministry of Construction is to use the allocated funds to purchase steel for the bridge, which will be 1256 ft long and have a capacity to carry up to 75 tonnes. The bridge, which is already under construction on the Yangon-Kyaukpyu Road, is targeted to completed in more than two years. During the meeting yesterday, lawmakers also discussed a proposal urging the Union Government to sign an agreement to establish an Animal-Human infectious disease centre in ASEAN countries.

Following discussion by several lawmakers, the proposal was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.—Mi Mi Phyo (Myanmar News Agency) ■

# Union Minister for Information attends 27th anniversary of IPRD

THE 27th anniversary of the Information and Public Relations Department was commemorated at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Attending the ceremony were Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint and Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun.

The Union Minister gave a speech to the civil service employees in attendance on the importance of working hard during challenges in one's career. He also said everyone should adapt to the changing technology.

The Union Minister highlighted some of the processes and workings of the IPRD such as converting their offices to community centres, facilitating children's literary festivals, coordinating public talks, curating museums for traditional ethnic handiworks and history, and facilitating literary festivals for ethnic literature in Hpa-an, Kayin State and Taunggyi, Shan State.

Next, the Union Minister awarded the first, second and third prizes to outstanding individuals from district-level community centers.

Afterwards, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun awarded first, second and third prizes to outstanding individuals from township-level community centers.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint presents prize to outstanding staff from district-level community center in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

He also handed out awards for other achievements from State and Regional Governments.

The Director General of the IPRD U Ye Naing handed out awards for outstanding students and literary works from their staff members. This was followed by a screening of a documentary video on the community centres.

Later in the afternoon, the Union Minister met with officials from the IPRD and State, Regional and District authorities to give further instructions on facilitating community centres, handling public libraries and children's reading corners, facilitating literary seminars, book clubs and book reviews, holding public talks and encouraging the reading and writing of more ethnic literature.—Myanmar News Agency ■

# Deputy Attorney-General receives Executive Director of European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar

DEPUTY Attorney-General U Win Myint received a delegation led by Mr Filip Lauwerysen, Executive Director of the European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar, at the Union Attorney-General's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, the role of the Union Attorney-General's Office in the law-making process, the legal framework being developed for the economic sector, the importance of maintaining law and order in investments and economic development, the importance of the Myanmar Companies Act in accepting investments from European companies, Myanmar Investment Law and the Contract Law were discussed.

Directors-General Daw Khin Cho Ohn and U Min Swe and Director Dr Kyi Kyi Than Aung from the Union Attorney-General's Office attended the meeting.— Myanmar News Agency ■

# Myanmar-Japan joint workshop on natural disaster management held

U Kyaw Myint Hlaing, Director -General of the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department, attended a workshop on natural disaster management, held in the meeting hall of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in Nay Pyi Taw, on 23 January morning. The workshop was jointly organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan.

At the workshop, they discussed and exchanged views on the process of conservation of the dams and the environment, environmental management and technical assistance. —Myanmar News Agency ■

# State Counsellor arrives India to attend 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit

AT the invitation of His Excellency Shir. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi left Nay Pyi Taw on 24 January 2018 to attend the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and the celebration of 69th Republic Day of India.

During the trip, the State Counsellor will attend the Retreat and Plenary Session of the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit on 25 January 2018 and the celebration of 69th Republic Day of India on 26 January 2018 respectively together with other ASEAN Heads of State and Government.

The State Counsellor was accompanied by U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for the Ministry of International Cooperation and the Myanmar Delegation was see off at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by the Heads of responsible Departments.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was welcomed at the Palam Airbase in New Delhi by Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Mrs. Anupriya Patel, Joint Secretary BM Division Ministry of External Affairs Mrs. Sripriya Ranganathan, Ambassador of India to Myanmar Mr. Vikram Misri, Ambassador of Myanmar to India U Moe Kyaw Aung and wife, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Thein Zaw and officials.

The delegation proceeded to Hotel ITC Maurya where they will stay during the trip.—Myanmar News Agency ■

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi seen off by the Heads of responsible Departments at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

# The day that we can commence repatriation is 23 January. We therefore made preparations and we are now ready: Dr. Win Myat Aye

## Interview with Dr. Win Myat Aye over repatriation of returnees

ON 24 January 2018, a group comprising members of the Advisory Board of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine, Secretariat staff, and members of local and foreign media went to inspect reception centers for receiving displaced persons who left the Maungtaw region of Rakhine State. These centers are Taungpyo Lat Wae reception center, Nga Khu Ya reception center and Hla Phoe Khaung transit center. They inspected the readiness of the centers fully manned with all the requisite government service personnel.

An interview was conducted with Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement regarding the arrangements already made by the Union Government for the repatriation process.

**Q: Please tell us about the repatriation process for returnees.**

A: I will now tell you about the repatriation process of returnees from Bangladesh. To do this we need an agreement between our two governments. We have already signed such an agreement. This agreement is for the repatriation of returnees who left our country. On the 15 of this month we have already held a meeting of the Joint Working Group. We now have an agreement as a result of the meeting. On the 16th of this month we gave a list to the Bangladesh side of returnees we can accept for repatriation. 750 muslims and 508 Hindus. According to the agreement which has been signed with Bangladesh, we can accept repatriation within two months from the date of signature. The day that we can commence repatriation is 23 January. According to our agreement with Bangladesh, we need to be ready to begin the repatriation on that date. We therefore made preparations and we are now ready.

> We have already checked and verified this list so it is easy for us. So they have to send us a list of people who wish to return.

Dr. Win Myat Aye speaks during the interview. **PHOTO: MNA**

Also in the agreement, when they send the people to our side, there are two methods. One method is to select the people who wish to return. That is we have to make a list of such people. When they make this list, they have to fill in forms. We have already sent these forms to Bangladesh. After they have filled in these forms, they will send these forms to Myanmar. Then we have to check these forms. We have to see if these people have lived in Myanmar or not. Also to see if terrorists are included in the list or not. After making the verifications we send back the list to Bangladesh. After the Bangladesh side has received this verified list they can send these returnees in groups. At the moment there are two reception centers. This is also mentioned in the agreement. They are Taung Pyo Let Wae by land and Nga Khu Ya by sea. At these places, we can receive 150 returnees at one place and 300 per day in two places, 5 days per week. That is 1500 in total per week. Right now we have sent a list for 750 and 508. From this list the Bangladesh side will compile a list of people who wish to return. We have already checked and verified this list so it is easy for us. So they have to send us a list of people who wish to return. Thus we can begin the repatriation for the first batch. On 23 January our side was ready. But no one returned. Those who were supposed to return never came. We did not receive any lists. There are many possibilities. This is how this process has to be carried step by step. Those who wish to return have to fill up forms. And this has to be voluntary repatriation. Do these people really wish to come back. It also depends on this. They have to fill in all the forms. The procedures have many steps. For them to send back these people, I wonder if the delays have been caused by these many steps. As of today we have not seen any. No lists, no people.

As far as we are concerned, we are ready. Why did we have to have everything ready. It is because according to the agreement, it is said that the repatriation process can begin from this date. So if they send the returnees on this date, we cannot refuse. We have a duty to honor this date. Our country is the receiving country.

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

**ACTING CHIEF EDITOR**
Aye Min Soe,
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

**EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR**
Mark Angeles,
markrangeles@gmail .com

**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**
Kyaw Myaing

**SENIOR TRANSLATORS**
Khin Maung Oo,
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Zaw Min, zawmin.gnlm@gmail.com
Win Ko Ko Aung,
kowink2aung@gmail.com

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**
Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**
Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com

**TRANSLATORS**
Khaing Thanda Lwin,
Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun

**REPORTERS**
May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com

**PHOTOGRAPHER**
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

**COMPUTER TEAM**
Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team),
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin

**EDITORIAL SECTION**
(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305

**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**
San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114

**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**
( +95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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**gnlmdaily@gmail.com**
**www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**
**www.facebook.com/globalnewlightofmyanmar**

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

Workers load sacks of rice onto a truck in Yangon. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR**

# Rice, broken rice exports via Muse trade reach over 1 million tonnes

RICE and broken rice exports through the Muse gate exceeded 1 million tonnes between April and December of the current fiscal year (FY), bringing in US$338 million, according to the commerce ministry.

The export volume rose significantly during this period compared with the same period last FY.

During the first nine months of the current FY, some 41,175 trucks passed through the Muse gate, whereas only 13,727 trucks made the trip last FY.

Some 75 per cent of the trade between China and Myanmar is carried out through Muse, a commercial hub. It also witnessed the majority of the country's rice exports.

Rice exports through the Muse gate fetched some $446 million for more than 1.2 million tonnes in the 2014-2015 FY, $374 million for more than 1.03 million tonnes in the 2015-2016 FY and $208 million for more than 627,400 tonnes in the 2016-2017 FY. Border trade through the Muse checkpoint between 1 April and 12 January this FY amounted to $4.36 billion, up by $236 million compared with the same period last FY.

China has set import quotas on a few agro products, including rice. Thus, merchants have to pay excessively high taxes when the import volume exceeds the quota limit.

Officials from the two countries negotiated free trade access by abolishing the quota-controlled market system at the Joint Border Trade Co-operating and Coordinating Committee meeting, held on 26 December, 2017. If the two countries decide on an official free trade agreement, Myanmar will have to improve its rice quality to meet the criteria of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of China. Rice trade via sea has now improved. Sea routes accounted for some 60 per cent of Myanmar's rice exports, whereas 40 per cent was carried out through the border gates this fiscal year. Last year, only 29 countries bought rice from Myanmar. Myanmar's rice is now being shipped to some 48 countries through the sea routes.—GNLM ■

# Myanmar plans to sign BIT with Hong Kong, Singapore

MYANMAR is planning to enter into a bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Hong Kong and Singapore, according to last Sunday's edition of Myawady Daily.

Myanmar's negotiations with the European Union for BIT is nearly complete as well, though the process is currently suspended, U Kyaw Win Tun, the Director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, told Myawady Daily. Myanmar and Singapore are negotiating the terms of the BIT. The negotiations with Hong Kong are likely to see good results.

Signing the BIT will help minimise investment barriers, facilitate investment and create more opportunities for Singaporean expatriate workers in Myanmar and vice versa. It will also serve as an investment protection measure for investors. The main objective is to ensure smooth, free and safe investments.

The BIT will also help promote business responsibilities and environment protection practices.

Some 12 countries have entered into a bilateral investment treaty with Myanmar, including China, India, Laos, Thailand, Viet Nam, Kuwait, Israel and Japan.—GNLM ■

# Surplus potatoes flow into domestic market through illegal trade

A combined team of officials from the Trade Department, the Customs Department and the Myanmar Police Force are investigating illegal trade in potatoes, according to the Commerce Ministry.

The officials received a tip that huge volumes of potatoes were flowing into the domestic market through illegal trade channels.

To protect domestic production, the Commerce Ministry banned imports of products such as potatoes and garlic.

To make the domestic market self-sufficient, potatoes are cultivated year-round. However, growers incur a loss when there is excess supply, triggering a drop in price. Thus, they are unable to cover the cultivation costs. .

It has been found that a few merchants were importing potatoes through illegitimate trade routes, because of which local growers were losing their market share.

To prevent the illegal inflow of potatoes from China, the combined team patrolled the grounds near the Muse 105th mile zone and confiscated more than 1,400 bags of potatoes from four 12-wheelers on 15 January.

The action is being taken to prevent non-competitive import practices such as "dumping," whereby foreign merchants undercut domestic producers by flooding the markets with cheap surplus goods.—GNLM ■

# Old turmeric stock fulfilling market demand

OLD stocks of turmeric are still being sold in the market as fresh supply will enter the market only in February or March, according to the Commerce Ministry yesterday.

Despite the decrease in foreign demand, the market for turmeric has been steady because of domestic consumption.

Turmeric prices vary depending on their quality. The cost of a viss of turmeric (equalling 1.6kg) ranges from Ks1,000 to Ks2,700. Good quality turmeric brings in Ks4,000 per viss, while inferior turmeric fetches Ks1,200 to Ks1,300 per viss.

Myanmar's turmeric is exported to India, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates.—GNLM ■

# Kayin State registers more than 352,300 tourists last year

WITH beautiful natural attractions, along with its local culture, Kayin State attracted more than 352,300 tourists last year, according to the Hotels and Tourism Department.

Tourist arrivals in 2017 increased by 200,000, compared to 2016, with the majority of these tourists from France, Germany and China.

Meanwhile, some 600,000 local visitors arrived in Kayin State in 2017.

Also, the number of day trippers to Kayin State increased this year. In the peak season, many tourists visited Hpa-an, the capital of Kayin State. Other well-known sites in the State included Mount Zwegabin, Kyauk Kalap, Paddamya Cave, Saddan Cave, Kawt Gun Cave, Bayin Nyi Cave, Kawkathaung Cave and Hot Spring.

There are 11 licensed hotels and seven hostels in Hpa-an Township. Myawady Township has six hotels and seven Bed and Breakfast facilities in Thantaunggyi Township. —Ko Htet ■

A man rows a boat at Saddan Cave in Hpa-an, Kayin State. **PHOTO: THWE THWE TUN**

# Union ministers, advisors witness readiness for repatriation

FROM PAGE-1

The group led by U Thaung Tun travelled to Hla Phoe Khaung camp in Maungtaw Township, a temporary home of IDPs. Maungtaw District Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut explained future plans for the camp and said there will be additional housing and roads built. He also explained future plans for food, water, electricity and healthcare for the camp.

The group toured the camp and the Union Minister talked with several Islamic villagers from nearby villages and asked them about their current state of affairs.

Hla Phoe Khaung camp sits on a 124.84 acre plot and contains 640 housing units for over 30,000 people. There are also over 500 reserve tents in case of emergencies.

The group then travelled to Kanyin Chaung Economic Zone, where they were briefed by the Chairman of the Association for Border Trade and Merchants U Aung Myint Than on the history and current status of the economic zone. Afterwards, the Union Minister and entourage met with local residents and visited the economic zone.

The group then travelled to Nga Khu Ya, a temporary centre for repatriation. There, they inspected the inspection process for repatriation and the process for issuing NVC cards. The group also inspected the sites for construction of temporary clinics, buildings for the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department for Health, the Department for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Department for Labour and Immigration, and other offices of the Rakhine State Government.

Later, the Union Minister and entourage travelled to Kyaukpyu from Sittway by air. There, they visited the Onshore Gas Terminal from Posco Daewoo, where officials explained the nature of the work and the ongoing processes.

In the evening, the Union Ministers and entourage travelled to Thandwe.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Nga Khu Ya Camp is ready to accommodate returnees from Bangladesh as from 23 January, 2018. **PHOTO: MNA**

Hla Phoe Khaung Camp contains 640 housing units for accommodation of more than 30,000 returnees from Bangladesh. **PHOTO: MNA**

> "We are ready to accept the first batch of returnees today as agreed, because under the agreement with Bangladesh, we must start the repatriation within two months and today is the day we slated to launch the repatriation," said Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Taung Pyo Latwe Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Ministers and Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations visit Onshore Gas Terminal from Posco Daewoo in Kyaukpyu. **PHOTO: MNA**

Chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Nga Khu Ya Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Ministers and Advisory Board for Committee for Implementation of Recommendations visit onshore Gas Terminal of Posco Daewoo. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State stroll on the friendship bridge at the border with Bangladesh. **PHOTO: MNA**

> Our two countries have to act in accordance with the agreement. Now on 23 January, we are ready: Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR


# Need to Upgrade Myanmar's Education

SINCE long before, English has been being taught in Myanmar as the compulsory subject from kindergarten up to matriculation classes. Yet, sorrowfully enough language proficiency level of students who completed higher education level was found still in poor condition. Accordingly, the motion was discussed in the Amyotha Hluttaw to change the teaching system of the language in schools so that students can effectively apply the language to some extent, upon completion of higher education learning.

In fact, it is of great need for students who have completed academic learning in schools from kindergarten to matriculation to acquire the skills of communication by the use of the language. Now is the time when Myanmar is making broader relation with the international countries in political, economic and various affairs. Not only in creating job opportunities in local and foreign companies but also in making communication with international communities, it greatly needs to acquire 4 skills in the language—reading, writing, speaking and listening.

> Being the basic foundation of the country and the future, establishment of the good education system will lift up the country's future.

Undeniably, language proficiency of most of the students is standing low as discussed and suggested these days. Starting from 2016, the foundation is being laid down for a new education sector including acquisition of four skills in language competency according to the national education strategic plan being implemented by the State. At the present academic year, English Reader for first standard students had been compiled with a view to improve language competency in four skills.

Educational projects are deep and sober ones which must take time in the long run. In implementing the project of acquiring these skills, scholars and savant intellectuals, parents, teaching staff and students themselves play an important role. Here, the sector of teachers and students are of great vitality.

It has been learnt that syllabuses are being compiled for altering new teaching methods to acquire these skills. Upon completion of the compilation, students will be taught with new syllabi based on kindergarten to 12th standard classes, starting from academic year 2022-2013. If so, school-age children who start learning in AY 2022-2023 will become grown-ups, they sure will become well-qualified ones in the midst of the world.

A perennial tree takes time to grow well, as does the education to bear fruits. At present, only talented ones and only few students who tried their best to get what they aimed mastered the language. These can be said to be attributed to weakness of teaching methods and teaching environments, absolutely not for students' lack of efforts. In the earliest phase of Myanmar's education history students had satisfactory mastery of the language as they learnt the language since from KGs. In the second phase, it plunged into the bottom as students had to learn it just at the time of learning in middle schools. Now, children are learning English since primary school level, going to develop very soon.

Being the basic foundation of the country and the future, establishment of the good education system will lift up the country's future.

# Unlawful Associations act protects the country

By Maung Sarga

WITH the emergence of "the Unlawful Association Act, 1908" the wording "unlawful associations," came into existence in the sphere of Myanmar language. The Act is still valid in the country until now. Later after gaining Myanmar Independence, unlawful associations appeared in the nation, harming peace, stability and security of the country, being a hindrance for national solidarity and destroying rule of law. Accordingly, we need to ponder as to why these unlawful associations turned up in the country and what the unlawful association act prescribed. Here is the brief account of what I had studied about it.

### Definition of the unlawful associations

"Unlawful Association," means an association which encourages or aids persons to commit acts of violence intimidation or of which the members habitually commit such acts. [section 15(2)(A)]

These unlawful associations had been declared to be unlawful by the President of the Union under the powers hereby conferred. [section 15(2)(B) and section 16(1)]

Armed groups fighting against the government are unlawful associations under section 15(2)(A) or section 15(2)(B), in some way or other. Any armed insurgent groups are unlawful associations under section 15(2)(A), though not being declared.

### Penalty to be punished

There are two kinds of penalties to be punished.

Whoever is a member of an unlawful association, or takes part in meetings of any such association, or contributes or receives or solicits any contribution for the purpose of any such association or in any way assists the operations of any such association, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term [which shall not be less than two years more than three years and shall also be liable to fine. [section 17(1)]

Whoever manages or assists in the management of an unlawful association, or promotes or assists in promoting a meeting of any such association, or of any members thereof as such members, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term [which shall not be less than three years and more than five years and shall also be liable to fine.] [section 17(2)]

### Declaration as an unlawful association

Under the prescriptions of the unlawful association act, the government can designate an association as the unlawful association by issuing a declaration. In former times, these associations were declared to be unlawful associations.

Under notification 53 dated 23rd January 1947 issued by police forces [branch] under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Red Flag Communist Party [Burma] and Red Flag Farmer Union had been declared to be unlawful associations. After gaining Myanmar Independence, Karen National Defence Organization [KNDO] was declared as an unlawful association under notification 61 dated on 1st February 1949 of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Similarly, Burma Communist Party [White Flag Communist Party] was declared as an unlawful association under notification 757 dated 21st October 1953 by the police forces [branch], the Ministry of Home Affairs, with Peoples' Comrade Party [PCP] under the notification 758.

In declaring the said associations to be unlawful ones, the declaration was made in accord with the prescription included in section 15(2), assuming that aims and objectives of those associations and their sub-groups, other groups connected to the sub-groups, committees and sub-committees of those sub-groups proved to be dangerous for rule of law in the nation, State law and order restoration, and peace and stability of the nation.

### Cancellation from unlawful associations

The government can designate cancellation from the list of unlawful associations as including Myanmar National Democracy Alliance (MNDA) were cancelled from the list of unlawful associations with effect from the date when they returned to legal fold, under the notification 2/91 dated on 14th May 1991 of the Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs, the government of the Union of Myanmar.

> It must be noted in our minds that anyone who gets involved with the armed insurgent groups fighting against the government, a person or persons or those who connected with them threatening to harm rule of law in the nation and national security, peace and stability are to be punished.

### Unlawful associations and political parties

A political party is not liable for its survival if it was declared as the unlawful association. And, it cannot stand as the political party any longer, provided that it was proved to have directly or indirectly connected or encouraged with armed insurgent groups fighting against the government or to have made terrorist events. Simultaneously, its registration as the political party is to be cancelled. [Section 407, 408 of the Constitution]

Had a person been found to have directly or indirectly connected with a member of the armed insurgent group fighting against the government or those regarded to have committed terrorist attacks or a member or members of an association declared as the unlawful associations, they neither have right to set up a political nor to have it registered as the political party. [Section 4(F) of Political Parties Law]

### Unlawful associations and Hluttaw Representatives/ Parliamentarians

Had a person been found together with solid evidence that they had connected with the associations declared unlawful ones under the existing laws, organizations and persons regarded to commit terrorist attacks and those who connected with armed insurgent groups fighting against the government, they have no right to be elected in any parliaments. [Section 10(D) of Hluttaw Election Law]

Provided that a parliamentarian who was convicted by a respective court of justice that he or she had connected with the associations or persons declared to be unlawful associations or those regarded to have committed terrorist attacks, or armed insurgent groups fighting against the government the said parliamentarian ceases to stand as the parliamentarian. [Section 11(J) of Hluttaw Election Law]

Had someone been found to have connected with an unlawful association, a legal action is to be taken against him. Concurrently, he will lose the right to set up a political party or to contest for a parliamentary seat in the election. And, the registration of a political party which connects with an unlawful association will be cancelled.

### Freedom from involvement in unlawful associations

Now the entire populace is taking active participations in the implementation of the national peace and multi-development of the nation, hand in hand with the government, with unity and strength. The Union Government is striving vigorously for the achievement of peace, stability and rule of law in the nation. At the present time, we must take awareness to threats and efforts subversive elements, with a view to making riots which will destroy peace and stability of the nation. Furthermore, we must avoid ourselves from getting involved in their traps.

It must be noted in our minds that anyone who gets involved with the armed insurgent groups fighting against the government, a person or persons or those who connected with them threatening to harm rule of law in the nation and national security, peace and stability are to be punished.

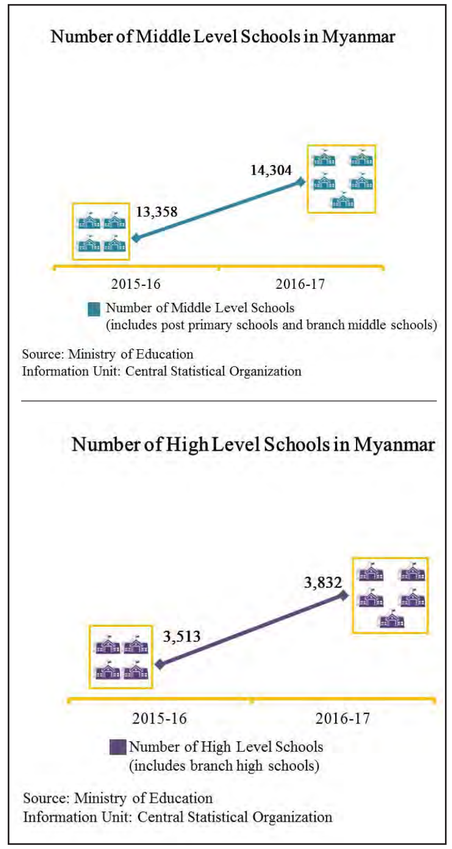
May we safeguard our nation from dangers of those threatening national peace and stability, and rule of law!

May we live in safety under the protection of the law, by abiding by the laws! ■

*Translated by Khin Maung Oo*

## Four Objectives of the 71th Anniversary Union Day

1. To develop the Union Spirit
2. To make the internal peace process a success with unity of ethnic people
3. To build a Federal Democratic Union through the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong
4. To boost the economy of the Union by encouraging small and medium enterprises

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# Interview with Dr. Win Myat Aye over repatriation of returnees

Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Taung Pyo Latwe Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Nga Khu Ya Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-3

Those who have lived in our country legally went over to the other side. It is the duty of this Union Government to receive them. Our Union Government cannot act unilaterally. Our two countries have to act in accordance with the agreement. Now on 23 January, we are ready. But I have explained earlier the reason they did not return. There can be many reasons. We do not wish to say anything about this. But it is certain that from our side we are ready.

The Advisory Board for the Committee for implementation of the recommendations for Rakhine has arrived. I am the Chairman of the Committee for implementation of the recommendations for Rakhine. In the advisory board there are five international professionals and five local professionals. Coincidentally this advisory board arrived on the 23rd January, the day the repatriation process was supposed to begin. So they decided to come here and that is why they are here today. So they have seen with their own eyes. They saw that our repatriation centers are ready. The transit center which is to serve as a holding place was also ready. They will not be kept here for a long time. Only for a short while. If you ask me how long, we have to build houses for the Muslims. Their houses had burnt down.

So they will have to stay in the transit center until the houses have been built. They will leave the transit center as soon as the houses have been built. If they ask me how long they will have to stay in the transit center, that is my answer. They will have to stay in the transit center only while the houses are being built. They will move to the houses as soon as the houses are ready. They will have to stay in the transit center only while the houses are not yet ready. I don't think it's going to be long, only a few months. Why? We want to get this done before the monsoon arrives. We want the construction work done. That is why the first group of returnees will be repatriated quickly. This is how we will receive returnees. We can receive 300 per day. We can receive about 1500 per week. This is how we have made full preparations.

**Q: Since they have to live in the transit center till the houses are built, I want to know what arrangements have been made by the Myanmar side for their food, lodging and health.**

A: We call this "Physical Arrangement". In cases where we receive returnees, first they are received at the reception center, and then they are moved to the transit center. We have made detailed arrangements for each of the stages.

**Q: Please let me know about arrangements for livelihood and health care for the returnees from Bangladesh.**

A: Under our Physical Arrangement, we will verify the returnees at the gate here first. If it is found that returnees had lived in Myanmar according to our documents and list, they will stay this camp for just one night, and they will be transported to Hla Phoe Khaung transit camp where they will be accommodated and will be supplied with food and provided with health care services. Staff from departments concerned are ready here to perform their their duties.

Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for Committee for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State met with local people in Kanyin Chaung Economic Zone. **PHOTO: MNA**

> We are ready for repatriation. So, we just need to wait for day they will send the list of returnees to us.

Staff from Ministry of Health and Sports, from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Immigration Department and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because, in case we find wrong doings, we need to contact with Bangladeshi officials to solve these issues.

**Q: Bangladesh is not ready for repatriation of returnees though the two countries agreed to begin the repatriation on 23 January. So, please let us know how the two governments will jointly carry out the repatriation process.**

A: We are ready to begin the repatriation as from 23 January. But, they sent the list of displaced people who want to return and we scrutinized the list and sent it back to them. The returnees need to fill forms in Bangladesh. They need to take some time to complete the process.

I think that the reason why they were not ready to begin the repatriation is due to delays for repatriation process on their part. We sent the list of first batch of returnees on 16 January after the two countries agreed. I think that If they take two weeks for the repatriation process, they might not be ready for the repatriation. We are ready for repatriation. So, we just need to wait for day they will send the list of returnees to us.

**Q: In your capacity as the Chairman of the Committee for Implementing the Recommendations on Rakhine State, please say something for the repatriation.**

A: Since our government took office, we have been striving and giving priority for harmony between the two communities. We must find the root cause of the conflict and must settle it. When we do it, we have considered recommendations of Mr. Kofi Annan and findings of the investigation commission led by Vice President U Myint Swe. Now, we are implement the recommendations. The first priority is national verification in accordance with the 1982 citizenship Act. We have to take steps for scrutinizing the displaced people. They would get freedom of movement and would gain access to education and health care services and would get job opportunities in accordance with the status granted after the scrutinization. If they are okay, no more conflicts will happen again here. That's why, we are implementing the recommendations giving priority to this step. —Myanmar News Agency

# Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs receives Chinese delegation

PYIDAUNGSU Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann received Ms Qu Boqian, Vice President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) and party, at the building of Hluttaw affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During their meeting, they exchanged views on matters of their bilateral relationship and cooperation, China's experiences in developing its country, as well as international relationships.

Also present at the meeting were Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Hong Liang, former Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Guan Mu, School of International Studies of Peking University's Prof Zhai Kun, and officials from the PRC, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission's Secretary U Khin Maung Tun, commission members U Ko Ko Naing and U San Shwe Aung, and officials from the commission.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann, right, receives Ms. Qu Boqian, Vice President of the CPIFA in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

# Deputy Information Minister calls on international media to help ensure smooth transition to democracy

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, fourth from right, with officials and media in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

AT his meeting with the top-level officials of some U.S. based media at the Ministry of Information yesterday morning, the Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun called on the international media to keep supporting Myanmar to ensure its smooth transition to democracy.

U Aung Hla Tun received Ms. Libby Liu, President of Radio Free Asia; Mr. Matthew Schuck, White House Liaison and Special Communication Advisor to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG); Ms. Oanh Tran, Managing Director of the BBG and U Than Lwin Tun, Head of Washington-based Voice of America (Myanmar) and U Win Naing, chief of RFA Yangon Bureau at the Ministry yesterday morning.

He expressed sincere thanks to the international media for the important role they had played in the nation's struggles for the emergence of democracy and human rights.

"We couldn't have reached present position without the support of the international media. Now, we're already on the right track to democracy. Our top priority at present is to make sure that we keep moving towards the right direction."

He said that Myanmar's transition to democracy was full of challenges.

"We shouldn't let anything disrupt our smooth transition to democracy so I'd like to request all the international media through you to understand our position and refrain from sensationalizing and setting agendas in carrying out Myanmar narrative," he added.

He then explained the plans for further reforms of the media to be in harmony with democratic transition and on-going plans to send media teams to Rakhine State. The two sides also discussed the possibility of promoting bilateral cooperation in producing programmes and training staff from the State-owned Myanmar Radio and Television.

Responsible heads of departments were present at the meeting.—Myanmar News Agency ■

# Sitagu Asia Royal eye specialist team provides eye treatment in Maungtaw, Rakhine State

THE Sitagu Asia Royal eye specialist team visited Maungtaw People's Hospital in Rakhine State yesterday morning.

The eye specialist doctors provided medical treatment to patients in the region, some of whom had never received ophthalmic care previously.

"From 23 to 26, January 2018, we have provided special treatments to eye patients free of charge in Maungtaw region", said Asia Royal Managing Director Dr. Myat Thu. "The team brings necessary equipment to the eye patients who are in need of treatment of their diseases. Prior to the surgeries, testing for cataracts, blood pressure, diabetes, infectious diseases and other diagnostic measures were done," Dr. Myat Thu said. He added that patients who want to undergo eye treatment, have to register at the counter. "We have already performed operations on over 500 patients so far. We will see about 1,100 patients in the first two days", he said. "Of the 1,100 patients seen so far, about 10 to 20 per cent of them will be found to need eye treatment and surgery. There are six eye specialists in our team, and I think about 100 patients are going to undergo surgery tomorrow". "In 2002, Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw said he wanted to start giving medical treatment in Natmauk, Magway Region, and Panthanaw, Ayeyawady Region, the birthplaces of General Aung San and former UN Secretary General U Thant, respectively. Accordingly, we performed it, and our mission is gaining momentum. Medical treatments are being conducted in 32 townships in 14 regions and states.

We have been giving medical treatment to the eye patients for over 10 years, and we have cured 100,000 patients who regained their eyesight."—Aung Ye Thwin ■

Eye specialist doctor gives medical treatment to patients in Maungtaw, Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: AUNG MIN**

# Clock Tower to be built in Patheingyi Township

IN accord with the harmony of urban features a clock tower will be built in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay.

The processes that will be built the clock tower will be carried out with the cooperation of Representatives of Hluttaw, officials from Township General Administration Department, departmental officials and city dwellers.

"We are listening to the voices of the public. There were new market in Patheingyi and new road constructions were built and upgraded. In addition, there is a plan to be built a city hall " said U Htwe Aung, member of Construction Group.

The places such as Patheingyi Kwe in downtown and Kyekonekwe at the entrance of the township are supposed to create the clock tower and displayed a model which has around ten feet at the proposed area. There was a meeting concerning about the building of clock tower on 12 January and representatives of Hluttaw, departmental officials and city dwellers were also in attendance.— Myanmar Digital News ■

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# Discussions to develop hotel and tourism industry held in Bago

A MEETING to discuss the development of the hotel and tourism industry was held at the Oak Thar Kyaw hotel in Bago on 23 January.

During the gathering, Bago Region Planning and Finance Minister U Nyunt Shwe delivered a speech, announcing that a committee to develop the hotel and tourism industry has been formed, and will work to open resorts and inns near reservoirs, waterfalls and dams. Also, Bago Region Hotels and Tourism Department Deputy Director U Hauk Kyin Mone spoke about the development of the tourism industry.

Further, Myanmar Hotel Entrepreneurs Association Bago zone chairman U Min Nyo and Bago Town Hotels Entrepreneurs Association chairman U San Lwin outlined the difficulties being faced in developing the hotels and tourism industry.

There are currently 67 hotels in the region, including 30 in Bago, 24 in Pyay Township and 13 in Taungoo Township. Bago Region received 343,385 visitors in 2016, increasing to 842,141 visitors in 2017.

In 2016, the Bago Region government earned Ks 188,886.8 lakh (US$241,648) from 157,175 foreign and local visitors. In 2017, the Bago Region government earned Ks 18,230.76 lakh (US$202,801) from 143,214 foreign and local visitors. —Tin Soe (Bago) ■

# Passenger bus catches fire on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway

A PASSENGER bus caught fire near milepost 276/0 on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway at 2:45 pm on Tuesday. The vehicle was on the way to Mandalay from Yangon and was driven by Min Naing. The fire is believed to have started from an engine compartment. No one was injured in the incident but the fire caused about Ks. 15 million losses.

The driver has been charged with negligence driving by the Highway Police Force.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Firefighters try to extinguish the burning passenger bus near milepost 276/0 on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway on Tuesday. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

# Health awareness mobile application introduced in Monywa

WORKING with the Health Promotion Division under the Department of Public Health and the Department of Public Health in Sagaing Region, an official launching ceremony for a mobile application named "Love Question-Life Answer" was held yesterday to help young people get correct and accurate information about sexual health.

At the event that was held at the Town Hall of Monywa in Sagaing Region, Dr Zaw Win, Minister for Social Affairs of the Sagaing Region Government, said the department had introduced the mobile app with facts about love, sex and health so that young people could find out about sensitivity issues confidentially, without shame or privacy concerns.

The mobile application, a trusted source of information, comprises eight chapters and is edited many times to meet international standards and yet comply with Myanmar's culture, he said.

The application will educate young people about physical and emotional topics: healthy lifestyle, gender and body dilemmas, safe sex and contraception, love and relationships, drug abuse and alcohol problems, HIV and sexually transmitted infections diseases, puberty and menstruation, and early marriage and unwanted pregnancy.— Myanmar Digital News ■

# A proper night market to be created in Pyin Oo Lwin

A proper night market will be created in Pyin Oo Lwin according to the Mandalay Region Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Soe Than.

The minister inspected proposed locations yesterday in order to build a night market. "A location will be designated that the public can agree on and then the construction will begin" he added.

There are six potential locations for the new proper night market according to Pyin Oo Lwin City Development Committee. They are by Nan Myaing Street, at Zaylay traffic-light, next to the corner of park, at field of the independence monument and at the city hall.— Myanmar Digital News ■

# Volcanic tremor hinders search operation after deadly eruption in Japan

KUSATSU, (Japan) — A volcanic tremor forced police and firefighters to suspend search operations on Wednesday at a ski resort near a volcano in eastern Japan that erupted the day before, officials said.

The sudden eruption of Mt Moto-Shirane in Gunma Prefecture on Tuesday morning rained volcanic rocks onto people at the Kusatsu Kokusai Ski Resort, killing a 49-year-old Ground Self-Defence Force sergeant major training there and injuring 11 skiers.

While the number of volcanic earthquakes has dropped significantly since the eruption at 9:59 am Tuesday, the Japan Meteorological Agency warned that the 2,171-metre mountain could erupt again and spew large volcanic rocks.

Kenji Nogami, a professor of geochemistry at Tokyo Institute of Technology who is conducting a field survey, said the latest eruption was a "typical phreatic eruption," in which groundwater heated by lava turns into vapor and explodes.

The land ministry sent experts to survey the eruption by helicopter, while local police and firefighters were searching by land to make sure there were no other victims left behind, before the operation was halted Wednesday morning.

The experts said the risk of landslides occurring at Mt Moto-Shirane is believed to be low at the moment. Volcanic mudflow often accompanies an eruption at a snowy mountain. When massive amounts of melted snow mixes with soil, it can turn into a huge mudflow that can travel at speeds of over 60 kilometres-per-hour and damage a wide area, requiring quick evacuations by people downhill.

Photo taken on 24 January, 2018 shows a vehicle carrying police officers to inspect a ski resort near Mt Moto-Shirane in Gunma Prefecture, eastern Japan, hit by the eruption of an active volcano the previous day. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Yasuo Ishizaki, a volcanic geology professor at the University of Toyama, said although the likelihood of volcanic mudflow occurring at the mountain appears to be low, "if a large-scale eruption accompanying excretion of lava occurs, it would increase the risk."

The number of volcanic earthquakes surpassed 400 in the first five hours of the eruption but none were observed from midnight to 9 am on Wednesday, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. —Kyodo News ■

# Philippine police to wear body cameras in war on drugs

MANILA — Philippine police will soon have to wear body cameras during anti-narcotics operations and visit suspects' homes only in the daytime, in an effort to erase doubts about the conduct of those on the front lines of a bloody war on drugs.

Police chief Ronald dela Rosa said police would wear body cameras to record arrests, under a 19 January memorandum made public on Wednesday that takes effect once the devices are procured.

The police are making a comeback in President Rodrigo Duterte's ferocious anti-narcotics campaign, a few months after he suspended them amid unprecedented scrutiny of their conduct.

"Once they are available, we will require them to wear that," Dela Rosa said of the cameras.

"We would have a policy where there will be no anti-drug operations without body-worn cameras," he told reporters.

He did not specify a date by which the cameras are expected to be made available to police, however.

Police data shows nearly 4,000 drug suspects were killed since Duterte came to power and launched the crackdown in June 2016, but police insist all died because they violently resisted arrest.

Police reject activists' allegations that they are executing suspected drug users and dealers in a systematic campaign of abuses and cover-ups. In his war on drugs, Duterte has been accused of allowing a culture of impunity to flourish.

In the same memorandum, Dela Rosa ordered police to immediately take injured suspects to hospital, and establish a data base of those who died in police operations.

In June, Reuters revealed that police have shot hundreds of people during anti-drug operations, before taking them to hospitals where they are declared dead on arrival.

Police say they're trying to save lives. Bereaved relatives and other witnesses say police are sending corpses to hospitals to disrupt crime scenes and cover up extrajudicial killings.

Police were also ordered to limit the much-feared "Oplan Tokhang" operations, when they visit homes of users and dealers and seek their surrender, to between 8 am and 5 pm (2400-1200 GMT) on weekdays, police spokesman Dionardo Carlos told a separate media briefing.

"It has to be daytime, so as to erase the impression that if you have been the subject of Tokhang, you would be killed," Carlos said, adding police would be required to wear their uniforms during such operations.

The Philippines has hit back at New York-based Human Rights Watch for what it called a misleading death toll of more than 12,000 in the drugs war, putting the number at half that. — Reuters ■

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population
Social Security Board

**Invitation for EOI Proposal to upgrade Health facilities of Social Security Board by Public Private Partnership (PPP) System**

1. According to Social Security Law(2012),Social Security Board implement social security project and when insured workers' face sickness, maternity, employment injury,Social Security Board give them to medical treatment and provide related cash benefit for insurance systems. For more and more increased insured workers, the SSB is planning to upgrade our health facilities of SSB clinics, workers' hospital and contracted clinics established nation-wide by Public Private Partnership (PPP) System.
2. Social Security Board now invites EOI proposal from interested local, international or joint-venture companies for upgrade health care system of Social Security Board (SSB) by Provider-Purchaser Split System and Private Public Partnership (PPP) System.
3. The companies who interested in EOI shall request to the Director ( Medical Department), Social Security Board (head office),No.(77), Corner of Thiri Yadanar Road and Naykyar (8th) Street, Ottarathiri Township, Naypyitaw, Myanmar. The interested companies can get these EOI during office hours commencing from 25-1-2018 at the Medical Department, Social Security Board.
4. Please note that you should submit EOI proposal to mention address not later than 14:00 pm on 23-2-2018. The EOI proposal shall be sealed and if the proposal is torn(or) opened (or) submitted by e-mail, the EOI proposal shall not be considered.
5. For further detail information, please visit Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population;Website www.mol.gov.mm and inquiry ph.no +(95)(67-3417916 ) during office hours.

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# Davos elite tap Cate Blanchett, Elton John, Shah Rukh Khan for human rights awards

DAVOS, (Switzerland) — Film star Cate Blanchett, singer-songwriter Elton John and Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan received awards at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Monday for their work raising awareness about human rights issues.

Blanchett, an Australian, received a Crystal Award for her work with people who have fled their homes. British singer-songwriter John received his for his charitable work with his AIDS foundation. Indian Khan's was in recognition of his work championing the rights of children and women in India.

The Crystal Award is given, by the WEF to artists who make a positive change in society.

The awards were presented at a ceremony in the village of Davos, in the Swiss Alps, where some of the world's top policy makers and executives have begun gathering for the annual meeting. Blanchett, who has won two Oscars, was named a goodwill ambassador for United Nations refugee agency UNHCR in May 2016. As part of her role, the actor has travelled to Lebanon and Jordan to meet refugees displaced by the Syrian conflict.

Actor Cate Blanchett, actor Shah Rukh Khan and singer Elton John are pictured at the Crystal Awards ceremony of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on 22 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

She warned of the consequences if more was not done to help people forced to flee their homes. "Lost generations of uneducated, disenfranchised and displaced children not only represent a vast loss of potential but also a threat for future global security and prosperity," she said.

More than a million people have fled parts of Africa and the Middle East to Europe in the last few years.—Reuters ■

# India's top court refuses to stop Bollywood movie Padmaavat

NEW DELHI — India's Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stop the release of Bollywood Hindi movie Padmaavat, saying states must obey orders to screen it. Two Indian states Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh had approached the court citing law and order problem and stiff opposition to the film by some fringe groups, seeking reconsideration of its previous order.

The top court last week set aside the notification passed by the states of Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat to ban the release of Padmaavat. "It is better to advise people not to watch the movie," the judges said while refusing to reconsider their decision.

The apex court said it was job of local governments to ensure peace and protect people. Padmaavat is based on the legend of Rani Padmini of Chittor and Rajput groups say the film wrongly showcases a romantic relationship between the queen and Muslim emperor Alauddin Khilji. Initially the film was named Padmavati. However, in wake of massive protests, India's Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) locally called censor board asked its makers to undertake dozens of cuts besides renaming it, which was duly complied with.

The film directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali' has been at the center of a huge controversy with the fringe group claiming to represent Rajput caste locally called Karni Sena accusing him of distortion of history in the movie.—Xinhua ■

# Former NBA star Bryant's animated film among 2018 Oscar nominees

WASHINGTON — The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced their full list of Oscar nominees for 2018 on Tuesday and among them was former NBA star Kobe Bryant's animated film "Dear Basketball". The film, which was directed by Disney animator Glen Keane and scored by John Williams, is an animated version of Bryant's "Dear Basketball" poem he penned for The Players Tribune in 2015. In it, Bryant voices his poem as animation conveys Kobe's love of the game as he leaves it behind. "What? This is beyond the realm of imagination," Bryant tweeted. "It means so much that the @TheAcademy deemed #DearBasketball worthy of contention. Thanks to the genius of @GlenKeanePrd & John Williams for taking my poem to this level. It's an honor to be on this team." The animated film will be competing against "Garden Party" (by Victor Caire and Gabriel Grapperon), "Lou" (by Dave Mullins and Dana Murray), "Negative Space" (by Max Porter and Ru Kuwahata) and "Revolting Rhymes" (by Jakob Schuh and Jan Lachauer) for the 2018 Oscar. The Academy Awards will be announced on 5 March on ABC.—Xinhua ■

# In Davos, Cate Blanchett jokes about playing Melania Trump

DAVOS, (Switzerland) — Actress Cate Blanchett, speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Tuesday, drew laughs when she jokingly speculated about playing First Lady Melania Trump on screen, saying she would not approach such a role from a "Free Melania" point of view. The comment came during a serious discussion about refugees, in which Blanchett, a goodwill ambassador for the UN's refugee agency, condemned what she said was a lack of political leadership in addressing the refugee problem, without mentioning President Donald Trump by name. "When I'm playing a character I think you have to present people warts and all," she said in an on-stage interview with New York Times reporter Nicholas Kristof, who has written extensively about refugees.

"If I was playing Melania Trump —not that I would probably be cast in that role — I wouldn't be necessarily coming from the place of 'Free Melania'," she continued to chuckles in the audience. "I'd be trying to understand the situation so that you could then throw that back at an audience and say: 'What's her position as a woman? What does she think? What's it like being married to —you know'."

Actress Cate Blanchett. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Blanchett was honoured by the WEF on Monday, along with singer Elton John and Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, for raising awareness about human rights. At the panel on Tuesday, her voice broke as she described meeting a Syrian refugee family in Jordan that had been forced to flee their country under gunfire, with the father jettisoning suitcases so he could carry his children across the border.—Reuters ■

# Prize camels keep tradition alive in changing Saudi, but please no Botox!

AL-RUMAHIYA, (Saudi Arabia) — The dromedaries paraded down a dusty racetrack as judges rated the size of their lips, cheeks, heads and knees. Crowds of men watched from the bleachers, hooting when the beasts representing their own tribe loped down the track.

A dozen beasts have been disqualified from this year's Saudi "camel beauty contest" because their handlers used Botox to make them more handsome.

"The camel," explained the chief judge of the show, Fawzan al-Madi, "is a symbol of Saudi Arabia. We used to preserve it out of necessity, now we preserve it as a pastime."

Much is changing in Saudi Arabia: the country is getting its first movie theaters. Soon women will be permitted to drive. The authorities eventually hope to diversify the economy away from the oil that has been its lifeblood for decades.

A man cheers as he rides a camael during King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Rimah Governorate, north-east of Riyadh, Saudi Arabis on 19 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

But as they seek to transform the conservative kingdom, the Saudi authorities are trying to smooth the path for reform by emphasizing traditional aspects of their culture. And for the Bedouin of Arabia, nothing is more essential than the camel, used for centuries for food, transport, as a war machine and companion.

So, the authorities have ramped up the country's annual month-long camel festival, which was relocated last year from the remote desert to the outskirts of the capital. On a rocky desert plateau, the government has erected a permanent venue to host the headline events: races and show competitions with combined purses of 213 million riyals. ($57 million)

The pavilion features an auction where top camels can fetch millions of riyals.

There are food stalls and souvenir shops, a petting zoo featuring the world's tallest and shortest camels, a museum with life-size sand sculptures of camels, tents for tasting camel's milk and viewing camel-hair textiles, and a planetarium showing how Arabs rode camels through the desert guided by the stars.

Organizers say this "heritage village" will expand in coming years as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — who is heir to the throne, defence minister and head of oil and economic policy — takes the reins through a newly-created official Camel Club established by royal decree last year.

Halfway through this year's festival, attendance is up about a third from last year, with about 300,000 people making the 1-1/2 hour trip from Riyadh so far, said Fahd al-Semmari, a Camel Club board member. "The vision is for the (festival) to become a global, pioneering forum for all classes of people to come for entertainment, knowledge and competition." —Reuters ■

# Amazons relishing Japan return after Fuji Rock highlights big 2017

TOKYO — After gigging relentlessly around the United Kingdom for two years in a tour van they ended up torching for the cover of their eponymous debut album, Brit rockers The Amazons finally got their just rewards in 2017.

In addition to the four-piece from Reading's first long player going top 10 in the UK, they sold out their headline tour on home soil and graced the stage at numerous major festivals including a slot at Japan's Fuji Rock festival.

Success of the debut album aside, flame-haired frontman Matt Thomson picked Fuji Rock as the highlight of the year and says he is relishing the band's return to Japan for their own mini tour in March.

"I had an interview just before this and they asked me what my highlight of 2017 was apart from the album and I said without a doubt the Fuji Rock festival," Thomson recently told Kyodo News by phone from his home in Reading, west of London.

"For a band coming from 5,000 miles away playing songs that were born in our bedrooms in Reading and in a dingy little rehearsal space in this commuter town that doesn't have a huge amount of significance, for us to go over to Japan...I mean we left the stage and the tent was packed and still singing our songs back to us."

"That was the real pinch-me moment for us and I think that kind of appearance definitely contributed to us coming back to Japan."

"I think out of all the festivals we have played Fuji was probably the most beautiful setting and if I could go back to any of them I would probably go back to Fuji because it was just...I took a video of the main stage and backdrop of the mountains and I have shown that video to about a million different people."

Thomson also revealed that by touring Asia his band have been seen as pioneers by some of their peers.

"That's all anyone wants to talk about in the UK," he says. "It's like 'ah man you had a wicked year, how was Japan?' every single time because it is not a country that a lot of people...I think most people are interested in it, they just don't get around to going there, so out of everything, even Glastonbury or whatever, people wanted to talk about Japan and Korea and Asia as a whole. It's exciting to be able to go back."

Showcased on singles such as "Black Magic" and "Ultraviolet," The Amazons' explosive rock riffs and melodic anthems (think Foo Fighters meet The Vaccines), along with Thomson's emotive vocals and introspective lyrics, have proved to be a winning formula.

But not even Thomson was prepared for the success the album has enjoyed in Japan, where he says sales have been second only to the UK.

"I've seen a couple of reports in terms of sales but that was in the first couple of months of the album (coming out) and it was the UK and Japan as the top two and then it was the rest of the world," he said.

"We have done multiple tours of Europe and you would expect that Germany would be close behind, but for Japan to come out as not just a surprising amount but a major place for us in terms of record sales was never discussed or imagined."

Despite arriving in Japan, their second biggest market, a couple of months after their album being released, Thomson said there was still not a huge amount of expectation around their Fuji Rock set.

"Then we turned up and the tent is packed and the people are singing the words and it's exciting for us and a nice surprise that it seems to be connecting in Japan."

"We did our set pretty early and then we had the whole day to kind of go out. We did an acoustic set for MTV then a signing afterwards and that blew our minds yet again. There was the longest queue and all these people were waiting in the rain and we live 5,000 miles away, but the Japanese people knew our names. I think that is the power of the internet and the power of music being able to transcend cultures."—Kyodo News ■

The Amazons perform at the 2017 Fuji Rock Festival . **PBHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

# Thitsar Arman still perfect in KBZ Bank Women's League 2017-2018

THITSAR Arman remained undefeated yesterday with an authoritative 6-0 win over the Institute of Sports and Physical Education (ISPE) in Week 5 of the KBZ Bank Women's League 2017-2018 at Aung San Stadium in Yangon.

Thitsar Arman used reliable players including Myanmar National Women's Team star Khin Moe Wai, Nilar Win, Khine Mar Oo and July Kyaw, while ISPE lined up with relatively inexperienced young players.

The big difference in football skills made ISPE struggle for the ball over the dominant Thitsar Arman squad.

At the 13-minute mark, Thitsar Arman scored the ice-breaker by Khine Mar Oo, one of the team's many standout players. Khine Mar Oo also scored the second goal for her team a short time later.

The two consecutive goals seemed to fluster ISPE, whose defenders committed many errors. This enabled Thitsar Arman to easily score their third goal at 38 minutes and concluded the action in the first half.

Youth women players from Thitsar Arman (white) and ISPE (blue) struggle for the ball in yesterday's KBZ Bank Women's League match at Aung San Stadium. **PHOTO: MWL**

The second half was again dominated by Thitsar Arman, though they did not convert every chance into a goal.

The fourth goal for Thitsar Arman was scored by Nilar Win at 83 minutes, and the fifth at the 87-minute mark by July Moe.

The sixth Thitsar goal just a minute before the final whistle was a beauty that the ISPE keeper could even come close to blocking.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

# MPT Myanmar National League matches shift to weekend

WEEK 3 matches of the MPT Myanmar National League 2018 will be shifted so they are played on Saturday and Sunday, according to an official from Myanmar National League. The plan will be ongoing starting on Saturday.

Also, some MPT MNL matches have been shifted to other stadiums. The match between Rakhine United FC and Ayeyawady United FC on Saturday has changed venues from Sittway Stadium in Rakhine to Pathein Stadium. Two matches, Southern Myanmar versus Magwe and Zwekapin United versus Myawady, will be broadcast live on state-run television, according to the MNL website. Perhaps the most anticipated match of the week will be Shan United versus Hantarwady United, to be played at Taunggyi Stadium on Sunday. Many are looking forward to see the skills of defending champion Shan United. — Kyaw Zin Lin ■

# Manchester City survive late fightback to reach League Cup final

BRISTOL (England) — Manchester City reached the League Cup final, shattering second-tier Bristol City's hopes of a remarkable upset, as the Premier League leaders survived a late fightback to win 3-2 on Tuesday and clinch the tie 5-3 on aggregate.

City appeared to be cruising when goals from Leroy Sane and Sergio Aguero either side of halftime put them three goals up overall, after a 2-1 win in the first leg, before their plucky opponents dragged themselves back into the game. Marlon Pack reduced the arrears for the hosts past the hour and Aden Flint scored deep into stoppage time to make it 2-2 on the night, leaving them one goal short of forcing extra time.

There was time for one more goal, but sadly for the second-tier side, it was scored by the visitors' Kevin De Bruyne in the sixth minute of added time, leaving Pep Guardiola's Manchester City side to face Arsenal or Chelsea in the final on 25 February.

Bristol City's Aden Flint scores their second goal at Ashton Gate Stadium in Bristol, Britain on 23 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"We are so happy to be in the final. We played amazing in the first half," Spaniard Guardiola said after reaching his first final with the club. "After we lost control, maybe it will be good for us... to learn that anything can happen and you have to play for 90 minutes." If there was a hint of complacency about Manchester City in the first leg, it seemed to have been drummed out of them by kickoff on Tuesday as they tightened the screw from the first minute.—Reuters ■

# Leopalace 21 Myanmar Open Golf Tournament starts today

THE Leopalace 21 Myanmar Open Golf Tournament is being held today at the Pun Hlaing Golf Club in Yangon.

The tournament, sponsored by Asian Tour, Japan Golf Tour and Myanmar PGA, will end on Sunday.

A total of 150 golfers, including Myanmar golf stars Naing Naing Lin, Thein Zaw Myint and Zaw Zin Win, along with other foreign professional golf players, are participating in the event.

The media conference for the tournament was launched at the Pun Hlaing Golf Club in Yangon and was attended by well-known foreign and local golfers.

"I have prepared well for the tourney, having competed in many others before. Although I won the title last year, I still have many goals. I will fix my mistakes as much as I can to defend my title," said Todd Sinnott, winner of the 2017 Myanmar Open.

The Day 1 preliminary round starts today, while the Day 2 Preliminary will be held tomorrow, the Day 3 Preliminary will be held on Saturday, and the final round along with the award ceremony will be held on Sunday.

The total prize money has been fixed at US$750,000.

The public is welcome to watch the tournament free of charge. Between the time it was founded in 1996 and 2016, the Myanmar Open had to be cancelled three times due to difficult circumstances. It has been a gem of the country's golf culture, as its only official professional golf tournament on the Asian Tour.—Ye Yint Shine ■