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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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People celebrate Buddha Day nationwide

Buddhists pour water on a Bodhi tree in Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon as part of Buddha Day traditions on the full moon of Kason. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

PEOPLE celebrated Buddha Day, which falls on the full moon day of Kason, by pouring water on Bodhi trees at the pagodas nationwide in Myanmar yesterday.

Buddhists observed the Eight Precepts, meditated and performed meritorious deeds on this day of great religious significance. The Kason festival of pouring water on Bodhi trees is among the 12 festivals held in their respective months.

The full moon of Kason is significant, because it was on this day that Gautama Buddha received His prophecy from Lord Buddha Dipankara. He was also born on this day, attained Enlightenment and entered Nirvana.

On this auspicious day, people pour water on the Bodhi tree, the same species of Bodhi tree in Gaya, India, under which He gained enlightenment more than 2,500 years ago.

SEE PAGE-2

Poisonous smoke from garbage fire to be controlled in three days

AUTHORITIES announced yesterday that the smoke from the garbage fire in the western outskirts of Yangon would be controlled within three days.

"After reviewing the ground situation, we adopted a new strategy and divided the garbage into four zones. We launched an operation against smoke in the first zone today," said U Myat Thu, Deputy Director-General of the Fire Services Department.

"We met with success today. We have targeted to control the smoke in the remaining three zones in three days," he added.

A combined force of firefighters, Tatmadaw men, staff of the Yangon City Development Committee and some 900 volunteers will participate in the fight against the poisonous smoke from the garbage fire with the use of Bio Foam and water.

Authorities have adopted a new strategy to control the smoke from the garbage, though 90 per cent of the garbage fire in the western outskirts of Yangon is under control.

"Experts from ASEAN and Thailand are here, and they also agreed with the new strategy," said U Maung Maung Soe, Yangon Mayor.

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People celebrate Buddha Day nationwide

Buddhist devotees pour water on a Bodhi tree at Maha Wizaya Pagoda in Yangon during the Kason Full Moon Day. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**

Buddhist devotees pour water on a Bodhi tree in the compund of Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw during Kason Full Moon Day. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-1

The 35th anniversary of Kason Festival was held at Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon yesterday with the pouring of water on the Bo trees. Members of the Sangha, members of the pagoda board of trustees and religious associations poured water on the Maha Bodhi tree, while reciting religious verses to celebrate Buddha Day.

10th Kason Watering Ceremony held at Uppasanti Pagoda

The 10th Kason Watering Ceremony of Uppasanti Pagoda was celebrated at its compound in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Present at the ceremony were Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung and wife, members of the Nay Pyi Taw Council and Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee, Dhamma Satkyar chant groups and officials. During the ceremony, the wife of Nay Pyi Taw Council chairman and officials watered the object stupas of Bo Trees No (1), (2) and (3) at the Uppasanti Pagoda compound. The No (1) Bo Tree was planted on 8th waning of Tazaungmone in the 1368 Myanmar Era (ME), and the No (2) Bo Tree was cultivated on 14th waxing of Kason in the 1372 ME, while the No (3) Bo Tree was planted on 13th waning of Tazaungmone in the 1373 Myanmar Era.

On the full moon day of Kason in the 1380 ME, the Uppasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw was crowded with Buddhist devotees.
Yi Yi Myint, MNA ■

Visitors to the Maha Thatkya Yanthi Image pour water on the bodhi tree in the compound as part of Kason watering ceremony. **PHOTO: MNA**

Kason watering ceremony held at Maha Thatkya Yanthi Image in Nay Pyi Taw

BUDDHIST devotees from Nay Pyi Taw, nearby townships and villages thronged Maha Thatkya Yanthi Image in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, the full moon of Kason. At the third watering ceremony of Maha Thatkya Yanthi Image, MORE CNC Co. Ltd. donated 150 simulacra (11-inch image) of Maha Thatkya Yanthi Image through a drawing of lots system in memory of Most Ven. Shwe Thu Wun Sayadaw.

The Maha Thatkya Yanthi Image was crowded with devout Buddhists of Nay Pyi Taw and nearby townships and villages, who did meritorious deeds, meditated and poured water on Bodhi trees from morning to evening.

Similarly, the devout Buddhists poured water on Maha Bo Tree Pagoda, where the devotees listened to a sermon of the Ovadacariya Sayadaws and donated a lotus robe. A consecration ceremony was then conducted.

The devout Buddhists also received the Five Precepts from Tatkon Myo Lae Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kaymainda. They also gave offertories to Sayadaws and made libation, and shared merits for their meritorious deeds. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Salaries of civil servants to increase from April 2018

The Union Government has decided to increase the salary of civil servants across government sectors during the cabinet meeting (7/2018) on 25 April.

The decision will take effect starting April 2018, as stated in the official announcement made by the Ministry of Planning and Finance yesterday.

The announcement stated the union government considers civil servants and the defence service personnel (Army, Navy and Air) to play a crucial role in the development of the country, and thus, as part of the efforts to promote their livelihoods, the union government is making adjustments to their cost of living.

The announcement stated the annual pay raises will continue as before, while the changes to pensions, fixed salaries of department staff, daily wages, monthly support funds and payment for expertise will be announced at a later date.

The announcement said the regulation for salary range, pension and supplementary funds of the defence service personnel will be submitted to the Defence Council, under the Ministry of Defence. Foreign affairs civil servants carrying out their duties overseas will continue to receive pay as per the current salary range in their respective host country's currency. Foreign affairs civil servants will receive the increased salary range once they complete duties overseas and return to Myanmar.

The salary increase for civil servants working in ministries and departments under the constitution is displayed below.—Myanmar News Agency (Unofficial Translation)

No.	Current salary range	No.	Increased salary range
1	120,000—2,000—130,000	1	144,000—2,000—154,000
2	135,000—2,000—145,000	2	162,000—2,000—172,000
3	150,000—2,000—160,000	3	180,000—2,000—190,000
4	165,000—2,000—175,000	4	198,000—2,000—208,000
5	180,000—2,000—190,000	5	216,000—2,000—226,000
6	195,000—2,000—205,000	6	234,000—2,000—244,000
7	210,000—2,000—220,000	7	252,000—2,000—262,000
8	250,000—4,000—270,000	8	275,000—4,000—295,000
9	280,000—4,000—300,000	9	308,000—4,000—328,000
10	310,000—4,000—330,000	10	341,000—4,000—361,000
11	340,000—4,000—360,000	11	374,000—4,000—394,000
12	380,000—4,000—400,000	12	418,000—4,000—438,000
13	500,000	13	550,000

> We have much to carry on fulfilling the hopes and needs of the people of the country. We must press on until our citizens have their dignity raised and our country can retain its former glory on the global stage.
>
> (Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)

> Let us strive collectively for the emergence of a just and free nation – a nation which will guarantee equal rights and equality, a nation which practices a pure ideology.
>
> (Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)

Poisonous smoke from garbage fire to be controlled in three days

A back hoe clears a path through the garbage dump for firefighters to reach afflicted areas. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

Firefighters douse the garbage dump with bio foam and water to extinguish the underground fire. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

FROM PAGE-1

The fires started at a garbage dump in Hlinethaya on the afternoon of 21 April and burned for several days, causing health hazards in nearby areas due to the smoke and carbon monoxide emitted by the fire. Five clinics have been set up nearby villagers to provide healthcare to the people and about 60 ambulances are also being used to send patients to the hospital when necessary.

"Four patients including a three-year old child received treatment today for smoke inhalation," said Dr. Thida Soe, Medical Superintendent of Hlinethaya Township People's Hospital.—Zaw Gyi ■

Second meeting for Rakhine State image promotion film

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint addresses the meeting for the production of a film that will portray Rakhine State's scenery and honesty of the people . **PHOTO: MNA**

A MEETING was held in the MRTV on Pyay Road in Yangon yesterday to discuss production of a film that depicts the beauty of Rakhine State and its people.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint said he wishes for the plot of the film to reveal the scenic beauty of Rakhine State, the sincerity and the socio-economic status of its people, promote Rakhine State's image and display positivity of Myanmar as a whole.

This was followed by discussions on screenplay and the film production process by U Ye Naing Director-General of the Information and Public Relations Department, Patrons of Myanmar Motion Picture Organzation Bagyi Soe Moe and U Aung Lwin, Myanmar Motion Picture Organization Chairman U Zin Wine, Shwe Than Lwin Media Co. Ltd CEO U Zaw Thet Maung, Forever Group CEO U Win Maw, Mingalar Co. Ltd Chairman U Zaw Min, Directors Zinyaw Maung Maung, Maung Myo Min, Nyi Nyi Htun Lwin and Zaw Myint Oo, and Myanmar Music Association General Secretary U Zaw Htoo Aung.

The meeting discussed hosting of the competition for documentaries promoting Rakhine's image and similar future events.

In the morning before the meeting, Dr. Pe Myint visited the MRTV Yegu Transmitter Site on Waizayandar Road in Mayangone Township. MRTV Deputy Director-General U Myo Myint Aung explained the daily operation of the site to the Union Minister and the Union Minsiter then instructed on natural disaster and fire prevention to be put into consideration for the site.

The Union Minsiter then inspected the construction of the transmitter, media related buildings and staff residences in the compound. —Myanmar News Agency ■

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Vaccination aims to end dog-transmitted rabies in Mandalay

AS part of its anti-rabies initiatives, the Mandalay Region Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is implementing a dog rabies vaccination programme with the aim of eliminating the infectious rabies virus.

To mark World Veterinary Day that is observed globally on 28 April, the department vaccinated pet dogs and cats within the compound of its office free of charge on 29 April.

Also, the department has offered rabies vaccines to dogs living in Buddhist monasteries and universities.

This is part of the government's programme to end human deaths from dog-transmitted rabies by 2030, the goal set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

According to WHO, rabies is a viral infectious disease that occurs in more than 150 countries and territories. Dog-transmitted rabies accounts for some 99 per cent of human rabies cases. It is estimated that 59,000 people die from rabies every year. The world's poorest are the most affected.

Myanmar is one of the countries with the highest death rates from rabies in Southeast Asia, a 100 per cent preventable disease.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay) ■

A Veter inarian vaccinates the dog against rabies. **PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MANDALAY)**

2,000 residents participate in 10,000 steps challenge in Mandalay

MORE THAN 2,000 people took part in the 10,000 steps challenge, a wellness programme held in Mandalay on Saturday, 28 April, according to the organizers.

The participants, along with Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung, participated in the programme, walking around Mandalay's moat within two hours, beginning at 5 a.m. According to the programme, the first 800 people who completed their 10,000 steps goal were awarded medals.

This 10,000 steps challenge fitness programme will again be held on 26 May and 23 June.

On average, 10,000 steps is equivalent to walking five miles, which will help participants keep fit and remain healthy. The movement will benefit people to boost the burning of calories.

Participants take part in the 10,000 steps challenge in Mandalay. **PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MANDALAY)**

The participants included climbers, trainees from Education College and local residents. According to a study, a 200-pound person burns approximately 396 calories per hour when walking at three mph.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay) ■

More public toilets to be constructed on Kyaiktiyo pagoda platform

WITH the number of pilgrims increasing each year, the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda Board of Trustee is planning to construct more public toilets on the Kyaiktiyo pagoda platform, according to a report in Myawady Daily recently.

Only three toilets are available near the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda, which are not enough for the large number of local and foreign visitors to the site. The pagoda board of trustee will invite tenders for the public toilet, according to its budget. The trustee will also seek assistance from donors. "The new toilets will be constructed in addition to the old one. Some people have already donated funds to construct a toilet. If we have to construct a toilet with the pagoda's budget, we will draw a new design and submit a proposal to the state government. After that, we will start inviting the tender," said U Soe Naung Oo, a member of Kyaiktiyo Pagoda Board of Trustee. Moreover, the pagoda board of trustee is planning to construct more shelters and water cleansing machines on the Kyaiktiyo pagoda platform. Kyaiktiyo Pagoda, the most famous pilgrimage site in Myanmar, was visited by more than 1.7 million local and 75,000 foreign visitors from 5 October 2017 through February 2018.—GNLM ■

Shwe Yee Htun-1 Well about 30 miles off Ngwesaung Beach, Pathein. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY ENERGY**

Natural gas exports exceed $3.3bn last FY

ALTHOUGH gas production through the Yetagun, Zawtika and Yadana projects has declined, natural gas exports during the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY) was worth some US$3.37 billion, according to the commerce ministry.

Gas production from Yetagun, Zawtiga and Yadana gas projects, whose pipelines extend to Thailand, are declining, according to the announcement made last year by the Ministry of Electricity and Power.

Natural gas was extracted from the Yedagon gas field in Taninthayi offshore in 2000, with a daily production of some 330 million cubic feet for export. However, production declined to 250 million cubic feet in 2017.

Additionally, gas from the Zawtika project located in the Gulf of Moattama started to be exported to Thailand in 2014, with its production being 279 million cubic feet for Thailand and 64 million cubic feet for local consumption.

According to an announcement made in June last year by the Ministry of Electricity and Power, it produces 200 million cubic feet for export and 80 million cubic feet for local consumption.

According to the 2014 statistics, the daily production from the Yadana natural gas field totalled 910 million cubic metres, 711 million cubic metres of which were exported to Thailand and the remaining kept for domestic consumption. Nevertheless, with the gas field maturing and production declining, some 800 million cubic feet are currently produced per day, according to the announcement made in 2017 by the electricity and power ministry.

Some 450 million cubic feet is exported daily to China from the Shwe natural gas field discovered in Rakhine offshore in 2014, while some 100 million cubic feet is used for local consumption.

In the export sector, natural gas and agricultural products individually made up 25 per cent; cut-make-pack garments accounted for 16 per cent, minerals for eight per cent, fisheries for five per cent and forest, animal products and other products for 21 per cent. – Ko Khant ■

Border trade reaches $320 million this month

BORDER trade from 1 to 20 April during the six-month transition period for the 2018-2019 fiscal year (FY) reached some US$320 million, including $199 million in exports and $120 million in imports.

Myanmar conducts border trade with China, Thailand, Bangladesh and India.

The Sino-Myanmar border trade at the Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kanpiketee and Keng Tung gates amounted to some $231 million, recording only a slight increase compared with the 2017-2018 FY, despite a small increase at the Chinshwehaw checkpoint.

Thai-Myanmar border trade is conducted through the Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese gates, with the estimated trade valued at $82.49 million.

Meanwhile, the India-Myanmar trade through the Tamu and Reed checkpoints was worth $5.6 million, with a slight decrease at the Reed gate.

Trade at the Sittway and Maungtaw land points of entry between Bangladesh and Myanmar rose slightly.

Industrial machinery, trucks, agricultural equipment, tractors, motorcycles, cars, food and beverages, cosmetics, fuel oil, fertilisers, cement, construction materials and other products are imported, while Myanmar exports agro products, fish, prawns, crabs, onions, sesame, turmeric, herbs, minerals and forestry products, among others. — Htet Myat ■

Myanmar-Viet Nam trade tops $658 million before end of FY2017-18

TRADE between Myanmar and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam topped US$658 million as of this February, 2017-2018 financial year, according to a monthly statistical report from the Ministry of Commerce.

The total trade figures included $116 million in exports and $542 million in imports. Myanmar imports spare auto parts, computer parts, construction materials, steel, plastics, pharmaceuticals and other chemical products from Vietnam, while exporting minerals, agricultural products, forest and marine products to the ASEAN member state.

Viet Nam's trade and investment with Myanmar have substantially increased each year since 2011-12 FY.

The ministry's yearly report indicates that bilateral trade with the Southeast Asian country was $346 million in the 2015-2016 FY, $321 million in the 2014-2015 FY, $281 million in the 2013-2014 FY, $155 million in the 2012-2013 FY and $143 million in the 2011-2012 FY. The total bilateral trade in the last fiscal year reached a record high of more than $494 million.

According to a report of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, South Korea's investments in Myanmar, at the end of 2017-2018 FY, reached $20.806 million from four projects. Its investment in Myanmar last fiscal year was valued at $1.386 billion.

The Myanmar government is putting forth concerted efforts to boost exports in the long, medium and short terms, and finding new international markets for domestically produced products, said a spokesperson of the ministry.—Shwe Khine ■

Import remittance pushes up dollar appreciation in post-Thingyan period

THE high volume of imports and the remittances accrued through them have scaled up the dollar exchange rate these days.

The US dollar to kyat interbank exchange rate in Myanmar's currency market has risen from Ks1,323 in the post-Thingyan period. Also, the Central Bank of Myanmar has raised its set rate from $1,326 on 18 April to Ks1,336 on 27 April.

The kyat appreciation against the dollar was strong in the pre-Thingyan period. However, the US dollar exchange rate after the Thingyan festival was on the high side with high imports and remittances, along with the rise in the US dollar value in the global currency market.

The dollar selling price was around Ks1,332, while the buying price was Ks1,329 yesterday, according to money exchange counters. - Ko Khant ■

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Planning and Finance Ministry's performance in second year in office

By Khin Yadana

UNION Minister and Deputy Ministers for Planning and Finance were interviewed about the vital and important Ministry that collect revenue for the government, fund the government's services to the people and the works it had conducted during the two-year period.

Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ministry of Planning and Finance holds meeting on reviewing the 2016-2017 financial year in conjunction with a ceremony to award outstanding civil servants. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Minister U Set Aung. **PHOTO: MNA**

> If the SMEs are put on a path toward import substitution, imports, trade deficit and foreign currency outflow can be reduced.

Union Minister U Kyaw Win

Q. Please explain about the country's financial situation and economy when the incumbent government took over the responsibility of the country.

A. Both the budget and trade was running at a deficit. This shows that export and import are not balanced. Foreign exchange rates were unstable and rising while important state-owned enterprises were operating at a loss for four-five years. In addition to this, there were loans prior to 1988 and loans obtained during the term of the Tatmadaw government.

A country's image is good only when loans are repaid in time. Since we took over the responsibility of the government, we strive toward total repayment of loans. Foreign exchange rates were stabilised through coordination between the ministry, Central Bank of Myanmar and Ministry of Commerce. Through coordination with Central Bank of Myanmar, management and other reforms for private banks were conducted so that banking services were systematic and in accordance to the law.

Q. Explain about the importance of local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to the country's economic development.

A. Although the country has local manufacturing, it is unable fulfil the local demand. Local SMEs lag behind in development. Neighbouring countries had higher technology and imported products overwhelm the local products. Because the local demands are met by import, the country's economy is a Trade Base Model and efforts are put toward SME development.

Q. What are the supports provided by the government for SME development and what are the processes and methods employed for SME development?

A. For the country to develop, the economy must be based on manufacturing. For SME development, their products need to be well established in the local market. Financial support by the government is also required for goods produced by local SMEs to be competitive with imported goods both in term of quantity and quality. Manufacturing will develop only when the high interest rates on loans are reduced. Technical knowhow also need to be provided.

If the SMEs are put on a path toward import substitution, imports, trade deficit and foreign currency outflow can be reduced. Reducing tax on raw material import will also reduce production cost and manufacturing will develop.

Q. What has been done for agriculture and fishery sector development?

A. Our neighbouring countries have big population and we have a good basis for agriculture and fishery. Every country needs food. The aim is for the country to become agriculture based industrial country. In addition to providing normal loans for planting crops, Myanma Agriculture Development Bank plan to become a real agriculture development bank by providing low interest loan for agriculture inputs such as farm machineries.

Tax under special goods tax law has been removed from fishery export to develop the fishery sector. Despite having a long coastline and weather that is good for palm oil production, this sector is yet to develop. Rice bran oil was widely produced in the past but this sector is also yet to be revived. Discussions are held with traders and merchant to produce good quality cooking oil.

Q. What has been done to develop investment in the country?

A. Government is encouraging all sort of investment in the country. Despite having huge acreage planted with sugar cane, we lack modern factories to produce quality sugar and we were importing sugar instead. Salt production from the sea was a big business in the delta area but after Cyclone Nargis, this business has almost disappeared. Now we are importing salt instead. That is why basic economy system is being changed in order to reduce import and produce locally. The State will support the SMEs for import substitution works to develop.

Q. Explain about the State's economic projects and preparation of budget.

A. On tax, the State plan to reduce the amount of direct tax and set as priority to increase indirect tax. Revenue for the State will be mainly from indirect tax and financial processes were systematically drawn up and implemented for priority works of the State. Based on the federal system, economic projects of the State were drawn up in a bottom-up approach. State projects are linked with the State budget and are aimed to be projects that produce true value.

Q. Explain about international economic cooperation.

A. According to the geographical location of Myanmar and the recent discussion between the President of People's Republic of China and the State Counsellor of Myanmar, China-Myanmar economic development will create a lot of opportunities.

Comparing the work processes of GMS, CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Viet Nam) and ASEAN, the entire coastline of Myanmar is the main door that link the region to the west. The economic corridor developed in cooperation with China and Dawei industrial zone developed in cooperation with Thailand are investments that will have great significant in a short time for the country's development.

Q. What are the opportunities for Myanmar businesses in the Economic Corridor jointly conducted with China?

A. In this case, there will be parts that will have to be conducted at the State level, parts that will be conducted through State and local businesses and parts that are conducted through business to business cooperation. Some will be through what is known as PPP, Private Public Partnership.

Q. What is being done by the ministry to raise the living standard of the people?

A. The ministry is working with Ministry of Electricity and Energy in the electrical power sector for the country's economic development. e-Government processes and Data ID practices are included in the State's 12 economic policies. Plans are being drawn for the technical development to be in line with other developed countries. International loans were obtained in developing the country's economy and the image of the country is being raised by timely and full repayment of loans.

Q. Is there anything else that you want to add?

A. The country's population has a high ratio of working age youths. But due to lack of job opportunities in the country, work forces in the rural areas are declining. The ability to accept and use technology is important in SME development. As such, priority will be given to use State funds in education, social and health sector to develop youth with high capability.

> The ability to accept and use technology is important in SME development. As such, priority will be given to use State funds in education, social and health sector to develop youth with high capability.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win

Q. Please explain about the organisation setup of the ministry.

A. There are 20 departments under the ministry. Seven are related to planning while 13 is finance related.

Financial policy sector

There are two parts in the financial policy sector, namely, taxation policy and expenditure policy. The ministry prepare and submit to the Hluttaw the Union Tax Law, National Planning Law and National Budget Law. Tax is not used to raise revenue only but is used as a weapon for the economic development of the State. Internal Revenue Department had increased the numbers of tax offices so that the tax is not collected by the department as in the past but for the tax payer to pay tax on their own. Customs Department is using Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) in Yangon port and is easing the works of importers and exporters. Preparations are made to use this system in border trade stations like Myawady and Muse.

Q. What has been done in the banking sector?

A. The ministry manage four state-owned banks, Myanma Economic Bank (MEB), Myanma Foreign Trade Bank, Myanma Investment & Commercial Bank and Myanma Agriculture Development Bank on behalf of the State.

The State use these banks to provide SME and agriculture loans. MEB also provide loans for agriculture, SME and construction sector.

Q. Explain about what is being done in insurance, micro finance and investment market sector.

A. Insurance sector has one state-own insurance company and 11 private insurance companies. Insurance services provided were increased to 18 types but insurance services are low in comparison to the country's GDP and population. That is why 26 representative offices of foreign insurance companies were permitted. The service of a consultant company will be used in arranging to permit foreign insurance services based on these 26 representative offices.

Q. What about the micro finance sector?

A. Loan in micro finance sector is being expanded for grass root level individual sellers and small home businesses in rural areas. There are now a total of 176 micro finance entities in all states and regions and 3.2 million persons were being provided with loans totalling more than Ks 3,800 billion. This is greatly benefiting the grass root level people.

The Committee for Reviewing and Verifying Accounts under the Ministry of Planning and Finance holds a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Yangon Stock Exchange officially starts trading on Friday 25 March 2016, months after it opened in December. **PHOTO: MNA**

Q. What has been done in the investment market sector?

A. Yangon Stock Exchange has been established by the ministry since two years ago. Five listed companies are traded in the stock exchange through six security companies. The government plan to continue the expansion of the investment market.

Deputy Minister U Set Aung

Q. Let us know about the changes made to project planning work.

A. The main changes made were establishing detailed strategies and work processes for sustainable development. In the past policies were issued but detailed processes to implement it were not made. Now, detailed processes were also made making the implementation part stronger.

Q. Explain in detail about implementing the economic policies.

A. Three step work process is established to implement the economic policies. A monitoring program is also included to check the process.

Instead of the respective ministry planning for the development of their own ministry, a system of different departments in different sectors coordinating for the development of the country will be seen. Once the transformation to this system is made, coordination and cooperation between departments and sectors will be more effective.

By that time, all will cooperate and participate in a new format under the National Development Plan that we are striving toward.

(Translated by ZM)

30 APRIL 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Microfinance: Pros and cons

THE Microfinance Law was enacted in Myanmar in 2011, and since then, some 176 foreign and domestic microfinance institutions have been established within the country. They include five international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), 22 NGOs, 39 foreign institutions, 107 local institutions and three joint-venture institutions.

The main objective of microfinance institutions is to promote rural development and reduce poverty. While their purpose is noble, microfinance institutions face the difficulty of distributing micro-loans to a large number of poor in the country.

As a result, the operational costs of microfinance institutions are high, and consequently, their interest rates go up as well, with the global average being 37 per cent. If a business model that returns higher profit than the micro-loan interest rate cannot be achieved, then the situation will aggravate.

Myanmar's financial sector does not yet effectively meet the demands of the country's growing economy.

Businesses identify the lack of access to finance as the largest constraint to doing business in the country.

Improved access to credit will mean higher incomes and more jobs. Farmers, small businesses and low-income households will benefit.

Most institutions also fail to complete background checks on people who secure a loan. In later years, the trend has shifted from giving out a large number of micro-loans to ensuring that start-ups and entrepreneurs have sustainable development.

Another issue related to high operational costs is that most microfinance institutions base their target area in places with reliable infrastructure and good communication networks.

As a result, a single person may be able to procure loans from several institutions based in the same area but down the line may become overwhelmed by the large interest rates and be unable to pay back. Incidentally, this means that most micro-loans do not reach areas that are in dire need of capital to boost livelihood. This global phenomenon is seen in Myanmar as well.

As a result, a single person may be able to procure loans from several institutions based in the same area but down the line may become overwhelmed by the large interest rates and be unable to pay back. Incidentally, this means that most micro-loans do not reach areas that are in dire need of capital to boost livelihood.

Myanmar's first-ever Credit Bureau, to be launched soon, will help alleviate some of the issues that microfinance institutions face. Additionally, microfinance institutions can cooperate among themselves to resolve issues and provide assistance in their related fields.

In conclusion, I beseech all relevant parties to assist and support microfinance institutions, so that poverty in rural areas is reduced and rural development is achieved. ■

How will we counter the Climate Change?

By Khin Maung Myint

I HOPE, by now, most of the people are aware of the consequences of the climate change and also are more knowledgable of the causes of the climate change. Here, I don't think I'll sound overly exaggerating, if I say that the climate change problem is the most immediate, clear and present danger that requires to be solved. If this danger cannot be countered in time, it would be very devastating to the planet and all living things, especially the humankind.

In recent times, more and more governments and organizations are becoming concerned with the looming dangers of the climate change. Thus, they are earnestly endeavoring to get the climate change under control.

The most significant achievement was the consensus reached at the 21st session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), held in France during November to December 2015. The agreements reached at that convention, which was signed by 195 nations, including the United States of America and the Peoples' Republic of China, who were reluctant to sign before, duly came into force in 2016 at the COP22 convened in Marrakesh, Morocco. That agreement is popularly referred to as the Paris Agreement. That achievement was a milestone breakthrough in the fight against the climate change and was a very bright ray of hope for the future of our planet.

I'll not be citing all the agreements that came into force, but only the relevant points for the purpose of this discussion. Generally speaking, the most important agreement was to maintain the temperature rise above the pre-industrial revolution at no more than 2° Celsius and if possible at around 1•5° Celsius. To achieve that goal, it was agreed that carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions must be curtailed by substituting fossil fuels such as: coal, wood, diesels, petroleum and natural gas with green or renewable energies — solar, wind, hydro and geothermal energies. Last, but not least, is to grow more trees to serve as CO_2 absorbers.

However, some scientists — climatologists, mathematicians and other professionals related to such matters had came up with bizarre ideas to counter the threats of the climate change. Their ideas are impractical and outlandish. They are just fantasies and are totally absurd that emerged from desperations in desperate times.

Quick fixes to keep global warming at bay

Spraying sulfur dioxide

The 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines briefly cooled the planet by around 1 degree F.
U.S. Geological Survey

Scientists looking for a quick fix to keep global warming at bay came up with some crazy ideas. One plan calls for spraying large amounts of sulfur dioxide into the upper atmosphere. The chemical would reflect the sun's light, cooling the planet, which is more or less what happens when a volcano erupts, albeit on a much larger scale. The scientist who proposed this plan surely must have been inspired by the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines that briefly cooled the planet by around 1° F. Of course, this plan poses numerous diplomatic, scientific, technological and humanitarian challenges, and it is entirely possible that the effect on global weather patterns would be worse than climate change.

That hasn't stopped researchers from dreaming up variations on this entirely outlandish theme. Here are three particularly impractical ideas that show why cutting pollution is almost certainly the easiest and safest way to cool down than rearranging the Earth's climate.

Asteroid dust

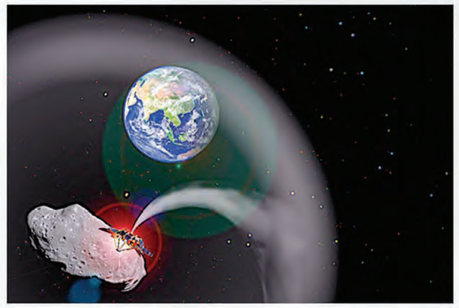
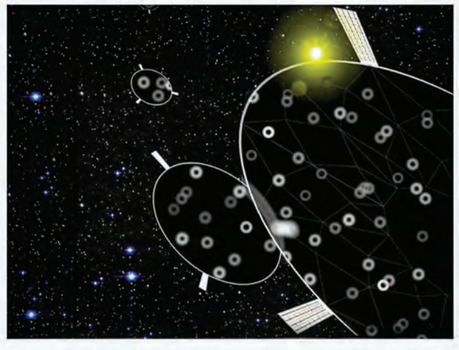


Illustration of asteroid dust blocking the sun's light.
Charlotte Lücking, based on images from ESA and NASA

Scottish scientists have proposed using asteroid dust to block the sun's light. Their plan calls for pushing an asteroid to the point where the gravitational pull of the Earth and the gravitational pull of the Sun are felt in roughly equal measure. At this point, asteroids are not in danger of falling toward Earth or drifting off toward the Sun. Their plan would land a spacecraft on the rock. They would then deploy an electromagnetic catapult to hurl asteroid dust into space. A dust cloud would form around the asteroid, preventing a small portion of the Sun's light from reaching Earth. This plan comes with many significant risks, including the possibility of accidentally sending a large asteroid careening toward Earth.

Solar shield



The graphic shows mirrors blurring the light from distant stars.
UA Steward Observatory

Another plan calls for assembling a giant, translucent glass disk at the same point in space where scientists proposed creating a dust cloud—the point where a celestial object is pulled equally toward the Sun and toward the Earth. The disk, which would cover an area roughly the size of India, would reflect some of the Sun's rays away from the Earth.

Because assembling a giant disk in space would be virtually impossible, one astronomer proposed using trillions of two-foot, razor-thin disks instead. He says it would be feasible to send the disks into space on rockets launched by a set of electromagnetic catapults. Then, those rockets could use ion propulsion to reach the point where they could release the disks. According to the astronomer, that whole project could be developed and deployed in approximately 25 years at a cost of a few trillion dollars.

Plastic in the ocean

White seafoam reflects sunlight, keeping the ocean cool.
Pexels

If spraying sulfur dioxide into the sky sounds dangerous and launching space mirrors sounds expensive, there is nothing to fret. Scientists have an idea that could work right here on Earth—cover the Arctic Ocean with bits of white plastic that will float on the surface of the water and reflect the Sun's light back into space. White surfaces reflect more light than dark surfaces, which is why it feels better to wear a white shirt than a black shirt on a hot, sunny day. As temperatures creep up, the Arctic is losing white sea ice, which is making warming worse. White plastic might compensate for this loss, but it means covering the Arctic in non-biodegradable trash.

A variation on this idea calls for filling the ocean with "microbubbles." White foam would perform the same function as sheets of ice or bits of plastic, reflecting sunlight back into the sky, thereby cooling the sea. Pumps might attach to dams, reservoirs or be fitted to ocean-bound cargo ships, which would froth as they chugged around the globe. It would take an enormous amount of energy to cover an ocean in tiny bubbles, and pumps would need to run constantly to maintain the foam.

The problem with hacking the climate

The challenge with each of these plans is that they only reduce the amount of sunlight absorbed by the Earth. They don't confront the actual problem—a surplus of carbon dioxide, which is making the ocean more acidic in addition to trapping heat. Dimming the sun may cool the planet, but it will alter the climate in other ways, disrupting rainfall around the globe.

One scientist compared this idea to placing a lid over a pot while turning down the heat on the stove—the average heat of the pot will remain the same, but the amount of water that evaporates might change. The effect is more droughts and hurricanes across the planet. It does not matter whether scientists spray sulfur dioxide into the sky or make oceans more foamy. Changing the method only changes how many people are adversely affected, which would range from 25 to 65 percent of the global population, according to one analysis.

The only safe method for hacking the climate is to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by cleaning up more than a century of pollution from cars, trucks, planes, factories, and power plants. This would be difficult and costly, which is why every scientist working on this issue underscores the fact that blocking sunlight should only be seen as a last resort. The sunshade is no substitute for developing renewable energy, the only permanent solution. A similar massive level of technological innovation and financial investment could ensure that.

Thus, it is quite obvious that cooling down our planet is the only practical means as recommended by the Paris Agreement. However, even if countries overcome the political obstacles necessary to meet that aim, it would take a long time to achieve. In the meantime they can expect heat waves, drought, and storms unseen in the history of human civilization, and enough flooding to submerge many low-lying coastal areas and some low altitude ocean islands around the world.

The only quick fix that we can expect to cool the planet is for a 'miracle' to happen. That miracle is not impossible to happen or very long to wait. If the calculations of the Mathematicians are correct, plummeting temperatures could send the world into a 'mini ice age' in 2030 and could OVERRIDE global warming.

* Temperatures will start dropping in 2021, according to a mathematical model,
* This, they say, will lead to a phenomenon known as the 'Maunder minimum',
* This was previously known as a 'mini ice age' when it hit between 1646 and 1715.

However, that miracle wouldn't be without adverse consequences. Some seas, rivers, streams, creeks and lakes could freeze up and would impose much inconveniences to the humankind as well as to other living things. It's only natural that good things are sometimes accompanied by bad things, so, let's keep our fingers crossed and hope for the best. ■

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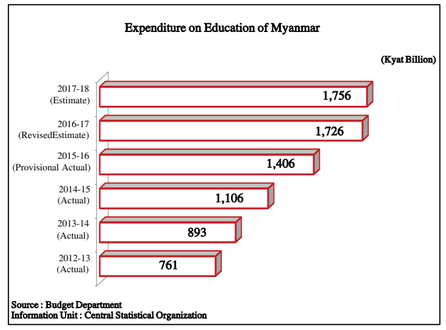
Photos : credit to the original posters



Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

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

Performance of Magway Region Government in 2nd Year in Office

Magway Region Chief Minister Dr. Aung Moe Nyo

By Shin Min

Magway Region Government has carried out to achieve all-round development in all socio-economic sectors of the people. In order to make sustainable development, plans are under way to support and encourage the small and medium scale enterprises, the development of health and education sectors, and conservation of natural environment.

Situated in the central part of Myanmar, Magway Region is 17305.62 square miles in area, made up of five districts, namely, Magway, Minbu, Thayet, Pakkoku and Gangaw. The five districts are made up of 30- towns, 184 wards, 1535 village-tracts and 4803 villages.

There are 925,424 households forming a population of 4,176,441 in the region, and Bamars are the majority with Chin national races residing in hilly areas. The mighty Ayeyawady River flows 240 nautical miles down Magway region from north to south. A variety of creek and small rivers originating from Chin mountain ranges, west Yoma mountain ranges and east mountain ranges flow down to the Ayayawady River. Lying 300- 1200 feet above sea level, the Magway Region is an arid region with a shortage of rainfalls.

It is Magway region which is dotted with historic pagodas such as the Shwesettaw and the Magway Myathalun and where human primates of over 40 million years had been found. The shortage of rainfalls has resulted in high unemployment in the region, compounded by poverty. This being the case, the Magway Region Government has been making all-out efforts to make significant progress in all spheres.

Aerial view of a bright and lively celebration in Magway Region.

> As regards the education sector, altogether 1012 schools big and small were upgraded with the emergence of new school buildings in order to meet the set standards.

Palm paraphernalia on display at the regional product competition.

Water Supply

The Magway Region Chief Minister Dr. Aung Moe Nyo said, "Efforts had been made to implement some 122 tasks in the region, utilizing Ks. 563.0407 million on urban water supply facilities including sinking artesian wells for security of drinking water and rural water supply facilities including digging wells and lakes."

With the aim of improving socio-economic life of rural populace, the Magway Region Government had implemented some 398 tasks, spending Ks. 4362.6339 million on rural water supply projects such as digging wells and lakes.

As regard to agricultural water supply, the Magway Region Government had implemented some 193 tasks including construction and maintenance of the irrigation dams and canals in the region. With a shortage of rainfalls, the region largely relies on water fed creeks and rivers such as the Ayeyawady, the Mone, the Mann, the Salin, the Yaw, the Pin and the Myinttha as well as reservoirs, lakes and natural lakes for agricultural purposes in 2nd year in office of the regional government. Apart from that, dams and embankments were renovated plus reclamation of new mechanized farmland for the agricultural development.

The extension of spillways of Ohngyi-Ohnwa dam in Pwintpyu Township was carried out to ensure the safety of local people and effective flood prevention. In the meantime, altogether many small dams and lakes were renovated with the use of Ks. 6606.22 million.

As a result, new mechanized farmland and quality species of seeds were distributed for farmers to enjoy higher yields of crops.

Power Supply

The Magway Region Government had utilized Ks. 14.854 billion on electricity supply, utilizing Ks. 14.854 billion for some 10978 households in the 188 villages in the region. For electrification, 11 KV power line (247.353 miles), 200 11/0.4 KV transformers and 400 Voltage power line (67.637 miles) were constructed along with the replacing wooden lampposts with concrete ones. And some procedures on rural electrification have been eased,

Officials inspect a reservoir in Magway Region.

Multi-sector coordination meeting led by the Magway Region government in process.

Magway Region Hluttaw building construction underway.

and efforts are being made for 188 villages that are not connected to the national grid to have access to solar energy plus diesel.

SMEs and Vocational Training Schools

It is of great importance to educate the local people Small and Medium Enterprises (SMES) in financial management to know where the wastage is. And in financing sector, they need to know a business plan as well as a sustainable plan. Some SMEs are operating without any business plan and target. Only if they have such plans and targets will their enterprises develop. Efforts should be made to promote business structure, accounting, taxation, market management, human resource management and capital management. As SMEs are major contributors to Myanmar's economy and job creation in Magway, it is of great paramount importance to meet challenges, create business opportunities, upgrade technology and settle financing issues.

> Efforts had been made to implement some 122 tasks in the region, utilizing Ks. 563.0407 million on urban water supply facilities including sinking artesian wells for security of drinking water and rural water supply facilities including digging wells and lakes.

Under the management of the Magway Region Government, the 2nd MSMEs Trade Promotion was held for three days in Magway. There were totaling some 150 shops selling household goods and utensils from Magway Region, Yangon Region, Madnalay Region, Nay Pyi Taw, Chin State, Rakhine State and Shan State respectively.

Under the social security law, the rights prescribed for premiums and mobile medical unit were facilitated to seven departments. In cooperation with the Ministry of Industry, the Magway Region Government had conducted a series of industrial and vocational trainings including three courses in 15 townships of five districts.

Commemoration and festivals

The Magway Region Government has reorganized the new pagoda board of trustees led by the local people, undertaking all-round development of the pagodas in a systematic manner. Necessary arrangements have been made to promote in health and security sectors for the convenience of the pilgrims.

Healthcare Centres

To be in line with two objectives of the healthcare sector—ensuring people to live long and ensuring people to be free from diseases, health awareness was given to rural people while effective prevention and treatment were provided throughout the nation. Meanwhile, some 16 healthcare centres and 96 sub-healthcare centres were built, utilizing Ks. 2239.686 million in order to undertake health activities in an effective manner. Likewise, the construction of housing units for patients' wards and operation rooms had been built, utilizing Ks. 6718 million for the region.

Education Sector

As regards the education sector, altogether 1012 schools big and small were upgraded with the emergence of new school buildings in order to meet the set standards. At the same time, a total 230 schools were provided with 8876 desks using the funds to the value of Ks. 4678.1907 million for the convenience of school children.

Knowledge Dissemination

In an effort to educate the public with knowledge, the Magway Region Government encouraged the Civil Society Organizations, departments and social and political parties to organize talks on peace, democracy, knowledge dissemination and human resource development, workshops and assemblies. Under the MoU signed by the Ministry of Information and Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, a community center and a mobile library were opened at the office of Information and Public Relations Department in Natmauk. The aforesaid community center and mobile library became a gathering point for the civil society organizations and learning center for human resource development course.

(Translated by William Ko)

Trainings for E-Government are being conducted to accelerate the public service works in the region.

Cruise boats wait for passengers along the banks of the Ayeyawady river.

Transformer installation in Magway Region.

Farmers tend to oil crops somewhere in Magway Region.

A 16-bed hospital in Pwintphyu Township is open for health services.

Holy religious objects hoisted atop Botahtaung Pagoda

A consecration ceremony and the hoisting of the golden umbrella, vane and diamond bud atop Botahtaung Pagoda in Botahtaung Township, Yangon, was held yesterday morning.

The attendees received the Nine Precepts from Yangon Region Thanlyin Minkyaung Monastery Sayadaw of Bhaddanta Sandima Bhivamsa.

The members of the Sangha recited the parittas.

The congregators, led by Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and wife, and donors handed over the diamond bud, the vane and the golden umbrella, as well as offertories. The Amyotha Hluttaw deputy speaker, union ministers, the Yangon Region chief minister and wife, the Yangon Region Hluttaw speaker and regional ministers and donors conveyed the diamond bud, the umbrella and the vane around the pagoda clockwise. The religious objects were then fixed with the pagoda before the members of the Sangha consecrated the pagoda.

—Myanmar News Agency ■

Buddhist devotees attend the consecration ceremony and the hoisting of the golden umbrella, vane and diamond bud atop the Kyaikdayap Sandaw-U Pagoda in Botahtaung. **PHOTO:MNA**

UEHRD needs cooperation from communities, INGOs to make its works a success

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye has stressed the role of international organizations working in Rakhine State in making the undertakings of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State-UEHRD a success.

Speaking at the meeting with governmental officials working for stability and socio economic development in Rakhine State, MPs and representatives from communities in Rakhine State in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye conveyed the feeling of ethnic community in Rakhine State saying that ethnic communities considered the works of international organizations are unfair.

In his capacity as the Vice Chairman of UEHRD, the Union Minister said UEHRD is working for resettlement and rehabilitation of the displaced persons, for improvement of their socio economy, and for making Rakhine State free from conflicts.

To achieve stability and socio-economic development in Rakhine State, security at border areas is important, he added.

"Despite challenges for security at the border, cooperation from ethic people of Rakhine, Daing Net, Khami, Maramargyi, Thet and Kaman and Hidus and Islamic communities is required," said Dr. Win Myat Aye.

"Not only Islamic community there, but also ethnic minorities and Hindus are facing obstacles," said the Union Minister.

"Free movement means travelling with documents and following local instructions and respecting the rule of law," said the Vice Chairman of the UEHRD.

He also urged the media to release reports with accuracy and fairness, and to clearly-understand what the authorities meant.

He also stressed the need to distribute the outcomes of the discussion of representatives from the government and different communities in Rakhine State after the meeting.

—Myanmar News Agency ■

Dr. Win Myat Aye addresses the meeting of government officals, MPs and representatives of communities in Rakhine State, and foreign dignitaries in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Rakhine Chief Minister tours Maungtaw District

Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and Union Minister U Khin Maung Tin inspect a temporary housing at a reception camp in Maungtaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Minister of Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin and state ministers visited Kainggyi Village, Maungtaw Township, on 28 April, where houses for the Mro people are being constructed.

The funds for the construction were donated by the Yangon region and Bago region governments.

Of the 56 houses donated by the Yangon region government, 40 have been completed, and of the 64 houses donated by the Bago region government, some 18 have been completed.

The chief minister and his entourage visited the finished houses in Pan Taw Pyin Village and checked on the Muslim residents there. The entourage also inspected the temporary residence for returnees in Hla Pho Kaung transit centre and the construction status of houses in Oh-Htein Village.

The chief minster and his entourage then inspected the preparations being made for the repatriation process at Hla Pho Kaung transit centre and Nga Ku Ya reception centre yesterday.—Myo Myint ■

N Korea's Kim willing to talk to Japan 'any time': Seoul

SEOUL, (South Korea) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is ready for dialogue with Japan "any time", Seoul's presidential office said on Sunday, as concerns grow in Tokyo that it is being sidelined from the reconciliation drive with Pyongyang.

Kim met South Korean President Moon Jae-in for a historic summit on Friday at the border truce village of Panmunjom — becoming the first leader from the North to set foot in the South after the 1950-53 Korean War.

The summit — only the third-ever between the leaders of the two neighbours — came ahead of Kim's planned meeting with US President Donald Trump after months of tensions sparked by North Korea's nuclear and long-range missile tests last year.

Japan — a key US ally in Asia — has long maintained a hardline position on negotiations with Pyongyang, but has found itself left on the sidelines of the recent whirlwind diplomatic activity.

Hawkish Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had earlier informed Seoul of his intention for talks with the North — a message Moon relayed at Friday's summit with Kim, the South Korean president's spokesman said.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. **PHOTO: AFP**

"President Moon told Kim that Prime Minister Abe had an intention talk to the North and... normalise diplomatic ties between the North and Japan," Kim Eui-kyeom told reporters.

"And Kim said that the North was willing to talk to Japan any time," he said, adding that Moon told Abe about the North Korean leader's response in a phone conversation Sunday morning.

Abe said Tokyo would seek to create "an opportunity to talk to the North", with Moon's help if necessary, and the South's leader said he would be "happy to build a bridge" between the two nations, according to the spokesman Kim.

The Japanese premier had cautiously welcomed the inter-Korea summit but urged Pyongyang to take "concrete action" toward nuclear disarmament.

Tokyo had also earlier called for Seoul to address at the inter-Korea summit the issue of Japanese citizens kidnapped by the North — a major domestic issue in Japan — but Moon's office did not mention the topic on Sunday.

Japan has demanded that Pyongyang provide information about its abducted citizens, believed to have been taken to provide language training to North Korean spies.

The two Koreas share resentment toward Tokyo's brutal 1910-45 colonial rule of the peninsula, and the North has regularly threatened to attack Japan, which is well within the range of Pyongyang's missiles.—AFP ■

N Korea offers to shut nuclear test site in May, invite US experts

SEOUL, (South Korea) — North Korea promised to close its atomic test site next month and invite US weapons experts to the country, Seoul said on Sunday, as Donald Trump expressed optimism about securing a nuclear deal in his summit with the secretive regime.

The reported pledge from the North's leader Kim Jong Un follows weeks of whirlwind diplomacy that saw Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in agree to pursue the complete denuclearisation of the peninsula during a historic summit on Friday.

"Kim said, during the summit with President Moon, that he would carry out the closing of the nuclear test site in May," Seoul's presidential spokesman Yoon Young-chan said.

Kim said he "would soon invite experts of South Korea and the US as well as journalists to disclose the process to the international community with transparency", Yoon added.

Tension has been high on the flashpoint peninsula since last year when the North carried its sixth -- and most powerful -- atomic test and test-fired missiles capable of reaching the US mainland.

"Kim said 'the US feels repelled by us, but once we talk, they will realise that I am not a person who will fire a nuclear weapon to the South or the US or target the US," according to Yoon.

"If we meet often (with the US), build trust, end the war and eventually are promised no invasion, why would we live with the nuclear weapons?'"

Kim also slammed speculation during his meeting with Moon that the Punggye-ri test site was already unusable after an underground tunnel there reportedly collapsed.

"As they will see once they visit, there are two more tunnels (in the test site) that are even bigger... and they are in good condition," he was quoted as saying.

The remarks are likely to be seen as a sweetener ahead of Trump's own planned summit with Kim, which the US president said would take place "in the next three or four weeks".

Trump touted his ability to achieve a nuclear deal with the regime at a campaign-style rally in Michigan to cheers and chants of "Nobel! Nobel!".

The US leader has been eager to play up his role in achieving a breakthrough with Pyongyang through his "maximum pressure" campaign involving tough rhetoric, strengthened global sanctions and diplomatic efforts to further isolate the regime.

"Months ago, do you remember what they were saying? 'He's going to get us into nuclear war, they said,'" Trump told supporters in Washington Township, north of Detroit.

"No, strength is going to keep us out of nuclear war, not going to get us in!" he added.

But Trump also sounded a note of caution, saying he was prepared to walk away if US demands for North Korea to relinquish its atomic arsenal in a complete, verifiable and irreversible way were not met. His remarks came as his new Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told ABC News he had a "good conversation" with Kim during his secret visit to Pyongyang over Easter weekend, adding that Kim was "prepared to... lay out a map that would help us achieve" denuclearisation.—AFP ■

Invitation for Bids

Loan Agreement No.MY-P8 dated 26/March/2015
IFB No. 1(T)DPTSC(PTP)/2018-2019

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received ODA Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Bid is invited by Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC) for the design, supply, installation including Civil and Building works of the following 500kV GIS Substations.

Sr. No	Invitation for Bid	Descriptions	Issuing Date	Submission Deadline Date and Time	Non-refundable Document Fee
1	MYP8, JICA, ODA Loan	500/230/33kV, 3x500MVA Meik Hti La (Kan Kaung) Substation	3/May/2018	31/July/2018 (14:00hr)	Purchase order with Myanmar Kyats which is equivalent to USD 1,000.
		500/230/33kV, 1x500MVA Taung Oo (Sa Ba Gywe) Substation			

2. The Eligible Nationality of the Bidder shall be Japan in the case of the single contractor. In case of a joint venture, such joint venture will be eligible provided that the nationality of lead partner is Japan, that the nationality of the other partners is Japan and/or the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and that total share of work of Japanese partners in the joint venture is more than fifty percent (50%) of the contract amount. This scheme is based on applicable guidelines of Japanese ODA Loan.
3. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the website (http://www.moee.gov.mm) or the documents from the Material Planning Department, Department of Power Transmission and System Control, Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
4. Bid documents must be delivered to the address above mentioned on or before the deadline date and time.
5. The Bid must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than four hundred million yen (JPY 400,000,000).
6. Technical Bid will be opened on 31/July/2018 at 14:00 hr at the Department of Power Transmission and System Control, Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw in the presence of representatives from Bidders.
7. Any request for the extension of bid submission dead line shall not be allowed.

Tender Committee
Department of Power Transmission and System Control
Ministry of Electricity and Energy, office No.27,
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Telephone : 067- 3410282, 3410209

Changing Trade Name for Registered Pesticide

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Current Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type/No
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Robert Benton's top movie directing tip: stay out of the way

Filmmaker Robert Benton (R) has directed Hollywood legends Meryl Streep, Dustin Hoffman and Sally Field to Academy Awards, and other actors including Paul Newman to Oscar nominations. **PHOTO: AFP**

LOS ANGELES — Legendary filmmaker Robert Benton has coaxed Oscar-winning performances out of some of the biggest stars on the planet on the way to picking up three statuettes himself.

But the famously self-effacing 85-year-old's secret to directing A-listers? Stay out of the way and let them do their thing, the "Kramer vs Kramer" director says.

"There's so much about acting that you can't put into words. I think people who can put it into words are not actors," he told fans at a discussion panel in Hollywood on Saturday.

"There's a thing you've just got to gamble with, and when you see it and it works, it's brilliant."

Benton spent an hour onstage at Hollywood's iconic Roosevelt Hotel — site of the first Academy Awards in 1929 — regaling attendees at the annual TCM Classic Film Festival with anecdotes from a career spanning more than half a century.

He revealed that his friend and fellow director Robert Altman ("The Player," "Gosford Park") taught him that listening to actors was one of the best skills a filmmaker could learn.

"He said the secret is not to figure out a language to tell the actors what to do, but to hire good actors to begin with," Benton recalled.

"There are directors who can get great performances out of actors. I am not one of them," the filmmaker once said. He was challenged on the quote by Turner Classic Movies host Ben Mankiewicz, who pointed out that Benton had directed Meryl Streep, Dustin Hoffman and Sally Field to Academy Awards, and other actors including Paul Newman to Oscar nominations.

Luck, judgment, instinct

"I have found actors — through luck, through the judgment of casting directors or through my own instinct — that are extraordinarily good," he confided.

Asked how he got some of Tinseltown's biggest stars to perform for him, he deadpanned: "I tried not to get in their way... that's not so easy."

Benton co-wrote Arthur Penn's groundbreaking crime thriller "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967) with David Newman, but is probably best known for his script and direction on "Kramer vs. Kramer" (1979) and "Places in the Heart" (1984), winning Oscars for both. He and Newman co-wrote Peter Bogdanovich's "What's Up, Doc?," which was released in 1972, the same year that he made his directorial debut with "Bad Company."

In 1978, Benton re-teamed with Newman and Newman's wife Leslie to write the screenplay for "Superman" (1978) starring Christopher Reeve, Marlon Brando and Margot Kidder.

Benton recalled how as a boy his dyslexia drove him to cinema as a means of understanding storytelling and the world around him, and how he would visit the picture house with his father three or four times a week.

He described how John Huston's "The Asphalt Jungle" (1950) "opened up the world to me" while he thought of "Singin' in the Rain" as "the perfect movie." "I couldn't read. I had dyslexia right from the first grade.

But I could draw, I could keep concentration for a long time," he said. "And I learned narrative from movies, not from reading books. Consequently, I would see movies again and again and again." —AFP ■

1980s classic 'Karate Kid' reborn as YouTube joins content wars

NEW YORK — For Generation X, "The Karate Kid" is a pop culture touchstone. Now, more than 30 years on, YouTube wants to bring a new generation into the dojo. Thirteen years after its creation, the wildly popular video-sharing platform is rolling out its first major original content series, "Cobra Kai" — a revival of the 1980s saga with a twist.

"Cobra Kai" creators Josh Heald, Jonathan Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg helped convince a hesitant Ralph Macchio, seen here at the film's world premiere, the to get on board. **PHOTO: AFP**

With the first 10-episode series going live online on 2 May, Google-owned YouTube is also hoping to draw new customers to its $10-a-month streaming service, YouTube Red, which was launched in 2015. YouTube Red is now available in five countries — the US, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and South Korea." — but YouTube says it will reach dozens more by year's end.

The portal — which now has 1.5 billion users — is hoping its forays into original content will help change the company's economic model, which until now has been largely based on ads and homegrown viral video stars.

To do that, and also counter the rise of Netflix and Amazon, the company have looked to a known quantity.

"The Karate Kid," released in 1984, led to three sequels, and even a reboot in 2010 starring Will Smith's son Jaden. Overall, the films have taken in more than $500 million at the box office worldwide. The star of the first film, Ralph Macchio, and the creative team behind such unhinged, raunchy comedies as the "Harold and Kumar" films and "Blockers," are on board for "Cobra Kai."

The twist?

The series — still set in the Los Angeles suburbs — is a comedy, and it's told not from the perspective of Daniel LaRusso (Macchio), the bullied teen hero who learns karate from a martial arts master, but that of his nemesis Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka). "Cobra Kai" creators Josh Heald, Jonathan Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg helped convince a hesitant Macchio, now 56, to get on board. "They were so convincing, passionate, completely well versed into the narrative of where they wanted to go, respectful of the nostalgia, the legacy of what the film is," Macchio said at a roundtable organized during the recent Tribeca Film Festival.

"It's their 'Star Wars'," he added, referring to the series creators' passion for the source material. "They know much more about the movie than I do, which is kind of freaky."

Nostalgia card

"Cobra Kai" subverts the usual hero-villain set-up of many martial arts film by exploring the complexity of Johnny, who was somewhat misunderstood, and thus demonized. Johnny, now in his 50s, has led a life full of ups and downs — mostly downs. Viewers can imagine that Daniel's triumphant kick in the original film's ultimate bout was the beginning of his woes. Johnny is offered a chance to rebuild his life — and upset that of his old rival, now a successful car dealer. Karate still takes center stage, along with a more general look at martial arts training and teenage relationships — all hallmarks of the original films. But the show has an off-kilter humor that stems from Heald, Hurwitz and Schlossberg.

With a cast of mainly young actors, YouTube hopes "Cobra Kai" can earn a following with a generation whose parents remember the first films, but often don't understand what makes their own kids tick. "There was something especially about bullying that looked very 2018 to us," said Heald. "We had to show restraint. We had to pull ourselves back and resist the will to just swim in a 'Karate Kid' fan bath."

YouTube has already produced some series for YouTube Red, including a fresh take on the popular "Step Up" street dance films. The first episode of "Step Up: High Water," put online in late January, has so far been seen 12 million times. But those shows were squarely aimed at the under-25 crowd. With "Cobra Kai," YouTube is hoping to also play the nostalgia card, and win over a much bigger audience.—AFP ■

Senior General waters Bodhi trees to mark Buddha's birthday

TO mark the full moon day of Kason in the 1380 Myanmar Era, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, along with the families of offices of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air Force), poured water on Bodhi trees at Lawkachantha Hsutaungpyae Pagoda in Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

First, the Senior General and his wife offered flowers, lamps and water to the pagoda.

During the ceremony, the Senior General and his wife watered the Bodhi trees, together with the Buddhist devotees. They then sprinkled scented water on the Buddha images. Buddda attained His Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Gaya, India, more than 2,500 years ago on the same day. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla pour water on a Bodhi tree in Lawkachantha Hsutaungpyae Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw, to mark the full moon day of Kason. **PHOTO: MNA**

AWPT invest 14 new pieces of equipment in port business

ASIA World Port Terminal (AWPT), developed, managed and operated by Asia World Port Management Company Limited (AWPM) has invested in 14 new pieces of port equipment for the long-term. These include 9 new SANY Rubber Tyred Gantry (RTG), 1 Mobile Harbour Crane (MHC) from Konecranes Gottwald, as well as 2 Reach Stackers (RS) and 2 Empty Container Handlers (ECH) from SANY.

AWPT's recent total investments are a sure sign of its bullish outlook on the prospects of the port business which it has been operating since 1996-1997. This also signals its strong confidence in the future of Myanmar's economy, the overall macro-economic development of the country as well as the strong policies of the government.

Buoyed by its vision to evolve into a technology-led player, this is the single largest investment in technology AWPT has made in recent years. With this, AWPT will improve its overall operating capacity by 33% and containers can be stacked up to 7 high as opposed to 5 high.

The new equipment is also expected to bring operational benefits and value to AWPT's customers –higher levels of productivity and efficiency – which will ultimately ensure faster turnaround times and better quality of services.—AWPT ■

Foreign sailors may have worked on South Song Dynasty ships

GUANGZHOU — Human bones found in an shipwreck in southern China may be evidence that foreign sailors worked in China 800 years ago.

Several bone fragments were found in the Nanhai No 1, a cargo vessel that sank in the Yangjiang River during the South Song Dynasty (1127-1279), according to Guangdong Cultural Relics Institute. "These bones are fragmented so it is hard to say that they belonged to one person or a number of people," said Cui Yong, deputy director of the institute.

DNA tests show that they were not remains of an East Asian person, he said. Judging from the fact that the bones were found on the lower decks of the boat, there may have been foreign sailors working during the Song Dynasty, he said. At 30.4 metres long and 9.8 metres wide, the vessel was found west of Hailing Island in south China's Guangdong Province. In 2007, the wreck was raised and is now kept at a museum for the Maritime Silk Road. Although the vessel's itinerary is unknown, large quantities of white porcelain indicate that the ship might have set off from Quanzhou Harbor in Fujian Province. Produced in Dehua, Fujian, white porcelain was mainly made for export. —Xinhua ■

Wooden Philippine boats to retrace historic China voyage

MANILA — Crafted from a centuries-old design, three identical wooden boats set off from the Philippine capital for China on Saturday to retrace a historic trip by a Filipino sultan and showcase longstanding maritime ties.

The 29 crew members on the three vessels — two propelled by engines and the third by sail — hope to make it across the South China Sea, a near-1,000-kilometre (620-mile) voyage, to the eastern city of Xiamen by 2 May.

The 18-metre (60-foot) boats are replicas of a "balangay", a type of vessel used in the region as far back as 320 AD. Sultan Paduka Batara — who ruled part of what is the Philippines today — sailed to China on a balangay in 1417 to pay tribute and to trade, Valdez said, but fell ill and died there. Spain later colonised the Philippine islands in the 16th century. Expedition leader Arturo Valdez hopes it is a case of fourth-time lucky: winds and rough seas forced his team back on three previous attempts using similar vessels.

"This boat is a replica of an ancient boat. It is not an all-weather boat. You have to fix it up. It is very vulnerable to weather and sea," he told reporters.

Rough seas are forecast late next week. The state weather bureau in Manila expects a period of good weather from Saturday to the morning of 2 May but after that, conditions could get rough, he added. The crew, which includes three women, are hoping they can slip through before the bad weather hits their route, Valdez said.

Engines were installed on two of the boats to comply with Chinese maritime regulations that prohibit wind-powered vessels from docking alone, Valdez said.

Valdez, who previously led a Filipino expedition that climbed Mount Everest, said he is aware of the implications of the trip at a time when the Philippines and China still have a territorial conflict over parts of the South China Sea.

But he said his voyage will demonstrate how the people of Southeast Asia crossed the high seas in the past to maintain contact.—AFP ■

TRADEMARK CAUTION

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Dated:30th April 2018.

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Fabregas boosts Chelsea's top-four bid, West Brom earn stay of execution

LONDON — Cesc Fabregas boosted Chelsea's bid to qualify for the Champions League as his superb strike clinched a 1-0 win at Swansea, while West Brom kept alive their slender hopes of avoiding Premier League relegation with a 1-0 victory against Newcastle on Saturday.

Spain midfielder Fabregas gave Chelsea the perfect start at the Liberty Stadium when he took an Eden Hazard pass and fired home for his 50th Premier League goal in the fourth minute.

That was enough to secure a third successive league win for Antonio Conte's fifth-place side, who move within two points of Tottenham ahead of their fourth-placed London rivals' clash with Watford on Monday.

"It's important for us to take three points. The big problem we are having this season is that we create many chances to score but we don't take them," Conte said.

"The only way we have to put a bit of pressure on the top four is to win. Today has been very positive to put that pressure on Tottenham." It was a damaging defeat for Swansea and Carlos Carvalhal's team are now only one point above the relegation zone with three games left.

West Brom would have been relegated to the Championship if they had failed to take maximum points at St James' Park, but Matt Phillips bagged the first-half winner to keep them in with a shout for a few more hours at least.

Cesc Fabregas scored his 50th Premier League goal to keep Chelsea's top-four hopes alive. **PHOTO: AFP**

Jake Livermore's pin-point pass sent Phillips racing clear of the Newcastle defence and the winger lashed past Martin Dubravka in the 29th minute.

Bottom club Albion are five points from safety and an eight-season stay in the top flight would still be over if they fail to take maximum points from their last two games against Tottenham and Crystal Palace. Interim boss Darren Moore said: "We can't control other results. There's nothing we can do.

"We're just doing everything we can at our end. The boys have done really well since I came in."

Dusan Tadic breathed new life into Southampton's bid to beat the drop as his double sealed a crucial 2-1 success in the south-coast derby against Bournemouth at St Mary's. Mark Hughes' third-bottom side took the lead when Serbia winger Tadic finished off a rapid counter-attack from Mario Lemina in the 25th minute. Joshua King equalised for Bournemouth with a close-range finish after Saints failed to clear a corner in first-half stoppage-time. But Southampton restored their advantage in the 54th minute thanks to a gem from Tadic, who embarked on a fine solo run before finishing in clinical fashion. Southampton, hoping to extend their six-season stint in the top flight, are one point adrift of safety with three games left.

"This is one of the most important wins in our history," Tadic said. "We are fighting for our lives and we showed that. We knew we had to win, no matter how we played."

Battling Stoke

Jurgen Klopp admitted Liverpool were below their best as they prepared for the Champions League semi-final, second-leg clash with Roma by settling for a goalless stalemate against Stoke at Anfield. The Reds head to Rome on Wednesday with a 5-2 advantage from the first leg and do so on the back of a tame encounter they controlled for long periods without over-exerting themselves in search of a winner.

The draw left Liverpool needing a maximum of four points from their remaining two matches to guarantee qualification for the Champions League via a top-four finish.

"I saw everything I wanted to see except fluency and fun and joy," Klopp said. "It is hard on a day like this. But no-one was seriously injured so we carry on."

Second-bottom Stoke are three points from safety, but boss Paul Lambert said: "If the lads had played like that from the start of the season, I would not be here and they would be cruising in the league."

Crystal Palace are on course to avoid relegation after thrashing Leicester 5-0 at Selhurst Park. Everton pushed Huddersfield deeper into the relegation mire as goals from Cenk Tosun and Idrissa Gueye earned a 2-0 win at the John Smith's Stadium.

Burnley, in seventh and chasing a Europa League place, were held to a 0-0 draw by Brighton at Turf Moor.—AFP ■

Myanmar to play Brunei today in 2018 Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy

AS a Group A match of 2018 Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy, Myanmar National U-21 football team will play against host Brunei team tonight at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

According to the National Football Association of Brunei Darussalam, the playing time will change a little. At first, the officially recognized time was 6:45 pm of Myanmar Standard Time but as for now it is changed to 7:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time. After having played two matches, Myanmar U-21 is still leading Group (A) with 4 points while the host Brunei follows behind by garnering 3 points and Timor-Leste stands in the third place with 3 points with goal difference to the host Brunei team. The football giant Thailand team stands in the bottom-most place with one point collecting.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)■

Advance tickets for Leeds United vs Myanmar sold

AS part of the AYA Bank Tour 2018, tickets will be sold in advance in Yangon and Mandalay Cities for the friendly match between England Championship Club, Leeds United and Myanmar football teams according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The tickets for the match against Leeds United and MNL All Star team will be available in Yangon at Thuwunna Stadium, Aung San Stadium, AYA Bank Branches in Yangon and Padonmar Stadium starting from 3 May and at Hledan Center starting from 6 May.

The tickets for the match against Leeds United and Myanmar National football team will be available starting from 5 May at AYA Bank Branches in Mandalay and Mandalay's Myanmar Football Academy.

The ticket prices in Yangon range from Ks 2,000 to Ks 3,000 for ordinary stand and Ks 4,000 for the grand stand.

Tickets in Mandalay are priced as Ks 2,000 for the ordinary stand and Ks 3,000 for the grand stand. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■