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President U Win Myint, centre, meeting with Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo, sixth from left, and Supreme Court Judges yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President meets Chief Justice and Supreme Court judges

PRESIDENT U Win Myint met with Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo and Supreme Court Justices at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday at 2 p.m.

During the meeting, the President discussed the work that needs to be accomplished to firmly establish the judiciary sector.

President U Win Myint also called for the conducting of responsible management at all levels, from the region and state to the township level.

The President further said there needs to be stricter regulations in maintaining court evidence, as loss and damage costs must be paid through the national budget.

He noted that greater amounts of foreign investment will flow into the country and the country's economy will develop only when there is rule of law and the country is free from corruption.

President U Win Myint said that skilled and truly capable persons must be assigned positions in the judiciary to strength-

en the sector. He noted that the Chief Justice has the responsibility to strengthen the entire country's judiciary sector and to properly guide judiciary officials at the state and regional level.

President U Win Myint urged Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo and Supreme Court judges to work to strengthen the judiciary sector with the help and support of organisations that provide legal aid and rule of law centres.

Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo briefed the President about the judiciary processes,

management of court evidence, challenges faced by courts, responsibilities taken by the Supreme Court of the Union, the number of court proceedings being conducted, and the status of reforming the organisational structure for employees.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister for the President's Office U Min Thu, as well as Supreme Court Judges U Thar Htay, U Mya Thein, U Myint Aung, U Aung Zaw Thein, U Mya Han, U Myo Tint, U Soe Naing, and U Khin Maung Kyi. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Mro ethnic villagers receive new houses

RAKHINE STATE authorities handed over new houses to Mro ethnic people at the Thit-tonna Gwason Village-tract in Maungtau Township yesterday.

The 86 houses were funded by the Ayeyawady Region Government and Mandalay Region Government, and handed over to Mro ethnic families from Karuchaung, Myatkhaung-taung, Panchaung and Inn Chaung villages from Thit-tonna Gwason Village-tract in Maungtau Township.

The authorities also delivered a set of solar panels and a family kit, each donated by the Ministry of Industry to Mro ethnic families who lost their homes in terrorist attacks last year.

"We are delighted to stay in the new house in the plains area, instead of in the hills where we used to live," said U Aung Phaw, a Mro ethnic man. Following the ceremony, another 30 houses donated by Daw Khin Kyi Foundation and 10 houses by the Department for Development of Border Areas and National Races, were also handed over to Mro ethnic families from Kontaing Village. Authorities assisted ethnic people who moved into the houses and, along with solar panels and family kits, provided household utensils.

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Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye meets with people at IDP camps in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye meets IDPs in Bangladesh

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye led a delegation to Bangladesh to visit the Ukhia IDP camp in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, and met with the district commissioner.

Dr. Win Myat Aye and his delegation were accompanied by Myanmar Ambassador to Bangladesh U Lwin Oo when they arrived in Ukhia IDP camp's guest hall to meet with the district commissioner and UN representatives. They were briefed on the resettlement, food supply, and healthcare provided in the camp. The Union Minister and UEHRD Chief Coordinator Prof. Dr. Aung Tun Thet explained the reason for

their visit and noted that they are ready for the repatriation process of IDPs.

Afterwards, the Union Minister met with IDPs in the camp and explained to them about the development process in Rakhine, based on suggestions by the Rakhine Advisory Commission, the readiness for the repatriation process from Myanmar's side, the humanitarian aid provided in Rakhine, the UEHRD's resettlement project, the registration for national verification cards and its benefits, the freedom to travel, housing projects, vocational training, easy access to education and healthcare, and the ongoing process of closing IDP camps

that were established in 2012.

The Union Minister also explained to the IDPs that they were here to provide assistance to IDPs who wish to return to Myanmar before the rainy season sets in, and to help with any problems they may be facing in the host country. He also told them they are ready for the repatriation process to begin.

This was followed by the Union Minister, Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Myanmar Women's Affair Federation Chairperson Dr. Thet Thet Zin and officials meeting individually with the IDPs and discussing various matters. The Myanmar delegation then toured the camp on motor vehicles.—Thura Zaw ■



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat meets with Indian Ambassador Mr. Vikram Misri in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives Indian Ambassador to Myanmar

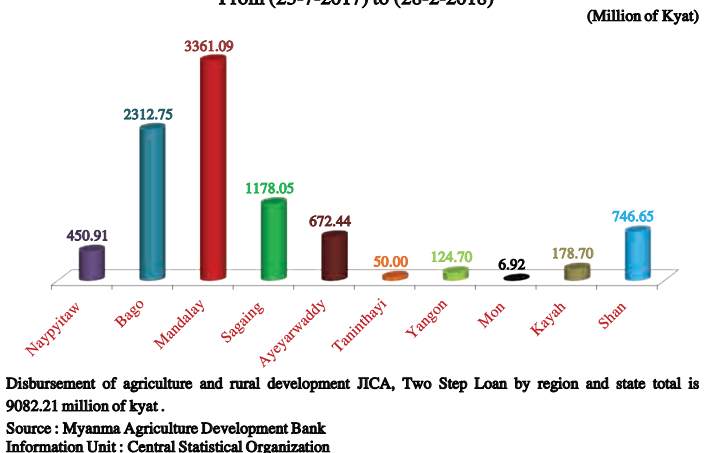
PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Vikram Misri at the Hluttaw building of the Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed the cooperation be-

tween Myanmar and India, and the legislative operations of the Hluttaw.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung alias U Tun Tun Hein and other officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Disbursement of Agriculture and Rural Development JICA, Two Step Loan By Region/State From (23-7-2017) to (28-2-2018)



Development of elephant conservation-based tourism

May Thet Hnin

THE Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE) is planning to develop Elephant Conservation-Based Tourism (ECBT) in time for the September tourist season in co-operation with the tour agencies.

Officials from the MTE discussed ECBT with officials from the tourism industry at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Travel Association office and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Yangon on 9 April.

The enterprise has so far opened 18 elephant camps across the country, with some 205 elephants. The MTE has explained the operation for the local and

foreign visitors. The entrepreneurs also shared their opinion on MTE's explanation.

"In 2016-2017, MTE suspended its logging operations for one year. Therefore, we have implemented ECBT for the conservation of more than 3,000 elephants and elephant mahout job opportunities", said an official from MTE.

Local and foreign tourists can feed, ride and wash the elephants. The visitors can also observe the elephant dancing at the camps. The visitors can also observe other significant places and other plantations which are very close to the elephant camp area. The elephant camps are also equipped with children's playgrounds and restaurants.

To attract the tourists, an elephant museum has been constructed inside some elephant camps. Some camps have also planted gardens to enhance the green environment. The MTE is planning to construct more places for the visitors to take a rest.

"There are thousands of tourists who visit the elephant camps in foreign countries every month. Therefore, we would like to suggest that we should build some small tents for the tourists to stay in and sell traditional foods. We also suggested to change the price. We have to make more decoration in this rainy season to attract more tourists", said U Min Thein, deputy chairman of the Republic of the

Union of Myanmar Travel Association. The entrepreneurs have proposed reducing entrance and riding fees for elephant camps.

"We will make a decision at the regular meeting of the enterprises", said U Moe Myint, Deputy General Manager of MTE.

"The admission fee for foreigner is Ks20,000 and the fee for riding an elephant for foreigners is Ks20,000. Therefore, nobody will ride the elephant. So, the entrance fees need to be changed for foreigners", said an entrepreneur who attended the meeting.

ECBT is conducted with the aim to implement elephant conservation and ecotourism at the same time, to create job opportunities for local people and

mahouts, and to earn the country income from the tourism industry. In 2016-2017 fiscal year, more than Ks120 million was earned from elephant camps. In 2017-2018, the income has increased to more than Ks300 million.

Thirteen elephant camps out of 18 have been opened in the time of the new government. The MTE has also planned to open more elephant camps other states and regions. There are more than 6,578 elephants in Myanmar, including 3,078 of MTE's elephants, 2,000 privately owned elephants and over 1,500 wild elephants. The MTE is conducting the elephant conservation effort in cooperation with international organisations. ■



Today at this time, we are witnessing the transformation of an era and a system in accordance with democratic principles. This is just the beginning of the democratic transition. To make this transition process smooth and successful, it is very important for our peoples, government employees and civil servants to change their dogmatic mindset and habits. Those government institutions which are lagging behind in the transformation process will need to be put under tight management controls. The country's weak judiciary system would need to be strengthened. More efforts need to be exerted to stamp out corruption. More efforts need to be exerted to prevent human rights violations. More efforts need to be exerted to crack down illegal drug trade. We need to manage public funds properly so that there is no wastage. Measures need to be taken to return confiscated farmland to farmers and to give compensation to farmers for losses they have suffered in accordance with the law. We also need to improve the socio-economic life of farmers, improve the lives of workers and ensure that students gain access to higher education.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)



Let me solemnly thank all our friends at home and abroad, who have helped us and are still helping us; organizations, business entrepreneurs, people from academia and professionals, and especially our people who have supported and assisted us with understanding and empathy. Those who have helped us once, we should never forget. Those who have helped us again and again are our real friends; they bring fulfillment to our lives.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)

President U Win Myint meets with Anti-Corruption Commission

PRESIDENT U Win Myint yesterday urged the Anti-Corruption Commission to perform its duties with more conscientiousness and increased reach as part of a nationwide effort to reduce cronyism, bribery and malpractice in the country.

"Freedom from corruption is the sine qua non for building a clean government and good governance, and it is also connected with foreign investment and the image of our country," said President U Win Myint at the meeting with the commission at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Yesterday's meeting, which was attended by U Aung Kyi, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission and its members, is a sign that the new President, who assumed office last month, is



President U Win Myint, center, shakes hands with a member of the Anti-Corruption Commission in a meeting yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

making anti-corruption a priority in his administration.

The President urged the commission to openly report on

possible interference by those in authority in anti-corruption case and any abuse of power in defending the accused. He also

advised the commission on ways to increase the reach of anti-corruption investigations, such as forming sub-commissions in re-

gions and states, collaborating with governmental departments or assigning an in-charge as part of efforts for expanding the works of the commission. Regarding its duties and responsibilities, the commission should carry out its duties decisively and without discrimination, he said.

U Aung Kyi, the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, clarified about the reform processes and future projects. Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister for the President's Office U Min Thu, Secretary of Anti-Corruption Commission U San Win, members of commission U Soe Tint, U Aung Lwin, U Han Nyunt, U Aung Than Myint, U Khin Maung Myint, U Myo Myint, Daw Aye Aye Mu, U Zaw Win and Daw Lei Lei Thwin. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe attends Signing Ceremony

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe attended the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between Ministry of Health and Sports, UNOPS and Save the Children at the Horizon Lake View Hotel yesterday afternoon.

At the ceremony, Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe, Mr. Michael Mc Grath and Mr. Sanjay Mathur signed the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Sports, Save the Children and UNOPS.

UNOPS Asia Region, Regional Director Sanjay Mathur and Regional Director of Save the Children Michael Mc Grath expressed their thanks and ap-



Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony between Ministry of Health and Sports, UNOPS and Save the Children in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

preciation.

Global Fund will support Myanmar through UNOPS,

with funding of US\$ 247.89 million to combat AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in the

2018-2020 period, as well as with US\$90.85 million through Save the Children.

Afterwards, the Union Minister for Health and Sports described the ongoing process, the priority tasks, as well as the strategy and technical sectors of the Ministry at the 12th Myanmar Health Sector Coordination Committee M-HSCC.

Also, officials from UNOPS explained the findings, suggestions and HIV—TB assistance from the Global Fund Office of Inspector General (OIG), along with National Committee on MDR-TB Management Dr. Si Thu Aung, and Deputy Director General Dr. Thandar Lwin explained the proposal for combating TB, while Mr. Orenn Ginzbur reviewed the funding from 3MDG. —Myanmar News Agency ■

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Yangon University to offer fishery science course from December

By May Thet Hnin

THE Yangon University will offer a bachelor's course in fishery science from December.

"The university will accept more than 30 students for the fishery science subject, which will be a four-year course. The curriculum for first- to fourth-year students was prepared recently, said U Tun Win Myint, Director of Fishery Department (Yangon).

"Aquaculture has been list-

ed as the top priority in the curriculum, because it is integral to the development of our country. We need more human resources in this sector," said Daw Toe Nandar Tin, Vice Chairperson of Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

The syllabus for the fishery science course was created by professionals from the Fishery Department and university teachers, in line with the international curriculum.

"We have also started pro-

viding teachers' training courses recently. We request authorities not to transfer teachers who have already undergone the training," she added.

The Fishery Science Department will be set up as a branch under the Yangon University's Zoology Department. The fishery science course will be taught in other states and regions, depending on the availability of teachers.

"Fish and shrimp breeding will be implemented as the sec-

ond priority sector in Myanmar," said Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu during a meeting with entrepreneurs.

More professionals will be available in the livestock breeding sector once the fishery science course is introduced. The subject will benefit our country, said entrepreneurs.

Myanmar exported some 568,227.327 metric tonnes of marine products, worth US\$ 717.717 million, last fiscal year. ■

Elephant poachers arrested in Rakhine Yoma

AN ELEPHANT poacher who killed an elephant, along with three accomplices, was arrested on 3 April at Kyainali area in Gwa Township, Rakhine State.

Forester U Aung Kyaw Myint and officials conducted an investigation in Rakhine Yoma, after receiving information from Friends of Wildlife (FOW).

On 2 April, they discovered

the dried tusks, skins, meat and other elephant parts in six gunny sacks, weighing approximately 70 visses (over 114 Kg), near a creek in Kyainali.

The following day, 3 April, the elephant poacher was arrested.

Police are working to arrest other poachers, too.—Nyi Too ■



Forestry Department Officials inspect elephant's parts near a creek in Kyainali. **PHOTO: NYI TOO**

Food items from star beans (Sacha Inchi) to be produced in Lashio Township's villages

FOOD items will be prepared from star beans (Sacha Inchi) in Lashio Township's villages, according to the star bean cultivators' network.

"Earlier, more than 20 villages from Lashio Township cultivated star beans for a trial period.

As the production was successful, we are planning to produce star bean dry leaves, star bean oil and star bean rice.

Then, we will distribute them in the local market," said U Sai Kyaw Htet, a member of the star bean cultivators' network.

"Most of the local farmers cultivated organic crops. They also practised mixed farming with pineapples and eaglewood. The cultivation of star beans costs between Ks1 million and 1.5 million per acre," he added.

A local farmer from Nam

Tum village-track in Lashio cultivated between two and six acres of star beans. They have cultivated star beans on a commercial scale, along with pineapples, eaglewood and red sandalwood.

Companies from Shan State (North) imported star bean seeds from Thailand.

The companies then asked the local farmers to grow them as organic crops on a five- or

15-year contract.

Recently, more than 100 acres of star beans were cultivated in the villages of Shan (North), said U Sai Aung Myat Toe, a member of the star bean cultivators' network.

Local farmers earn profits of some Ks1 million per acre by selling star beans. Star beans food items are exported mainly to China and Thailand.—Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

Tourist arrivals in Myanmar increase in March

TOURIST arrivals in Myanmar have increased this March, compared with the same period last year, according to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA).

Tourists visit Myanmar through its three international

airports, as well as the border checkpoints on bikes or in vehicles.

Some tourists also flock to Myanmar in luxury cruise liners.

Some 77,111 tourists entered Myanmar in March 2018,

including some 51,461 tourists with tourist visas, and some 19,753 tourists with business visas, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, some 542,599 tourists visited Myanmar with tourist visas,

while some 238,432 tourists had business visas.

Some 531,951 tourists had visiting visas, while some 244,412 tourists had business visas in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, respectively.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myawady gate registered highest value of individual trading

BORDER trade with the use of Individual Trading Cards (ITCs) reached its highest record of Ks34.4 billion at Myawady gate during the 2017-2018 fiscal year, according to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

Individual trading card holders primarily imported goods through Myawady gate, with exports worth only Ks6.8 million.

The Trade Department issued 168 cards to individual traders between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018, and individual trading card holders conducted trade worth Ks45.9 billion. Exports were valued at



Vehicles seen at Myawady border trade zone. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

only Ks5.3 billion, while imports reached more than Ks40.6 billion. The value of trade carried

out by individual card holders last FY was registered at over Ks3.2 billion in Tamu, over Ks51

million in Muse, Ks34.4 billion in Myawady, Ks944 million in Tachilek, over Ks56 million in Lwejel, over Ks4 million in Chinshwehaw, over Ks1.71 billion in Kanpikete, over Ks869 million in Kawthoung, over Ks1.2 billion in Reed, over Ks3 million at Htantlan Township, over Ks3.33 billion in Mawtaung and Ks160 million in Kengtung, according to official statistics from the Commerce Ministry.

The trade values with ITC were reported at over Ks737 million from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, over Ks6.6 billion in FY 2013-2014, over Ks9.3 billion in FY 2014-2015, over Ks6.4

billion in FY 2015-2016 and over Ks18.9 billion in FY 2016-2017.

The Trade Department has so far issued 1,432 cards, with 292 cards from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, 261 cards in FY 2013-2014, 317 cards in FY 2014-2015, 146 cards in FY 2015-2016, 248 cards in FY 2016-2017 and 168 cards in FY 2017-2018. The Trade Department issued trade cards in a bid to boost border trade. A businessman can trade Ks3 million worth of goods per day using ITC, and then, the Trade Department granted trade values of up to Ks15 million per day, which is a five-day-trade-value.

—Ko Htet ■

ADB forecasts GDP growth of 7.2 per cent within two years

May Thet Htin

The Asian Development Bank predicts growth in Myanmar's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will reach 7.2 per cent by 31st September, 2018.

GDP growth picked up in FY 2017-2018, to 6.8 per cent, while the current account deficit widened. With continued economic reform, growth should be sustained this year and accelerate to 7.2 per cent next year, said Mr. Newin Sinsiri, ADB's Country Director for Myanmar.

Agriculture, which constitutes 30 per cent of GDP, grew 3.5 per cent in FY 2017-2018, compared to the previous FY 2016-2017. The industry and service sectors maintained growth estimated to exceed 8 per cent. Exports are expected to increase by 15 per cent in FY 2017-2018, mainly driven by a record high of rice shipments and high demand for garments. Also, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism reported tourist arrivals up by 18 per cent in 2017. Each of these improvements are contributing factors to GDP growth during the last FY 2017-2018. The ADB made a statement regarding possible growth in Myanmar's GDP in the medium term and coming fiscal year, based on information from FY 2017-2018, said Ms. Yumiko Tamura, Principal Country Specialist of ADB. Inflation rates during last FY 2016-2017 stood at 6.8 per cent, and fell to 5.3 per cent. Subdued international

grain prices, slower monetary expansion and a stable exchange rate helped control the inflation rate, however, it began edging up in September 2017. Import values soared to 12 per cent in FY 2017-2018, with a 2.4 per cent contraction in FY 2016-2017. High import values are attributed to increasing domestic consumption and demand for capital goods to supply infrastructure projects. The fiscal deficit is estimated to have widened to the equivalent of 3.5 per cent of GDP in FY 2017-2018, which is up from 2.5 per cent in FY 2016-2017, as the government increased expenditures on electric power infrastructure, health care, education and social welfare.

Inflation will continue edging up due to higher growth and expected increases in international oil prices. Inflation is expected to accelerate to 6.2 per cent in 2018, before moderating slightly to 6 per cent in 2019. Additionally, the fiscal deficit is projected to remain near 4 per cent of GDP over the next two years, as the government increases public spending, with an attempt to support the socio-economic development agenda.

ADB also pointed out that with underdeveloped capital markets, Myanmar cannot hope to attract sizable portfolio capital inflows in the near future. FDI will be the main source of financing to narrow the current account deficit. FDI can help tap

into export-orientated production of labour-intensive goods.

Myanmar has enacted the Myanmar Company Law. It is seen as a positive development to attract foreign investments. Continued efforts towards a more conducive business climate will attract FDI. In a bid to promote investments, Myanmar should exercise best practices of regional countries for screening and approval procedures for foreign investment, foreign equity holdings, control over capital repatriation by foreign enterprises, working processes to seek construction permits, tax incentives and property registries. Government initiatives to formulate a 238 point economic policy agenda, set out in the draft Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, should keep investors engaged. Building on these initiatives, policy makers should implement reform expeditiously and effectively to buoy investor confidence and attract sizable FDI in the years to come, ADB urged. "We definitely welcome the government's positive direction in preparing medium term and long term strategy which will guide all of us, not just the public finance sector, but also the private sector players, to decide where investments may be needed or might be encouraged", said Ms. Yumiko Tamura.

ADB held a press conference, entitled, "Asian Development Outlook 2018," at the Pan Pacific Hotel, Yangon, yesterday.

Mandalay Region to stop granting new mining licences

MANDALAY Region Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Minister U Myo Thit said existing mining licences could be extended, but the ministry will not grant new ones, in line with the environmental conservation policies to conserve natural resources.

Mandalay is rich in natural resources and minerals. Gold mines are found mostly in Thabeikkyin Township, besides Yamethin and Singu townships.

"Authorised mining blocks will be granted an extension only after inspection. They will not be forced to shut operations, but no new licences will be granted under the Natural Resources Conservation policies. The aim

is to conserve the natural resources for future generations," said U Myo Thit. There are some 451 mining blocks in the Mandalay Region, with 43 large-scale mining blocks, 245 small-scale mining blocks, 59 blocks for experimentation, two blocks for successful mining operations and 89 scalable small blocks to maximise their advantages.

"The Mandalay Region is the main producer of minerals. Gold is primarily extracted from Thabeikkyin Township, while wax is found in Madaya, coal in Thazi, marble in Sakyin and ruby in Mogok Township.

The environmental conservation measures are being extensively carried out at the district level, said U Myo Thit. — Khaing Hset Wai ■

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Those present at the 70th Anniversary of Chin National Day in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ministry providing equal rights and opportunities for ethnic nationals

By Mawsi

PHOTO : HTEIN NAN NAW

DURING the term of the incumbent government Ministry of Ethnic Affairs was formed to effectively and speedily implement socio-economic development that includes language, literature, arts, culture, tradition, religion, historical heritage, peace and constitutional rights of ethnic nationals.

Following is the interview conducted with Union Minister and responsible officials on the work conducted by the ministry during the second one year period to strengthen the union spirit and socio-economic development of the ethnic nationals.

Nai Thet Lwin, Union Minister, Ministry of Ethnic Affairs

Q. First explain about the aim of establishing the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs.

A. Myanmar is a country where ethnic nationals live together. Due to past events in the history, doubts and suspicion developed in ethnic nationals for not having equal rights and conflicts occurred. In order to obtain full constitutional rights, the Law on Protection of Ethnic Rights was enacted in 24 February 2015. As per this law the previous government formed the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs and the ministry is now two years old.

Q. Explain about the vision of the ministry.

A. The vision of the ministry is to retain and develop the literature and culture of ethnic nationals. Their rights will be protected. The reason for doing this is to strengthen the union spirit and develop the socio-economic situation of the ethnic nationals. The rights are as set out in the



Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs attends stake driving ceremony. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

law for ethnic nationals. There is a need to know the duties and responsibilities at the same time as obtaining the rights. Our society will develop only when duties, responsibilities and rights are equally valued.

Q. Explain about works implemented by the ministry.

A. The ministry helped in holding special days of ethnic nationals as enacted in the law. States/regions ethnic affairs ministers also support the ethnic nationals in the states/regions to hold ethnic national events.

Q. What has been done for education sector development of ethnic nationals?

A. Ethnic nationals lived in remote and far-off distant places where access to education was poor. Because of this, they lag behind in education and were exploited and used by some group of people. Now, they are having more opportunities for education. They can use their own language according to edu-

cation policy and learn. In order for ethnic nationals to prosper in the union and internationally, they need to learn the language used in the union as well as international languages. To enable this, the ministry coordinated with Ministry of Education to employ ethnic national youths as Teaching Assistant (TA) so that ethnic national children can obtain quality learning through their own language resulting in creating job opportunities for ethnic national youths. Coordination will be continued with Ministry of Education so that more can be employed in other required areas.

Q. What has been done for ethnic nationals in coordination with other ministries?

A. Together with Ministry of Health and Sports, the ministry assisted and cooperated in translating information about Japanese Encephalitis vaccination project, H5N1 bird flu information posters, pamphlets and standard

health facts booklets into ethnic national languages.

In response to proposals submitted by ethnic national villages on electrification, the ministry coordinated with Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Department of Rural Development to install solar power electrical system in villages that are more than 10 miles away from National Electrification Plan.

Q. Explain about the ministry constructing office buildings in states and regions.

A. Works were assigned to Ministry of Construction to build 80x60 ft. reinforced concrete two storey buildings in Kayin, Kayah, and Mon states, Bago and Ayeyawady regions with fund permitted in fiscal year 2017-2018. The building constructed in Mon State, Mawlamyine was opened on 19 March 2018 in commemoration of 44th anniversary of Mon State Day. Other buildings in states and regions will soon be opened.

Q. What are other additional things done for ethnic nationals?

A. Development and peace co-exist in sustainable development of the lives of the ethnic nationals. If there is peace, there can be development and peace can be maintained only if there is development. That is why the forum on Sustainable Development of Ethnic Nationals was held in Nay Pyi Taw in January 2018. At the forum economic development sector, peace and ethnic national media sector and sharing of ethnic national resources were discussed and 28 points were identified. The outcome was the establishment of Ethnic Entrepreneurs Association in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Yangon on 17 March 2018.

Q. Comment on what ought to be done between ethnic nationals for ethnic national rights.

A. Ethnic nationals in Myanmar lived in the hill, plain, delta and coastal areas. Due to the different geographical location, the language, literature and culture of ethnic nationals were different but all are human beings. As human beings, ethnic nationals cherish and value themselves while considering other ethnic nationals as their siblings and lived in unity with mutual respect, peace and democracy federal union that everyone yearn for will come into being.

At the present, the government is working hand in hand with ethnic nationals for national reconciliation and peace in the union. All ethnic nationals are urged to cooperate and work together to achieve this end.

SEE PAGE-7

Ministry providing ...

FROM PAGE-6

U Min Aye Ko, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Ethnic Affairs Q. Let us know if there is any special accomplishment for ethnic national affairs.

A. According to set procedures and instructions, applications to amend correct ethnic nationality in national identification cards of ethnic nationals can be made to relevant township offices with supporting documents. If the applications are assessed to be true, amendments were being made with the permission of Ministry of labour, Immigration and Population, National Registration and Citizenship Department Director General it is learnt.

In addition to this some ethnic nationals apply to put in prefixes in front of their names (eg. Saw, Sai, Min, Naw, Nan, Mi) according to their tradition in their personal records and this had been done accordingly. As per application, prefix in front of the names to identify male or female (such as Saw Hla Maung, Sai Hla Maung, Salai Hla Maung, Min Hla Muang, Naw Hla Hla Yi, Nan Hla Hla Yi, Mi Hla Hla Yi) were also being added in the applicants' national identification cards.

Q. What is the ministry doing to fulfil the basic requirement of obtaining electrical power for the socio-economic development of ethnic nationals?

A. In coordination with Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock

and Irrigation, Department of Rural Development, solar power electrical systems were being arranged to be installed in villages that are more than 10 miles away from National Electrification Plan (NEP). As per this plan, 43 villages in Yangon Region and Ayeyawady Region will have solar power electrical systems installed in fiscal year 2017-2018 and fiscal year 2018-2019 according to the information from relevant ministry.

Q. How is the ministry organised and what are its duties and responsibilities?

A. The ministry is made up of the Union Minister's office, the Ethnical Literature and Culture Department and the Ethnic Rights Department. A total of 314 officers and staff were appointed.

As per arrangements made by states and regions governments, offices for the two departments under the ministry were being opened in states and regions. Offices were opened in Mawlamyine, Mon State; Monywa, Sagaing Region; Sittway, Rakhine State; Myitkyina, Kachin State; Loikaw, Kayah State, Mandalay, Mandalay Region; Haka, Chin State and Magway, Magway Region.

U Win Naing, Deputy Director General, Ethnical Literature and Culture Department

Q. What are the aims of the department and what are its achievements during the two-year period?

A. Strengthening of the na-



U Win Myint, then-Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, centre-left, and State Counsellor, centre-right, arrive to attend the dinner to mark the 71st Mon National Day at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

tional spirit and developing the socio-economic situation of the ethnic nationals are being aimed for by maintaining and raising the ethnic literature and culture.

During the two-year period of the government, poems, articles, books, video records of ethnic national literature, language, culture and historical relics were collected in the department's library. A book on eight ethnic national languages was published within the department.

In addition to this, department's offices were opened in Mon State, Kayin State, Sagaing Region, Rakhine State, Kachin State, Kayah State, Mandalay Region, Bago Region, Ayeyawady Region, Taninthayi Region, Chin State and Magway Region in fiscal year 2016-2017 and fiscal year 2017-2018.

Arrangements were made to publish the Law on Protection of Ethnic Rights in ethnic languages and had been published and distributed in 44 ethnic languages. Health related journals published by Ministry of Health and Sport, notices and posters published by UNICEF were also being translated into ethnic national languages.

Pamphlets describing the history, location, distinguished places, traditional festivals, dances, natural resources, traditional foods etc. of eight main ethnic nationals and 32 sub groups were being published in Myanmar-English languages. Arrangements are being made to publish facts about remaining sub groups. The traditional costumes and apparels of the eight main ethnic nationals, their tools and utensils, musical instruments etc. were being displayed in the ministry's exhibition.

Ministry of Education was coordinated to appoint 5,161 Teaching Assistants to teach

ethnic national languages. The ministry also assisted and supported the application of literature and culture groups in states and regions to Ministry of Home Affairs to form literature and culture committees. Teaching of ethnic literature and languages in basic education schools during summer holiday was also being conducted together with Ministry of Education.

Dr. L Tu Mane Gaung, Deputy Director General, Ethnical Rights Protection Department

Q. What are the aims and work processes of the department?

A. The aim of the department is to obtain the full rights and opportunities of the ethnic nationals. In doing this, it will be done without affecting the country's security, rule of law, moral of the people and enacted laws. Another thing is to coordinate and resolve disagreements between ethnic nationals.

Q. What was done by the department during the two-year period?

A. Five offices were opened in states and regions in fiscal year 2017-2018. Staffs were appointed and these staffs were liaising with ethnic national organisations. At the same time, systematic arrangements were being made to work together with more ethnic organisations.

Requirements of the ethnic nationals were being fulfilled. Rules on Protection of Ethnic Rights will soon be enacted and based on it the rights of the ethnic nationals will be protected. Together with protecting these rights, there is a need to ensure that natural security, regional peace and stability are not affected.

Salai Haki, Chin national

It is good for all ethnic na-

tionals like us that Ministry of Ethnic Affairs was established. Why? Our country is a country that had many ethnic nationals. Our country ought to have a ministry that work for all ethnic nationals.

Law on Protection of Ethnic Rights is also needed. With the enactment of this law, ethnic nationals in ethnic regions can freely obtain the full rights.

Literature is the life of all nationals. Literature is required by all nationals. Without literature, we could not retain sustained existence. There are big and small ethnic nationals. Only through literature can we maintain all. Teaching of literature is the main thing here. If the ministry maintain and develop ethnic literature, we all will welcome the ministry.

Sai Tun Min Latt, Shan national

As an ethnic national, I welcome the establishment of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs. With the establishment of this ministry, I think ethnic nationals will have their rights. The Law was enacted in 2015. Rules are being drawn up. Once the rules are also enacted, more can be done freely about ethnic literature and culture.

Shan State is huge. Many ethnic nationals are there. I want to say that there are some weaknesses in employing teachers. Some don't know the subject in depth. Only teachers that know in depth can teach the children well. Literature is the lifeblood of a people. If literature disappears, so will the people. That is why literature is important.

It is good that the ministry came into being. Ethnic culture will develop. We will get our full rights while we fulfil our duties and responsibilities. It is important that we do this and achieve peace and development together.

■ (Translated by ZM)



Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin and dignitaries cut the ribbon to open the ceremony of the Lisu Traditional New Year Festival in Putao, Kachin State. PHOTO: MNA

Every citizen has duty to contribute to achieving peace, ending armed conflicts

WE all understand fully well that peace is critical to the country's future, and that peace and development are inseparable. Peace is not just for an individual, for an organization or for an ethnic group, but for the whole Union. Peace is for the security and safety of all Union citizens and ethnic races which have been living in the country through thick and thin.

But we all need to think deeply on why our country is unable to achieve peace and what we should do to achieve peace. Different ways are needed to persuade all to participate in the peace process.

The path to peace is a long-distance journey based on resolute spirit and faith. There have been ups and downs, fits and starts and twists and turns in the peace process.

If a person believes that they can achieve peace for their community through non-violent means, then they will be willing to take risks to achieve that goal.

ingful wish for everyone to wonder what role they can contribute to this end. To achieve this peace, we must work hard with strong desire, with relentless efforts, with strong spirit and with the wisdom to distinguish right from wrong. Even though everyone desires peace and wishes for the fighting to end, a lack of trust from both sides is the reason why some ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) have not signed the NCA yet. If a person has belief and trusts in themselves, then they will be able to trust other people. If a person believes that they can achieve peace for their community through non-violent means, then they will be willing to take risks to achieve that goal. For our citizens, today is the time to think about what duties and responsibilities they need to take, and not just be interested in the benefits they may receive.

To prevent our country from being deprived of democracy and human rights and become a place where people are unhappy due to lack of peace, we must work hard with the above four mindsets.■

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



PHOTO: ZAW ZAW



Toddy-palm trees in Meikhtila PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKHTILA)

Curbing the felling of toddy-palm trees in Upper Myanmar

By Zwe Htet Shin

SCATTERED toddy-palm trees or rows of Palmyra-palm trees represent a symbol of beauty for serenity of rural life and also fine arts for poets; the local populace of rural areas preserves traditional values on those tall and graceful trees. The trees are widely cultivated in Upper Myanmar and their fruits, fronds, branches, stems and roots are economically useful.

Toddy-palm trees, branches and fronds are seen growing green in a far-off country and the farmers are toiling in the fields of onions and garlic. They are eating lunch together in comradely association among the fields and they happen to be in love with one another, creating a more than happy occasion. As a proud sign of Upper Myanmar, toddy-palm trees are grown gracefully in groups or in rows that can be seen from far-away places.

Nowadays wooden planks of expensive kinds are widely substituted with those from mature toddy-palm trees in buildings and shops in rural and urban areas. Business of toddy planks is brisk as they are widely used in furniture as finished products. Toddy wooden planks unless soaked in water are more durable than other hard wood and will last for a

long time." A grandchild is said to live long in a house of toddy palm wood built by his grandfather" said a 60-year-old carpenter from Myinkin village.

Using as a substitute for wood and bamboo

Toddy-palm wood is more and more used in the restaurants, tea shops and hotels and also used in village houses as posts, beams and bars in substituting for other hard wood and bamboo by cutting and felling of even 70-year-old palm trees. As hard wood becomes more and more expensive, palm wood is naturally substituted in huts, houses and buildings, resulting in high prices of palm trees and wood. Palm wood with a length of 16-feet plank with 5'x 2' costs K. 7000, putting the whole tree at a cost

of K. 30,000. Costs for services of felling a palm tree together with making four 4'x 2' planks and four 5'x 2' planks will charge as much as K. 40,000. Five house posts and seven 4'x 2' planks are obtained from felling a toddy tree; as many as five trees will have to be cut off to build a house with 3 or 4 posts in front. In addition, thick forests of toddy palm trees are found near several villages in Magway township, service charges of felling a toddy tree once cost at K. 1500, but now at the selling price of K. 35,000.

Average height of palm trees is 60-80 feet with a lifespan of 150-200 years. Toddy palm climbers have become fewer and fewer, some sources said. In rural areas near Magway Township, the tree stumps are used to make stools and the trunks for building

bridges and houses. Furthermore, toddy fronds are utilized for roofing and fencing and branches are used for making chairs, said U Kyi Khaing from Thedaw village.

Businessmen of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises from Rakhine and Chin states, in co-operation with those from Magway Region held an exhibition on the Street between Bogoyoke Statute Park and Independence Park for three days displaying their local products respectively. A team from Pakokku Industrial Zone showed slabs of palm parquet which are made up of small pieces of toddy palm trees.

The members of Ayeyawady and Sagaing regions and Shan State observed the exhibition; they wanted to continue their exhibitions in their own regions. The exhibitions are meant to promote economic developments as well as brethren friendship among our nationalities.

So, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises should be systematically assisted by the government for social and economic developments in their Regions and States, continued Magway Region Chief Minister Dr. Aung Moe Nyo.

Various kinds of local products from Magway Region such as sesame, groundnut and oil as well as furniture made from toddy trees, equipment of inno-

But curbing the felling of these tall trees is absolutely necessary to stop the deforestation of the palm trees in Upper Myanmar in order to maintain the ecological balance of the whole area.

variations from Magway Institute of Technology and local produce and traditional and cultural products from Chin State and fishery products of dried prawn and fish and national costumes from Rakhine were proudly displayed in their respective booths. Businessmen of Medium Enterprises showed local food, various kinds of juice, cosmetics and consumer goods.

Production Manager U San Win of Sein Soe San Co. Ltd said they went through timber production for 20 years. Now they found a lot of natural resources in Upper Myanmar especially toddy trees." We don't want to sell raw materials abroad but as finished goods. If foreigners don't like our end products, we could use them for local markets" he continued.

Seasoned parquet made from Palmyra trees

Furniture such as big and small settees and revolving chairs is made of seasoned parquet of toddy trees. Small furniture such as ashtrays, vases with long and short necks, wine cups, arms bowls, food containers, chairs of various types, windows and beds is being made; the smallest article could cost K. 3500 and a pair of quality settees could charge as much as K. 9.4 million.

Maintenance of toddy-palm trees

In an age of modernization, the toddy-palm trees are used in restaurants and tea shops to attract consumers to spend pleasant days in country cottages. While on study tours in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions in Upper Myanmar, the use of toddy-palm trees, branches and fronds is vividly seen in building huts, restaurants and houses all along the roadsides. Wide use of the palm trees in the rural areas is to some extent advantageous for those who could not afford to use expensive wood. But curbing the felling of these tall trees is absolutely necessary to stop the deforestation of the palm trees in Upper Myanmar in order to maintain the ecological balance of the whole area.

(Translated by Arakan Sein)

Newspapers to be distributed in turns this Thingyan

THE Ministry of Informations, News and Periodicals Enterprise announced that daily newspapers will be printed in turns during the Thingyan Festival.

While the Myanmar Alinn will be printed on 13, 14 and 15 April, the Mirror and the Global New Light of Myanmar newspapers will temporarily cease printing operations during this period.

While the Mirror and the Global New Light of Myanmar will resume operations on 16 and 17 April, the Myanmar Alinn will temporarily cease operations on those days.

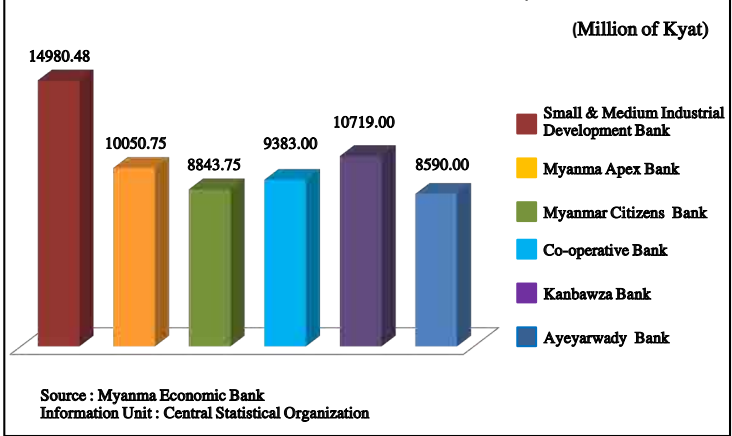
Similarly, the Mandalay News Sector from the Sub-Printing house (Mandalay) will temporarily cease printing operations on 14 April, the extra page in ethnic languages from the Sub-Printing house (Mawlamyine) will temporarily cease printing on 15 April, and the extra page "Today Yangon" published every Wednesday from Myanmar Alinn will temporarily cease printing on 18 April and will resume normal production after the Thingyan holidays. Advertisements will be received at the newspaper offices, which will remain open during Thingyan. All newspapers will resume normal production starting 18 April.—News and Periodicals Enterprise■

Guidelines for the public to reduce accidents during Thingyan

1. Be responsible and don't consume alcohol heavily.
2. Avoid using psychotropic drugs.
3. Avoid the use of water balls, fire hose, and acid or similar corrosive liquid.
4. Do not carry nor conceal pointed objects, knives or other melee weapons.
5. Avoid buying and selling of sexual stimulant drugs.
6. Avoid wearing clothing inappropriate to the local culture.
7. Females should avoid travelling around with non-family members and refrain from accepting food from strangers.
8. Avoid staying out late into the night.
9. Avoid taking a rest in secluded areas throughout the day.
10. Avoid consuming alcohol and driving cars over the weight limit.
11. Avoid excessively teasing other people.
12. Avoid swimming or showering in lakes or creeks.
13. Avoid using or decorating items that are unsuitable for display to the general public.

—Myanmar Police Force

The Status of SMEs Loan by Private Banks in JICA Two-Step Loan Project 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 (February)



17-year-old Myanmar stunt performer wins first prize in Bangkok motorcycle competition

A YOUNG Myanmar motorcycle stunt performer won first prize in the junior competition in the 39th Bangkok International Motor Show 2018 that was held on 6 April in Thailand.

Maung Thet Naung Zaw, who is 17 years old and from Nandawyar ward in Amarapura Township in Mandalay Region, won first prize in the competition which included about 20 other young contenders from Thailand, Indonesia and Myanmar.

"I have been interested in performing motorcycle stunts since I was 14. I used to practice stunts in the Manaw Yaman grounds in Mandalay at that time. These days I am practicing on roads that are not busy or crowded.

One difficulty for me is that there is no exclusive place for

me to practice my motorcycle stunts in my country. Furthermore my country does not have any organizations or clubs that support motorcycle stunt riding on a competitive level and there aren't any kinds of competitions as well," Maung Thet Naung Zaw said.

In the Bangkok International Motor Show 2018, he performed stunts for three minutes with a Honda MSX 125.

Ko Naung Naung, trainer of Maung Thet Naung Zaw, said "I am glad when I saw a new generation follow the path we paved. What I want to say to younger people is that we welcome youngsters who want to become motorcycle stunt performers if they have the focus and ambition to reach the international level of competition."—Myanmar Digital News ■



Young motorcycle stunt performer competing at the junior event in the 39th Bangkok International Motor Show 2018. PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS

Water World Amusement Park opens to public in Meiktila



Water World Amusement Park opened in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region yesterday. PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS

WATER World Amusement Park which includes a water slide and swimming pool was opened to the public beside Yangon-Mandalay Road in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region yesterday morning.

"Water World Amusement Park was opened to offer better entertainment services for local people who no longer need to go to Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw for relaxation. The park will be open to the public from 9 am to 7 pm daily including the

Thingyan festival (water festival). The entrance fee for the park is set at Ks. 2,500 for adults and Ks. 2,000 for kids," said Ko Zin Min Thaw, a manager of the park.

Water World Amusement Park is located on over 2 acres of land near Kyunphopin Village, Kantha Village-tract in Meiktila Township. Visitors will be offered a wide range of entertainment, from games to aquatic activities.—Myanmar Digital News ■

IWT's ferry services to reduce operations during Thingyan festival

FERRY services run by the Inland Water Transport (IWT) will reduce operations on certain routes during the Thingyan festival, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Yangon-Dala, Yangon-Kanaungto and War Dan-Dala ferry lines will operate fewer services during the water festival from 13 to 17 April, according to IWT.

Ferry ships running from Yangon-Dala Cherry water ferry are set to operate only 26 times a

day, as against their regular service of 47 times per day, during the water festival. Moreover, the Yangon-Kanaungto ferry, which was operating eight routes per day, will now operate only four routes per day from 13 to 17 April. War Dan-Dala ferry lines will also reduce operations to four routes from 10 per day during the water festival, according to IWT.

Likewise, some ship lines will not operate during the water festival. According to the ferry

schedules, the Yangon-Labutta line will depart from Yangon to Labutta on 13 April, and it will resume its service after the water festival.

The Yangon-Kyungmange ferry service will also suspend operations during the water festival.

The Yangon-Bokalay water ferry service will not run from 14 to 17 April, while another water ferry on the Yangon-Labutta route will stop operations from 10 to 17 April.—GNLM ■

Chaungtha to tighten security during Thingyan festival celebrations

Some 100 security personnel will be deployed on Chaungtha beach during the Thingyan festival, so that visitors can enjoy the festival safely, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

"Security will be the top priority during the festival. The Ayeyawady Region police will deploy 40 security personnel in the Chaungtha Hotel Zone.

The security forces will adopt security measures, in co-

operation with 60 people from the fire brigade and the ward administration office," said U Naing Win, secretary of Chaungtha Hotel Zone.

Pandals will be set up in front of hotels to serve snacks to people. The walking water festival will also be held along the beach.

The police are tightening security due to the huge arrival of visitors.

Hotel room charges are expected to increase by some 30 per cent.

Chaungtha beach usually receives some 40,000 visitors every month during the peak season. The number of visitors to the beach reaches some 10,000 visitors during the rainy season. During the water festival, the number of visitors to the beach is expected to increase by 35 per cent.—GNLM ■

Foreign heads of state send congratulatory messages to President

Mr. Aleksandar Vucic, President of the Republic of Serbia, said in his message that he extended his cordial congratulations and best wishes for the successful discharge of President U Win Myint responsible duties, personal well-being and prosperity of the friendly people of Myanmar.

“You may rest assured that I will be ready to invest, together with you, additional personal efforts aimed at further enhancement of the traditionally friendly relations and overall cooperation between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,” said Mr. Aleksandar Vucic.

“I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for the principled position of the Republic of the Union Myanmar regarding non-recognition of the unilaterally declared independence of the so-called “Kosovo”. I am confident that you country will continue to lend its support to the preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia, in line with in-

ternational law, Charter of the United Nations and principles built into the foundations of major international organizations, including the Non-Aligned Movement, whose founding fathers included the leaders of our two countries, said the President of the Republic of Serbia.

Mr. Janos Ader, President of the Republic of Hungary, said in his message that he had the honour to convey his most sincere congratulations on the occasion of President U Win Myint’s election as President of the Union of Myanmar.

“I am pleased to note that in the past few years the co-operation between our two countries entered a more intensive phase helping us to identify promising areas. I would like to use this solemn occasion to reiterate my desire to further strengthen the traditionally friendly relations between Hungary and Myanmar for the benefit of our peoples and countries,” said President Mr. Janos Ader.

Mr. Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, said

in his message that he, on behalf of the people of the United States of America, sent his congratulations to President U Win Myint and the people of Myanmar as President U Win Myint celebrates his inauguration as President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

“As a partner and friend, the United States values the enduring ties between our two nations. We pledge our continued assistance to help Myanmar realize its goals of building a peaceful nation that offers inclusive economic growth, adherence to rule of law and respect for human rights, national reconciliation, and greater health for all its people,” said President Donald Trump.

Mr. Alain Berset, President of the Swiss Confederation, wished President U Win Myint every success in the fulfillment of your new function.

“I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the longstanding relationship between our two countries, which was recently strengthened by the celebrations of the

60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations I am confident that the ties between Myanmar and Switzerland will continue to deepen in the coming years thanks to our bilateral collaborations in many different areas, as well as through our regional and multilateral cooperation, especially in the context of Switzerland-ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partnership,” said Mr. Alain Berset.

“Furthermore, I would like to reiterate Switzerland’s commitment in continuing to support Myanmar in its ongoing transition into a stable democracy and in its efforts to achieve peace as well as sustainable socio-economic prosperity,” he added.

Mr. Shavkat Mirzeye, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, says in his message that “I have the honour to express my confidence that in Your highly responsible position of the President of Republic of the Union of Myanmar You will continue to promote the further development of mutually beneficial re-

lations between Uzbekistan and Myanmar.”

“I am convinced that the establishment of a constructive political dialogue, long-term trade and economic ties and cultural and humanitarian exchanges will serve to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the interests of our countries and peoples,” said Mr. Shavkat Mirzeye.

His Majesty King Philippe, King of the Belgians, said in his message that he would like to warmly congratulate President U Win Myint on his election as new President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

“I wish you success in carry out the duties entrusted to you by the Parliament. The Kingdom of Belgium remains committed to supporting the people of Myanmar on their path to democracy, development and national reconciliation,” said King Philippe.

“My country is looking forward to working with your government and further deepening the ties of friendship between our two countries, bilat-

erally and multilaterally. In this framework, your participation to the ASEM Summit which will take place in Brussels in October 2018 would certainly contribute to the success of this important event,” he added. “Finally, I would like to sincerely thank your country for supporting Belgium candidature to the United Nations Security Council,” said King Philippe.

Mr. Khaltmaagiin Battulga, President of Mongolia, says in his message that “it gives me great pleasure to note the successful development of friendly relations and cooperation between Mongolia and Myanmar on the basis of common principles of international relations. Taking this opportunity, I wish to pledge to Your Excellency my full collaboration in further expanding and strengthening our bilateral relations,” “Please accept, Your Excellency, my best wishes for your good health and happiness as well as prosperity to the friendly people of Myanmar,” he added. Myanmar News Agency ■

Mro ethnic villagers receive new houses

FROM PAGE-1

Also, the new villages will be provided with water supplies, transportation, clinics and schools, according to authorities.

Ethnic Mro nationals lived peacefully with agriculture and new Khon-

htaing (Mro) village will soon be developed with the full requisite of a village.

The Rakhine State government has been building new homes in the Maungdaw Township for the security and social development of ethnic groups, such as Mro,

Khami, Thet and Daing-net, among others. These groups were earlier living in the mountainous areas.

The government expects that the construction of such villages will improve the livelihood and social conditions of the people.—Tin Soe ■



Mro ethnic villagers walk past their new houses in Maungdaw. **PHOTO: TIN SOE**



A Mro family waves from their new house in Kontaing Village. **PHOTO: TIN SOE**

Transferring Distributor for Registered Products

Distribution of following pesticides registered by Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Singapore) is transferring from Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch) to Agro Tech Co Ltd. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within (14) days.

Sr	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Reg Type	Reg.No
1	EXACT 20SP	Acetamiprid 200g/kg SP	Prov:	2014 - 2169
2	PROMOTE 5SC	Hexaconazole 50g/l SC	Prov:	2015 - 2163

Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch) : Rangoun Business Center, Room 209, No. 97, West Shwe Gon Daing Road. Tele : 01 8603042, 09 5145328

Defence Services families hold ordination, novitiation ceremony

THE families of the Defence Services Office (Army, Navy and Air) held their 6th ordination and novitiation ceremony at the Anawrahta Hall of the Commander-in-Chief Office (Army) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Present at the ceremony were Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Ngwe, Union Minister Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Maung Maung Kyaw, along with their wives, Tatmadaw



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife donate offertories in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

officers, officials and their families. The Senior General and party paid homage to State Ovadacariya Abhidhaja presiding Sayadaw of Mandalay Maha Wizitayone Monastery Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Wisaraina Bhivamsa and Township Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Kan Oo Monastery

Sayadaw Maha Gantha Vacaka Pandita Sasanadhaja Dhammakariya Bhaddanta Vilasa. After the ordination ceremony, the Senior General and party offered "soon" (lunch) to the Sayadaws. Also, other communal ordinations were organized at the Mingala Zayone Pali University Monastery and Yadanasan Pariyatti Monastery in Pyinmana Township.—MNA ■

Quake awareness raised in Mandalay schools

ABOUT 100 schools in the Mandalay region that have the highest likelihood of being hit by an earthquake were selected to conduct an earthquake awareness training programme in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said U Aye Min Thu, Director of Mandalay Region Department of Disaster Management. The project named "Building Resilience in Earthquake-prone areas in Myanmar Through Better Preparedness and Response" consists of earthquake awareness training and related activities. A workshop was held at Hotel Sakura Princess in Chanayethasan Township in Mandalay on 10 April, at which 100 schools in the Mandalay Region were chosen for the training.

"According to seismologists, the Mandalay Region is one of the earthquake-prone regions. If an earthquake were to occur, it could affect public areas and schools. If students do not respond in a positive way and do not have awareness about earthquakes, there will be huge loss of life because of earthquakes. Therefore, we will provide the earthquake awareness and practice how to respond to earthquakes with the assistance of UNDP", he added. There are three steps that should be conducted if an earthquake occurs when students are in school. They should respond by leaving the classroom, leaving the building and staying in a safe place.

"Earthquake awareness training is not enough for the student. If an earth-

quake happens in reality, nobody knows how to respond. Therefore, we will practice those steps. We will practice with the children on how to respond in the classroom, and then, how to leave the classroom. And then, how to reach their parents, said U Aye Min Thu.

"We have already chosen six states and regions that are situated close to the Sagaing fault line. The project will cover about 500 schools from those six states and regions for earthquake awareness activities.

This programme aims to reduce risks during earthquakes", said Daw Mai May Htar Phwy Bob, project manager of the Building Earthquake Resilience Project of the UNDP.—Aung Thant Khine ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/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 REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK WELLINGTON VOY. NO.

(1811-1812)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WELLINGTON VOY. NO. (1811-1812) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/BSW 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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. (KHAD 0094N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. (KHAD 0094N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/AWPT 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 ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. (038N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. (038N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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 INTER ASIA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO. (017N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO. (017N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP 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 CONTINENTAL
SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (1005W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (1005W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP/MITT 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
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AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Rakhine State Thingyan pandals will liven celebration

RAKHINE State Minister for Social Welfare Dr. Chan Tar, who is also chairman of the Rakhine State Maha Thingyan Festival Executive Committee, told reporters that Rakhine State will hold a traditional Thingyan Festival amid other festivals that will celebrate the Myanmar New Year of 1380.

He said the festivals will include the pandals, a large platform from which water is thrown at Thingyan participants, a competition in the making of Thanakha (Limonia acidissima) an ancient process that has been handed down the generations, sacred bathing of the images of Buddha, washing of the hair of old women by young ladies, keeping the Sabbath, doing charitable deeds, paying homage to the elderly and participating in water dousing



Local people ready to get wet in Traditional Thingyan Water Festival in Rakhine State. PHOTO: HAN LIN NAING

celebration.

Rakhine State will have two large pandals, fifteen medium-sized pandals, and 24 small pandals for people celebrating Thingyan. Dr. Chan Tar said that every year, the Rakhine State Government opens two large pandals in Sittway, and local

residents of Mizan Ward open a Rakhine traditional pandal. He said the addition of department-opened pandals will make Rakhine State more lively this year. He said the department pandals are not mandatory but opened by the staff as they wish to celebrate Thingyan.

Dr. Chan Thar said they opened the first Rakhine traditional pandal in Ngapali to promote interest and tourism there. He said that the tradition of placing a wooden long boat filled with water in the pandals was a common sight in his youth but the practice has since become

rare. He said he wished to bring that tradition back.

The Rakhine Government has allotted Ks1 million to each township in Rakhine as funds for the Thingyan festival. Rakhine people have the tradition of splashing water on each other only after the sacred bathing of Buddha images.

Before the sacred bathing of the Buddha Images, young men and ladies gather at an appropriate place in their village or ward and grind sandalwood on specially designed smooth stone slabs.

A Rakhine traditional music troupe comprising Rakhine youngsters play Rakhine Thingyan songs and antiphonal chants that include a loud chorus that encourages and entertains the ladies labouring in the grinding of the sandalwood.

There will also be Rakhine musicians to perform on stage.

Dr. Chan Tar said he wished for all the citizens in Rakhine State to celebrate Thingyan with peace and happiness, spreading kindness to each other in this gentle and important traditional festival. —Myo Myint ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI AMPLE VOY. NO. (0236-454)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI AMPLE VOY. NO. (0236-454) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT 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.

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AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING
LINES**

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1083 S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1083 S/N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (012 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (012 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT 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 INTERASIA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BALI VOY. NO. (052N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BALI VOY. NO. (052N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-4-2018 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 SILKAGO LOGISTICS
PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. (085N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. (085N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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.

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Jingle bells: Japan's unusual station music

TOKYO — Minoru Mukaiya is one of the world's most played musicians, with millions of people across Japan listening to his songs every day — but most of them don't even notice.

Mukaiya is a composer of "Hassha Merodii" or "train departure melodies", short jingles that whisk commuters on their way at some of the world's busiest stations.

Almost no one would know his most famous track by name, a catchy electronic ditty broadcast for departures from platforms three and four at Tokyo's Shibuya station — the world's third busiest — but millions have it on their brains for hours after their commute.

Asked how many train jingles he has created, the 61-year-old former keyboard player with the jazz-fusion band Casiopea pauses. He has lost count and an assistant rushes over with a list. "170? What? I wrote 170," he says, exploding with laughter. "That can't be right!"

"Hassha Merodii" is so common now in Japan that locals are

unfazed when the sharp twang of an electronic keyboard or an organ's trill spills out of a loudspeaker but tourists are often thrilled.

Nevertheless, Mukaiya's work has attracted a cult following.

He has more than 34,000 Twitter followers, performs the ditties at concerts to thousands of screaming fans and is now banned from playing at Ginza station — the epicentre of Tokyo swank — after a live show there sparked pandemonium.

Fans tell him the music is "good for their health, for their work, for walking. It warms them up" after a hard commute to the office, Mukaiya told AFP in an interview in his music room.

"I want them to be happy."

'Mountain train'

"Hassha Merodii" started when train operators were looking for ways to make their stations stand out and came up with the idea of a catchy jingle.

The songs are capped at seven seconds — the "dwell



This train simulator has pride of place in Mukaiya's office. PHOTO: AFP

time" train operators have to cram people into packed commuter trains and still, famously, run on time.

A spokesman for the JR East train company told AFP they were introduced "to prevent passengers from dashing onto the train".

But despite the short time-frame, Mukaiya says that each ditty packs in a story.

In Japan's ancient capital Kyoto, "we have a deep respect for culture, so the song sounds more respectful of Japanese culture," he explained, sandwiched

between musical instruments and computer screens.

The rapturous crescendo and rising pitch in Shibuya station's departure song, on the other hand, is a nod to the train's uphill journey to the next platform.

"The Toyoko line used to be up the stairs on a very high level. But now the Toyoko line has moved to the subway, and the journey from Shibuya to the next station is a very steep slope," he says.

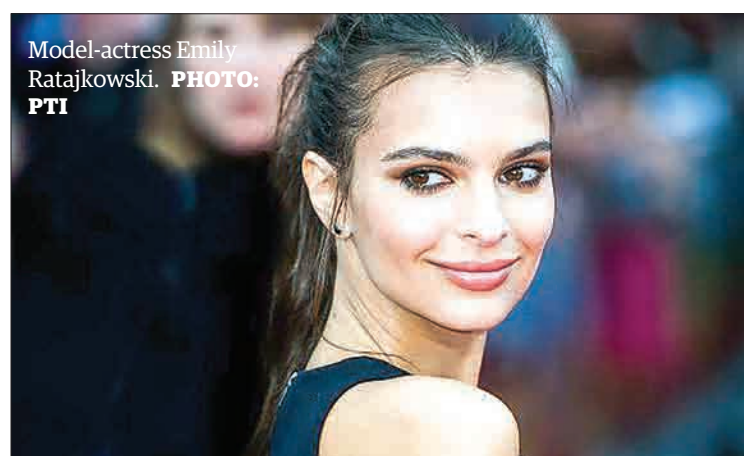
"So I thought the departure song... needs to make it feel like

the mountain train."

Other jingles nod to local history. The station at Takadanobaba, the home to popular anime series Astro Boy, pays homage to the cartoon with a jingle version of the show's theme tune.

And Osaka station features a soundbite of "I guess I really do love you", one of the region's most famous songs.

One of the distinguishing features of Mukaiya's work is that the individual tunes at each station along a line can be combined to form a coherent song.—AFP ■



Emily Ratajowski feels camera shy in front of family

LONDON — Actress Emily Ratajowski has revealed that she is "camera-shy" when she is with her family as the moments are "much more intimate" than acting in a film. The 26-year-old model admitted that she gets "super embarrassed and nervous" in front of the camera when her loved ones are around, reported Femalefirst. "When I'm acting, it's a character, and when it's modelling, it's a fanta-

sy world. Even when I'm taking pictures for my Instagram, that's a specific second of a world; that's not reality," she said. "Sometimes, when my friends take a picture of me on vacation, or I'm with my husband, I feel camera shy. When my husband pulls out the camera, I get super embarrassed and nervous, because it's so much more intimate and honest and really us," she added.—PTI ■

I do films for entertainment, not for any social purpose, says R Balki

CAMBRIDGE (Massachusetts) — Social issues may be at the centre of R Balki's films but the director says his main aim is to always create a story that starts a conversation and is entertaining to the viewers.

The director's latest "Pad Man", featuring Akshay Kumar, addressed the taboo surrounding menstrual hygiene in India and was based on the life of Arunachalam Muruganatham.

Addressing the students of Massachusetts Institute of Technology during their annual India conference, Balki said, "I never do a film for any social purposes. I do it for pure entertainment. My definition of entertainment is what entertains me.

"When I was doing 'Cheeni Kum', a lot of people told me that India is a young country

you are doing a movie with a 64-year-old man and a 32-year-old woman. I said no. I am not doing a film with 64-year-old man and 32-year-old man. I am doing a film with Amitabh Bachchan. They did not get it."

Balki said after the movie, he was approached by many elderly people who appreciated its concept.

"A lot of people are coming and telling me, I really love your film. It has given me hope in life," he said.

"When you do a concept, which is away from what the people expect entertainment to be, you always ride a different path. But I've just done films because I believe in today's world. The biggest need, the biggest thing to tackle is boredom," he added. Balki said he has always believed in making life interesting and "keep add-

ing some hope, keep wishing life was like this".

"The reason I did 'Paa' was I got a meeting one day and I saw Amitabh Bachchan for once playing the fool and saying some ridiculous things and Abhishek having a serious look and it brought all the wisdom. So I said, I want to do a film with these guys where their roles are reversed. I wanted him (Amitabh) to play the son and him (Abhishek) the father," Balki said.

The director said each of his films were an attempt to "see life in the way people would wish it were".

"I didn't do this film (Padman) because of a cause, because I wanted to create a conversation. The reason, why I did this film I agreed with Akshay to do this film, only after I met Murugan," he said.—PTI ■

Indigenous people in Thailand's Deep South adapt to new lifestyle

YALA (Thailand) — The Orang Asli indigenous people have lived in seclusion in the rainforests of southern Thailand since ancient times, but more than a few of them have lately changed the way they live because forest food has gradually grown scarce.

In hopes of a more secure future, Pise, a man in his 50s, and 11 of his family members have decided to abandon their jungle lifestyle and work in a rubber plantation to earn a living.

Talking to Kyodo News through a translator, Pise said cassava, the main food of the Orang Asli people, was easily found in the past, but the forest's ecology has gradually changed after Bang Lang Dam on Pattani River was built and completed in 1981.

Orang Asli, or Asli in short, are indigenous people living deep in the Hala rainforest, situated near the Thai-Malaysian boundary in Yala Province.

They are very discrete and will instantly relocate their huts if they spot any "outsider" nearby their areas. They find it hard to trust people outside their ethnic group and still blame the angry forest spirits when bad things happen to them.

Pise used to hunt small wild animals for food with bamboo blowpipes that spit poison darts, but he no longer wanted to do this when he realized the forest food is not as abundant as it once was.



Three Orang Asli women catch fish in a river in Hala-Bala Rainforest, Yala. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

"I miss living in the deep forest, but it is not easy to find sufficient food anymore. The food is in decline while our population is growing day by day," Pise said.

The Orang Asli communities number about 300 in Yala and Narathiwat, Thailand's two southernmost provinces long known as hotbeds of insurgency.

Another 300 are scattered in the other Deep South provinces of Phatthalung, Trang and Satun, where they are known as the Mani people.

Unlike the Orang Asli, ethnic Mani people have been given Thai identity cards and Thai surnames for their civil registration.

The Orang Asli population in

Thailand is forecast to rise. However, the total number is still far behind that across the border in Malaysia, which is home to more than 170,000 Orang Asli people.

Yet, working from Monday through Friday for 1,000 baht (\$32) a week does not allow Pise and his family to stave off hunger.

His family and other Orang Asli people, therefore, greatly rely on the border patrol police, who care for them by delivering clothes, packages of raw rice, instant coffee, cans of fish, and other foodstuffs.

Paramin Nathornjaroensuk, a 46-year-old border patrol police officer, said the Orang Asli in the two southernmost provinces now

have access to healthcare services after initially having difficulty to gain this basic right because they lacked Thai ID cards.

"We raised the issue with the state agencies to grant them the right. Now they are able to receive medical treatment when needed, free-of-charge," Paramin said.

Orang Asli people are generally healthy and rely on herbal plants to heal their ailments. Still, toothaches are a common problem for them due to poor oral hygiene, according to the border patrol police. In exchange for clothes, food and painkillers to treat toothaches, the Orang Asli people give the border patrol police things gathered in the jungle

such as honey and tongkat ali, an herb that has long been used in Southeast Asia as a general health tonic and libido booster.

"Orang Asli people never take anything from us for free. If we refuse to take their stuff, we insult them," Paramin said.

Because of their existence in well-known literature like the folktale "Sung Thong," composed by King Rama II and "Ngoh Pa", written by King Rama V, Thai people are familiar with their curly hair and dark-skinned features.

But Paramin dispelled misconceptions among most ethnic Thais that it is okay to refer to the Orang Asli people as Sakai, a label meaning "slave" that stems from past centuries when they were subjected to slave raids by Malay and Batak forces, causing many to retreat further inland and to avoid contact with outsiders. "The term Sakai can provoke this indigenous group," Paramin explained, adding that its members consider it strongly offensive.

To Paramin, the Orang Asli people play a great role in guarding the forest as they have alerted authorities to the presence of armed poachers and illegal loggers entering the forest.

"I was scared to death when the poachers threatened to kill me if I informed an officer, but this forest is my home," an elderly Orang Asli man said. —Kyodo News ■

Anyone want to buy a dinosaur? Two on sale in Paris

PARIS — The skeletons of an allosaurus and a diplodocus are up for auction in Paris this week, marketed as hip interior design objects — for those with big enough living rooms.

"The fossil market is no longer just for scientists," said Iacopo Briano of Binoche et Giquello, the auction house that is putting the two dinosaurs under the hammer on Wednesday.

"Dinosaurs have become cool, trendy — real objects of decoration, like paintings," the Italian expert told AFP, citing Hollywood actors Leonardo DiCaprio and Nicolas Cage as fans of such outside prehistoric ornaments.

Cage, however, did hand back the rare skull of a tyrannosaurus bataar, a close cousin of T rex, that he bought in 2007 after it was found to have been stolen and illegally taken out of Mongolia.

Dinosaur bones are increas-

ingly gracing collectors' cabinets, with another huge skeleton, that of a theropod, expected to fetch up to 1.5 million euros (\$1.84 million) when it goes up for auction in June.

Chinese buyers

"For the last two or three years the Chinese have become interested in palaeontology and have been looking for big specimens of dinosaurs found on their soil, for their museums or even for individuals," Briano said.

The new buyers are now bidding against multinational corporations as well as ultra-rich Europeans and Americans, the "traditional" buyers of dinosaur skeletons, Briano added.

In 1997, McDonald's and Walt Disney were among donors stumping up \$8.36 million to buy Sue — the most complete and best preserved Tyrannosaurus rex ever found — for the Field

Museum of Natural History in Chicago. "Millions of people come to see it, it's incredible publicity for companies," said Eric Mickeler, a natural history expert for the Aguttes auction house.

Palaeontologists acknowledge that many fossils that go on the block are of limited scientific interest, but important specimens do go up for auction and can, as in Sue's case, be bought through acts of patronage.

The market remains small and "isn't for everybody", Mickeler said. Only around five dinosaurs are put up for auction around the world every year.

'People like the teeth'

The allosaurus which goes on sale Wednesday, among 87 lots of natural artefacts, is considered "small" at 3.8 metres (12.5 feet) long. It is expected to fetch up to 650,000 euros, while the diplodocus — despite being bigger at



Dinosaur skeletons, including the two being auctioned this week, are increasingly being sought as interior design objects, in particular by Chinese buyers. PHOTO: AFP

12 metres long from nose to tail — has a guide price of 450,000 to 500,000 euros.

Carnivores like the allosaurus often fetch more than herbivores. "People like the teeth," Mickeler said. The price also goes up if the skeleton shows traces of a fight or an incurable illness, as well as if it is considered rare, has a high percentage of verified bones, or a particularly impressive skull. "We recently sold a very beautiful piece to a Venetian

family, they have a magnificent big room in which the dinosaur is perfectly at ease," Briano said.

But Ronan Allain, a palaeontologist at the Natural History Museum of Paris, denounced "completely nonsensical" prices.

"It's the luxury world, it's not for people like us," he said.

"We could decide to buy it pre-emptively, but for the theropod, for example, that would mean shelling out more than a million," he said. —AFP ■

Roma dreaming of Kiev after magical recovery against Barcelona

ROME — Roma have their sights on Kiev and the Champions League final after completing a miracle comeback against Barcelona on Tuesday to overhaul a three-goal first-leg deficit and take their place in the competition's last four.

The Italian capital came alive after a magical night at the Stadio Olimpico in which Roma — fourth in Serie A and fresh from being booed off in a 2-0 defeat against Fiorentina at the weekend — swept Lionel Messi and co aside in front of a crowd that roared itself hoarse.

Trailing 4-1 after last week's quarter-final, first leg at the Camp Nou, Edin Dzeko, Daniele De Rossi and Kostas Manolas all scored to take them through to the semi-finals on away goals against all the odds.

"Perhaps the greatest night in Roma's history," was how daily *Il Fatto Quotidiano* described the result on Twitter.

Car horns blared and fans poured into the streets across the Eternal City as supporters hailed an incredible result for a success-starved club.

The last time Roma got so far in Europe's top competition was back in 1984, when the Giallorossi contrived to lose the final on penalties to Liverpool at their own ground.

In the intervening three decades they have won just one league title and four Italian Cups, but after seeing off what winning goalscorer Manolas called "the best team on the planet", coach Eusebio Di Francesco wants his



Roma's players celebrate after winning a UEFA Champions League Quarter Final Second Leg soccer match between Roma and Barcelona in Rome, Italy on 10 April. Roma won 3-0. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

team to aim for May's final in the Ukrainian capital.

"Why shouldn't we believe? If you come all this way and get to the semi-finals, why shouldn't you believe in getting to the final in Kiev," he asked reporters

after the historic win.

Pride restored

Roma have brought some pride back not just to Rome but to Italian football after the country's humiliating failure to

qualify for the World Cup earlier in the season.

Beating one of the giants from Spain, who hammered Italy 3-0 in qualifying for this year's tournament in Russia, will be particularly sweet, es-

pecially after champions-elect Juventus were bashed 3-0 on their own patch by Real Madrid last week.

"Italy needed a European team, and that's what we were tonight. Today is a great moment, but it's not enough," added Di Francesco.

"This team needs to aim for Kiev. And that's it."

Despite their patchy domestic form, which sees them battling with Inter Milan and local rivals Lazio for a space in next season's Champions League, Roma are through to Friday's draw — where Liverpool are potential opponents — on merit.

They haven't conceded a goal at home in the whole competition and on Tuesday restricted Barcelona to just three shots on target despite the potent attacking firepower boasted by Ernesto Valverde's side.

Barca could easily have already been three down by the time De Rossi slotted home the 58th-minute penalty that made it 2-0 on the night and had the Stadio Olimpico dreaming of victory.

Before that, Marc-Andre ter Stegen pulled off a brilliant 37th-minute save from a Dzeko header and off-form club-record signing Patrik Schick wasted two very presentable headed chances.

Instead it was up to Manolas to make Roma fans' dreams a reality with an 83rd-minute header that sparked pandemonium on the pitch and in the stands.—AFP ■

Guardiola blasts referee as Salah sends Liverpool into semi-finals

MANCHESTER (United Kingdom) — Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola blasted Spanish referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz and lamented decisions that cost his side dear after a 2-1 home defeat by Liverpool on Tuesday sealed a 5-1 aggregate Champions League quarter-final win for the five-time European champions.

Guardiola was forced to watch the second half from the stands after being sent off for his protestations at the break as free-spending City's dreams of conquering the Champions

League for the first time were dashed for another season.

City led 1-0 on the night at that stage after Gabriel Jesus's second-minute opener, but the hosts felt aggrieved after Leroy Sane had a second goal wrongly disallowed for offside just before half-time.

"It's different to go in 1-0 at half-time to 2-0," said Guardiola, who also believed Liverpool's opener in a 3-0 first-leg win at Anfield last week should have been ruled out for offside.

"When the teams are so

equal the impact of these decisions is so big."

Mohamed Salah booked Liverpool's place in the last four for the first time in a decade when he coolly chipped home his 39th goal of the season 11 minutes into the second half before Roberto Firmino inflicted a third consecutive defeat on City for the first time in Guardiola's near two-year reign.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp hailed the maturity of his side to see out a first-half onslaught. "The boys found a solution. We had these two or three



Mohamed Salah scored Liverpool's first goal at the Etihad Stadium as the five-time European champions reached the semi-finals for the first time in a decade. **PHOTO: AFP**

moments already at end of the first half so it was easy for me and the boys to see the develop-

ment of the game and that we are already through the whirlwind," said Klopp.—AFP ■