

NATIONAL

State Counsellor's message to ceremony to launch campaign against quid and tobacco by products
PAGE-3

**NATIONAL**

Government and RCSS/SSA hold talks
PAGE-3

NATIONAL

Campaign launches on anti-quid and tobacco leaf products via media
PAGE-7

NATIONAL

Myanmar Red Cross Society report
PAGE-6

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National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) Chairperson and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes U Yawd Serk, chairman of Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor holds talks with RCSS/SSA Chairman

NATIONAL Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) Chairperson and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received U Yawd Serk, chairman of Restoration Council of

Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) yesterday at National Reconciliation and Peace Center, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the officials discussed trust build-

ing measures, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), development of ethnic national regions, education, health and anti-drug matters.

State Counsellor Daw

Aung San Suu Kyi and RCSS/SSA Chairman U Yawd Serk exchanged gifts and took a group photo with others attending the meeting before concluding the meeting. **SEE PAGE-10**

Taungdwingyi rioters arrested for attacking a mosque and residence

FIFTY masked youths attacked a residence in Ohndaw 1 ward on Taungdwingyi-Magway Road in Taungdwingyi, Magway Region with stones on 10 September while shouting the national anthem of Myanmar.

The group also threw stones at a mosque door at Shwe Kyar In and at Tamar Arziwa Store.

Security forces warned the rioters to disperse and after their commands were ignored the police moved into the crowd with their shields, scattering the throng.

Hnin Ko Ko Lin, also known as Hnin Ko Ko, was arrested for possessing a slingshot and a piece of brick.

Authorities also arrested Soe Thu, 33, Thein Zan Htay, 22, Naing Aung Htet, 27, and Sithu Aung aged 18.

Investigations are under way against other suspected rioters, police said.—Myanmar News Agency ■

NATIONAL

Ethnic minorities never ever made problems in the history

An interview with the dignitaries from interfaith friendship and unity group.

PAGE-2



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Ethnic minorities never ever made problems in the history

By Tin Maung Lwin and
Min Htet Aung

Responsible officials from Interfaith Friendship and Unity Group (IFUG) led by U Nyi Pu, Rakhine State Chief Minister and U Khin Maung Tin, Deputy Minister for the State Counsellor's Office visited Yathedaung, Buthidaung and Sittway on 7 and 8 September, meeting local residents to inquire about their requirements.

Here are voices of the dignitaries from interfaith friendship and unity group, in the interview.

Dr Thar Nyan, General Secretary, Christian representative in the Interfaith Friendship and Unity Group

I came here under the arrangement of the Ministry of the State Counsellor Office, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and Rakhine State government. The main objective was that we held the IFUG meeting with regard to the event of 25 August, making decisions to help solve local people's difficulties. So, we formed a 10-member group to go to Maungtau, consisting of 2 Buddhists, 2 Muslims, 2 Hindus, 2 Christians and I myself as the general secretary and another one as chairman—10 altogether.

If and when something happens, there will be refugees and they need to be fed and accommodated. Following this, reha-



Dr Khin Maung Htoo.

bilitation and resettlement are essential. In this region, the task of performing rescue is of great importance. And, there is a need to get rid of misunderstanding among each other. Maungtau events were not based on religion and race. It is harming the national sovereignty.

In the world, today, there are similar cases, for example in southern Thailand and Indonesia. In our country, we still have time to prevent. So, our government, Tatmadaw and the people need to cooperate hand in hand with each other. We felt considerate for our national ethnic people. It is necessary for all the local populace to pay mutual respects so that there will be no difficulty for peaceful living and stability. Mutual understanding is also of great importance. I hereby would like to say that we came here to



Dr Thar Nyan.

Dr Khin Maung Htoo, Buddhist representative in the Interfaith Friendship and Unity Group

We came here with a view to help people over the events in Maungtau, as to how much and how we can help them. On arrival we learn that they try to get what they want, through terrorism, on the wrong pretext of religion. We told the local people to live on awareness, keeping 4 Cardinal Virtues in mind. All must not believe in rumours, to be united after careful consideration. We will come again for health, if we are assigned. We will give medical doctors and subsidies including food.

U Nyunt Maung Thein, a Muslim and Vice Chairman

help our national brethren.



U Nyunt Maung Thein.

of the Interfaith Friendship and Unity Group

We came here to find how we can assist the displaced people, how we can refute the fake news spreading over the world, how we can help all the people here and how we can resettle them as soon as possible. We discussed with local people from different faiths in Yathedaung, Buthidaung and Maungtau. We found in Maungtau that displaced people are suffering a lot due to terrorist attacks. We don't accept terrorism.

U Ragu Nay Myint, a Hindu and member of the Interfaith Friendship and Unity Group

International media have portrayed the issue in Rakhine State as a genocide and Bengalis as a minority in this state. In fact, about 98 per cent of the population in Maungtau is Bengalis and just



U Ragu Nay Myint.

2 per cent is ethnic Rakhine. Hindu is also one of the minorities in Maungtau. They were killed by terrorists. Some were raped. Some were forced to convert to Islam. International media turned a blind eye to suffering of Hindus.

When we enquire about the terrorist attacks in Maungtau, Muslim villagers also expressed their sympathy to ethnic Rakhine villagers. In the history, ethnic minorities never ever made problems, Muslim villagers do not reject this fact. Regardless, we do not accept terrorism. ■

Correction

Please read "assistance" in the headline of the news story "Ready to render assistance" on front page of 11 September Issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar.— Ed

PRESS STATEMENT

The Situation in the Rakhine State

The situation in Rakhine State has been the focus of the world attention in recent weeks. The Government of Myanmar fully shares the concern of the international community regarding the displacement and suffering of all communities affected by the latest escalation of violence ignited by the acts of terrorism committed by the extremist group known as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in Northern Rakhine State on 25 August 2017.

The fresh round of violence was the result of simultaneous and coordinated attacks by the terrorists on 30 police outposts in Northern Rakhine State. The ARSA, which has been independently verified to be externally funded and inspired organization, has claimed responsibility

for the attacks. The same group has also claimed responsibility for the attacks initiated on 9 October 2016. The brutal acts of terrorism which targeted not only the Myanmar security forces but also innocent civilians must be unequivocally condemned. Acts of terrorism cannot be condoned for any reason.

The Government of Myanmar strongly condemns the vicious acts of terrorism and has declared the ARSA a terrorist group. The Government welcomes the statements issued by the United Nations and a number of countries firmly condemning the terrorist attacks.

The attacks of August 2017 were deliberately timed to coincide with the release of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine led by Mr. Kofi

Annan. It is evident that the latest terror campaign is an attempt to undermine the efforts of the Government to find a lasting solution to the issue of Rakhine through the speedy implementation of the Advisory Commission's recommendations.

The security forces have been instructed to adhere strictly to the Code of Conduct in carrying out security operations, to exercise all due restraint, and to take full measures to avoid collateral damage and the harming of innocent civilians in the course of carrying out their legitimate duty to restore stability.

Human Rights violations and all other acts that impair stability and harmony and undermine the rule of law will be addressed in accordance with strict norms of justice.

The recent attacks have led to widespread fear and the subsequent displacement of all communities, including Rakhine, Hindu, and various smaller ethnic minorities such as the Mro, Daingnet and Kaman, whose fate is sadly overlooked by the world.

The Government has granted media access to northern Rakhine to both local and international media in order to provide a balanced and comprehensive view of complex situation. The government provided prompt relief aid to alleviate the plight of displaced communities.

Humanitarian assistance will be provided to all displaced inhabitants without discrimination. A Government-led mechanism established in cooperation with the Red Cross Movement has already started its human-

itarian assistance activities. Myanmar welcomes the offers of ASEAN members as well as other countries to contribute toward the assistance programme.

The Government brought out a statement welcoming the recommendations of Mr. Kofi Annan's Advisory Commission on 24 August 2017. A Ministerial-led Committee to monitor the progress of the implementation of the recommendations will be established speedily and an Advisory Board comprised of eminent persons from home and abroad will also be constituted to assist the Committee in its work.

The international community can best help by supporting the Myanmar Government in its efforts to bring stability, peace and development to Rakhine State.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

State Counsellor's message to campaign against quid and tobacco by products

Following is the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's message sent to the ceremony to launch a public campaign for control of quid and tobacco leaf products via media.

Mingalaba to you all! I send greetings for the mental and physical health of my beloved and respected people.

I'm happy to send this message to a ceremony to launch a campaign to reduce consumption of quid and tobacco which is a challenge that has greatly affected the health of the people. I'm hoping and expecting good results for people's longevity and health from this ceremony

For the people of the world, especially in least developed countries, non-contagious diseases together with contagious diseases are a big threat to their lives as well as being a huge health burden. According to a report by the World Health Organization, 59% of the fatality rate in our country in 2014 was from such non-contagious diseases. Just as preventive and treatment of contagious diseases are being made, preventing and controlling of non-contagious diseases from consuming quid and tobacco leaf products need to be done. Smoking cigarettes and daily continuous consumption of tobacco leaf products including quid are seen to be widely increasing among the people, both among men and women.

Within Southeast Asia's ASEAN countries, Myanmar is seen to have the highest percentage of consuming quid with tobacco leaf products. This is becoming the main challenge for our people's health. When the incumbent government came to power in 2016 May, instructions were sent

to departmental officials to take responsibility to strictly educate, inform and restrict consumption of quid in offices, hospitals, schools and places where people converge.

In conducting such an enormous health program, the main thing is the need to effectively educate the people. In conducting such educative works, it should be noted that short term programs that is effective in a short time do not produce good results. The main thing is for all levels of the governmental organizations together with the people to disseminate long term education through many ways. Especially students and children under 13 who have not used quid should be prevented from starting to use it and to stop the dangerous usage if already started. For the educational efforts through various means to have a huge impact, schools, teachers, health personnel, personnel of other organizations, family of the personnel and responsible personnel, are all requested to participate.

Today's program to control quid and tobacco leaf products via media campaign to the public is a very good program. I thank and honor the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Information together with all associated organizations.

In conclusion, seven million of Myanmar people are consuming tobacco leaf products and quid. According to research conducted, yearly fatality from such consumptions was more than 60,000 and people should meet this health challenge with the theme "Avoid quid to avoid regret." I urge you all to overcome it as a national duty with determination. May you all be healthy, strong and be able to serve the country more than ever.

Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe receives Bangladeshi Ambassador



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe and Bangladeshi Ambassador Mr. Mohammad Sufiur Rahman hold talks in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe received Mr. Mohammad Sufiur Rahman, Bangladeshi Ambassador to Myanmar at the Office of the State Counsellor in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday at 3:30 pm. During the meeting, status on implementing peace and stability in northern Rakhine State, humanitarian aids providing after the outbreak of extremist terrorist attacks and bilateral relations were discussed.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Government, RCSS/SSA hold talks

Government negotiators met with the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) yesterday at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss the peace process, economic development and counter narcotics efforts.

The meeting was attended by NRPC Vice Chairman Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, National Security Advisor U Thang Tun, Peace Commission Vice Chairman U Thein Zaw and Secre-

tary U Khin Zaw Oo, Union level Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Deputy Minister for the President's Office U Min Thu, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut, Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin and Director General U Zaw Htay, RCSS/SSA Chairman U Yawd Serk, secretary 3 U Sai Ngin, Central Executive Committee members U Khay Pyu and U Sai Mane; U Saung Han, U Sai Han and U Sai Lyen from PMC, Economic Department Head U

Aung Tane, Liaison Office

Director U Sai Oo, office staff U Kham San and U Hao Kham. NRPC Vice Chairman Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe delivered a speech, followed by a speech by RCSS/SSA Chairman U Yawd Serk. Towards the end of the meeting, NRPC Vice Chairman Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe delivered a closing speech followed by a speech by Chairman U Yawd Serk after which the meeting came to an end in the afternoon.

After the meeting, the meeting attendees took a group photo and had lunch together.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Negotiators from the government and RCSS/SSA hold talk over peace process. PHOTO: MNA



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Onion price increases leave market vulnerable to Chinese imports

ONION prices increased over 50 per cent recently due to dwindling stocks, according to the Myanmar Onion, Garlic and Kitchen Crops Exporters' Association.

"The price of onion has increased, but onions are not selling well in the market. We are looking at the situation. We're optimistic that the price of onion will not increase highly because the new onion will enter the market in October," said U Khin Han, the chairman of Myanmar Onion, Garlic and Kitchen Crops Exporters' Association.

Rising domestic onion prices has created an opening for cheaper, more plentiful illegal Chinese onion imports, said U Win Myint, the secretary of Mandalay Region Kitchen Crops Association.

As local onions are selling for more than Ks1,000 per viss, Chinese onions sell for



A farmer works in the onion field in Padigon, Bago Region. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

as cheap as Ks600 or Ks700 per viss, he said, though he was critical of their quality.

In the first week of July, onion prices ranged between Ks900

and Ks1,250 per viss in Bayint Naung wholesale market. The prevailing price of onions ranges from Ks1,600 to Ks2,250 per viss on 7 September.

In the same period last year, onion prices sold for less than Ks1,000 per viss. Previously, Myanmar exported onions to China and Thailand.— GNLM ■

Plan aims to reduce tobacco consumption through radio, television

A public service campaign on radio and television are being organized to commence this week to reduce tobacco consumption, according to a report of the Myawady Daily issued on Sunday.

The campaign will be led by the People's Health Founda-

tion, a non-profit public health organization.

The campaign will air on MWD Documentary, MRTV, MRTV-4 and DVB channels four times a day.

The campaign will also broadcast on Cherry FM, City FM and Mandalay FM. The six-

week programme starts today.

Tobacco-related mortality in Myanmar is rising and is directly associated with chewing betel quid, a combination of betel leaf, areca nut, slaked with lime and tobacco, and well as cigarettes, said People's Health Foundation Chairman

Dr. Than Sein.

US-based Vital Strategies, an international public health organization, is sponsoring the campaign.

The plan includes distribution of posters and pamphlets to target communities within one and half month.—GNLM ■

Japan to finance affordable residential mortgages

Japan's government has indicated its willingness to subsidize affordable home mortgages for low-income residents, according to a report yesterday in the Myawady Daily.

"Japan would provide housing loans next year. Currently, the Myanmar and Japanese governments are discussing how much to provide as housing loans," Construction and Housing Development Bank (CHDB) Director U Win Zaw said.

"If Myanmar receives a

loan program from Japan, the Construction and Housing Development Bank will manage and disburse the loans to the public".

Buyers who wish to buy affordable or low-cost apartments must have a savings account with CHDB, and their savings account must have at least 30 per cent of the value of the apartments they want to buy.

People who have that amount in their savings accounts can only buy those

apartments sold by the Urban and Housing Development Department.

CHDB, a bank offering long-term mortgages to the public for government-built affordable and low-cost residences, plans to extend its typical mortgage terms to 15 years, from 10 years.

In the first phase, about 600 apartments have been sold. Therefore, the department is planning to sell an additional 600 apartments very soon. — GNLM ■

Truck carrying illegal timber seized in Shan State

Law enforcement authorities discovered poached timber worth Ks4.2 million being inside a Toyota vehicle near Yaypu checkpoint in Hsenwi Township, Shan State on Friday.

That same day, police discovered a total of five timber contraband cases and seized wood with an estimated worth of Ks35 million, according to internal revenue department. — GNLM ■

Tea growers to use solar dryers instead of firewood in Shan State



Farmers harvest tea leaves in Momauk. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

TEA growers and dealers in Taunggyi, Pindaya and Nyaungshwe in Shan State will adopt solar tea leaf dryer instead of firewood to improve product quality, according to yesterday's report of Myanma Alin.

The German development agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, or GIZ, and the Commerce Ministry will provide technical assistance to help implement the new tea dryers.

Solar drying saves time and

money. We hope this will bring a fruitful result, U Hta Maw Han, a tea leaf grower from Pindaya told to Myanma Alin.

Myanmar's dried tea leaf is exported to Thailand, China, Germany and other European countries. Tea also sells well domestically.

There are about 800,000 acres of tea plantations in Myanmar. Tea growers in eastern Shan State are organized in Kengtung and Tachilek townships.—Zar Lin Thu (AMIA)■

Real estate sector attains about US\$890 million of FDI so far

NEARLY US\$890 million of foreign direct investment flowed into real estate as of end of August in the current fiscal year, according to statistics recently released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

This fiscal year, eight foreign enterprises put investments of over US \$888 million into real estate sector.

Real estate foreign investments were followed by man-

ufacturing sector investments worth an estimated \$1.18 billion.

Between 1 April and 31 August, Myanmar attracted investment worth an estimated \$3.69 billion from 120 foreign enterprises in agriculture, livestock and fisheries, power, manufacturing, transport and communication, hotel and tourism, real estate, industrial estate and other service sectors.

Mining, oil and gas and construction sectors did not

receive any foreign investment this year. Since FY1988-89, more than \$74 billion in foreign investment has been recorded by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC). Real estate placed fifth in total foreign investment sectors with 47 projects estimated to be worth of \$4.6 billion.

Singaporean investors, this FY, invested the most in Myanmar, followed by China and the Netherlands. — Ko Khant ■

50,000 tons of impurities in annual rice production

MORE than 28 million tons of rice paddy is produced and processed in Myanmar, including 50,000 tons of impurities such as straw, sand, weed and small stones, according to a report of Myanma Alin, yesterday.

Such a large ratio of im-

purities is due to rudimentary farming methods and lack of agricultural technology and impact Myanmar farmers' ability to maximize revenues and penetrate premium export markets.

Without adequate processing techniques and ma-

chinery, the task of removing of sand, weed and small stones increases production costs and time, said U Win Aung, a rice merchant to Myanma Alin.

Myanmar expects to export 200,000 tons of rice this financial year.— Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■



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Myanmar Red Cross Society report

THE information committee released a report on activities of Myanmar Red Cross Society in Sittway and other townships in Rakhine State providing aid and support to IDPs who fled Maungdaw Township from terrorist attacks.

Providing assistance to IDPs from Maungdaw

On 28 August, a total of 25 Red Cross staff and volunteers helped people fleeing from Maungdaw and Buthidaung Township to safely reach the monasteries in Sittway. They have established contact with humanitarian groups in Sittway and are ready to provide health-care when needed.

Status report from Myanmar Red Cross Society

The report begins with the Myanmar Red Cross Society offering condolences to those who lost their lives since the attacks began on 25 August.

The Myanmar Red Cross Society provides services in first-aid training, health and prevention techniques, cleaning the environment and purifying water reserves and providing vocational training in Rakhine State. The Red Cross has branches in Sittway, MraukU and Minbya towns and has temporarily halted their operations over personal safety concerns for their staff members. The report says they will continue their operations when the situation allows it.

Prof. Dr. Daw Mya Thu, Chairperson of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, said the Red Cross is ready to provide humanitarian aid to those affected by the conflicts. "We have staff members in our branch offices and headquarters is ready to dispatch more personnel if needed," she said. "We have the basic food and drinking necessities ready too. We are currently planning for the safety of our personnel in Rakhine State," she said.

Food donation

The Manager and staff of the Yum Yum instant noodles factory, under the Yathar Cho Industry Limited, have donated 56,160 packages of instant noodles (worth Ks 9 million) to the



The Myanmar Red Cross Society is helping evacuate internally displaced persons from conflict areas in Rakhine. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Red Cross headquarters for distribution in Rakhine State.

Healthcare assistance

On 31 August members of the Red Cross and three officials from Rakhine helped place IDPs in temporary shelters and helped transport wounded individuals to Sittway General Hospital.

The Red Cross and Rakhine officials laid down tarpaulin sheets for IDPs to rest on at the temporary shelters and constructed makeshift tarpaulin bathrooms for women to shower in. They also set up fiber barrels to store drinking water.

Helping the people

On 2 September the Red Cross helped provide a supply of tarpaulin to the Rakhine Department of Relief to set up lavatories in the temporary shelters for the IDPs.

On 3 September the Red Cross helped set up two water reservoirs in Dhamma Rama monastery and one water reservoir in Mani Yadanar monastery and provided healthcare on Adhihtan monastery. On the same day, 30 IDPs arrived in Lawka ManAung Buddhist building in MraukU. U Maung Hla, the in-charge of the Red Cross branch in MraukU, administered the distribution of cash donations, rice sacks, mosquito nets and sachets of oral

rehydration salts to the IDPs.

On 5 September the Red Cross distributed 300 sachets of oral rehydration salts to 172 IDPs in Minbya.

On 6 September two volunteers from the Red Cross and one doctor and two nurses from the Department of Health provided healthcare to the IDPs in Adhihtan monastery.

Red Cross personnel from Thandwe District and Taungup Township travelled to Mae town where 42 people who fled from Maungdaw are taking refuge in their relatives' homes. The Red Cross members provided the IDPs with 9 family kits, 9 hygiene kits and 9 dignity kits.

Meeting with government officials

On 7 September, a team led by U Khin Maung Hla, the General Secretary of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, met with the Rakhine State government and discussed future plans for humanitarian aid in Rakhine.

Distributing aid

On 8 September, a team of four personnel led by U Than Htun Oo, the in-charge of Thandwe District's Red Cross, travelled to Daw Mya Village in Thandwe Township and provided humanitarian aid to 6 households who fled their homes from the conflict areas.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Alternate assignment of staff groups to fulfill requirement of local ethnic people

In order to systematically fulfill the requirements of local ethnic people who were displaced by ARSA extremist terrorist attacks, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is arranging alternate assignment of staff in groups from head office, state and region to Rakhine State.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye met one such group in Sittway Airport guest room on 10 September and said due to ARSA extremist terrorist attacks, ethnic nationals such as Thet, Daingnet, Kaman, Maramagyi and Hindus who are the minority in Maungdaw region were leaving their homes and staying in monasteries and schools in Sittway, Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, MraukU, Buthidaung and Maungdaw.

Food and other requirement of these people were being arranged together by the ministry and Rakhine State government while supports such as psychological consultation, play station for children to keep them happy, healthy and fit, school age children to continue their education, petty cash for each and other necessary personal effects were provided with donations from donors.

When conducting their works, the staff should be on the

same level with the people remarked the Union Minister and the Rakhine State Chief Minister greeted the staff and explained about the regional situation.

Later in the evening of 10 September a donation for persons displaced by ARSA extremist terrorist attacks were made at the guest room of Yangon International Airport where Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye accepted Ks. 1 million donated by Colonel Myo Myint (retired) on behalf of officers, trainees and families of Under Training Officer Course 1.

Similarly on 11 September in Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Nay Pyi Taw, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye accepted Ks. 18.85 million donated by Magway Region constituency 4 Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Aung Kyi Nyunt and donors, Ks. 1 million donated by Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung, a total of Ks. 76.05 million donated by officials of travel related associations and presented certificate of honor to the donors.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will effectively and systematically utilize the donations made for ethnic nationals in Rakhine state it is learnt.— Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye accepts Ks. 1 million donated by Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung. PHOTO: MNA

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Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General poses for a documentary photo with RCSS/SSA's chairman and party in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice Senior General Soe Win receives RCSS/SSA's chairman and party

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win received U Yawd Serk, Chairman of the Restoration Council of Shan State/ Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) and party at Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

During the meeting, the understanding and different ideas from Union level peace implementation agreement signed by the working Committees on Implementation of Peace and RCSS/SSA on 16 January 2012 were discussed in details.

This was followed by exchanging views on peace and

stability within Shan State, needs for people to live peacefully and without tension, engagement conversely with trust and respect between both sides, friendship over sustainable performing of meeting and discussion, and trust building on both, it is learnt. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Police on full alert in Maungtaw to restore rule of law

WHILE a resident living in Aung Mingalar ward of Sittway illegally left the designated place for shopping, local nationals detained him. The police dispersed the crowd who gathered to see him at a local police station.

The event was that Isuz (a) Paing Pyae Sone residing in Aung Mingalar ward of Sittway left the designated place by bike to go shopping in other area, 3 local nationals found him leave and they arrested Isuz. While keeping him in the police custody, some people gathered to witness the event, amounting to some 30 people. So, the police kept the situation under control and handed over Paing Pyae Sone to village elders, it was learnt.

On September 11, at 3:30 am a flame was found on the



Isuz (a) Paing Pyae Sone.

roof of the house of U Nyunt Tha Aung of Thingazar village in Minbya township. On receipt of the information, the combined force came to investigate the event, finding that the seized two cans was a kind of explosives stuffed inside.

At about 6 am on 10 September, a dead body arrived at

the Taungpyo Letwe hospital. The corpse was learnt to be a man named Dimar Mauk (a) Battar aged 49, living in 1st ward of Taungpyo Letwe. On 26 August at about 4:40 pm security forces searched for 3 terrorists who arrived at the ward, ARSA extremist terrorists started to fire at security forces. During the security forces' counter attack, he was said to have been shot dead.

It was learnt that on September 10 at about 1:15 pm security forces of Kyee Kyun outpost in Maungtaw township seized two long boats with 16 people and a corpse on board. The 16 people included 1 man, 3 women and 8 children and 4 other suspects including Zarhat Tusaung living in Gone Nar village.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Campaign launches on anti-quin and tobacco leaf products via media

A ceremony to launch a media campaign on anti-betel quid with tobacco and tobacco products was held at Ministry of Health and Sports.

First, a message sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to launching ceremony was read by Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint.

In his opening address at the ceremony, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe warned rising deaths rate from non-infectious disease, blaming on betel quid with tobacco and tobacco products.

The ministry would raise awareness on danger of tobacco and tobacco products so that people can avoid health

hazards, he said.

The Union minister also stressed the important role of media in the campaign, pledging to reduce the consumption of betel quid with tobacco and tobacco products in the country.

The six-week media campaign will be jointly conducted by Ministry of Health and Sports and related ministries together with People's Health Foundation and will raise awareness of the danger and hazards of consuming betel quid with tobacco and tobacco products. An educative video entitled "Avoid quid to avoid regret" was shown to the attendants of the ceremony. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu meet with local residents in Maungtaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Site visit to Maungtaw region for security and other matters

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu conducted a site visit yesterday afternoon to Maungtaw region from Sittway for Maungtaw region security and area domination, repair and reconstructing basic infrastructures and resettlement of displaced local populace due to ARSA extremist terrorist attacks.

In the visit the Union Minister, Chief Minister and party went by helicopter to Angumaw, Kyaukpandu, Alethankyaw, Udaung, Kaing-

gyi, Thayaykonbaung, Kyikanpyin, Laungdon, Kyeinchaung, Trane, Wetkyein, Thetkaingnya, Nanyakaing, Khamaungseit in Maungtaw District and met with Lt-Gen Aung Kyaw Zaw of Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office in Buthidaung to discuss regional security, area domination, border fence, border road, and approach road repair.

During the visit the Union Minister, Chief Minister and party provided food, clothing and utensils for people living in the region it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Specific ethical principles and standards of media

Khin Maung Oo

NEWS and information on ARSA extremist terrorist attacks in Northern Rakhine State are moving round the world, as against the truth, that is, actual events, in abnormal appearances. In other words, the truth has plunged into a deep hole, because of the one-sided news and information based on partial and unconfirmed facts from unreliable sources, rather than the news and information which the national-level information committee is releasing in accord with the changing times.

By manipulating the presentation, approach, perspective and choice of words, some professional journalists have posted or broadcast news and articles. Consequently their postings and articles have been shared on social media such as Facebook. Thus the events

that occurred in northern Rakhine State have been depicted as grave violations of human rights and inhumane tortures committed on the Muslim population in that area. Whereas the voice of the local media, national ethnic people from Rakhine State, innocent people who had been victimized by extremist terrorists, the reports written by a handful of respected journalists and scholars from the international community who reported on the actual events, nearly disappeared under the overwhelming and powerful influence of foreign media. They include racial agitations, resulting in protests and demonstrations against Myanmar and Myanmar diplomatic missions and Myanmar nationals in some countries, which can be said to be greater than protests against nuclear threats.

In regard to the affair of northern Ra-

khine State, unbiased news, information and researches conducted by interested researchers from foreign countries have come out recently. From these findings, we came to know that some matters need to be questioned, as to specific ethical principles and media standards of some international journalists. In the article written by Nicholas Kristof in the New York Times, the writer gave a wrong pretext that his writing included only a few voices of local Rakhine nationals for fear that the long article would make readers bored. Out of the two sides, he laid stress on one side only. This is surely tantamount to giving priority to making profit rather than laying stress on truth and fairness. And, in the news coverage of BBC on September 7 presented by Reporter Jonathan Haidt who accompanied the Press team to Buthidaung and

Maungdaw, the reporter said that some national ethnic people got involved in arson cases. His writing was found to have been based on unconfirmed news and information, by neglecting actual events on the ground. He has neglected to report about the Rakhine ethnic nationals and innocent people suffering from great difficulties, mine attacks planted by ARSA extremist terrorists, the brutal killing of innocent ethnic nationals, abduction and arsons.

Honesty, fairness and endowment of abilities to deal with any problem are real qualities of excellent journalists. Journalists should perform their duties with genuine Cetana, in trying to find out the solution to a problem, by reporting news with detailed facts, without bias and without any desire for sensationalism. ■

Will Myanmar lead drug policy reform in Southeast Asia?

Renaud Cachia
Transnational Institute

A commentary on a draft bill recently proposed at Parliament

MYANMAR is better known for its serious drug problems - including large-scale illicit drugs production and trafficking and high rates of heroin use - than for implementing progressive drug policies that prioritise the health of its population. However, this could change in the near future.

Change is in the air

Myanmar is better known for its serious drug problems - including large-scale illicit drugs production and trafficking and high rates of heroin use - than for implementing progressive drug policies that prioritise the health of its population. However, this could change in the near future. Last year, Police Colonel Myint Aung, head of the International Department of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC), commented in an interview that legislative changes were being considered to “make [drug use] a health issue, rather than a criminal one”. More recently, Major General Aung Soe, the military-appointed deputy Minister for Home Affairs, declared to a Member of the Parliament that “prevention and judicial strategies are not enough to solve drug problems,” and that “the economy, social affairs, health and development must [also] be taken into consideration”.

This changing approach to tackling drug issues is reflected in a draft bill that was approved by the upper house of the Parliament (“Amyothar Hluttaw”) on the 16th of August. The text proposes to intro-

duce several amendments to 1993 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law and, most notably, to eliminate prison penalties for drug use. In a country where failing to register as a drug user can lead to 3 to 5 years imprisonment, and where up to 74% of all inmates are in prison for - mostly minor - drug-related offences, the step is significant. However, if Myanmar policy makers really want drug users to be seen as people who need help and support, rather than as merely criminals, it is fundamental that they also extend the exemption from prison penalties to include the possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use.

The decriminalisation of drug use has long been advocated for by numerous organisations, including several local and international NGOs and UN Agencies. In February this year, the Drug Policy Advocacy Group - Myanmar (DPAG), a civil society platform, also released a briefing that recommended ending the criminalisation of drug use and increasing access to health, harm reduction and voluntary treatment for drug users, among other interventions. Indeed, extensive evidence from around the world shows that, while the fear of prison penalties is not an effective deterrent against drug use, it does have a substantial negative impact on the health of drug users and the community at large.

What benefits can be expected from the current drug law reform?

The elimination of prison penalties for drug use will no doubt generate a debate in Myanmar. Already numerous people, including parents and teachers, are raising an important and legitimate question: what will happen if Myanmar

stops arresting and incarcerating drug users? Won't the country witness a further increase of drug use, especially among young people?

The best way to answer this question is to look at what has happened in the more than 30 countries that have already conducted similar reforms, albeit using very different models. Among those, the case of Portugal is emblematic, as results have been closely monitored and speak for themselves.

In 2001, the Portuguese Government announced that it would decriminalise drug use and scale up health and social interventions for drug users. Opponents strongly criticised the Government's decision and predicted a rampant increase of drug use among the youth, or even the impending transformation of Portugal into a haven for “drug tourists”. More than 15 years later, none of these predictions have materialised. Instead, Portugal's policy has been saluted as one of the most successful in the world due to overwhelmingly positive results: the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne diseases sharply decreased; the number of deaths by overdose dropped; the number of drug users entering drug dependence treatment programmes increased dramatically, while the number of drug users and problematic drug users, especially among adolescents, fell. Finally, overcrowding in the criminal justice system reduced and crimes related to drug consumption, in particular petty thefts, declined.

Several countries in Latin America have also carried out legal reforms that pursued the same objective and decriminalised drug use. In Southeast Asia, neighbouring Thailand is considering

introducing similar changes to reduce prison overcrowding and respond more effectively to drug use related problems. Myanmar's decision to prioritise a public health and human rights approach, in line with the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document, is a highly encouraging move that sharply contrasts with the intensification of the war on drugs and the increase of violence observed in the Philippines and a few other countries in the region.

Of course, every context is unique, and it is always difficult to anticipate the impact of a given policy change. However, the numerous experiences around the world clearly show that the harms of criminalisation far outweigh those of decriminalisation. The Myanmar government's intention to eliminate prison penalties for drug use is therefore excellent news and must be applauded.

A closer look at the proposed changes, nevertheless, reveals that the draft bill recently approved by the upper house of the Parliament still contains problematic aspects. Four of them, in particular, require special attention: the continued criminalisation of drug possession for personal use; the imposition of compulsory treatment for drug users; the heavy criminalisation of small-scale subsistence poppy farmers; and the continued possibility of using the death penalty for drug related offences.

Fortunately, it is not too late to incorporate additional amendments to the text. The following sections propose calibrated but essential changes that Members of the Parliament could consider as priorities. These would assuredly help to improve the lives of tens of thousands of people suffering from drug related problems in the country.

SEE PAGE 9

Will Myanmar lead drug policy reform in Southeast Asia?

FROM PAGE 8

Additional Proposed Amendments

Lifting prison penalties for drug use and possession for personal use: a fundamental prerequisite for sound public health programming

Representatives from the upper house of the Parliament approved an amendment that exempts drug users from prison penalties. They reportedly did so in an attempt to facilitate their access to health services. The possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use, which was initially also included in the provision, was, however, removed after discussions. This unexpected decision is, unfortunately, likely to jeopardise the entire reform. Indeed, it directly undermines the bill's primary objective, which has been repeatedly asserted as placing the focus on public health rather than criminal justice. By eliminating prison penalties for drug use, policy makers have acknowledged that severe punishment is an obstacle for drug users' access to health services. Then, the exemption should also apply to the possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use. In fact, using drugs necessarily involves possessing them in the first place. The establishment, by the Ministry of Health, of threshold quantities deemed acceptable for personal use could effectively help the police and judges to distinguish between simple users and dealers, and in so doing, prevent any increase in trafficking.

No significant gain can be expected on the front of public health if drug users still risk multiple years or incarceration for the simple act of holding small quantities of drugs for their own consumption. It is therefore absolutely crucial for the success of the reform that representatives from the lower house of the Parliament ("Pyithu Hluttaw"), who will also discuss the bill in the near future, re-introduce the initial exemption clause.

Scaling up access to voluntary drug treatment

The new emphasis of the law on public health is a welcome improvement. However, the bill that was approved by the upper house contains an obligation for all drug users to undergo drug treatment (Section 9, sub-section a): "The drug user shall go under treatment at the Department or medical facilities approved by the Ministry of Health and Sports for this purpose". This is problematic for two reasons.

First, medical science tells us that while the use of psychoactive substances always has the potential for harm, in practice most users will never experience any serious negative consequence from their drug use and may actually stop using at

their own volition at some point in time. UNODC estimate that only about 10% of all drug users will ever develop a problematic pattern of drug use or become dependent on drugs. Of course, this doesn't mean that drug use cannot be harmful, and indeed in many cases it is. But it does tell us that treatment is actually not necessary for the great majority of drug users. It should, therefore, be offered only to people who really need it, that is, those engaging in problematic drug use, who have become dependent on drugs.

The second reason why making treatment compulsory is problematic is that this can lead to gross violations of human rights. Several countries in South East Asia – including Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Lao People's Democratic Republic – have been, for years, emphasising compulsory treatment for drug users in centres specifically designed for that purpose. Vietnam, for instance, decriminalised drug use in 2009, and replaced prison penalties with compulsory treatment in closed treatment centres. Interestingly, the Vietnamese Government used a similar language to that currently being used in Myanmar, arguing that drug users should not to be considered "criminals" anymore, but rather "patients". In practice, the changes introduced turned out to be a mere continuation of repressive policies, with drug users still being detained, but this time in a different setting and under the guise of treatment. Widespread violations of human rights, beatings and inhumane treatment were also reported. This led to an unprecedented call by 12 UN Agencies in 2012 for the immediate closure of all compulsory drug detention and rehabilitation centres, on the grounds that they violate human rights and threaten the health of detainees, and for the release of all detained individuals.

In addition, evidence shows that compulsory treatment is highly ineffective: relapse rates as high as 90% have been reported following release from compulsory treatment centres in China, Cambodia or Vietnam. Overall, the shortcomings of this approach became so severe that the Vietnamese Government decided in December 2013 to implement a partial pull back and initiated a transition from compulsory treatment in detention centres towards voluntary treatment in community-based settings. This experience should serve as a warning for Myanmar policy makers about the risks of making treatment mandatory, repeating the mistakes of other countries in the region. Fortunately, Members of the Parliament still have the opportunity to review the wording of the relevant sections and can ensure that treatment remains voluntary in nature. Rather than making

drug treatment an obligation, the Government should instead focus its efforts on making access to voluntary treatment, information, counselling and harm reduction services more easily available to drug users who need them.

Prioritising a development-led approach in opium growing areas

Another serious shortfall of the bill approved by the upper house of the Parliament is the fact that it does not address the situation of small-scale subsistence poppy farmers. No change or amendment has been proposed on this issue and poppy cultivation remains punishable with a minimum of 5 to 10 years imprisonment, regardless of the quantity cultivated or the circumstances of the offence. It is well known that most people who grow opium in Myanmar are not criminals but poor small-scale farmers who cultivate poppy as a way to survive. Prescribing long-term prison penalties without addressing poverty, food insecurity, armed conflict, lack of basic infrastructure, land grabbing or the absence of viable employment opportunities, to name only a few of the difficulties faced by farmers, is both iniquitous and unrealistic.

The case of Thailand is, with this regard, an excellent example of good practice. In 1969, the Government of Thailand, under the leadership of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, invested significantly in development projects in poppy growing areas, bringing modern agriculture, market access and social services to highland communities. By 1985, opium cultivation had declined by nearly 80%, although this reduction can be partly attributed to the relocation of opium cultivation to other areas, notably including Myanmar – a phenomenon known as the "balloon effect". Punishment and arrests of farmers remained minimal and forced eradication started only after the initial period of 15 years of sustained development. Today, opium production in Thailand has fallen to negligible levels.

The Government and Members of the Parliament should seriously consider eliminating prison penalties for small-scale subsistence cultivation which takes place in the absence of sustainable alternative livelihood options. To prevent a potential increase of cultivation, limits and conditions could be defined by the authorities, in consultation with representatives from opium farming communities. At a minimum, milder and more proportionate sanctions should be contemplated as alternatives to incarceration for small-scale subsistence farmers, who should be differentiated from larger-scale commercial cultivators and investors. Generally, the Government should

provide adequate sustainable development assistance before a farmer can be sanctioned for his or her dependence on the illicit drugs economy for basic subsistence.

Abolishing death penalty for drug offences

Although it is currently not used in Myanmar, the death penalty has been retained in the law for certain categories of drug offences. In this regard it must be noted that applying the death penalty to drug offences is both disproportionate and incompatible with international human rights norms. In fact, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a major international human rights treaty, restricts the imposition of the death penalty only to the "most serious crime", to be understood as an offence that involves intentional killing or the taking of life. In other words, drug offences, of any nature or scale, do not constitute the most serious crime under international law. In addition, use of the death penalty for drug related offences is inconsistent with the objectives of the International Drug Control Treaties. Finally, even in countries where the death penalty is being applied for drug offences, there is no evidence that it has any deterrent effect. Retaining in law the option to sentence people to death for drug related offences could easily lead to actual executions. Myanmar policy makers are therefore strongly urged to reconsider the relevant section and abolish the death penalty for these offences.

The way forward: investing in health and development programmes

Beyond reviewing the law itself, it is equally critical that the Myanmar Government undertakes serious programmatic reforms. Indeed, the harms caused by problematic drug use and drug production cannot, and will not, be effectively mitigated without committing significant financial and human resources to health and social interventions for drug users, and to rural development programmes in opium growing communities.

Support harm reduction and increase access to voluntary, evidence-based drug treatment for drug users

One of the main public health risks associated with illicit drug use in Myanmar continues to be HIV and other blood-borne infections due to unsafe injecting practices. To respond to this emergency, the Myanmar Ministry of Health has again included harm reduction services for people who inject drugs as a key priority of its third national strategic plan for HIV/AIDS (2016 – 2020).

SEE PAGE 10

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

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment on special civil appeal cases

Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo and the other Union Supreme Court judges ruled on four special criminal appeal cases and five special civil

appeal cases.

The court also heard a special criminal appeal case and four special civil appeal cases. —Myanmar News Agency ■

State Counsellor receives RCSS/SSA . .

FROM PAGE-1

Also in attendance were Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, National Security Advisor U Thaung Tun, Deputy Minister for the President's Office U Min Thu, Deputy Minister for the Office of the State

Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin and Director General U Zaw Htay, Secretary 3 U Sai Ngin, Central Executive Committee Member U Sai Mane, U Sai Lyen from PMC and office staff U Kham San and U Hao Kham.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker leaves for Sittway to provide cash assistance

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and six other parliamentarians left Yangon by air for Sittway to provide cash to displaced people who fled violence and unrest in northern Rakhine State, yesterday.

The deputy speaker and party were welcomed in Sittway by Rakhine State Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation U Aung Kyaw Zan and officials at the airport.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and party arrive Sittway Airport to provide cash to displaced person. PHOTO: MNA

Will Myanmar lead drug policy reform in Southeast Asia?

FROM PAGE 9

Local and international NGOs provide health services, such as needle and syringe exchange programmes or HIV testing and treatment, in regions most affected by drug use. However, coverage is still largely insufficient, and numerous barriers continue to exist for drug users attempting to access these services. In addition, several international donors who had traditionally funded harm reduction programmes in Myanmar announced their intention to significantly reduce their financial support. In this context, it is all the more important that the Myanmar Government reaffirms its commitment to ensuring an adequate provision of harm reduction services in the country. Concretely, this should translate into the Government allocating dedicated resources to the provision of such services, either directly or indirectly. In addition, the Government should express clear political support and back the work of NGOs that operate in this sector, which often face opposition from local communities or authorities.

Besides harm reduction, the number of hospitals and specialised facilities that offer evidence-based drug dependence treatment services is disproportionately low, especially in regions that are severely affected by injecting drug use. As a matter of priority, methadone programmes, which have proved to be highly effective and are hugely appreciated by drug users, should be urgently and massively scaled up across the territory. The introduction of other types of substitution treatment options,

such as buprenorphine, could be considered too. In a similar way, the opening, under the technical supervision of the Ministry of Health, of voluntary, evidence-informed and community-based treatment programmes offering behavioural therapies would immensely benefit the increasing number of amphetamines users throughout the country. Voluntary rehabilitation programmes for drug users formerly run by the Ministry of Social Welfare should also be re-activated and resourced adequately.

Last but not least, all law enforcement agents, from top ranking to field level officers, should be systematically sensitised to the changes brought in by the amended law, and in particular to its concrete implications and the practice on the ground.

Promote alternative development projects in opium growing areas

Despite an intensification of poppy eradication efforts in the past few years, opium cultivation in Myanmar has almost tripled since 2006. These apparently paradoxical results highlight the importance of addressing the driving factors of illicit crops cultivation, described above. Although the need for rural development is often endorsed in principle, very few communities have so far received any concrete support. In their last statement, the Myanmar Opium Farmers Forum invited “government officials to provide basic services and long-term support to develop communities, instead of only eradicating poppy fields and demanding bribes and illegal taxation”.

As the example of Thailand

mentioned above illustrates, achieving a sustainable reduction of opium cultivation will require the Myanmar Government to make a considerable and sustained investment in rural development projects in impoverished poppy growing areas. Ideally, such development programmes should be integrated within a broader national rural development strategy. Clear policies stating that forced eradication of illicit crops should be avoided at least until people have access to sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities should also be adopted.

Conclusion: will Myanmar become the leader of progressive drug policy reform in South East Asia?

The myth that tough punishment is the only way to, once and for all, “eradicate the drug problem”, remains deeply entrenched in South East Asia. Several countries such as Thailand and the Philippines have implemented their own “war on drugs”, using a combination of heavy prison penalties, harsh law enforcement, forced treatment, the death penalty and even extra-judicial killings of drug users. However, these methods are increasingly showing their limits: far from reducing the health related harms of drug use or protecting communities, they are only proving to exacerbate violence, fuel corruption, and severely undermine the rule of law. The uncomfortable truth is that there are no easy fixes or miracle policies that would address all drug-related problems and issues. There are, however, drug policies that can significantly reduce those prob-

lems and bring immense benefits to both people using drugs and the community at large. The Myanmar Government has acknowledged that criminalising drug use has been counter-productive in many ways and that public health should be a central element of its drug policies. This is significant progress. However, by choosing to exclude possession for personal use from the exemption from prison penalties, Members of the Parliament risk undermining the stated objective of prioritising public health and could even jeopardise the entire reform. Making drug treatment a compulsory requirement for all drug users is also problematic, and could result in simply reproducing the mistakes made by other countries in the region. Similarly, continuing to criminalise subsistence poppy farmers would mean reasserting unfair policies that have already proved to be a huge failure. Effective drug policies should be largely based on public health considerations. But they also need to consecrate human rights and development as equally important pillars. The provisions mentioned above, which are all still contained in the draft bill, directly contradict these two aspects.

Legal reforms are not conducted on a yearly basis, but only occasionally. The Myanmar Government has, now, a unique opportunity to put aside the failures of the past, and adopt evidence-based policies that can improve the lives of thousands of people. The important changes underway undoubtedly represent major progress. Nevertheless, further amendments to the 1993 drug law, in line with the sugges-

tions above, should be seriously considered in order to make sure these changes have the desired impact. In addition, those legal changes will need to be accompanied by serious health and rural development interventions led by the Government.

The old “repressive reflex” may be embedded into many people’s minds. Yet there is nothing inevitable about it. Enlightened leaders and Governments are often at the forefront of legal changes that precede important social transformations. Experience shows that when ambitious reforms are conducted with determination and strong political will, the public rapidly embraces change and soon transitions towards more progressive views.

The real risk for the Government of Myanmar does not lie in its people opposing changes considered “too progressive,” but rather in merely conducting a partial reform, which will fail to deliver tangible results and ultimately backfire on those who approved it. Myanmar has a unique opportunity to make history and take the lead in drug policy reform in Southeast Asia. But in order to do so, it must not hesitate to complete its transition from a repressive to a supportive model, based not only on public health, but also on human rights and development.

(The Transnational Institute (TNI) is an international research and advocacy institute committed to building a just, democratic and sustainable planet. For more than 40 years, TNI has served a unique nexus between social movements, engaged scholars and policy makers.)

UN nuclear watchdog chief says Iran playing by the rules

VIENNA — The head of the UN nuclear watchdog said on Monday Iran was playing by the rules set out in a nuclear accord it signed with six world powers in 2015, after Washington suggested it was not adhering to the deal.

The State Department must notify Congress every 90 days of Iran's compliance with the deal. The next deadline is October, and President Donald Trump has said he thinks by then the United States will declare Iran non-compliant.

Yukiya Amano, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said Iran had not broken any promises and was not receiving special treatment.

"The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the (deal) are being implemented," he said in the text of a speech to a quarterly meeting of the IAEA's 35-member Board of Governors.

Most sanctions on Iran were lifted 18 months ago under the deal and, despite overstepping a limit on its stocks of one chemical, it has adhered to the key limitations imposed on it.

In April, Trump ordered a review of whether a suspension of sanctions on Iran related to the nuclear deal, negotiated un-



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano. PHOTO: REUTERS

der President Barack Obama, was in the US national security interest. He has called it "the worst deal ever negotiated."

The US ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, traveled to Vienna last month to speak with Amano about Iran and asked if the IAEA planned to inspect Iranian military sites, something she has called for.

Iran dismissed the US demand as "merely a dream".

Iran has been applying an Additional Protocol, which is in force in dozens of nations and gives the IAEA access to sites, including military locations, to clarify questions or inconsistencies that may arise.

"We will continue to implement the Additional Protocol in Iran ...as we do in other countries," Amano said.

In addition, the IAEA can request access to Iranian sites

including military ones if it has concerns about activities or materials there that would violate the agreement, but it must show Iran the basis for those concerns. That means new and credible information pointing to such a violation is required first, officials from the agency and major powers say. There is no indication that Washington has presented such information.—Reuters ■

Suicide bomber wounds three in attack on NATO convoy in Afghanistan

KABUL — A suicide bomber attacked a convoy from the NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan on Monday, wounding at least three civilians, officials said.

It was not immediately clear whether there were any casualties among the troops in the convoy which was attacked near Bagram airfield, outside the capital Kabul.

Resolute Support headquarters in Kabul said it was aware of the attack and would release details once more information became available.

District Governor Abdul Shukor Qodossi said at least three civilians had been hurt and one of the vehicles damaged. A statement from the Taliban militants said 13 Americans had been killed and 11 wounded and three armoured vehicles destroyed.—Reuters ■

Spanish Red Cross physiotherapist killed in northern Afghanistan

MAZAR-I-SHARIF, Afghanistan — A Spanish physiotherapist working for the Red Cross in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif was shot dead on Monday, apparently by a hospital patient, officials said. Police said that two arrests had been made and an investigation was under way.

The International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed that the staff member had been killed in its orthopaedic centre in Mazar-i-Sharif. "We are shocked and devastated," it said in a statement on Twitter.

Sheer Jan Durani, a spokesman for the police chief in Balkh province, said two patients were admitted to hospital and one took out a pistol apparently concealed in a wheel chair and shot the woman. Both men were arrested, he said.—Reuters ■

Saudi Arabia arrests prominent cleric: social media

DUBAI — A prominent Saudi religious leader has been arrested, according to social media postings on Sunday, in what appears to be a crackdown on Islamists seen as critics of the conservative kingdom's absolute rulers.

Sheikh Salman al-Awdah, an influential cleric who was imprisoned from 1994-99 for agitating for political change and has 14 million followers on Twitter, appears to have been detained over the weekend, the posting suggested.

In one of his last postings on Twitter, he welcomed a report on Friday suggesting that a three-month-old row between Qatar and four Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia may be resolved.

"May God harmonize be-

tween their hearts for the good of their people," Awdah said on Twitter after a report of a telephone call between Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to discuss ways to resolve the rift which began in June.

Hopes for a breakthrough were quickly dashed when Saudi Arabia suspended any dialogue with Qatar, accusing it of "distorting facts".

Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt accuse Qatar of supporting Islamist militants, a charge Doha denies.

Awdah was the second cleric reported detained by Saudi authorities in the past week. Reports on social media said

that Awad al-Qarni, another prominent cleric with 2.2 million Twitter followers, was also detained from his home in Abha in southern Saudi Arabia.

Like Awdah, Qarni had also expressed support for reconciliation between Arab countries and Qatar.

Saudi officials could not immediately be reached for a comment on the reported arrests.

The al-Saud family has always regarded Islamist groups as the biggest internal threat to its rule over a country where appeals to religious sentiment can never be lightly dismissed and where Islamist militants have previously targeted the state.

A decade ago it fought off an al Qaeda campaign of attacks targeting officials and foreign-

ers that killed hundreds. In the 1990s, the Sahwa (Awakening) movement inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood demanded political reforms that would have weakened the ruling family.

Reports of the arrests coincided with widespread speculation, dismissed by officials, that King Salman intends to abdicate in favor of Crown Prince Mohammed.

Asked about the reasons for the arrests, a Saudi analyst speculated: "(To) crush the Muslim Brotherhood or scare others if their plan is for him (Crown Prince Mohammed) to be king."

Exiled Saudi opposition activists have called for protests on September 15 intended to galvanize opposition to the royal family.—Reuters ■

Hurricane Irma threatens Florida's bustling tourism industry

NEW YORK — Hurricane Irma's path of destruction up Florida's Gulf Coast on Sunday threatens to disrupt a thriving state tourism industry worth more than \$100 billion annually just months ahead of the busy winter travel season.

Some of the state's biggest attractions have announced temporary closures, including amusement park giants Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom, Universal Studios, Legoland and Sea World, which all planned to close through Monday.

About 20 cruise lines have Miami as a home port or a port of call, according to the PortMiami website, and many have had to move ships out of the area and revise schedules.

Carnival Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean have canceled and revised several sailings as a result



Boats are seen at a marina in Coconut Grove as Hurricane Irma arrives at south Florida, in Miami, Florida, US on 10 September, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

of the storm and have offered credits and waivers on trips where passengers are unable to travel.

A Carnival spokesman said the situation in Florida on Sunday was still not clear enough to fully assess how widespread the effects

will be.

"We will know more in the hours ahead since the hurricane is active in Florida right now," spokesman Roger Frizzell said.

Irma made a second Florida landfall on Sunday on southwestern Marco Is-

land as a Category 3 storm bringing winds of 115 miles per hour (185 kph) and life-threatening sea surge.

Disney canceled the Monday sailing of one of its cruise ships and said it is assessing future sailings, which stop throughout the

Caribbean and in the Bahamas.

Florida is one of the world's top tourism destinations. Last year nearly 113 million people visited the state, a new record, and spent \$109 billion, state officials said earlier this year. The first half of 2017 was on track to beat that record pace, officials said.

The damage Irma's winds and storm surge do to Florida's 660 miles (1,060 km) of beaches and the structures built along them during more than 30 years of explosive population growth will be critical to how quickly the state's No 1 industry recovers. The Gulf beaches west of St. Petersburg and Clearwater, are squarely in the storm's path.

In 2016, more than 6.3 million people visited Pinellas County, which encompasses those cities,

and generated more \$9.7 billion in economic activity.

Up and down the wide, sandy beaches of Pinellas County are traditional "old Florida" waterfront hotels such as the Don Cesar, a coral pink 1920s hotel on St Pete Beach, which was closed by the storm. There are also modern high-rises and resorts that are part of the nation's biggest chains and brands including Hyatt Hotels, Marriott International, Intercontinental Hotels Group, Hilton Hotels & Resorts and Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company.

The low-lying barrier islands would be inundated if Irma's storm surge reaches forecast heights of as high as 15 feet (4.6 metres). While some newer structures in the area are built on elevated pilings, many older homes and businesses are not. —Reuters ■

Six slightly injured in irritating substance attack at Frankfurt Airport

BERLIN — A total of 6 persons were slightly injured in Frankfurt Airport as an unknown person sprayed an irritating substance at the Airport of Frankfurt am Main, German police said.

The attack took place at the switch island in Terminal 1 of the airport. The fire brigade said the cause was still unclear and an investigation is under way.

The fire brigade's work finished and the switch opened again, and the operation at the airport continues regularly.

No readings are more noticeable, German police at Frankfurt Airport said on its Twitter account.

At around 11:15 am, six passengers had complained about eye irritation in Hall B at Terminal 1, a spokesman told German media FOCUS Online. Then rescue workers and the fire brigade had been requested, and 20 switches were closed.

However, the fire brigade could not have ascertained any elevated values.—Xinhua ■

Merkel in diplomatic push on N Korea, to speak with Putin-spokesman

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel will speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin as part of high-level talks aimed at increasing pressure on North Korea over its nuclear programme, her spokesman said on Monday.

Berlin remains ready to support discussions about ways to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, spokesman Steffen Seibert told a regular government news conference, noting that Germany is one of few countries with diplomatic ties with Pyongyang.

"That is why we have offered to be helpful in the search for new ways to de-escalate the situation," he said, hours before the UN Security Council was due to vote on a US-drafted resolution that would impose new sanctions on Pyongyang.

"The only conceivable solution is a peaceful and diplomatic one.

But to achieve such a solution, the pressure on North Korea must be increased."

Merkel has already discussed the issue with US President Donald Trump, French President Emmanuel Macron, South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and also planned a telephone call with Putin, he said.

North Korea was condemned globally for conducting its sixth nuclear test on 3 September, which it said was of an advanced hydrogen bomb.

Merkel told the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper on Sunday she was ready to become involved in a diplomatic initiative to end the North Korean nuclear and missiles programme, and suggested the Iran nuclear talks could be a model.

Germany and the five countries on the United Nations Security



German Chancellor Angela Merkel. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

ty Council with veto power took part in talks that led to Iran agreeing a landmark deal in 2015 to curb its nuclear work in return for the lifting of most economic sanctions.

Seibert said there had been no concrete request for Germany's help in initiating discussions over the North Korean crisis.

Merkel, one of the world's longest serving democratic leaders, is expected to win a fourth

term in office in a 24 September vote, with polls giving her conservatives a double-digit lead over their main centre-left rivals.

Merkel is widely seen in Germany as a safe pair of hands at a time of global uncertainty such as the North Korea crisis, Britain's looming departure from the European Union and Donald Trump's presidency in the United States.—Reuters ■

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by the Department of Public Health & Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports for the supply of Non Control Items, Transportation Equipment, Office Equipment, Furniture, Machinery & Equipement in the (2017-2018) Budget year.

Tender documents are available during office hours at the Procurement and Supplying Division Office No(4), Ministry of Health and Sports Commencing from(15.9.2017).

Sealed bids are to be submitted to the office. not late than (16-10-2017) 14:00 hour, after which no bid will be accepted. No telegraph/telex proposal will be accepted.

For detail information please contact the Phone No.067-3411510,067-3411544, Procurement and Supply Division Office, Ministry of Health and Sports.

Procurement and Supply Division
Ministry of Health and Sports

Tokyo commuter train catches fire, 300 passengers evacuate on tracks

TOKYO — A commuter train caught fire Sunday afternoon in Tokyo after being stopped next to a building along the tracks that was ablaze, forcing some 300 passengers to evacuate.

No one was hurt in the incident that occurred on the Odawara Line operated by Odakyu Electric Railway Co between Sangubashi and Yoyogi-hachiman stations, but about 71,000 people were affected by subsequent delays.

On Monday, the police inspected the fire site, a three-story building housing a boxing gym, to investigate the cause of the blaze. Police said the fire may have broken out on the third floor, where the gym is a tenant, given that a person connected to the gym has acknowledged smoking on the floor.

Some passengers said they were unaware the train had caught fire until they came out of the cars. "I was scared. It was good that I was able to evacuate," a passenger said.

"The car was filled with smoke and I felt it was getting hot," said Katsumi Tokuyama, a 39-year-old Tokyo resident who was on board the train. "When I saw the footage later I was surprised that the blaze was much more intense than I had thought."

Riko Kinefuchi, a 16-year-old high school



A screenshot from YouTube in this supplied photo shows flames and smoke spewing from the roof of an Odawara Line train in Tokyo on 10 September, 2017, after it caught fire from a building along the tracks that was ablaze, forcing some 300 passengers to evacuate. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

student, saw a burning building on her left side when the train stopped. She was in the third car and eventually smelled smoke.

It took about 30 minutes to complete the evacuation after the emergency stop between Sangubashi and Yoyogi-hachiman stations. But many passengers were calm and walked to a crossing without any

chaos, according to Kinefuchi.

A police officer had pressed an emergency button at a crossing near where firefighters were tackling the burning three-story building in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward, meaning the train was automatically brought to a halt opposite it.

The roof of the train, which was inbound to

Shinjuku Station, caught fire at around 4:05 pm on Sunday, producing black smoke.

The driver started to move the train to ensure safety but halted it again after about 120 metres after being notified by firefighters about the fire on the roof.

The passengers were guided by train crew to leave the train from the front and rear cars. Odakyu is investigating whether its response when the train stopped and its evacuation measure were appropriate.

According to the operator, the body of the train is made of stainless steel and immune to catching fire. But part of the train's roof is covered with urethane resin, which plays the role of an insulator, to protect it from overhead wires with high-voltage current.

Although fire-retardant material is mixed in the resin, it could still catch fire, Odakyu said.

About 25 fire engines were dispatched to attend the building fire and blaze on the roof of the second carriage of the eight-car train. The fires were put out after about one hour and 45 minutes.

The fire burned a floor area of some 80 square meters at the building and some 15 square meters of the train's roof. —Kyodo News ■

Philippines says some rebels ready to surrender as troops advance in Marawi

MARAWI CITY, Philippines — Some Islamic State-linked militants besieging the southern Philippines city of Marawi have sent "feelers" they are prepared to surrender after three and a half months of fighting, the military said on Monday.

Philippine forces have used loudspeakers urging militants to give themselves up, telling the estimated 50 to 60 fighters left in the city their lives would be spared if they disarm, change out of their black clothes and walk to a designated location.

"Hopefully, we will have surrenders within the next days," spokesman Colonel Romeo Brawner told a news conference.

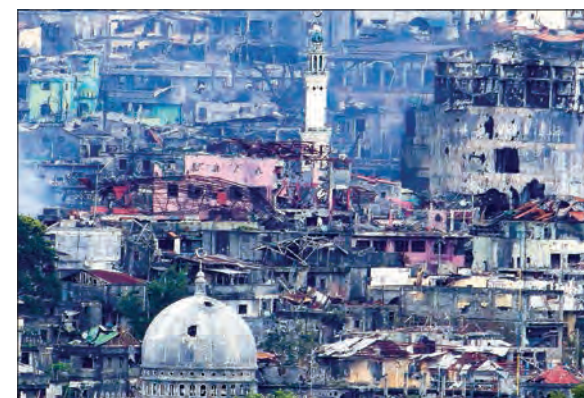
"There are feelers.

Definitely, there are feelers," he added, declining to elaborate.

The surrender offer came after a renewed, if short-lived, effort by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte to start back-channel talks with militants, with a former Marawi mayor Omar Solitario Ali to have acted as an intermediary.

Duterte on Saturday ruled out the possibility of allowing rebels to flee in exchange for the release of dozens of hostages.

Two troops were killed at the weekend, taking to 147 the number of security forces killed in the Marawi conflict. Some 655 militants and 45 civilians have been killed, according to the army.—Reuters ■



Damaged buildings and houses are seen as government troops continue their assault during clearing operations against pro-IS militants group which have seized control over large parts of Marawi City, Philippines on 11 September, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10.9.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV PACITA VOY. NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PACITA VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10.9.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

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For **Oris Holding AG**,
C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botataung Township, Yangon.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Dated 12th September 2017 kmma@kcyangon.com

Spicey skits bring an Emmy for Melissa McCarthy

LOS ANGELES — Melissa McCarthy won an Emmy on Sunday for her spoofs of former White House spokesman Sean Spicer on “Saturday Night Live” in television sketches that went viral.

With slicked back hair and wearing ill-fitting suits, McCarthy played Spicer, whom she dubbed Spicey, as an enraged man who attacks the media, craves the praise of his boss, and rides a motorized speaker’s podium.

McCarthy on Sunday was named best guest actress in a comedy series for her impressions. The star of “Bridesmaids” and “Mike & Molly” was not at the ceremony in Los Angeles to accept the award.

Spicer quit his post as White House communications director in July after six months of stormy encounters with the media that, along with McCarthy’s sketches, turned him into a figure of ridicule. NBC’s “Saturday Night Live” went into television’s Emmy awards this year with 22 nominations, reflecting the renewed popularity of the satirical sketch show and its most-watched season in 23 years. Alec Baldwin also is in the running next week



Actress Melissa McCarthy. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

for an Emmy for his impressions of US President Donald Trump on “Saturday Night Live,” while the show’s Kate McKinnon has been nominated for her roles as losing Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton and Trump White House aide Kellyanne Conway. On Sunday, “Saturday Night Live” also picked up an Emmy for comedian Dave Chapelle’s stint as guest actor and host. “Saturday Night Live” is broadcast on NBC, a unit of Comcast Corp (CMCSA.O). Awards for the major Emmy categories, including best TV comedy and drama series, will be handed out on 17 September in a televised ceremony hosted by comedian Stephen Colbert. —Reuters ■

Damon, Clooney defend black family’s portrayal in ‘Suburbicon’

TORONTO — The African-American family struggling to fit in to an all-white suburb in 1950s America in the George Clooney-directed dark satire “Suburbicon” was intentionally portrayed in a one-dimensional way, actor Matt Damon said on Sunday.

The film, based on a script written by Joel and Ethan Coen, stars Damon and Julianne Moore and depicts the violent efforts of the neighborhood’s white residents to oust a black family, the Meyers, after blaming them for a deadly break-in.

The film has received mixed reviews since its world premiere in Venice earlier this month, with some critics hammering its superficial treatment of the black characters.

“The Meyers family, you never know them, right, and that’s the point,” Damon told a news conference at the Toronto International Film Festival. “Because the town didn’t get to know them, they just freaked out.” Moore added: “They blamed them for absolutely everything and then you see



Actors Julianne Moore and Matt Damon attend a news conference to promote the film “Suburbicon” at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in Toronto, Canada on 10 September, 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS

us in our little house quietly going about our dirty business.”

Moore plays both Damon’s wife and her sister, who hatches a plot with Damon’s character Gardner Lodge to stage a home invasion and get rid of the wife to start a new life together.

The film lands at a time of deep unease over race in America after white supremacists clashed with anti-racism protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia last month, leaving one dead.

“Its bigger problem is a

timely subplot about virulent racism among white Americans that comes off as a mishandled afterthought,” Hollywood Reporter said. Film site Collider added that by depriving the Meyers of individual voices and having them “stand in for all black families, Clooney turns them into a cardboard cutout.” “We wanted it to be entertaining, we didn’t want it to be a documentary and we didn’t want it to be an ‘eat your spinach’ piece of filmmaking,” Clooney told the news conference. —Reuters ■

Stone lauds Billie Jean King at ‘Battle of the Sexes’ screening

TORONTO — Academy Award winner Emma Stone praised tennis great Billie Jean King’s for pushing social change for women while battling her own insecurities at the Toronto premiere of “Battle of the Sexes” on Sunday night.

Stone plays King in the story of her famous 1973 tennis match against retired former champion and male chauvinist Bobby Riggs, played by Steve Carell.

“I think the thing that was most inspiring to me... was that Billie Jean was going through so many personal trials at the time and discovering so much about herself,” Stone said on the red carpet at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Along with the highly-publicized grudge match, the film also covers King’s sexual exploration via a off-court relationship with a woman. She did not publicly identify as a lesbian until 1981.

“In this time period she was confused and scared and still was able to effect such massive social



The cast arrives for the film “Battle of the Sexes” at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), in Toronto, Canada on 10 September, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

change,” said Stone, who won an Oscar earlier this year for “La La Land”.

King, who won the match, played a pivotal role in the fight for equal pay for female athletes and is considered a major influ-

ence on the women’s liberation movement as a whole. But more than 40 years later, the issue of equal pay, both in tennis and the wider working world, is still simmering. “It’s eerily relevant these days, and sadly it’s, I think, more

relevant than it should be at this point,” Carell said ahead of the screening.

A tennis tournament executive, Raymond Moore of the BNP Paribas Open, last year said that top-level women’s players rode

“on the coattails of the men” and were “very, very lucky” to have equal prize money.

He stepped down from the role several months later amid heavy criticism, with tournament owner Larry Ellison citing King’s “historic campaign for the equal treatment of women in tennis” when announcing the move.

The film has received early awards-season buzz since first screening at Telluride earlier this month, with Stone’s performance especially well-received.

The Toronto festival is an important stop for filmmakers looking to showcase their work in the long Hollywood awards season that culminates with the Oscars on 4 March.

“Battle of the Sexes” was directed by husband and wife team Valerie Faris and Jonathan Dayton, who previously worked with Carell for their 2006 film “Little Miss Sunshine”. Stone and Carell had previously worked together on 2011’s “Crazy, Stupid, Love”. —Reuters ■

Films in honour of Democracy Day to be shown at 47 cinemas nationwide for seven days

THE Myanmar Democracy Film Festival will be launched on 15th September, showing five films at 47 cinemas nationwide from 15 to 21 September.

People can enjoy the films free of charge on 15th September.

The festival will be held in honour of the International Democracy Day and is designed for developing spirits and habits of the democratic society in youths.

Among them, the special five films are “Glittering With Gold in the Sunlight”, “The Great Myanmar”, “The Day with Blue Sky”, “Thara Saw Hti,” and “Demo Yatkwet”.

In Yangon Region, the cinemas which will show the films are Thamada and JCGV Cineplex at Junction City-1 in Dagon Township, Myayadana in Thaketa Township, Mega Ace in North Okkalapa Township, Hmawbi Paradiso in Hmawbi Township, Nawade in Mayangon Township, Maha Myaing in Insein Township, Myahantha in Thanlyin Township, Shwepyitha in Shwepyitha Township and Red Radiance at Hledan.

The cinemas in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area are Aungthabyay and JCGV in Nay Pyi Taw Council, Winleik, JCGV and Myogonyang in Mandalay, Cherrylwin and Movie Planet in PyinOoL-

win, Grand Cinema in Meikhtila, Myaylatgon in Myingyan and Paradiso in Kyaukpadaung.

The cinemas in other region are Mingalar Cineplex-1 in Bago, New 3D in Toungoo and Mingalar

Tun Thiri in Pyay, Mingalar Sanpya in Magway, Yadana in Yenanchaung, Thiha in Pakokku, paradise in Monywa, Paradiso in Shwebo, Shwepyitaw in Patheingyi, Paradiso in Pyaw, Paradiso in

Bogalay, Aungmyingalar in Dawei and Myeik Mingalar and Hello in Myeik, JCGV-1 Cineplex in Mawlamyine, Paradiso in Thaton, Ayea in Myittha, Star in Bhamo, Tatnaywin and USaukpan in Hpa-

an, Thunshwesin in Myawady, Mega Ace Cineplex Hall-1 and Myathukha in Taunggyi, Paradiso in Aungmye, Aungmye, Theinthaik and Thida Aye in Lashio.—Khin Zarli



Ivy League graduate and dance champion crowned Miss America

ATLANTIC CITY (NJ) — An Ivy League graduate and national dance champion from North Dakota was crowned Miss America on Sunday, becoming the first contestant from the state to win the nearly 100-year-old contest.

Cara Mund, from Bismarck, ND, a graduate of Brown University in Rhode Island, who has been accepted to Notre Dame's law school, trained for several summers with the world-famous Rockettes.

Mund, 23, was one of 51 contestants in the pageant, representing the 50 United States and the District of Columbia.

Mund, who adopted the Make-a-Wish foundation which benefits children with life-threatening conditions as her platform

for the competition, performed a jazz dance to “The Way You Make Me Feel” for the contest's talent portion, wearing a double-breasted black mini-dress with a matching fedora-type hat.

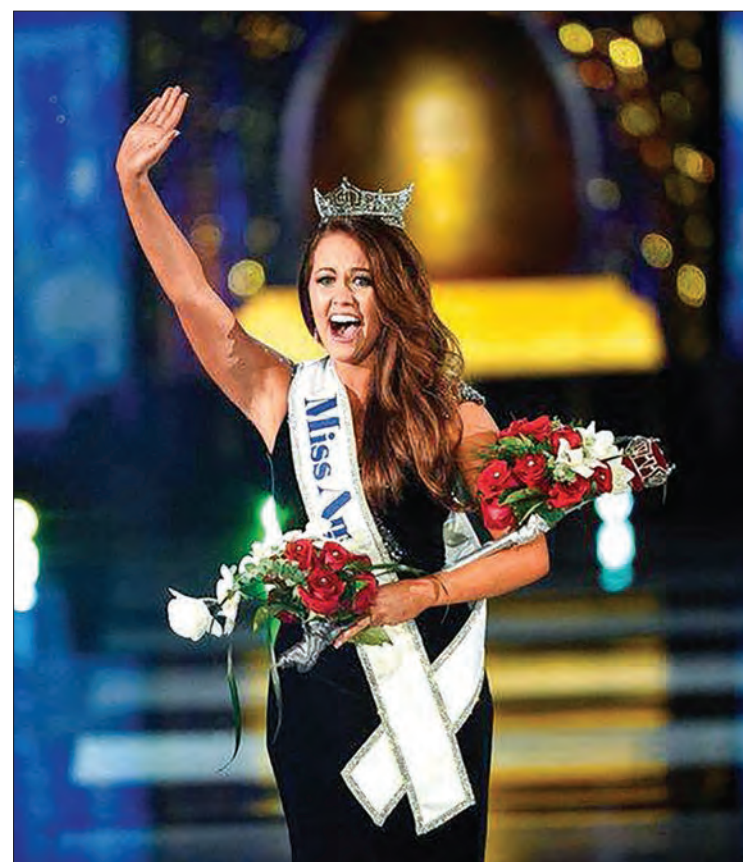
In a question-and-answer session, Mund weighed in on the United States' recent withdrawal from the Paris climate accord, saying she thought it was a “bad decision.”

“Whether you believe it (climate change) or not, we need to be at that table,” she added. The first runner-up was Miss Missouri, Jennifer Davis, who competed on a platform of diversity. She was followed by contestants from New Jersey, Kaitlyn Schoeffel, District of Columbia, Briana Kinsey and Texas, Mar-

gana Wood.

The pageant was broadcast live on ABC from Atlantic City, New Jersey. The contest returned to the seaside gambling resort a few years ago after nearly a decade in Las Vegas. It was dropped by ABC in 2004 following a steep ratings decline, but returned after years on cable.

Judges scored contestants, who ranged from teen-agers to the cut-off age of 24, based on talent, the live question segment, a personal interview and appearances in gowns and swimsuits. Many of the entrants drew on music or dance for the talent portion. The winner receives a six-figure salary, expenses for the year and a \$50,000 scholarship.—Reuters ■



Miss North Dakota Cara Mund reacts after being announced as the winner of the 97th Miss America Competition in Atlantic City, New Jersey US on 10 September, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar trounced Philippines to grab semifinal chance



Myanmar football player (center) vies for the ball at yesterday match at Thuwunna Stadium. **PHOTO: MFF**

Myanmar beat the Philippines 7-0 yesterday to keep in touch with Indonesia for a place in the semifinal of the AFF Under-18 Championship hosted in Yangon. The Philippines made a good defense along the first half hence Myanmar was not able to score any goal until the 50 minutes. But with the best efforts of Myanmar in the second half, it was obvious that the lack of fitness

was seen on the Philippines side. In the 51 minutes, the Philippines defense line was ruptured when Htet Phyoe Wai ran in down the left for Pyae Sone Naing to score an opening goal for Myanmar.

The two quick goals later by Win Naing Tun scored in 56 and 63 minutes guaranteed that the game is already over. Myanmar added more goals through

Kaung Khant's hat tricks in 74 minutes, 76 minutes and 90 minutes respectively.

The other goal was also scored by Myanmar's star Naing Tun in the 85 minutes.

With Vietnam having secured their place in the semi-finals this year, the pressure was on Myanmar to keep up the pace alongside Indonesia from Group B. — KyawZin Lin ■

Vietnam secures semifinal of AFF U18 Championship

Vietnam beat Indonesia by a decisive score of 3-0 in yesterday's AFF U-18 Championship match at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon with securing the first semifinal berth by collecting nine points from three matches played within the Group B. Indonesia got six points after beating Myanmar and Philippines respectively.

Vietnam footballers were more patient at the start when they absorbed much of the first-half offensive play.

Malaysian Goal keeper Muhammad Riyandi had to sideline after getting knee injury in the

37minute interrupted the team's confidence and it took just three minutes for Vietnam to get an opening goal.

Some uncertain Indonesian defense allowed Viet Nam striker Le Van Nam to slam home a minute before the break, giving Vietnam a 2-0 advantage going into the second half.

Both teams played more aggressively in the second half and four minutes to the end, Vietnam made sure of the win with the third goal scored by its star player Bui Hoang Viet Anh heading in the goal box within the close range. — KyawZin Lin ■

Mourinho recalls Smalling and Lindelof for Basel game

LONDON—Chris Smalling and Victor Lindelof will start at the heart of Manchester United's defence when they host FC Basel on their Champions League return on Tuesday, manager Jose Mourinho has said.

Defenders Eric Bailly and Phil Jones, who have started all four of United's Premier League games this season, are serving UEFA bans heading into the European campaign.

The duo helped United keep three consecutive clean

sheets in the Premier League before their perfect start to the season ended with a 2-2 draw at Stoke City on Saturday.

"He's (Jones) playing well for us," Mourinho told reporters.

"He's probably tired with two consecutive matches with the national team so it's good that on Tuesday he gets his rest and it's an opportunity for Smalling and Lindelof to play the Champions League match."—Reuters ■

Anderson says Nadal, not nerves, was his undoing at US Open

NEW YORK — First-time grand slam finalist Kevin Anderson said he felt relaxed going into Sunday's US Open decider but was overwhelmed by the "conundrum" of Rafa Nadal's ruthless all-court game.

Although the same age as the 31-year-old Spaniard, the late-blooming South African faced an opponent contesting his 23rd grand slam final and fourth at Flushing Meadows.

"I think the nerves that I was maybe going to feel, you know, I felt pretty good out there," Anderson told reporters after his 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 defeat.

"I thought I was hitting the ball very well.

"It was more the conundrum of playing Rafa as opposed to being in my first final."

World number one Nad-

al played near-perfect tennis on Sunday, committing just 11 unforced errors, never facing a break point and winning all 16 points at the net, including a beautifully timed volley to clinch the title.

That level of performance was too much for Anderson, who relies heavily on a huge serve that typically wins bunches of free points off lesser opponents.

Not so against Nadal, a human backboard who pressured the South African's serve from the outset and broke him four times from his nine opportunities.

"Rafa made it very difficult for me tonight," he said of the Mallorcan, who celebrated his third title at Flushing Meadows.

"I felt he got a lot of returns back. He varied his return position quite a lot. You know, one of

the best defenders in our sport."

Federer and Nadal each won two of the four grand slam titles this year, with the 36-year-old Swiss taking the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

Anderson said that if 16-times grand slam champion Nadal could stay healthy, he would have a shot of catching Roger Federer's record of 19.

"It's very close right now," he said.

"Staying healthy would be the biggest obstacle to that. Roger is obviously a few years older than him, but he's had an amazing year.

"I guess time will tell on that."

Anderson did not expect the competition in the men's game to let up in 2018, when 'Big Four' players Novak Djokovic and Andy



Rafael Nadal (R) of Spain holds the trophy after defeating Kevin Anderson of South Africa in New York, US on 10 September. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Murray are expected to return from injury.

"I expect them to be healthy and ready to go in a similar fash-

ion that Rafa and Roger were this year," he said.

"I think it will be very interesting next year."—Reuters ■