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in
Picture

Opening Ceremony of Southeast Asian (SEA) Games

Myanmar's Contingent arrives during Opening Ceremony of Southeast Asian (SEA) Games at Bukit Jalil Stadium, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia on 19 August 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS (NEWS ON PAGE 16)**

SUNDAY SPECIAL



Today's issue contains an 8-Page special pull-out supplement.

Widespread rain across Myanmar today

A persistent low-pressure weather system over the north-west Bay of Bengal will result in scattered rain or thunder showers in lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions and Shan State today.

Widespread rain is predicted for Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, Kachin, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states and Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Kayah. The weather bureau also predicted the likelihood of isolated heavy rainfall in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, and Kayin and Mon states.

Over the next two days, the meteorological agency said there is a likelihood of increased rain in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, Kayin and Mon states.—GNLM ■

Second day of Myanmar Pearl Auction

By Min Min Zaw
Myanmar News Agency

The second day of the Myanmar Pearl Auction (August-2017) organised by the Myanmar Pearl Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental

Conservation, was held in Myanmar Gem Museum in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Starting in the morning, local and foreign pearl merchants and jewelry merchants viewed the displayed pearls and submitted their tenders.

At noon, tender number 1 consisting of lots 1 to 90 was closed and successful tenderers were announced. At 4 pm, tender number 2 consisting of lots 91 to 180 were closed and an announcement was made for successful tenderers.

Tender number 3 for lots 181 to 270 will be closed at 20 August noon and successful tenderers will be announced shortly thereafter. In yesterday's tender 1 and 2, 178 lots of pearls and jewelry were sold.

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Second day of Myanmar Pearl Auction

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“In Myanmar pearl and jewelry sales, each tender will consist of 90 lots and a total of 270 lots will be sold. There are a total of 86,914 pearls and will be displayed and sold under a tender system. The event is attended by jewelry merchants from countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Thailand and India as well as local jewelry merchants. Sales to foreign jewelry merchants are in Euro while sales to local jewelry merchants in Myanmar Kyat”, said Daw Mya Mya Win, Assistant General Manager, Myanma

Pearl Enterprise.

“Myanmar pearls are the best quality in the world. Only a handful of countries are producing pearls and none are of the quality of Myanmar pearl. Myanmar’s natural resources are valuable and high-value quality pearls are produced. That is why countries are investing in Myanmar pearl oyster breeding. As local jewelry merchants were permitted to purchase in Myanmar kyats, it is very convenient. Nowadays, Myanmar pearls are famous around the world,” said pearl and jewelry merchant Ko Kan Hein. ■



Merchants evaluate pearls at the second day of the Myanmar Pearl Auction (August-2017) in the Myanma Gem Museum, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar Democracy Festival to be held with anyeint and dances

THE Myanmar Democracy Festival is being planned for the country and its people to promote high morality and esteem and to support the establishment of democratic practices and thoughts, festival planners said Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint.

A work coordination meeting to hold the Myanmar Democracy Festival with movie shows, anyeint (traditional dance troupes) and dances was held yesterday morning at Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) meeting hall on Pyay Road, Yangon and was attended by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint.

In his opening address to the meeting, the Union Minister said the Myanmar Democracy Festival week came about after plans to produce a movie. As artists from movie, music and anyeint professions pitched in to help, shows, anyeint and dances were arranged to be included in the festival to make it an impressive event. There will be an opening



Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint delivers a speech at the work coordination meeting to hold the Myanmar Democracy Festival with anyeint and dances in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

ceremony on 15 September to be held with the country’s leaders and artists in attendance.

“Everything is ready to hold the Myanmar Democracy Festival. As the preparation works are systematically conducted through forming of steering committee and sub-committees, it is believed that the works are progressing well. Thus, all are invited to openly discuss on the work done and the work that still needs to be done”, said the Union

Minister.

Dance event work committee chairman U Myint Htwe, Director General of MRTV, opening ceremony and movie show work committee chairman U Maung Pe, Director General of the Information and Public Relations Department, anyeint competition work committee chairman U Ye Tun, MRTV Director (MI), director Maung Thi, Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation Chairman U Lu Min, Myanmar

Music Association Chairman U Tin Oo Lay, Myanmar Thabin Association Chairman U Phoe Chit and meeting attendees discussed their respective sectors, after which the Union Minister delivered a concluding speech.

The Myanmar Democracy Festival will be held from September 15 to 21 and opening ceremonies will be held in President Cinema, Yangon and Winlite Cinema, Mandalay.

During the Myanmar De-

mocracy Festival period, five movies — “Naychi Mhar Shweyi Laung”, “Thara Sawhtee”, “Demo Yakkwak”, “Tain Pyar thaw Nay” and “Kyi Myat thaw Myanmar” — will be shown in 44 cinemas throughout the country. Prominent celebrities will also entertain with dance, music and song performances that will be held in Yangon National Theatre on 15 and 16 September from 7 pm to 11 pm.

Myanmar Democracy Anyeint competitions will be held in Yangon National Theatre from 27 to 30 August and in Mandalay National Theatre from 28 to 30 August. Five anyeint troupes will compete every day and seven finalists will each be awarded a prize of Ks1 million.

Ten prizes consisting of first, second, and third-place prizes, two consolation prizes, best troupe prize, best lead female dancer, best comedian, best band and audience selected best Anyeint troupe prizes will be awarded.—MNA ■

Upper Paunglaung Dam. PHOTO: MNA



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker, Union Ministers inspect Nay Pyi Taw hydropower stations

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, accompanied by Union Ministers U Win Khaing, U Kyaw Win and U Thein Swe, inspected hydropower stations of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy in the Nay Pyi Taw Council area yesterday morning.

The Speaker and Union Ministers were welcomed upon arrival at the Paunglaung hydropower station by the Head of the Power Station, who explained about electricity generation, distribution and the status of the power station.

During a meeting that followed in the power station briefing hall, U Aye San, Director General of the Department of Hydropower Implementation, spoke of the hydropower projects implemented and water resources available in the Sittaung, Paunglaung and Dotawaddy River basin area for hydropower generation. Deputy Director General U Ye Toe Thwin then explained about the power line and sub-station projects on the Sittaung and Dotawaddy rivers and U Khin Maung Win, Managing Director,

Hydropower Generation Enterprise, spoke about the status of hydropower station, electricity generation and distribution. Union Minister U Win Khaing explained further about the National Electrification Plan, and the increase in annual electricity requirements.

In the evening, the Speaker and party arrived at the hydropower dam in Nancho under the Department of Hydropower Implementation, where Director General U Aye San explained about the main points of the Nancho hydropower station.—MNA ■



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than views the scale model of Paunglaung Hydropower station as an official clarifies about the station. PHOTO: MNA



Rakhine State Cabinet members discuss the projects to be implemented in the townships in Rakhine State. PHOTO: KYAW HTOO MAUNG

Tenders to be invited for sub-Ks100 million projects in Rakhine

By A One Soe

Rakhine State government has announced yesterday that it will invite tenders for projects with investments of not more than Ks100 million.

The announcement came at the coordination meeting on inviting tenders for the projects for the 2016-2017 financial year.

“We envision development and security in Rakhine State with establishing an economic zone which can create job opportunities,” said the Rakhine State Finance, Tax, Planning and Economic Minister.

At the meeting, the authorities pledged that they will carry out the tender processes following instructions from the Gov-

ernment. The authorities also discussed plans for implementing the projects in townships in Rakhine State.

Following the meeting, the authorities held a meeting with local traders and businessmen over issues related with socio-economic development and the security, health and education sectors. ■

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

Over 3 million acres of monsoon paddy in MraukU

AS of 19 August a total of 326,918 acres of monsoon paddy has been planted in MraukU district said a MraukU district official.

U Aye Tun, a MraukU district officer, said "Over 11 million acres of monsoon paddy is planned in Rakhine State of which 3 million acres is in MraukU."

In the 2017-2018 monsoon seasons, paddy is planted in MraukU, Kyauktaw, Minbya and Myebon townships, Rakhine State while 11 other monsoon crops were also cultivated in MraukU on 6,671 acres. Cultivation loans were granted in order for MraukU district to fulfill the targeted monsoon paddy planting it is learnt. —District (IPRD) ■



MraukU district officials inspect paddy field planted in MraukU district. **PHOTO: DISTRICT (IPRD)**

Border import with ITCs more than Ks12 billion; exports over Ks960 million

BORDER imports with the use of Individual Trading Card (ITCs) as of 4 August amounted to more than Ks12 billion while export value with the ITCs reached Ks969 million, according to the official statistics issued by the Ministry of Commerce on Friday.

In the current financial

year, the trade value with the ITCs totalled Ks13.339 billion. Of all border trade points of entry, Myawady border is found to have the largest volume and value of trade with over Ks10 billion, followed by Kanpikete with Ks827 million, Tachilek with Ks576 million, Mawtaung with

Ks556 million and Tamu with Ks542 million.

The ministry's statistics between 1 April and 4 August show that the trade value with the ITCs was Ks273 million in Kawthaung border trade station, Ks250 million in Reed, Ks62 million in Kengtung, Ks9 million in

Muse and Ks4 million in Chinshwehaw. With the aim of boosting the country's border trade, the trade department has issued ITCs since 2012-2013 FY.

From its beginning to date, the department issued a total of 1,326 ITCs to individual exporters and importers.—GNLM ■

Freight costs along Mandalay-Muse route decreased since mid-July

THE Myanmar Highway Freight Transportation Services Entrepreneurs Association said that freight prices along Mandalay-Muse route has steadily declined since mid-July due to trade in low-volume stocks, according to a report of the Ministry of Commerce.

The association said

the freight costs of Mandalay-based bus lines operating along Mandalay-Lashio route, Mandalay-Kyaukme route, Mandalay-Taunggyi route, Mandalay-Mawlamyine route and Mandalay-Yangon route saw no obvious changes last month.

However, the prices of

freight on Mandalay-Muse route has been on decline starting from the middle of last month.

The freight costs continue to fall to eight kyats per viss (a viss is equivalent to 3.6 pounds) for both light and heavy commodities in the second week of this month.

The freight costs of a viss of light cargo on Mandalay-Muse route were Ks66 on July 4. It decreased to Ks58 per viss on August 8 while a viss of heavy cargo were transported at a cost of Ks57. On August 8, the freight prices on other Mandalay-based routes were no more than Ks50.—Shwe Khine ■

Yaba pills seized

Anti-narcotic squad from Katha searched a motorcycle driven by Maung Wal together with Aung Khaing Zaw at 11 am on 18 August at milepost 146/0 at Nabar intersection in Katha Township. The police found 1,407 yaba pills and a handset.

Similarly, Lashio anti-narcotic squad searched a motorcycle driven by Pyae Phyo Swe on Muse-Mandalay Union road near Oriental tollgate in Nawngkhio Township on the same day.

The police found 3,800 yaba pills. Muse anti-narcotic squad searched a vehicle driven by

Kyan Kyar Wun at Pan Lon 1st street in Mantwein Ward in Muse Township and discovered 3,900 yaba pills.

Likewise, anti-narcotic squad from Loilem searched a motorcycle driven by Win Aye together with Kyaw Naing (alias) Zin Ko Htet at Pan Khaik Woe monastery on Loilem-Namsan road in Loilem Township and seized 20,115 yaba pills and a handphone.

Police have taken action against them under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Law.—Myanmar Police Force ■



The two suspects Win Aye and Kyaw Naing (a) Zin Ko Htet with drugs. **PHOTO: MPF**



Betel nut sacks are sorted to export to India. PHOTO: ZO HAY HSAR

Local exporters face losses as India raises import duty on betel nuts

BETEL nut exporters are currently facing losses as Indian authorities have raised the import duty on betel nuts to 40 per cent, according to a spokesperson of the Tamu Border Traders Association.

The imports of Myanmar's betel nuts to India through Tamu and Reed border trade stations have been banned by Indian government beginning late July. For the time being, a large quantity of betel nuts

has currently piled up in both Reedkhawda Town in Chin State and Mizoram State of India for nearly two months.

One merchant said local exporters brought back their stocks along Tamu-Kalay-Reed route as they have no demand for the seed from India through the two borders, facing large losses of prices for betel nuts which have been sold before.

There are nearly around 150,000 acres of betel nut plan-

tation in the country. Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions as well as Mon State supply large volume of betel nut on a commercial scale. According to statistics issued by border trade camp, Myanmar exported US\$7.706 million worth of betel nuts weighing 8,452 tons to India in FY2014-2015. The export volume increased to over 20,000 tons in FY2015-2016 and it continued to rise to 21,492 tons in FY2016-2017.—Zo Hay Hsar ■

Over 48,000 tons of diesels imported in early August

MYANMAR imported more than 48,000 tons of diesels worth US\$112 million in the first week of this month through by sea, a decrease of over 6,000 tons matched against the previous week, according to trade authorities.

In the previous week before 30 July, the country bought 54,480 tons of diesels from the international trading partners.

More than 7,000 tons of diesels were also imported into

the country through by border points of entry during the same period. Over 1,700 tons of diesels worth \$827,400 entered the country from Myawady border gate, over 444 tons of diesels worth \$223,604 from Tachilek border point, 4,527 tons of re-export diesels worth more than \$2 million from Muse border trade camp and 360 tons of re-export diesels worth \$2,061 from Lweijel border trade station.

In Yangon market, the retail

prices of diesel was Ks670 per litre while high-quality diesel was sold for Ks690 per litre on 7 August. The prices of diesels increased by around Ks1,000 within the next three days.

The diesel prices in Mandalay's retail market were Ks660 per litre while a litre of high-quality diesel was worth Ks680. The prices of diesel slightly increased in the second week of this month.—Kyaw Kyaw ■

Yangon's auto dealers face cooling demand

AUTO dealers in Yangon say they are facing cooling demand this August, but the market sees a moderate demands for cars with Yangon license plates and permit-free cars such as Belta cars and Honda Insight cars.

There is no significant motor vehicle requirement in the market although the import of cars decreased during these days because the country imported a large number

of vehicles between the late 2016 and early 2017. After the government's new policy to import only left-hand drive cars in coming years to reduce road accidents, the majority of buyers later purchase right-hand drive cars, marketable cars and cars with Yangon license plates than before. Senior auto dealers say that brand new cars are likely to have a good market demand in the future as there is no signif-

icant gap between the prices of Japanese used car and the new car at the current time.

According to local dealers, 2012 Hondafit was worth over Ks20 million in Yangon's auto market in the final week of last month, while 2012 Suzuki Swift was more than Ks17 million, 2004 Toyota Crown was sold for over Ks30 million and 2003 Toyota Alphard for Ks35 million.—Khine Khant ■

Prices of chicken, duck continue to drop in Yangon market

DESPITE regular inflow of poultry products to Yangon's chicken and duck market in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, the prices of chicken have dropped by half in the city, according to a report of the Myawady Daily issued on Saturday.

U Hsan Thurain Aye, an official from the chicken and duck market, said more than 77,000 vissees of chicken plus 2,500 ducks regularly enter the city's market.

Most of the poultry products are imported from Yangon's poultry farms, followed by Ayeyawady and Bago regions. At the present time, a viss of chicken has been sold for Ks1,700 in the domestic market. The normal selling prices of chicken were Ks3,200 per viss in the past. Chicken prices have been on decline to 50 per cent from its peak on account of the spread of seasonal H1N1 virus in the city this monsoon.—GNLM ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့တိုင်း: "Sunday Special" အချပ်ပို (၈)
မျက်နှာပေါင်သော The Global New Light of Myanmar
နေ့စဉ်ထုတ် သတင်းစာကို အောက်ပါမြို့များတွင် ဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

"Sunday Special" အချပ်ပို (၈) မျက်နှာ ပေါင်သော

နေပြည်တော်
မြန်မာ့ရေးသားကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ်(၇) နေပြည်တော်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်)၊
စီမံရေးရာဌာန၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၄၁၂၁၀၈

နေပြည်တော်
နေပြည်တော်သတင်းစာတိုက် (တပ်ကုန်း)
ဓယျာသိရိမြို့နယ်၊ ဓယျာလမ်း၊ နေပြည်တော်၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၃၆၀၄၈၊ ၀၆၇၃၆၀၂၉

ရန်ကုန်
The Global New Light of Myanmar သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊
ငါးထပ်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း၊ ဝဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊
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မန္တလေး
လမ်း (၂၁ x ၂၁) ကြား၊ (၉၂ x ၈၃) လမ်းကြား၊ ပုလဲဓမ္မ
ရောင်ရမ်းမန္တလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၂၃၂၇၂၉၊ ၀၂၃၂၉၅၁

တောင်ကြီး
ရုံးကြီးလမ်း၊ သစ်တောရပ်ကွက်၊ တောင်ကြီးမြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၈၁၂၁၁၆၄၊ ၀၉၅၂၁၄၅၇

မကွေး
နတ်မောက်လမ်း၊ တပ်မ (၈၈) တပ်နယ်ရေးအနီး၊
မကွေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၃၂၇၁၂၂

တချင်းတုံ
မြို့နယ် (၃-၈)၊ အမှတ် (၁) လမ်းသွယ်၊ မြို့နယ်လမ်း၊
တချင်းတုံမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၄၂၂၄၉၂

ကလေး
အောင်ဓမ္မရပ်ကွက်၊ မြို့နယ်အားကစားကွင်းအနီး၊
ကလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၃၂၂၁၃၃

မြစ်ကြီးဟူး
အမှတ် (၄၁)၊ ဓရာရပ်ကွက်၊ အောင်ဆန်းလမ်း၊
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စစ်တွေ
ရမ္မာဝတီလမ်းနှင့် တက္ကသိုလ်ရိပ်သာလမ်း၊
စစ်တွေမြို့အနီး၊ မန်းကျည်းမြင်ရပ်ကွက်၊ စစ်တွေမြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၄၃၂၃၀၆၈

လားရှိုး
ဟူးမန်ကျေးရွာထိမ်း၊ ဟူးမန်ဆည်ဘယ်ဘက်ခြမ်း၊
(၁၂) ရပ်ကွက်၊ မန်ဆည်ဘုရားရွာ၊ အဝေရာလမ်း၊
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ဇြိတ်
မေတ္တာလမ်း၊ ရှမ်းရောင်ရမ်း၊ ကလေးကျေးရွာအုပ်စု၊
ဇြိတ်မြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၅၉၄၂၁၀၃

မော်လမြိုင်
ကြာအင်းကျေးရွာ၊ မော်လမြိုင်မြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၅၇၂၇၂၅၊ ၀၅၇၂၇၂၆

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Chinese Nobel laureate's widow makes first appearance since funeral

SHANGHAI — The widow of Chinese Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo has appeared for the first time since her husband's funeral in an online video in which she said she was recuperating and asked for time to mourn.

Liu Xia had been under effective house arrest since her husband, a prominent dissident since the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests, won the Nobel prize in 2010. He died on 13 July after being denied permission to leave the country for treatment of late-stage liver cancer.

Liu Xia had been allowed to visit him in prison about once a month and to remain with him while he was treated in his final days.

However, friends of the couple have told Reuters that they have been unable to speak with her since after her husband's funeral, after which they say she returned to Beijing and has been staying with a friend.

In a roughly one minute-long video posted on YouTube on Friday, Liu Xia speaks directly to the camera while holding a lit cigarette. She was sitting on a white sofa in front of a pot of tea in what appeared to be the living room of a home.

"I am outside recuperating, everyone please grant me time to mourn, time for my heart to heal and one day I will be able to face you all in a healthy state," she said. It was not immediately clear what she meant by "out-



Liu Xia, wife of deceased Chinese Nobel Peace Prize-winning dissident Liu Xiaobo and other relatives attend his sea burial off the coast of Dalian, China in this photo released by Shenyang Municipal Information Office on 15 July, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

side". "The doctors tried their best when Xiaobo was ill and Xiaobo also viewed life and death very plainly. So I must recalibrate, and in future when I have made improvements in different aspects, I can be with you all again."

Reuters was not able to verify whether she made the comments of her own free will or her location.

The video was uploaded by user "goudan li", who joined YouTube on 6 July, 2017. Other videos uploaded by the user were ones alleging wrongdoings by fugitive tycoon Guo Wengui.

"Goudan li" did not immediately respond to Reuters' messages on the video.

Chinese authorities have said that Liu Xia was free and have told diplomats who asked about her whereabouts that her lack of communication was due to her desire to mourn in peace.

Before the death of her husband, Liu Xia had told diplomats and friends that she wished to leave China should Liu Xiaobo be released. Jared Genser, a human rights lawyer based in the United States who had advocated for Liu Xiaobo and his wife, filed a formal complaint on

the behalf of Liu Xia with the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances in early August.

China's Ministry of Public Security did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It was not possible to contact the Ministry of State Security as it has no website or publicly available telephone number.

Liu Xiaobo was sentenced to 11 years in prison in 2009 for "inciting subversion of state power" after he helped write a petition known as "Charter 08" calling for sweeping political reforms. — Reuters ■

Scientists eye use of new cancer diagnosis in several years

TOKYO — Scientists from state-backed institutions hope to gain government approval for use of a diagnostic method which traces molecular signs of over a dozen cancers in a small amount of blood.

The method being developed by a team of scientists from the National Cancer Centre Japan and other institutions is designed to detect cancer-associated microRNAs, molecules regulating gene expression, the scientists said.

The new diagnosis will be cheaper and much less invasive than biomarker testing as it can detect microRNAs linked to 13 types of cancers in a single drop of blood, they said.

The new method is also more accurate than the biomarker testing and can detect early stage cancers, they said.

It can find bile duct, bladder, breast, colon, esophageal, liver, lung, ovarian, pancreatic, prostate and stomach cancers, as well as glioma and sarcoma.

Research to date has mostly been conducted using blood samples preserved for a relatively long period of time.

The team is conducting clinical trials involving some 3,000 cancer patients to ensure the test's accuracy. —Kyodo News ■

Construction of first phase of Thailand-China railway project to start in October

BANGKOK — China and Thailand are working together to sign two contracts of the first phase of Thailand-China railway project in September to begin the construction work of the first section in October, Chinese Embassy in Bangkok said in a statement on Saturday.

According to the statement, the two countries concluded negotiations of the contract of design work of the first phase of Thailand-China railway project and agreed on the price in the supervision contract during

the 20th meeting of Joint Committee on Railway Cooperation between Thailand and China.

"It is a new significant progress that the project made after being approved by Thai cabinet and Thailand's National Legislative Assembly," the statement said.

It also mentioned that both sides had been required to accelerate their work to make it possible for the two sides to sign the two contracts in September and to begin the construction work of the first section

in October.

The construction of first phase, or the 253 km railway from Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchasima, will start gradually from the first 3.5 km section, the second 11 km section, the third 119 km section and finally the fourth 119 km section.

The railway project will also be further extended from Nakhon Ratchasima to Nong Khai on Thai-Lao border, which is called the second phase.

"The preparation work for the second phase of the project

will start soon," the embassy said.

China and Thailand have held meetings of Joint Committee on Railway Cooperation for 20 times over the past two years, the statement said both sides have overcome many difficulties and solved many problems.

Chinese side will be responsible for the design work and supervision, which will incorporate many Thai engineers and architects while the Thais will be responsible for construction work. The project will also use

Thai equipments and materials as much as possible.

Once finished, the project will be the first standard gauge high speed railway of the Thailand and the railway, according to the statement, "will improve Thailand's transport system, enforce its role as the transport hub in the region, boost economic growth in the country, especially its northeastern part, contribute to the Eastern Economic Corridor project and benefit other countries along the railway." —Xinhua ■

Landslide on Chuo Expressway leaves at least dozen injured

GIFU, Japan — A landslide occurred on the Chuo Expressway in Gifu Prefecture in central Japan on Friday evening, involving at least four vehicles and injuring at least 12 people, local firefighters said.

The landslide occurred around 9:30 pm and affected a 100-to-200 metre section of the expressway in Mizunami, Gifu, they said. Heavy rain was falling in parts of Gifu and neighboring Aichi Prefecture around the time of the disaster, prompting a local weather observatory to issue a landslide alert.

There was no immediate information regarding the extent of the injuries.—Kyodo News ■

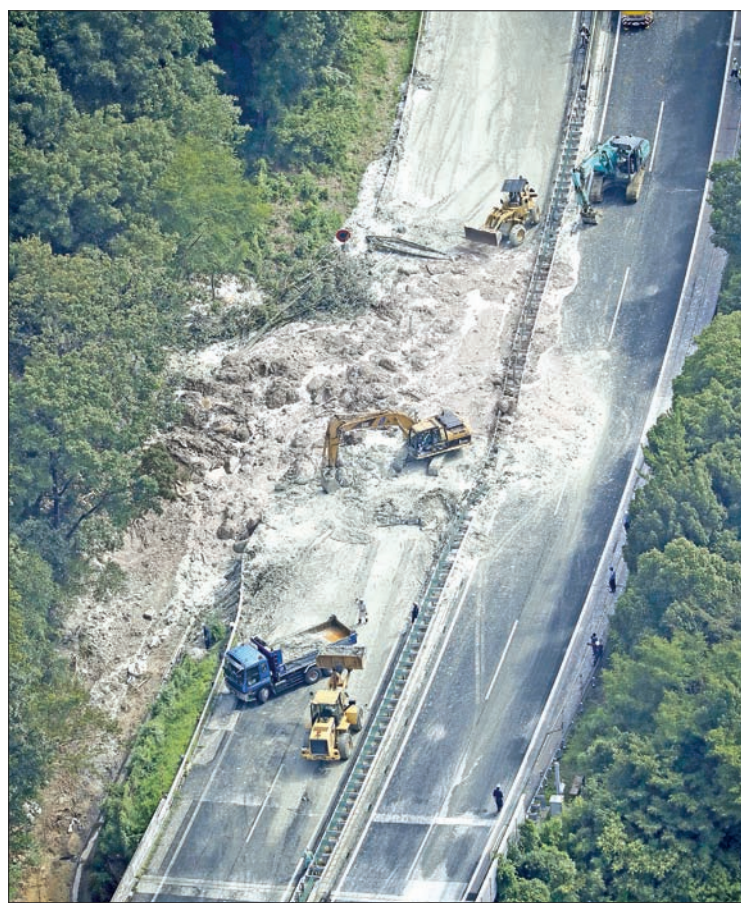


Photo taken on 19 August, 2017, from a Kyodo News helicopter shows the scene of a landslide on the Chuo Expressway in Mizunami, Gifu Prefecture, central Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Fired workers protest against US-owned miner Freeport Indonesia

JAKARTA — Hundreds of workers laid off by Freeport Indonesia blocked routes and set trucks on fire near the company's mines in the eastern province of Papua on Saturday, company officials said.

The Indonesian unit of US mining giant Freeport McMoran Inc has been embroiled in a labour dispute since May, when around 5,000 workers went on strike to protest against mass layoffs.

Freeport says the layoffs were triggered by unexpected revisions earlier this year in government rules on taxes and royalties.

The protests by the ex-workers, who were demand-

ing their jobs back, prompted police personnel to secure the area.

A spokesman for the company said the protests have not had an impact on operations, although employee access to worksites was being affected.

"Some of our employee convoys have been cancelled and we will not be scheduling further convoys until the situation is conducive again. We have urged our workers to avoid this area until further notice," said Freeport Indonesia spokesman Riza Pratama. The company is a major source of employment and livelihoods in the impoverished eastern-most province of Indonesia.—Reuters ■

Keyboard warriors: S Korea, US gear up for war games to counter N Korea threat

SEOUL — In air conditioned bunkers and at military bases across South Korea, it is with keyboards — not tanks — that South Korean and the US forces will launch military exercises on Monday, denounced by North Korea as a rehearsal for war.

The 21 to 31 August exercises involve computer simulations designed to prepare for the unthinkable: war with nuclear-ca-

pable North Korea.

The wargames, details of which are a closely guarded secret, simulate military conflict with the isolated country. The US describes them as "defensive in nature," a term North Korean state media has dismissed as a "deceptive mask".

"The drills deal with all the steps involved in a war, of course, towards victory," said Moon

Seong-mook, a retired South Korean brigadier who regularly participated in the drills until the mid-2000s.

Far from the dusty firing ranges just south of the heavily fortified border with North Korea, US and South Korean troops hunch over laptops and screens wearing earphones and camouflaged combat uniforms, according to photos of past UFG

drills on the United States Forces Korea website.

The US military describes the software behind the drills as "state-of-the-art wargaming computer simulations". There will be no field training during the exercise, according to US Forces Korea.

As part of the exercises, imagery from military satellites orbiting above the Korean penin-

sula, is at times used to peer deep into North Korea, said a former South Korean government official who declined to be identified.

Banks of monitors and computer graphics create simulated battlefields, complete with troop movements, according to Park Yong-han, a military expert formerly with the state-run Korea Institute for Defence Analysis.—Reuters ■

Nervous Japanese hold drill in case N Korea fires missiles over them

KOTOURA, Japan — Residents of a town on the Japanese coast held evacuation drills on Saturday to prepare for any launch of North Korean missiles towards the US Pacific territory of Guam, that would fly over their homes.

As sirens blared from speakers in the town of Kotoura, children playing soccer outside ran to take shelter in a school, along with their parents and their team coach.

"I've been concerned every day that something might fall or a missile could fall in an unexpected place due to North Korea's missile capabilities," said the coach, Akira Hamakawa, 38.

North Korea's rapid progress in developing nuclear weapons and missiles has fuelled a surge in tension across the region.



School students take part in an evacuation drill based on the scenario of a launch of North Korean missiles towards the US Pacific territory of Guam that would fly over their homes, in the town of Kotoura, Tottori prefecture, Japan in this photo taken by Kyodo on 19 August, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

US President Donald Trump warned North Korea this month it would face "fire and fury" if it threatened the United States.

The North responded by threatening to fire missiles towards the US Pacific island territory of Guam. Any such missiles would have to fly over western Japan.

While North Korea later said it was holding off firing towards Guam, tension remains high and annual joint military exercises by the United States and South Korea beginning on Monday are likely to enrage Pyongyang.

Nearly 130 people took part in the drill in Kotoura, which has a population of 18,000, a town official said.

For 10 minutes, people ducked down covering their heads with their arms. Many of those taking part said they were worried.

North Korea has in the past

threatened to attack Japan, a staunch US ally and host to US military bases.

Japan is the only country in the world to be attacked with nuclear weapons.

Authorities are publishing notices in newspapers, on television and online, advising people to take shelter in robust buildings and to keep away from windows should missiles land.

Evacuation drills, however, have only been held in remote towns such as Kotoura.

A North Korean missile could reach Japan in about 10 minutes.

"A lot of people participated in the drill with a sense of emergency," said Yosuke Suenaga, the cabinet counsellor of situation response and crisis management.—Reuters ■

Trafficking in persons sees improvement, but still more needs to be done

By Aye Min Soe

MYANMAR has seen improvement in fighting human trafficking, rising from a Tier-3 ranking to the Tier-2 Watch List.

The achievement has brought pride to the country and we thank those who involved in the drive.

However, Myanmar is not yet out of the woods in combating this scourge.

According to statistics released by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the country exposed 143 cases in the first eight months of this year, an increase compared with the same period last years.

Awareness campaigns against trafficking in persons have been carried out, with 1,609 educative talks and more than 17,500 instances of handing out pamphlets to the people in the first eight months of this year.

Still, we have a long way to go to reach the goal of eliminating the crime.

The deportation of illegal Myanmar migrant workers from foreign countries has alerted us that we need to create more job opportunities and to carry out systematic management for sending workers overseas. Only then can the country prevent trafficking in persons.

It should be noted that the problem

has its root in poverty. In some cases, it has been found that previous victims of human trafficking turned into traffickers. So we should not turn a blind eye to the socio-economic life of the victims that forces them to travel to other countries for employment and, in some cases, become traffickers themselves. We need to educate all Myanmar people about the dangers and corrosive effects on our society.

Women are trafficked across other borders too, to Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

Meanwhile, the statistics released by the Ministry of Home Affairs shows

that the number of cases in which Myanmar women are trafficked into China and forced to marry strangers there is increasing.

Trafficked women are exploited as sex workers or labourers. Men are tricked into accepting jobs for low wages and forced to work long hours.

The situation is very serious and getting worse. Authorities concerned in regions and states are obliged to carry out preventive measures against trafficking in persons effectively. Individually, we must accept the education efforts and do our best to combat this growing menace. It is our national duty. ■

Sharing

By Ashin Canda Dika
(Shwe Paramitawya)

IN its real meaning, sharing is a charming word which brings the meaning of freedom, nobility, adoration and beauty. The moment we hear, see or recite the word, sharing “မျှဝေခြင်း” we are relieved of all our tension and stress, feeling greatly rejoiced and peaceful in our minds and bodies.

A skilled masseur can reduce the aching pains or stiffened parts of the body by rubbing or pressing with the hands, as needed. By doing so, stiffened muscles are becoming loose and the person who receives massage get a relaxed feeling of relieving pain and stress due to the process of sharing.

On account of sharing we contribute, we tend to be relaxed and possess calmness. Depending upon the circumstances, excitement and happiness give us a good temperament and mood. If our minds are centered to our personal benefits only, in everywhere, our minds will be stiffened with ego and stress. It is kind of tension to always ponder and perform for our possession, use and enjoyment. Tensions may be attributed to affection, disappointment, pride, jealousy, greed, anger and envy.

Only sharing can alleviate our mental tensions. If we fulfill the needs of others—regardless of much or less at our utmost, destructive elements—dissatisfaction and disappointment will clear, thus simultaneously constructive elements—considerations for others and astuteness of necessities will become full. At that time, all our tension will completely be lessened and we will gain mental strength.

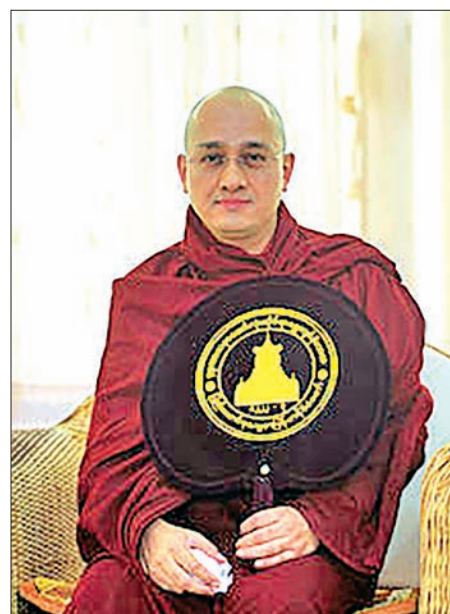
It was in Monywa, in 2009 when a part of a crane dropped off from the height and hurt the tendon of my right knee. The wound was sutured with many stitches, staying in plaster cast for a fortnight. When the plaster of Paris was removed, I could no longer to manage to bend my right knee. Due to living for two weeks straight, I had to live with my right knee un-bended, muscles became stiffened. Only when I practiced for nearly 20 days with the use of the machines, my knee returned to its normal stage.

If we bend our fingers through, in other word, if we clench our fists without undoing them again, muscles become stiff and we cannot unfasten our fingers. If we force ourselves to fasten, it will greatly hurt us. Only if we frequently bend or undo our fingers, can we move our fingers as normal, without pain.

It is like clenching our fists to keep or grasp our possessions, ranks and authority, intellects, techniques and knowledge we acquire through our own efforts, for our own sake only. Without sharing to others apart from our own family and our community, our minds and feelings will be stiffened, failing to manage to un-bend our fingers. If it came to helping in the interest of others, it would hurt our feelings.

It means that we need not bend or stretch our fingers constantly, and we are required to do depending upon situations. That is to say, we are to do by adjusting between self and philanthropy.

To fulfill our possession of property and intellect, qualifications up to the stage of fullness is in fact like clenching our fists, that is, doing for ourselves, or vice versa. Had we performed for



Ashin Canda Dika (Shwe Paramitawya).

ourselves and others depending upon time and situations, our minds will be relaxed, free and calm.

As a boy, I had ever heard a lyric, “Will you clench your fist or will you open your hand—you can choose either of them— လက်သီးဆုပ်မလား လက်ဝါးဖြန့် မလား ကြိုက်တာကို ရွေးစမ်းကိုယ့်လူ. To be relaxed and blessed with happiness, we need to clench our fists or unfasten them depending upon situations. Only if we have, we can perform philanthropic deeds and we can share ours to others.

We never mean that we must give or share only if we have plenty. We can share some or part of what we have. Willingness to share is of importance.

Long ago, there used to be a culture of a handful of rice donation. Whenever rice was cooked, a handful of rice out of a daily ration was set aside and when accumulated rice amounted to much, they were donated. It is a noble deed of sharing as donation was done during difficult times.

Today's sharing at Thaton is the one done by students who received scholarship awards from Shwe Parami

Education Foundation by accumulating K 1000 per month to share school uniforms to their fellow students. It is not done out of abundance. Though being insufficient, they tried their best to accomplish such a donation, by reducing their monthly expenditure. It is more marvelous than the donation out of abundance. Boomerang effect will be great surely though it was not expected.

In the opening address, Mahn Win Khaing Than, Patron of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw said, “Sharing can get rid of the vicious circle, “Donation is not performed out of poverty and failure to donate begets poverty.” It was quite right in saying so.

As a matter of fact, sharing is the Spirit of Buddha-to-be. At the time of thousands of eons ago, townspeople of Rammarwadi were repairing the road because Depinkara Buddha would reach. Buddha-to-be Sumeda hermit was granted the worst part of the road for repairing. Though the Hermit could manage to repair the road in a moment through His Power, He repaired it as done by others, by exerting much effort as He wished to give physical contribution. Just prior to the completion of road repair, the Godama Buddha arrived. So He lay down on the unfinished part of the road for Godama Buddha to go past through His back. On seeing the Buddha's face, He made a solemn pray to become the Buddhahood so that He can lead beings to the way to liberate from circles of life. Though He can gain Nirvana in a moment for His own sake only, He made a solemn pray to become Buddhahood to save uncountable amounts of being, by fulfilling paramis for many and many eons. After becoming the Enlightened Buddhahood, He preached sermons throughout 45 years, with the spirit of sharing.

SEE PAGE 9

No more death from H1N1 yesterday

Though more six patients have been confirmed as infected with the latest H1N1 swine flu, the infection did not kill any patient yesterday nationwide, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Currently, there are more than 770 patients with symptoms of the contagious infection which has killed 29 patients so far.

There have been three inpatients at Wabargi Specialist Hospital and 30 inpatients in hospitals in various regions and states receiving treatment for confirmed cases of H1N1 yesterday.

More than 190 patients have been discharged from the hospitals nationwide, said the ministry.

H1N1, which spreads from

person to person by inhaling the virus, or by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and then touching one's mouth or nose, became a global pandemic in 2009. Its flulike symptoms include coughing, fever, sore throat, stuffy or runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue.

The ministry urged in its report for the elderly, children, pregnant women, people with chronic illnesses and low immune systems to follow the ministry's guidelines to protect against the seasonal influenza and to receive medical examinations at the nearest health department if they experience any of the virus' symptoms.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar-Japan company donates school, road for Thilawa SEZ

By Ye Khaung Nyunt

The Myanmar-Japan Thilawa Development (MJTD) Company held a ceremony yesterday in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone to announce their donation of a new two-storey building for Myaing Thaya Sub-Basic Education High School and a new concrete road in Myaing Thaya 3 ward.

U Thein Han, chairman of the MJTD, said the two-storey building with furniture, a fence and a tube well is worth more than Ks247 million, while the 1,900 ft long, 12 ft wide concrete



Dignitaries formally open the new school building and a new concrete road in Kyauktan on Saturday. **PHOTO: MNA**

road is worth more than Ks57.7 million. The ceremony was attended by Chairman of Thilawa SEZ Management Committee and Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Set Aung, Deputy Chairman of Thilawa

SEZ Management Committee, Yangon Region minister of electricity, industry, roads and communication Daw Nilar Kyaw, officials from education department and MJTD and invited guests. ■

Sharing

FROM PAGE 8

When making a vow to become Buddhahood, Dipankara Buddha did not pass over Sumeda hermit's back, with the hermit on right side spreading flowers on Sumeda's back, as did by follower Arahattha monks while paying respect by spreading flowers.

Puthujana's sharing spirit was paid respect by Buddha and Arahtta monks as paying respect to sharing spirit. By seeing this, it is evident that sharing spirit is of great importance.

On such a ceremony, where students who won scholarship award presented by the Shwe Parami Education Foundation shared their fellow students with school uniforms, stationeries, story books and bicycles, Mahn Win Khaing Than, one of the highest State Leaders condescended to attend. This event reminds me of Dipankara Buddha and follower Arahttas monks. Who dare deny that those who give sharing and the ones who receive sharing here will belong to the group of virtuous persons and future's leaders-to-be?

Donation can be made by presenting a representative representing students in Thaton at Shwe Parami Foundation in Yangon after purchasing school uniforms and books with the

monthly saving at K 1000 per month. But it cost too much to have held the ceremony. Some may think that such a ceremony is more than necessary. In fact it is designed to indoctrinate the sharing spirit in students, that is, to broaden scope of loving-kindness that would like to perform well-beings of the whole populace.

Wholesome deed that supports to brighten the original good deed is called "Parivara Dana" / supporting wholesome deed. It is more beneficial than normal deed. I want you to be pleased with the thought that this is a worthwhile effort. You can assess as to whether it is worthwhile or not, from the speech of Mon State Chief Minister Dr Aye Zan, "It became incumbent upon me to hold such sharing ceremonies in 10 townships in Mon State. I made a solemn promise to implement my pledge for needy students."

Ceremony is the one held occasionally. Sharing can be done without holding ceremony. Those needed ahead of us are required to be shared. Sharing made with loving kindness is noble and grand regardless of voluminous amounts or not.

Here, I would like to share an event of sharing without a ceremony which took place in the hospital of Thaton some 30 years ago. In 1990, in the hos-

pital, a newly appointed medical doctor who earned K 1200 as a salary was serving when a 5-year-aged patient with 15 lb body weight, same to that of 8-month child was hospitalized. The TB patient child was in critical condition with high temperature for 4 months. After finding out the cause of the disease—malnutrition, the doctor fed the child with an egg a day, which cost K 1.25 a piece for 20 days. To do so, he had to live on his meager amount of salary frugally because he had no extra income for not running a private clinic (GP). The then hospitals had no funds for feeding patients with meat. After 20 days later, the patient nicknamed Maung Thon Nya/ Mr Zero gained weight and he was discharged from the hospital. In case, the poor Mr Zero was neglected in the hope that he was a terminal patient, he would have died of malnutrition in the hospital. Out of the four cardinal virtues—Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha in these orders, we cannot jump to the last—Upekkha. Share loving-kindness based on Karuna/ sympathy. Share loving-kindness based on Mudita/ rejoicing at somebody's success or properties, without any hints of jealousy. Only at the last time, we must neglect on the assumption that the person in question is doomed to such a fate. Even at this stage, sharing loving-kindness by neglecting regardless of good or ill treatment towards us is called sharing loving kindness based

on Upekkha/ detachment.

On the day when Maung Thon Nya was discharged from the hospital, in the front basket of the old bike used by the doctor for commuting, someone was found to have put a brown bag containing 20 eggs. The sharing was made by someone who witnessed the doctor's meritorious deeds. The doctor placed the eggs in the refrigerator of the hospital for the patient like Maung Thon Nya.

The then doctor was none other than Professor Dr Ye Myint Kyaw, the specialist pediatrician-cum-double prize winner of national literature who compiled medical articles and aesthetic literature under the pseudonym of Dr Ye. The story is included in his short story titled, "Dare you vie for?" It is a good story which revitalizes the spirit of sharing.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counselor, gave instructions on sharing program to subsidize school uniforms and stationaries to needy basic education school children at the very advent when the incumbent government took office. Accordingly, students from Shwe Parami Education Foundation started to accumulate K 1000 each every month, amounting to much after one year. This is the great marvel of collective forces.

I hereby express my thanks to Daw Mar Mar Khaing, Pyithu Hluttaw representative, Thaton constituency, Dr Zaw Lin Htut, Amyotha Hluttaw

representative, Dr Wunna Aung Thu, secretary of NLD, Thaton township, Thaton NLD ward and village-tract leaders and village administrators for their helps to choose needy students.

Our people's leader will be laying down instructions and decisions that will be beneficial for the people. It is necessary for all of us to remember every instruction and decision she laid down and to implement these. Provided that the whole populace will follow the leadership of such a leader we unprecedentedly came to possess, a good nation with a good system will emerge very promptly.

Every individual has their respective school, township and village each. Even if we cannot share in very far places, if we do sharing on small scale in our respective locations, the whole nation will develop remarkably, for sure.

May all serve in the interest of the people by sharing!

May all build up the new nation by sharing!

May all have the acquired virtues in doing wholesome deeds by sharing!

With the spirit of sharing,

Ashin Canda Dika
(Shwe Paramitawya)

[Excerpt from the sermon preached at Suvana Bhonmi Sasana Bimman, Thaton on 6th August, 2017 at the sharing ceremony]

—Translated by Khin Maung Oo (Tada-U)



Head of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov.
PHOTO: TASS

Russian Head of General Staff Gerasimov hands award weapon to Syrian general

MOSCOW — Head of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov at the Hmeymim air base handed award weapon to the Syrian general, who commanded landing and the liberation of El-Kder, the Defence Ministry's press service said on Saturday. Gerasimov also handed a grateful letter from the Russian defence minister and award weapon to Brigadier General Hasan Sukhel, the ministry said. "For the successful offensive along the Euphrates river, for participation in strategically important settlement Es-Sukhne, as well as for

command of the landing and the liberation of El-Kder, the Russian Defence Minister, Army General Sergei Shoigu awards you for the courage," the ministry quoted Gerasimov.

Earlier, the Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement: "On the night of 12 August, for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities against the IS terrorist group in Syria, the government forces have managed to organize and conduct a virtuoso operation to land a tactical airborne assault in the rear of the militants, followed by the defeat and capture of the

settlement of El-Kder (about 120 km west of the city of Deir ez-Zor)." "On 13 August, 2017, in a joint action of the Russian Aerospace Force, units of the governmental forces and militia west of the Homs Province, Es Sukhne is fully liberated from militants of the Islamic State (outlawed in Russia - TASS)," the ministry said. "By 7 in the morning on 13 August, in hard fighting units of the Syrian armed forces liberated from terrorists Es Sukhne's central and southern parts, establishing full control over the city," the ministry said. "The lib-

eration of Es Sukhne from the IS terrorists opens the opportunity for the Syrian governmental forces for an offensive and de-blocking of Deir ez-Zor." Earlier on Sunday, in an interview with the Rossiya 24 television channel, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said de-blocking of Deir ez-Zor, which has been seized by the Islamic State (outlawed in Russia) for a few years, would be a milestone in fighting terrorism in Syria. "This is probably the milestone on Euphrates, which will to a big extent say about finishing fighting IS," he said.—Tass ■

White House lawyer Cobb predicts quick end to Mueller probe

WASHINGTON — The White House lawyer brought in to deal with special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election said he believed the focus of the probe was "narrow" and the aspects related to President Donald Trump should be completed before the end of the year. The lawyer, Ty Cobb, who joined the White House staff on 31 July, made the comments in interviews with Reuters on Tuesday and Wednesday. He declined to provide specifics backing his outlook, which contradicts media reports that the scope of Mueller's probe is expanding and the views of several outside

experts that the investigation is likely to continue well into 2018.

"I'd like to see the president out from under this by Thanksgiving, but certainly by year end," Cobb said, adding that he would be "embarrassed" otherwise. "I think the relevant areas of inquiry by the special counsel are narrow." Mueller is investigating possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia, among other matters. Moscow has denied interfering in the election and the president has denied collusion took place. Cobb, who resigned from law firm Hogan Lovells to take the White House job, said he meets with or talks to Trump almost daily and interacts

with Mueller's team. Cobb said he could not discuss those communications. As a White House lawyer, Cobb is in a different position than the president's outside counsel John Dowd and Jay Sekulow. Cobb would not be able to assert attorney-client privilege to protect his conversations with Trump from a grand jury subpoena. Peter Carr, a spokesman for Mueller, declined to comment on any timeline for the probe or which matters would fall under the special counsel's aegis.

Trump has said he believes investigations of his and his family's finances would be beyond the scope of Mueller's probe. Mueller is reportedly already looking at

Trump's business dealings going back a decade. Cobb said he believed Mueller's 16-lawyer team was "appropriately focused" and understood "the urgency to the country and to the presidency" of finishing the probe as quickly as possible. Several legal experts said Cobb's timeline was unrealistic, noting similar probes have dragged on for years.

"I cannot imagine a universe in which the prosecutor's office is giving the president a clean bill of health before Thanksgiving of this year," said Andrew Wright, an associate White House counsel under President Barack Obama. "It's a very complicated investigation."—Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Finnish police say arrested four other Moroccan men over links to stabbings

HELSINKI — Finnish police said they have arrested four other Moroccan men over their possible links to the man suspected of killing two and wounding eight in Friday's knife attacks.

The police added in a news conference that the attacker, who had arrived in Finland last year, seemed to have chosen women as his targets.

Finnish broadcaster MTV, citing unnamed source, said the man had been declined asylum. The police declined to comment but said he had been "part of the asylum process."—Reuters ■

Eight stabbed in Russian city, police shoot man dead — agencies

MOSCOW — Eight people were injured in a knife attack in the Siberian city of Surgut, the local office of the Russian law enforcement committee said in a statement published on its website. "A man was moving along the main streets stabbing people", it said, adding "the attacker has been killed." "The committee is investigating attempted murder", the spokeswoman for the committee told Reuters by phone, adding she would not comment on whether the incident was terrorism related.—Reuters ■

Spanish government maintains security alert level, says no attack imminent

MADRID — Spain will maintain its security alert level at 4, one notch below the maximum level which would signal an attack was imminent, after two deadly attacks in the northeastern region of Catalonia this week, Interior Minister Juan Ignacio Zoido said.

Zoido added that the government would reinforce security in crowded areas and tourist hot-spots, after a van mowed down people in Barcelona on Thursday, killing 13 people including many foreign visitors.—Reuters ■

Lebanese army, Hezbollah declare offensives on Islamic State at Syrian border

BEIRUT — The Lebanese army launched an offensive on Saturday against an Islamic State enclave on the northeast border with Syria as the Lebanese Shi'ite group Hezbollah announced an assault on the militants from the Syrian side of the frontier.

The Lebanese army operation got underway at 5 am (0300 BST), targeting Islamic State positions near the town of Ras Baalbek with rockets, artillery and helicopters, a Lebanese security source said. The area is the last part of the Lebanese-Syrian frontier under insurgent control.

The operation by Hezbollah and the Syrian army targeted the area across the border in the western Qalamoun region of Syria.

A Hezbollah statement said the group was meeting its pledge to "remove the terrorist threat at the borders of the nation" and was fighting "side by side" with the Syrian army.

It made no mention of the Lebanese army operation.

The army said it was not coordinating the assault with Hezbollah or the Syrian army.

Any joint operation between the Lebanese army on the one hand, and Hezbollah and the Syrian army on the other would be politically sensitive in Lebanon and could jeopardise the sizea-



A Lebanese soldier is seen near the town of Ras Baalbek, Lebanon on 17 August, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

ble US military aid the country receives.

Washington classifies the Iran-backed Hezbollah as a terrorist group.

"There is no coordination, not with Hezbollah or the Syrian army," General Ali Kansa said in a televised news conference, adding that the army had started to tighten a siege of IS in the area two weeks ago.

"It's the most difficult battle so far waged by the Lebanese army against terrorist groups —

the nature of the terrain and the enemy," he said, characterizing the 600 Islamic State fighters in the area as 600 "suicide bombers".

In a recent speech, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the Lebanese army would attack Islamic State from its side of the border, while Hezbollah and the Syrian army would simultaneously assault from the other side.

A commander in the military alliance fighting in support of

President Bashar al-Assad said that "naturally" there was coordination between the operations.

Last month, Hezbollah forced Nusra Front militants and Syrian rebels to leave nearby border strongholds in a joint operation with the Syrian army.

The Lebanese army did not take part in the July operation, but it has been gearing up to assault the Islamic State pocket in the same mountainous region.

Footage broadcast by Hezbollah-run al-Manar TV showed

the group's fighters armed with assault rifles climbing a steep hill in the western Qalamoun.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun was following the army operation, called "Jroud Dawn". "Jroud" refers to the barren, mountainous border area between Lebanon and Syria.

Hezbollah has provided critical military support to President Bashar al-Assad during Syria's six-year-long war. Its Lebanese critics oppose Hezbollah's role in the Syrian war.

Northeastern Lebanon was the scene of one of the worst spillovers of Syria's war into Lebanon in 2014, when Islamic State and Nusra Front militants attacked the town of Aarsal.

The fate of nine Lebanese soldiers taken captive by Islamic State in 2014 remains unknown.

Shi'ite Hezbollah and its allies have been pressing the Lebanese state to normalise relations with Damascus, challenging Lebanon's official policy of neutrality towards the conflict next door.

US President Donald Trump called Hezbollah "a menace" to Lebanon and the region during a meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri in Washington last month, and promised continued US support for the Lebanese army. — Reuters ■

Saudi-led coalition responsible for 'worst cholera outbreak in the world' in Yemen — researchers

LONDON — The majority of deaths from Yemen's cholera outbreak have occurred in rebel-controlled areas cut off from supplies due to airstrikes and blockades by a Saudi-led military coalition, according to research published on Friday.

The study by London's Queen Mary University found eight out of 10 cholera deaths took place in regions controlled by Iran-backed Houthi rebels who have fought a two-year war against Saudi-aligned forces backing Yemen's government.

Yemen is battling against the "world's worst cholera outbreak", according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

More than half a million people have been infected with cholera since the epidemic began four months ago and almost 2,000 people have died, the WHO said on Monday.

"Saudi-led airstrikes have destroyed vital infrastructure, including hospitals and public water systems, hit civilian areas, and displaced people into crowded and insanitary conditions", Jonathan Kennedy, Andrew Harmer and David McCoy, the study's researchers, wrote.

The Saudi ministry for foreign affairs did not immediately respond to written questions or telephone calls.

Yemen's devastating civil war has pitted a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia against an Iran-backed armed Houthi group, and economic collapse has made it difficult to deal with disease outbreaks such as cholera and mass hunger. The study compared data from the WHO with maps of government-controlled and rebel-controlled areas.

The researchers found 78 percent of cholera cases and 81

percent of deaths from cholera occurred in Houthi-controlled regions. Only 10.4 per cent of deaths occurred in government-controlled areas.

The researchers said the Saudi-led coalition was responsible for the deadly outbreak, by causing shortages of food, medical supplies, fuel and chlorine, and restricting humanitarian access. Each day there are more than 5,000 new cases of cholera, which causes acute diarrhoea and dehydration, in Yemen where the health system has collapsed after more than two years of war, according to the WHO.

Cholera, spread by ingestion of food or water tainted with human faeces, can kill within hours if untreated. It has been largely eradicated in developed countries equipped with sanitation systems and water treatment.

—Reuters ■

Pakistan holds state funeral for German nun who fought leprosy

KARACHI — Pakistani soldiers on Saturday carried the flag-draped coffin of German-born Catholic nun Ruth Pfau to a state funeral where she was honoured after devoting her life to eradicating leprosy in the country.

Widely known as Pakistan's Mother Teresa, Pfau died last week in the southern city of Karachi at age 87. She is to be buried in her adopted homeland.

Mourners paid their last respects as Pfau's coffin was carried to the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre that she founded before being taken on to St Patrick's Cathedral for the official service.

Pfau had been living in Pakistan since 1960, and her

leprosy centre in Karachi was Pakistan's first hospital dedicated to treating the disease. She later opened treatment centres across the country.

"It is a big loss to this hospital and to humanity. It is very hard to find a person like her in today's era," said Yasmeen Morris, a staff member at the centre.

"She led a very simple life and she loved humanity."

In 1996, the World Health Organisation declared that leprosy had been controlled in Pakistan, which led Pfau to the more challenging task of eliminating the disease.

Last year, the number of patients under treatment for leprosy fell to 531 from over 19,000 in the 1980s. —Reuters ■



The Army-2017 international military and technical forum will be held on 22-27 August. PHOTO: TASS

Russia to demonstrate new fixed-wing and rotary drones at Army-2017 forum

MOSCOW — The exposition of Russia's Aerospace Force at the Army-2017 international military and technical forum will include new aircraft and helicopter-type unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the Defence Ministry said on Thursday.

"Educational establishments and research units of the

Aerospace Force will present about 50 newest developments at the Army-2017 forum. They include modern aircraft and helicopter-type unmanned aerial vehicles of various designations, flying laboratories, the newest radio reconnaissance stations," the Defence Ministry said.

The forum's specialists and

visitors will be able to view modern small-size radar stations, training simulators and software for detecting moving air targets and many other things, the ministry said.

The Air Force and Aerospace Force Academies, research companies of the Air Force and Space Troops, and

also the Central Research Institute of the Aerospace Force's Air Force will demonstrate their exhibits at the Army-2017 forum.

The Army-2017 international military and technical forum will be held on 22-27 August on the territory of the Patriot Park in the Moscow Region.—Tass ■

Senator McCain completes first round of radiation and chemotherapy

WASHINGTON — diagnosed with brain cancer in July, has completed his first round of radiation and chemotherapy, his daughter said on Friday.

"His resilience & strength is incredible," Meghan McCain, who is a host on the Fox News program "Outnumbered," wrote on Twitter about her father: "Fight goes on, here's to small wins."

McCain, 80, who is known for his political independence during three decades in the Senate representing Arizona, was found to have an aggressive form of brain tumor, glioblastoma, after surgery in July for a blood clot above his left eye.

Doctors have said his treatment options include a combination of chemotherapy and radiation. McCain has said that he would receive treatment in Arizona. Last month, McCain cast the deciding "no" vote on the Senate floor against a bill to repeal key elements of the healthcare law known as Obamacare. With that vote, the bill was defeated, 51-49, dealing President Donald Trump and Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell a crushing political setback.

McCain, the son and grandson of admirals, was a US Navy pilot whose plane was shot down over Viet Nam in 1967. He spent more than five years as a prisoner of war in North Viet Nam and was tortured repeatedly.—Reuters ■

Venezuela's PDVSA defends 'perfect' relationship with Russia

CARACAS — Venezuela's alliance with Russia is "perfect," the president of state oil company PDVSA said on Friday, blasting what he said was a US-led attempt to sully the growing ties between the two nations.

Reuters last week published a Special Report revealing that Venezuela's unraveling socialist government is increasingly turning to Russia for the cash and credit it needs to survive and offering prized state-owned oil assets in return, sources familiar with the negotiations told Reuters. Venezuela's opposition lawmakers say Russia is behaving more like a predator than an ally, scooping up assets on

the cheap and gaining control of much of the OPEC nation's crude for trading at a time when President Nicolas Maduro is desperate for financing.

PDVSA President Eulogio Del Pino said the United States and its allies were trying to hurt Caracas' relationship with Moscow because they feared losing Latin America to Russia's sphere of influence.

"That's why they're attacking you Russians," said Del Pino in a televised broadcast from the Petrozamor joint venture with Russia's Gazprombank.

"That's why the North American empire goes against our nation, why they threaten us so

blatantly. Because they see a threat to what for over 80 years they considered their backyard."

Without directly mentioning Reuters, Del Pino also criticized that "every piece of news that these nation-hating people generate goes against the oil industry" as part of a broader attempt to destabilize leftist-run Venezuela. In what he said was proof of strength in Venezuela's oil industry, Del Pino said joint ventures with Russian companies in Venezuela were producing some 250,000 barrels per day.

"We're working in perfect alliance," Del Pino said as red-shirted oil workers clapped.—Reuters ■

British Columbia extends wildfire state of emergency for third time

CALGARY, (Alberta) — The Canadian province of British Columbia has extended a state of emergency for a third time until 1 September because of wildfires raging across the region, the provincial government said on Friday.

Since early summer firefighters and emergency services have been battling hundreds of blazes across British Columbia that have forced as many as 45,000 people from their homes.

More than 894,000 hectares (2.2 million acres) have burned so far this year, making it the most destructive fire season since records began in 1950.

The wildfires have prompted the longest-lasting state of emergency ever declared in British

Columbia, having started on 8 July, and gives federal and provincial authorities the power to take any action necessary to fight the wildfires.

There are 140 fires still burning across the province, and while many residents have been able to return to their homes, 4,400 are still under evacuation orders and another 20,000 remain on evacuation alert, meaning they may have to leave at any time.

The number of fires has fallen slightly since mid-July, a cold weather front bringing strong winds and possibly lightning over the weekend could spark new outbreaks, British Columbia chief fire information officer Kevin Skrepnek said on a conference call.—Reuters ■

Seventh Australian senator referred to High Court as citizenship crisis deepens

MELBOURNE — A crisis engulfing Australia's parliament has widened after a key independent senator became the seventh parliamentarian referred to the High Court to determine if his dual citizenship makes him ineligible to sit in parliament. Senator Nick Xenophon's announcement on Saturday that he holds dual British citizenship comes as the future of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's government hangs in the balance, with question marks surrounding the eligibility of key members of his government and crossbenchers threatening supply should it be stripped of its one-seat majority. That majority was placed in jeopardy earlier this week after Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce said he may be ineligible for parliament due to New Zealand citizenship



Independent South Australian Senator Nick Xenophon. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

by descent. His father was born in New Zealand. Joyce has since relinquished New Zealand citizenship, but is awaiting the High Court ruling, along with several other politicians who believe they may have dual citizenship. The citizenship crisis, based on a 116-year-old law which demands an elected lawmaker only have Australian citizenship, has rocked the Australian parliament, ensnaring three government members, three Green party MPs and Xenophon. Xenophon

said on Saturday he had received advice overnight from the UK Home Office that, due to a "rare peculiarity", they considered him a British overseas citizen.

The senator, who was born in Adelaide, Australia, said his father, Theodoros Xenophon, was born in Cyprus and left there in 1951. Cyprus remained a British colony until 1960 when it gained independence.

"The great irony here is that my father left Cyprus in order to escape British colonial rule," the senator said. Xenophon had renounced Greek citizenship, which he received from his mother, but had not been aware he held possible British citizenship.

On Friday a member of Xenophon's eponymous party in the lower house of parliament, Rebekha Sharkie, became the latest

crossbencher to withdraw her support for the government on matters of confidence and supply, telling Fairfax Media the prime minister was showing "disrespect to the Australian community" by not standing down the ministers referred to the High Court from their cabinet positions. While the government does not currently need the support of crossbenchers in the lower house to hold office, should the court rule Deputy Prime Minister Joyce ineligible, it could only survive with the support of at least one non-government MP. Only one lower house crossbencher has not withdrawn their support.

Business leaders in the country have warned the dual citizenship chaos risks damaging the country's standing among foreign investors.—Reuters ■



Supplied photo taken in Oita, southwestern Japan, in June 2017 shows a drone outfitted to look like a hawk. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Oita city tries to fend off farm-raiding monkeys with drone

OITA, (Japan) — The Oita city government in southwestern Japan is working to scare off farm-raiding wild monkeys using a drone decorated to look like a hawk — their natural enemy.

The Tanoura district on the east side of Mt Takasaki, where a popular monkey park is located, is known as a producer of loquats, figs and mandarins but has been suffering damage to the products caused by rogue monkeys for years, according to the city government.

"The Tanoura district is the largest producer of loquats in the prefecture. While tourism is also important, we would like to reduce the damage" to the agricultural products, said Tomohiro Anan, an official handling loquats at a local agricultural cooperative.

Around 100 monkeys which do not belong to groups appear not be fed by the monkey park that is known to be feeding wild monkeys. To compensate for losses on farm products, the city spent 5.90 million yen (\$53,400) in fiscal 2015 and 3.93 million

yen in fiscal 2016. The city has so far flown a drone four times since the end of May, the harvest time for loquats. To intimidate monkeys, the city tried to simulate a hawk hunting monkeys by hanging a stuffed monkey from a drone decorated as a hawk with fake eyes and a beak. It also played a recorded sound of screaming monkeys through a speaker.

Last September, an invited hawk unleashed a real hawk in the area to scare off monkeys at the request of the city government. The attempt generated a certain effect but it was difficult to guide the hawk in the desired direction, prompting the city to start utilizing a drone.

Though the effect of flying the drone remains unclear, reports of farm damage have been declining this fiscal year, according to the city.

The city will conduct about 20 experiments through March 2018 so that it can start a drone program in full swing in the next fiscal year after examining the effect, it said.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV NESHAT VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV NESHAT VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20.8.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 LAND AND SEA SHIPPING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20.8.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20.8.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20.8.2017 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 NEW GLODEN SEA**

Phone No: 2301185

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(3)	Top-Prince	Fipronil 50g/L SC	Provisional Reg: P2017-3411
(4)	Top-Fostar	Fosetyl-aluminium 80%WP	Provisional Reg: P2017-3412
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Taylor Swift goes blank on social media, sending fans into frenzy

LOS ANGELES — Taylor Swift, one of the most popular celebrities on social media, wiped all her accounts on Friday, sending fans into a frenzy over whether the pop singer had been hacked, was preparing to launch a new album, or was about to reinvent herself.

Swift, who has 85 million Twitter followers and 102 million Instagram followers, deleted all of her Instagram photos, her posts on Tumblr, and removed her avatar from her Facebook page where all postings prior to December 2015 were missing.

The “Blank Space” singer also deleted years of Twitter posts, and her official website showed just a black screen.

“I’m scared to go to sleep thanks to Taylor Swift like what if she drops a new song,” tweeted an anxious fan called Anu using the handle @shadesoftaylor.

Taylor’s publicist did not return calls for comment, but the development follows a busy two weeks for Swift, who earlier this month ended a six month absence from the public spotlight to testify at a high-profile groping



Singer-Songwriter Taylor Swift arrives at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Gala (Met Gala) to celebrate the opening of “Manus x Machina: Fashion in an Age of Technology” in the Manhattan borough of New York on 2 May, 2016. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

trial in Denver, Colorado.

Swift, 27, was on Monday awarded the symbolic \$1 in damages that she had sought after

a federal jury in Denver found that a radio DJ had grabbed her bottom while posing for a photo with her in 2013.

Her unflinching testimony describing the incident was applauded by fans and women’s rights groups for highlighting the

issue of sexual assault. Swift later made a donation to the sexual violence campaign and support group Joyful Heart Foundation.

Some fans speculated on Friday that Swift, whose last album was the best-selling “1989” in 2014, may be clearing out her accounts before releasing new music.

Others wondered if she had been hacked, while some thought the country-turned-pop star might be planning an image makeover.

“I woke up literally 7 minutes ago what in the world is going on with Taylor Swift,” wrote one fan, Jordyn, on Twitter.

“Is the new era coming or she has been hacked ??,” tweeted another confused fan, using the handle TaylorSwiftNow.

Usually ubiquitous on social media and red carpets, Swift largely dropped out of public view earlier this year after a highly publicized but short-lived 2016 summer fling with British actor Tom Hiddleston, and feuds with Kim Kardashian, Kanye West and Katy Perry. —Reuters ■

Patty Jenkins in final talks to direct ‘Wonder Woman 2’



Patty Jenkins. **PHOTO: PTI**

LOS ANGELES — Patty Jenkins, who gave DC its most successful film, “Wonder Woman”, this year, is in final negotiations to sign on to direct its sequel.

The sequel was confirmed last month at San Diego Comic-Con and a 13 December, 2019 release date was also announced for the same.

Gal Gadot has also been

tapped to return for the sequel but Jenkins has yet to sign the second film in the new DC franchise.

According to Deadline, a studio source confirmed they were “confident the deal will be reached soon” which could reportedly make Jenkins the highest-paid female director in Hollywood.—PTI ■

Lights, camera, corona: Hollywood embraces the eclipse

LOS ANGELES — The sun is getting ready for its closeup. Producers of feature films and TV commercials will set up at key locations to capture what they hope will be unique scenes using the natural spectacle of Monday’s total solar eclipse.

For filmmakers, the most-coveted backdrops sit within the “zone of totality,” where the moon will cover the sun and expose a glowing corona around its perimeter for up to two minutes and 40 seconds.

Camera crews, directors and actors are staging rehearsals and preparing to act quickly, as the brief period of totality will give filmmakers little time to record the perfect shot.

“One take only,” said director Alvin Case, who aims to shoot a roughly six-minute scene in western Nebraska for his independent feature film “In the Moon’s Shadow.” “That’s all you get with the sun.”

Case’s project, about a pair of estranged sisters who travel

together to watch an eclipse, is one of at least three productions scheduled to shoot in Nebraska on Monday, said Laurie Richards, the state’s film officer. Another feature film and an automobile commercial also are set to record footage there during the eclipse.

Richards said she has been busy fielding last-minute inquiries from people wanting to shoot scenes for movies, TV commercials and documentaries during the rare event.

Eclipses have figured into previous Hollywood plots, including that of “2001: A Space Odyssey.” In most cases, visual effects experts recreated the phenomenon for the screen. An exception was the 1961 religious movie “Barabbas,” which used actual footage from a solar eclipse in a climactic scene depicting Jesus Christ’s crucifixion.

Case plans to aim one camera skyward to film the eclipse and keep another focused on the reaction of three actors watching it unfold, he said.

“You want the viewer to experience what they are experiencing, the moment of awe,” he said. Several producers of TV commercials have requested permission to shoot in Oregon and Wyoming during the eclipse, local officials said.

In Oregon, authorities granted permits weeks ago for a handful of projects to film on Monday, the executive director of Oregon Film, Tim Williams, said. Recent requests were denied because officials are focusing on the expected influx of tourists, he added.

Another filmmaker who will be shooting in Nebraska, Maria Dyer, said she plans to employ four cameras and a drone to capture eclipse footage, particularly the changing light over the state’s Sand Hills, for a forthcoming movie. One challenge will be adjusting camera settings to account for the change in exposure. Another is the chance of clouds or rain.

“It feels like a worthwhile risk to take,” she said. —Reuters ■

Lethal United hit four again, Liverpool scrape first win

LONDON — Manchester United netted four goals for the second consecutive week in the Premier League to rout Swansea City 4-0 on Saturday and ensure their highest-scoring start to a season for 110 years.

United manager Jose Mourinho said he "let the horses run freely" at the Liberty Stadium while goals also flowed at Southampton, who snuffed out an astonishing comeback by 10-man West Ham United to win 3-2.

Liverpool struggled to squeeze past Crystal Palace 1-0 and promoted Brighton and Hove Albion suffered their second defeat in two games, 2-0 at Leicester City.

Mourinho's United completed their victory with a devastating late burst in which Romelu Lukaku, Paul Pogba and substitute Anthony Martial scored between the 80th and 84th minutes after Eric Bailly had netted late in the first half with his first goal for the club.

United, who scored twice late on to beat West Ham by the same score last weekend, have one of the strongest benches in the league and it was Martial's 75th-minute introduction that



Manchester United's Eric Bailly celebrates scoring their first goal with Romelu Lukaku during their Premier League in Swansea, Britain on 19 August 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

began the mayhem.

"It was 1-0 and we thought let's go for more and exploit the fragile morale of the opponent. Our bench is really good - the players have a lot to give," Mourinho said.

Martial capped the rout with

a delightful strike after he picked the ball up 35 yards out, cut inside and thumped the ball past a despairing Lukasz Fabianski.

"There was happiness in our play," Mourinho said. "There was no need to close the door."

Swansea badly missed the

departed Gylfi Sigurdsson and injured Fernando Llorente and look to be in desperate need of reinforcements in the transfer window.

Southampton got the better of an astonishing game of two penalties, a sending-off and an

ultimately futile West Ham fight-back at St Mary's.

After the home side went 2-0 through Manolo Gabbiadini and a Dusan Tadic penalty, and West Ham's Marko Arnautovic was sent off for elbowing Jack Stephens, the Hammers started to play.

Mexican forward Javier Hernandez scored his first goals for the club to bring hope of an unlikely point before Saints' second penalty deep into stoppage-time was converted by Charlie Austin.

Liverpool secured their first league win of the season, and inflicted Palace's second defeat, when Sadio Mane broke the Anfield deadlock after 73 minutes, although Christian Benteke should have given the visitors the lead moments earlier.

Watford, who drew with Liverpool last week, beat Bournemouth 2-0 with a first goal from new Brazilian striker Richarlison while West Bromwich Albion won 1-0 at Burnley with a late goal from Hal Robson-Kanu who was then sent off for elbowing.

The win was Albion's second of the season and put them level on points with leaders Manchester United.—Reuters ■

Kyrgios sweeps away Nadal in Cincinnati quarter-final

MASON, OH, USA — The excitable Nick Kyrgios made short work of top-seeded Spaniard Rafael Nadal in a dazzling 6-2, 7-5 victory on Friday at the Cincinnati Open.

In a highly-anticipated quarter-final matchup, Australian Kyrgios breezed past the 15-times grand slam champion Nadal in about one hour and 20 minutes.

"He obviously is a tough match always," Nadal told reporters. "Nick is a great player, but I played poorly."

"I started the match well and then I played a very bad game in the second set when he broke me. I played some good points. He had some mistakes and I was able to be back in the match. And then I played a terri-

ble game. So it was a bad match for me."

Despite the defeat, the 31-year-old Nadal will for the fourth time in his career be the world number one when the ATP rankings come out next week.

The 22-year-old Kyrgios recorded 10 aces in a strong serving display, and moved to the semi-final to face David Ferrer, who produced another shocking result in dominating third-seed Dominic Thiem 6-3, 6-3.

Kyrgios, known as much for his temper as for his brilliant shot-making, was poised against Nadal. The young contender blew a chance to close the match while serving at 5-4 in the second set when Nadal broke him. But he promptly broke back before closing out the night.

Earlier in the day, Kyrgios completed his match, that began on Thursday before it was held over due to rain, defeating hard-serving 6-foot 11-inch Ivo Karlovic of Croatia 4-6, 7-6(6), 6-3.

Kyrgios did have an outburst in that match when he threw his racquet down in disgust after losing two straight service points in the tiebreak to even it up at 6-6.

The outburst appeared to work as he won the next two points and then dominated a deflated Karlovic in the final set.

Nadal was somewhat rusty in beating fellow countryman Albert Ramos-Vinolas 7-6(1), 6-2 earlier in the day but few would have expected his result against Kyrgios. — Reuters ■

Bayern newcomers Suele, Tolisso score in season opening win

MUNICH, (Germany) — Champions Bayern Munich eased past Bayer Leverkusen 3-1 in the Bundesliga season opener on Friday to lay down a marker as they eye a record-extending sixth straight German league title.

Newcomers Niklas Suele and Corentin Tolisso put the Bavarians ahead before Robert Lewandowski added a third with a penalty, following the official use of the video assistant referee for the first time in the Bundesliga.

Bayern were missing close

to half a dozen key players to injury including Manuel Neuer, Thiago Alcantara and Jerome Boateng, but it never showed as they rode roughshod over Leverkusen for more than an hour. Admir Mehmedi pulled a goal back for the visitors in the 65th minute, who missed a handful of good chances to score again late in the game.

Last season's runners-up RB Leipzig are in action at Schalke 04 on Saturday while Borussia Dortmund, who finished third, travel to VfL Wolfsburg.—Reuters ■

Myanmar women's football team plays Viet Nam today at SEA Games

The Myanmar national women's football team will play against Viet Nam in UM Stadium today at 2:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time, with hopes of a continued quest for the gold medal.

It is the third day of competition for the women's football teams in the 29th SEA Games.

Myanmar has played two games so far and earned three marks, while Viet Nam has received three marks after playing one game against the Philippines.

With a defeat against Thailand in their first match, today's game looms in importance, be-

cause a win today keeps the team's gold medal hopes alive.

Myanmar and Viet Nam are longtime rivals. The last contest between the two teams played was in April, with Myanmar going down in defeat by a score of 0-2.

After the Myanmar/Vietnam match, Malaysia and Thailand will play.

Myanmar and the Philippines have played two games each, while Malaysia and Thailand have played one game each. Currently, all four teams have earned three marks each.

—Shine Htet Zaw ■



Myanmar national women's footballers pose for happy photo at the playground. **PHOTO: SOE NYUNT**

2017 SEA Games opening ceremony held

Kyaw Zin Tun

The opening ceremony for the 29th SEA Games kicked off yesterday evening at the National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur, featuring a beautiful smorgasbord of lights, sounds and visual displays.

Starting off the opening ceremony was The Big Kuala Lumpur Welcome segment, comprised of performances from various artists and organisations.

Following the performances, athletes and officials from each participating country marched into Bukit Jalil Stadium preceded by their flag and a placard bearer and formed the line of nations.

Each flag bearer had been chosen either by the nation's National Olympic Committee or by the athletes. In keeping with SEA Games tradition, Ma-

aysia entered the stadium last, accompanied by music. The Malaysian contingent, consisting of nearly 900 athletes, was led by three world champions -- Azizulhasni Awang, a champion sprint cyclist; Cheong Jun Hoong, who won gold at the women's 10m platform individual event at the World Aquatics Championships in Hungary last month; and Mohd Al-Jufri Jameri, the gold medallist in the men's Putra E class at the World Silat Championships in Indonesia in December last year.

The trio of Malaysian world champions received the loudest cheers from spectators as they entered the stadium. Other participating countries had entered in alphabetical order.

Popular Malaysian singer Dayang Nurfaizah wowed the audience with her version of the KL2017 official song "Bang-

kit Bersama" (Rising Together), which is the theme of the 2017 SEA Games.

Olympic Council of Malaysia president Tan Sri Tunku Imran Tuanku Ja'afar praised the tireless efforts by Khairy Jamaluddin and his team to ensure that KL2017 would be a memorable sporting event for the spectators and the 11 participating countries over the next 12 days.

The audience in the stadium, along with the hundreds of millions of television viewers across the region, were entertained by flying performers supported by an aerial system, as well as a massive high-definition floor projection created by many multimedia projectors.

Approximately 85,000 thousand spectators filled the newly redecorated National Stadium in Bukit Jalil, which will be the

focus of attention over the next 12 days of competition, where 38 sports and 404 events will be featured.

Khairy Jamaluddin, Youth and Sports Minister and the chairman of the 2017 Southeast Asia Games (KL2017) Organising Committee, delivered the opening speech at the ceremony, which was graced by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil last night.

It was the sixth time for Malaysia to host the SEA Games since its start in 1959, when it was known as the South East Peninsular (SEAP) Games, with the last time in 2001. Malaysia also hosted the SEA Games in 1965, 1971, 1977, and 1989.

The 2017 Southeast Asia Games will feature nearly 7,000 athletes and officials and will end on 30 August. ■

Myanmar hockey teams depart for SEA Games

Myanmar's men's and women's hockey teams departed from Yangon yesterday for Malaysia to take part in the 29th SEA Games.

Eighteen players for the Myanmar hockey team left for Kuala Lumpur yesterday morning, together with manager U Zaw Win, assistant manager, U Thein Htway, Pakistani Technical Expert Mr. Zahid Ali, and coaches U Tun Tun Oo, U Moe Zaw and U Kyaw Soe Hlaing. The women's team is accompanied by manager U Nay Tun, assistant manager Daw Khin Lay Mon, Pakistani Technical expert Mr. Asif Maqsood and coaches U Aung Hmu and U Thuya Kyaw. The women's team left for Malaysia yesterday evening. In the 29th SEA Games, both Myanmar hockey teams will play against host Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. —Ye Yint Shine ■

Myanmar men's and women's basketball teams play today at SEA Games

Myanmar's men's and women's basketball teams will play their opening matches today, with the men facing host Malaysia in the afternoon and the women against Indonesia in the morning.

In the preliminary round of Group A, the Myanmar men's basketball team will play against the Philippines on Tuesday and

Thailand on Thursday.

The Myanmar women's team will play the Philippines on Tuesday, Singapore on Wednesday, Thailand on Thursday, host Malaysia on Friday and Viet Nam on Saturday.

A total of seven teams -- Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thai-

land and Viet Nam -- have fielded teams for the women's basketball competition and will play a round robin format in one group. The women's team rankings will be determined by their overall tournament points, head-to-head tournament points, head-to-head goal average, overall goal average and drawing of lots.

The nine teams in the men's competition are divided into two groups, Group A and B. Group A is comprised of Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand. Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Singapore and Viet Nam are in Group B.

All men's and women's basketball games will be held at the

MABA Stadium in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 26 August.

The men's preliminary rounds in two groups will be held from 20 to 26 August and the classification round, knockout round, semifinal matches, bronze medal match and final match will be on 25 and 26 August. —Kyaw Zin Tun ■

The Global New Light of Myanmar

NEXT GENERATION PLATFORM

20 AUGUST 2017

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR



Nadi Win Lae
Fifth year, law student,
Taungoo University

“Loudspeaker” which is the main cause of noise pollution has been increasing more and more in Myanmar in these days. Various kinds of Ceremonies and especially religious groups who offer to monks during the period of Buddhist lent and the ones who ask for money to do any religious deeds used to use such loudspeakers around the country. However, they don’t know much about the effects of switching on those loudspeakers. It can actually cause noise pollution which can affect both health and behavior; it can even damage psychological health and hearing. Studies have shown that the occurrence of aggressive behavior, disturbance of sleep, constant stress, fatigue and hypertension can be linked to excessive noise levels.

As loudspeakers disturb not only our health but also our daily lives, ie: in communicating, in conversation, in studies and in doing other important matters, most of the people can’t bear that noise anymore. As a result, there were a lot of conflicts between the public and those persons who make it. What I think here is that the most important thing in these problems is to have mutual understanding between each other. People don’t want them not to switch on the loudspeakers at all, they just want them to turn down the volume, to limit the time of using them and to use them in accordance with stipulated rules and prescribed terms and conditions.

In Myanmar, rules in respect of switching on loudspeakers were enacted in Ward or Village Tract Administrative Law, 2012. Awareness of that law by both sides can only solve the disputes and it can help to promote rule of law because most of the persons who are using loudspeakers don’t know about this law so that they likely to become not obeying the rules or infringing the laws.

According to Section 18 of the Ward or Village Tract Administrative Law 2012, if the person residing in the ward or village tract desires to use the loudspeaker, he shall obey the prescribed terms and con-



STOP

switching on
loudspeakers severely

ditions in addition to obtain the permit of the relevant ward or village tract administrator. Under Ward or Village Tract Administrative Rules, para 14(c), any individual or any organization who wants to use loudspeaker have to request to switch on the loudspeaker three days in advance to the Ward or Village Tract Administrator and such Administrator shall grant the request, allow them to switch on only between 6am and 9pm normally and supervise them to switch on just to hear the sound by the public within the allowed area not to disturb the public.

Although there are the existing laws and rules as aforesaid, neither the Administrators nor the users of loudspeaker abide by strictly in reality. In almost all cities, wards and villages, we could hear the sound of loudspeaker till even 11pm.

Moreover, it can be seen that most of the users of loudspeaker don’t request the permission to the Administrators and the latter also don’t carry out strictly its functions and duties which are enacted in Section 13(i) of the Ward or Village Tract Administrative Law which states that “granting the request of permit to switch on the loudspeaker with stipulated discipline, taking action and informing to take action to the person who switches on loudspeakers without permission or the person who breaches the discipline.”

Now, it is undeniable that both of them don’t abide by the law and it can happen the lack of rule of law. Furthermore, since the users of loudspeakers switch on them as they like at any time and at any day without permission, the public became disappointed of them. In addition, as we all had to listen to the religious music and even

Buddha’s scriptures, eg: (Pa Htan) almost every time with excessive sound through loudspeakers, it is no exaggeration if I say that some of the youths, valuable future generations become to hate them and sometimes they even abuse them. Actually, it is sure that they will not hate them if they can’t hear all the time. But now, we all should notice that such loudspeakers are giving misdeeds to youths and others and as a result, it can even destroy Buddhism in the future if such things can’t be curbed in time.

Therefore, as a conclusion, I would like to say that even our Lord Buddha loved peace and silence. Why not we could love silence if we really want to listen to Buddha’s speeches! It is not necessary to use loudspeakers to do meritorious deeds or otherwise, good deeds may turn into disappointed things in the mind of public. So, even if it is really necessary to use loudspeakers, let’s use them in accordance with the laws and rules to promote rule of law and let’s reduce using loudspeakers which can affect our health, peace and even our religion as much as possible. As for the public, if you see someone’s switching on loudspeakers not in accordance with the laws and rules that I mentioned above, and if you can’t bear that sound anymore, you can complain it to your ward or village tract administrator to take action according to law.

May you all be careful not to happen noise pollution! ■

The Day I have been Bullied



Aung Kaung
Pyae @ Daniel
Grade 6, T.T.C

BULLYING is the most inappropriate act which can be found in anywhere. Especially for me, being the shortest and the thinnest in the class, I have sometimes been abused by verbally, even physically.

Last year, my mother bought a jacket as a birthday present for me. The color of the jacket is blue with white stripes.

It’s also comfortable to wear and also expensive. It’s made in U.K. It is easy to fold too.

The next day after my birthday, I went to school with the jacket. I felt that I looked so great. My friends also like my jacket. My friends tried my jacket. I felt proud of having that jacket.

At the recess time, I went to the toilet. I saw two big boys blocking my way. They said, “What are you wearing, loser? It is a blue jacket or blue dress?” They took my jacket and ran away. I tried to get my jacket back. But it was in vain. They hid it in somewhere. I didn’t know what to

do. I felt so sad. When I got back home, I took a bath instead of learning my lessons. Then I sat quietly in the armchair, trying to think what to say when my mother asked me. I could not think anything. Then I felt sleepy and went to bed. Actually I couldn’t sleep well. Next morning, as I’m afraid, my mother asked me “where is your jacket?” I said “I...I don’t know. May be I lost it in the playground or in the canteen.” My mother scolded me for losing the jacket. I couldn’t forget that day. I know that was lying but I couldn’t be honest. I didn’t want any big problem.

But nowadays I have a regret not to tell the truth to my mother. If I could tell the truth on that day, they could be punished anyway. If so, they would get their lesson and never bully anyone again. ■

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

Basic English Grammar for Basic Students

Lesson 15: Adjectives – degrees of comparison

Dear students, today, we are going to study more about Adjectives .

For Adjectives, we have different degrees according to their seriousness.

For example, if we say, “She is as beautiful as her mother.”- we mean to say that both of them have the same level of beauty.

If we say, “She is more beautiful than her sister.” Here in this sentence, we can see the comparison between her beautifulness and her sister’s. The degree becomes higher and we use it together with the word “than” which shows the comparison.

And when we say, “She is the most beautiful in her class.”, it shows the highest degree of her beautifulness . We always put “the” before the “Superlative Degree of Adjective”.

So, according to the different degrees of the Adjectives, we can compare among these Adjectives.

These are : Positive Degree, Comparative Degree and Superlative Degree.

For these degrees we can put simply “er” and “est”.

For example:

high, higher , highest ;
small, smaller , smallest;
short, shorter, shortest;
big, bigger, biggest;
slow, slower, slowest;
quick, quicker, quickest;
cold, colder, coldest ;
hot, hotter, hottest;

But , for some other Adjectives , we put “more” or

“less” for the Comparative Degree and “most” or “least” for the Superlative Degree.

e.g. beautiful , more beautiful, most beautiful
wonderful, more wonderful, most wonderful
argumentative, more argumentative,
most argumentative
(Most words with three or more syllables are changed like that in this way.)

Not only these words, but others have quite different from these .

e.g. little , less, least
much, more, most
good, better, best
bad, worse, worst

You must all keep in your mind, which words can be formed into Comparative and Superlative Degrees and in which way.

Here comes the Exercise 15.

Exercise 15

I. Write down the Comparative Degree and Superlative Degree of the following Adjectives.

pretty, small, slow, happy, sad ,
content, ugly, bad, good, little

II. Fill in the following blank spaces with suitable Adjectives.

- He is the student in his class.
- This book is than that one.
- I have themoney among all of us.
- Her mother is much than her aunt.
- He can run than his friend.
- I am thegirl in the class.
- There is sugar in his cup of coffee than mine.
- Good, Better ,; Never let it rest.
- Till your good is And your better
- Who is the most man in your University?

Here are the Answers from the last week’s Exercise 14.

I. Examples of 5 Interjections are :

.. Oh!, Ah!, Wow !, Alas!, Hurrah !

II. To underline Interjections

- Alas !, (b) Aww! , (c) Hey!, (d) Wow!, (e) Ah!, (f) Oh!, (g) Hymm!, (h) Hip , hip, hurray ! (i) Bravo!, (j) Hey!

III. (a) Oh!, (b) Why! , (c) Hurray! (d) Hymm!, (e) Wow!, (f) Bravo! , (g) Oh! , (h) Oh!, (i) Ah! , (j) Wow!

That’s all for today. Hope that you have done well!

Bye for now! See you next week!

Your English Teacher (GNLM).

Email: dr.nunuwintin.rose.dawn@gmail.com

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Learn to Live



Jesus said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drink my blood remains in me, and I in them". (John 6:56. NIV)



Sarus cranes, the endangered species, are native to Myanmar.

Inform us: Call of Sarus Crane

By Nyi Two

KO Saw Myo, 32, a native of Achaw village in Ayeyawady Delta region, led our team to a wild rice field where a nest with two eggs of sarus crane with scientific name of *grus antigone* was built. The man found the nest while he was trying to lay a fish-trap in the field.

When we were about to leave the village after winding up our talks on sarus crane and conservation of biodiversities he came to us to tell about the nest. He was inspired to do so as his wife, Tin Mya who attended the talks told him that the speakers at the talks urged the attendees to inform them about the nest of the elegant bird.

Though there are many species of sarus crane in the world, the red head ones found in the delta are under the threat of extinction not only in Myanmar but in the world.

Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states and Bago region are areas where sarus crane can be found

but the birds are mostly found in delta Ayeyawady. Efficient action is needed to be taken to conserve the rare species because without any actions they will be extinct, according to sarus crane conservation experts.

Experts estimate that there are about 500 of the bird in Myanmar but the number found in the above-mentioned states and region is too small with two digits. About 200 to 400 birds are found in the delta region, they said.

Sarus crane conservation campaigner U Naing Linn of Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar) who is in-charge of Ayeyawady Delta said that delta region in Myanmar is the last fortress for the sarus crane and if the fortress falls, the species found in Myanmar will be totally extinct. He also pointed out that delta is the only region to conserve the bird as well as to carry out conservation activities.

The red head sarus cranes are used to build their nest in paddy and reed fields with little water and other cultivable land. As just three percent of the nests

are built in the wild grass field but the remaining are in paddy fields and cultivable land, their nests are destroyed and their eggs robbed by farmers.

Changing pastures of the sarus crane to fish breeding ponds or freshwater prawn farming is another threat the birds are now facing. Moreover, excessive use of insecticides in agricultural works, hunting animals by poisoning them, and capturing the birds for food are the reasons why the birds are on the verge of extinction.

Forest degradation, man-made forest fire or which caused naturally, silting up of rivers, creeks and lakes, breeding of birds as pets are also the threats. Threats include habitat destruction and/or degradation, hunting and collecting, as well as environmental pollution and possibly diseases or competing species.

"Naturally, sarus cranes build 97 % of their nests in paddy fields. This is the main reason of damaging their nature. For this reason, we want cooperation of farmers not to damage the

nests," said U Thet Zaw Naing, an expert from Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar).

Forest Department, Maubin University and Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar) jointly make a plan to honour farmers who cooperate with them, that is to say as nests destroy the paddy fields, those who inform the tri-lateral group on the nests in their paddy fields will be compensated for the damages.

Sarus crane conservation campaigners urge locals who've got awareness of wildlife conservation not to take the matter for granted but to make cooperation.

Ma Mya Yin, 39, a native of Ngagyigayet village, said that as sarus crane was sacred striving for attaining Buddhahood the bird shouldn't be killed. She vowed to protect sarus cranes.

There is syncretism among locals in delta region concerning the sarus cranes. For example, the bird is called Yay Man Kaung which can cause floods, but others believe that if nests and eggs of sarus cranes are destroyed there may be a bad omen.

There also is a lovely tradition. When the birds are in group and two of them dancing in the middle of others which surround the two, it is called the wedding of sarus crane and believe that this is the sign of good harvest. Moreover, there is a belief that if there is a nest in one's paddy field, record paddy yield will be achieved.

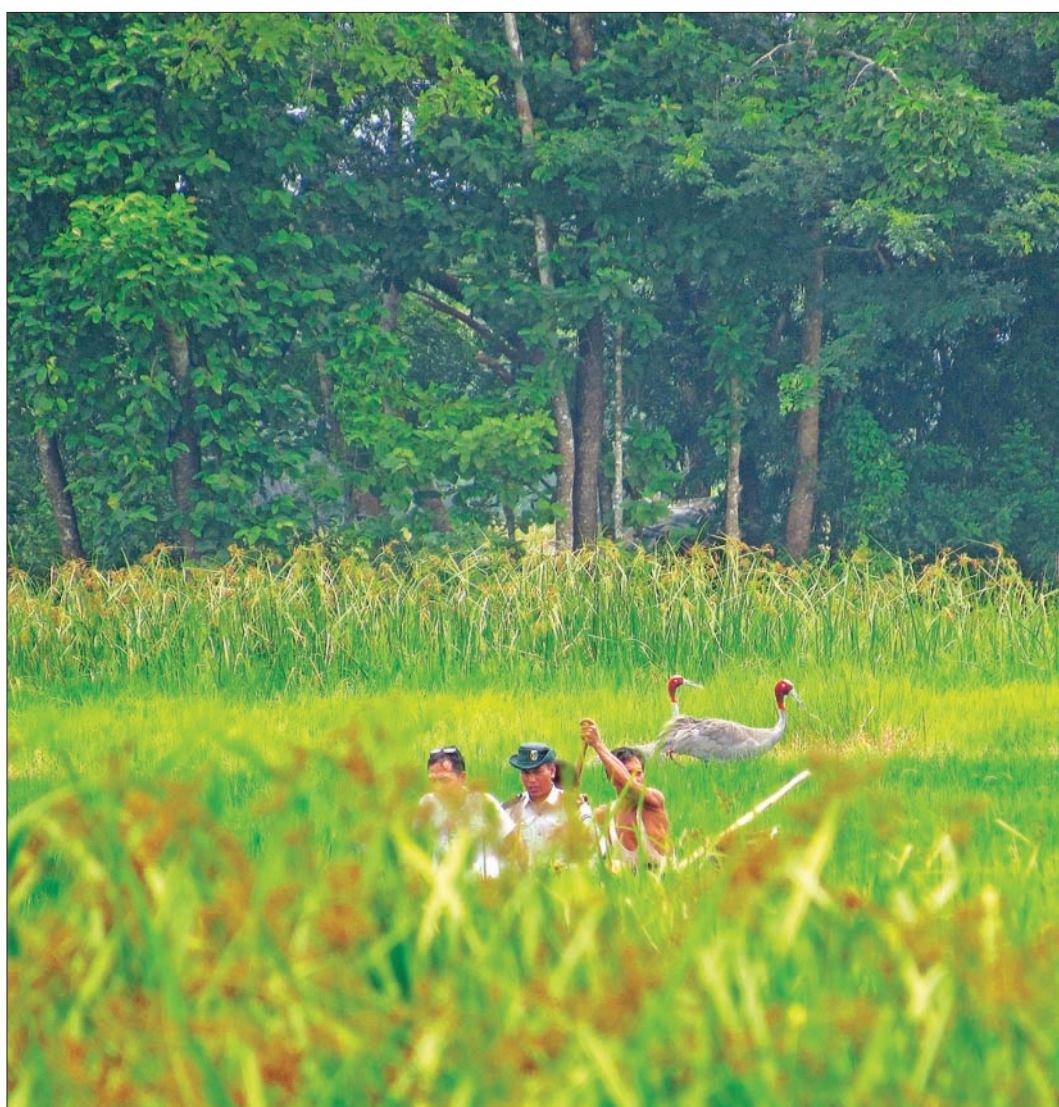
U Sein Tun, 67, Ngagyigayet villager, recounted his experience saying that in his youth there were sounds and calls of sarus cranes the whole year but now the sounds are silent which is he sign of extinction. He estimated that nowadays, the number of the birds may be less than one fourth of the number of his youthful age.

Maubin and its surrounding areas are not the places where red head sarus cranes are very rare to see. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, their number has decreased gradually.

As regards the threat posed on sarus cranes, the birds were categorized on the verge of



Awareness are being carried out not to destroy nests and eggs of sarus cranes.



Conservationists estimate that there are 500 of sarus cranes in Myanmar.

extinction in 1994 but after 18 years, it was classified as vulnerable.

In the past red head sarus cranes were abundant in Thailand but ten years ago, there was none of them due to extinction. This was due to habitat destruction by farmers.

Now, Thailand imported red head sarus cranes from Cambodia breeding them as originally inhabitants while giving awareness to local farmers.

In Myanmar, there was two species of sarus cranes namely black head sarus cranes and maiden sarus cranes but the latter was totally extinct and the former exist abundantly.

Forest ranger from Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary U Kyaw Kyaw Naing said sarus cranes are under full protection of the Protection of Wildlife and Conservation of Natural Areas Law (1994)

Section 37 of this law states, "Whoever commits any of the following acts shall, on conviction be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 7 years or with fine which may extend to kyats 50,000 or with both:-

(a) killing, hunting or wounding a completely protected wild animal without permission, possessing, selling, transporting or transferring such wild animal or any part

thereof without permission;

(b) exporting without the recommendation of the Director General a completely protected wild animal or a protected wild plant or any part thereof."

Ko Saw Myo admitted that he knows the red head sarus cranes are rare species but has no idea the birds are protected under the law.

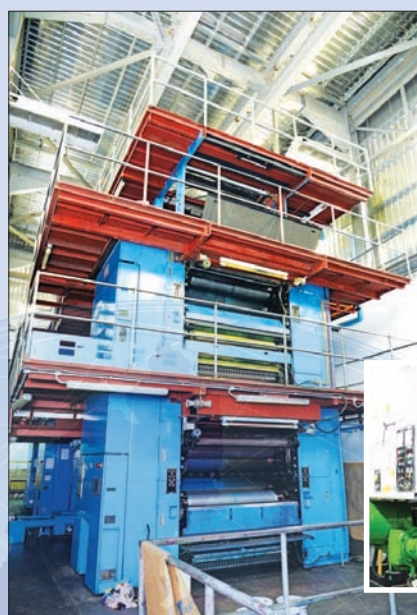
While we were watching the homecoming of a pair of sarus cranes to their nest, Ko Saw Myo pledged that he would tell his fellow villagers to inform about nests of the sarus cranes and not to destroy them.—Translated by Wallace

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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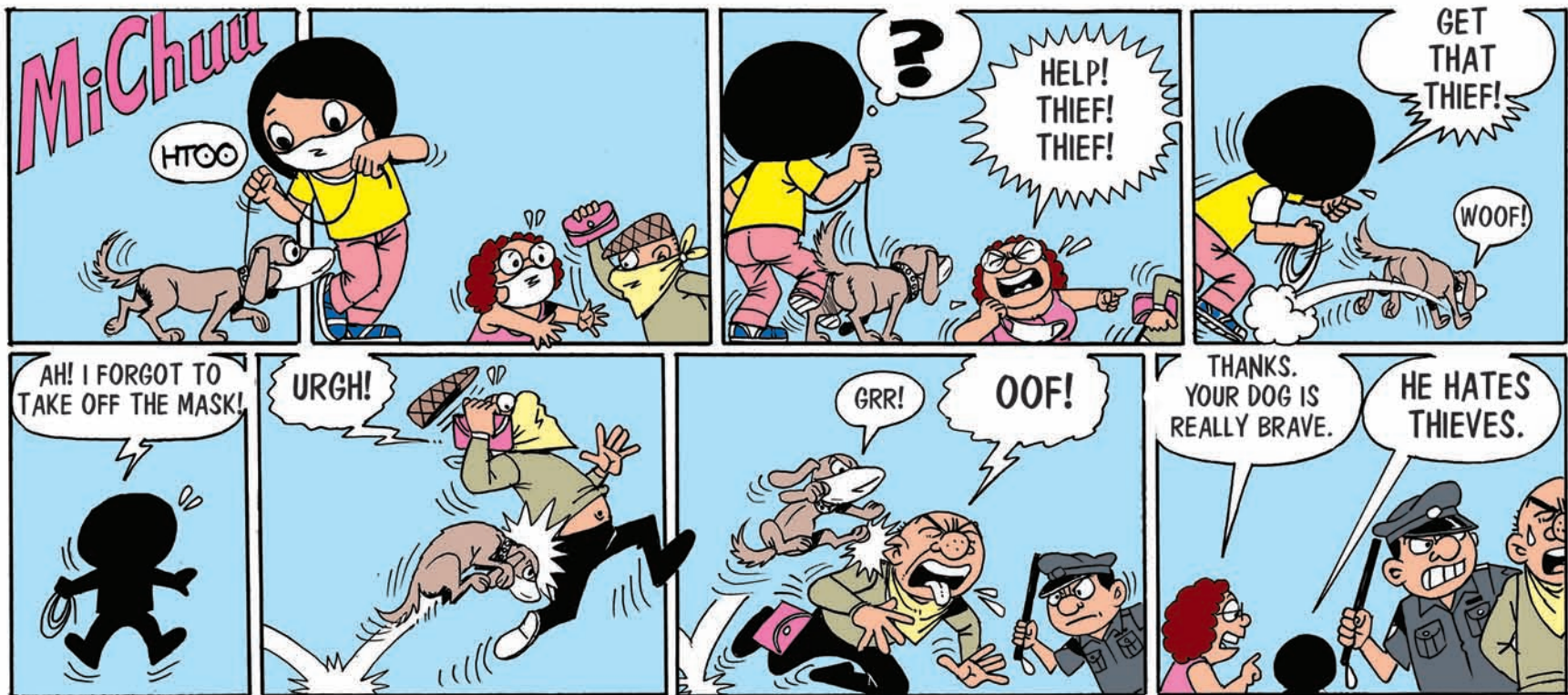
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PEOPLE WILL BE PEOPLE

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Maung Shwe Win



SUNDAY JOKE

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Maung Maung Aung
2017



“Peace will make the Golden Land shine”

EU Ambassador Roland Kobia takes stock after four years in Myanmar

A wide-ranging Interview with EU Ambassador Roland Kobia to Myanmar by the Global New Light of Myanmar and MRTV touched upon democratic and economic reform, peace process and bilateral relations between EU and Myanmar.

Q: The EU embassy opened with your tour of duty, so can you share the progress of the EU-Myanmar relations and the progress of Myanmar's democratic transition?

A: I came here four years ago to open a full European presence when this country had only just started to open up to the world and normalize its relationships with the concert of nations. We opened the EU Delegation as a political decision to support a transition we believed in. We were warmly welcomed by the Myanmar government and people.

The EU quickly mobilised the political will and concrete resources to be at the level of expectations. A package of very concrete initiatives was launched to support to Myanmar's transition: the EU was the first Western power to lift all sanctions (except for the arms and ammunitions). We awarded the most generous, and unilateral, trade regime to Myanmar, the GSP+ (Generalised System of Preferences), which enables Myanmar to access the European market of over 510 million consumers without any quotas or customs duties. In addition, the EU immediately offered its full political support for the reform process in engaging in a transformative agenda and allocated about €1 billion (around 1.6 trillion MMK) for development aid. The EU and its Member States have put a lot of political capital in Myanmar and it has proven to be the right decision because when you look at the range and depth of changes and the pace of reform, it has been an incredible journey, which we hope will continue.

Q: Now Myanmar's democratic reform and peace process is gaining momentum, so what is your opinion on this?

A: Both the reform and the peace process are first and foremost nationally owned initiatives. The international community can offer help, share experiences and ideas, and offer technical and financial support but at the end of the day the decisions are, and have to be, made by Myanmar.

I think Myanmar has been extremely clear in the choices it has made, notably in the 2015 elections. This should be respected. A great majority chose to turn a new page and open a new era towards



EU Ambassador Roland Kobia to Myanmar speaks during the interview with GNLM and MRTV at the Embassy of EU in Yangon. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAH**

democracy and pluralism. The EU is accompanying you in this complex transition, in particular as regards the peace process. Despite some criticism at the moment, I think there is no other choice than to support the peace process. Peace should be a major endeavour both at individual level, in every citizen's mind and effort, and a collective effort. Everyone should contribute. Because ultimately, all other efforts to strengthen democracy and to bring prosperity to the people of Myanmar will be in vain without lasting peace.

The Golden Land will have a Golden Future only if there is peace first. If there is conflict and inter-communal violence, there will be no democracy as the latter is incompatible with conflict. There

will be no socio-economic development as an economy will not flourish during conflict. Therefore when I look back I think history has proven it was the right decision to support any meaningful initiative that tried to promote peace. Today the Joint Peace Fund is plentiful of resources and is available any time to move peace forward.

Let's not under-estimate how far this country has come – but let's not take progress for granted either. As monumental as Myanmar's transformation has been so far, it would be a missed opportunity of not to continue and even increase the efforts.

By putting the peace process at the top of the agenda, the government has sent an important signal – now it has to reach out to all parts of the country, engage in discussions and lead the way for all parties to come to the negotiating table. We know that some do not want peace, for various reasons. They constitute a minority, and have an unsustainable position. A lucid joint reflection on the strengths

and weaknesses of the current approach would therefore be useful. There needs to be a renewed focus on creating a climate of trust where all sides feel truly part of a process, where they feel heard and respected.

The way to achieve peace is to enter into negotiations with your former – or actual – enemies and

to ensure each and every party makes compromises towards reaching a lasting political settlement. The strongest could give signs of goodwill to the smallest as confidence-building measures. If some do not seize the chance, they will be exposed as peace-spoilers. To address the current slow down in the peace momentum, a “New Deal” giving both a holistic and more precise vision of the future could be an option. The idea would be shedding more light on the precise direction and destination of the country, the peace process being one step thereof. This would

reassure all parties to join and own the deal, and to build the necessary trust to implement it. To convince people to jump on a train, they need to know what the direction is, and what destination is being envisaged.

The European Union stands ready to continue offering its support because we know from experience that it can take a very long time to build lasting peace. Europe was built on the ashes of war over many decades. I hope all parties to the conflict in Myanmar will continue to find our support useful. Our offer is on the table, it is just a question of using it.

Q: Myanmar is implementing political and economic reform in parallel so what is your impression on this?

A: I am impressed by the number of reforms that have been carried out in parallel over the last six years. When you look at the number of initiatives that have been taken, the number of laws that have been adapted or repealed, the number of structures that have been set up, the change of mindset that starts to surface, it is an astounding achievement. The work that has been put into this transition deserves to be recognized.

Of course people are always impatient and would like things to go faster. Long-awaited change has not yet reached the homes of millions of people in this country and living standards are still lagging behind compared to other countries in the region. Much will therefore depend on whether the government will be able to build on the initial positive dynamic, in particular in the economic sector.

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Economic growth and a boost to the job market will have a direct impact on the lives of the people and consequently boost the public's confidence in the new Myanmar, thereby having a multiplying effect on the support for that route.

Myanmar's transition is highly complex and has to be taken one step at a time. To lead transitions you need three things: political will, leadership and strong support among your country's "agents for change" and civil society. As opinion leaders, they are the ones to help political leaders overcome the immense challenges of this transition.

The international community can equally assist and bring positive change, not only in the development sector but especially when it comes to boosting the economy and help creating new jobs. If Myanmar succeeds in creating a business-friendly environment, the country will greatly benefit from foreign direct investment that comes hand in hand with know-how, technical expertise and skills – all ingredients to sustainable economic development. However, foreign investment in Myanmar has slowed down. I see a number of reasons for this, starting first and foremost with the ongoing conflicts in the country. Instability is deterring investments. Second, the need investors have for clarity about the policy and the overall direction of the economy. Third, the overall conduciveness of the economic environment.

European investors are looking for sustainable, long-term investment opportunities, but this requires an environment that provides for the necessary security, both from an overall political stability point of view and regarding legal security of a predictable business environment. Myanmar needs to keep up the pace of reform to become an attractive place for high quality foreign investments that are made to last. The quick wins are not always lasting wins. Investors want predictability, legal certainty, transparency and a reasonable capacity to forecast. Myanmar also needs to show companies that they will be treated fairly, equally and won't be discriminated against local businesses or businesses that use different commercial behaviours. Investors want a level playing field with fair competition to be able to work in a fair environment and ensure sustainable investments.

Q: Can you tell your opinions on the ongoing Rakhine issues?

A: The situation in Rakhine is a difficult, emotional and deep-rooted issue that is going back a long way in history. It is a complex problem of a state at the periphery that struggles with inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions, underdevelopment, fear and poverty. Members of all communities in Rakhine are poor and struggle to survive; they should all be supported if one is serious about a lasting solution. There is no time to lose in addressing the issues in Rakhine, as these difficult living conditions do not only cause suffering for the people, but are also a fertile breeding ground for extremism. What I think is needed is a joint effort of the government, local political and religious leaders as well as civil society to bring about an end to violence and long-overdue improvements to the difficult living conditions of so many families in Rakhine.

Investors want a level playing field with fair competition to be able to work in a fair environment and ensure sustainable investments.

We have to bear in mind that the security situation in Rakhine State affects security and stability not only in Rakhine, but in the whole of Myanmar and in the wider region. The recent violence has resulted in dozens of thousands of people fleeing their homes, adding further to the already significant number of people displaced in Rakhine. Violence, conflict and segregation have resulted in great human suffering: there are families without a roof over their heads while the monsoon season is in full swing; generations of children with no education and no hope for a better future; thousands of sick people with no access to health care and many deaths that could well be prevented. People in Northern Rakhine from all communities are desperate. And as we could observe in many other areas



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with European Council President Donald Tusk, at the European Council headquarters in Brussels, Belgium on 2 May 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

of the world, this desperation and lack of perspectives is a very fertile breeding ground for extremism and ultimately further violence. Indeed, we have already seen some reports about possible links to foreign terrorist organisations growing in the area. If people are not offered a perspective for a peaceful existence in dignity, it is only a matter of time until they will turn to radical groups who offer them "a way out". It is up to national and local leaders to stop and reverse this trend of growing radicalisation in Rakhine before it gets even more complicated and spills over.

The EU is offering its full support to the Myanmar government and we stand ready to facilitate dialogue and extend our peace building support to the area. A number of grass-root level initiatives are already under way. EU support promotes inter-communal understanding and reconciliation and offers aid to improve access to education, healthcare, livelihoods, as well as sanitation, water and food. Humanitarian and development access should continue to be opened as much as possible, and target all.

I will leave this country being sad to see that the situation in Rakhine is not a positive curve. This applies also to Shan and Kachin States. Each of these conflicts has its own roots but they all have the same effect: people who are suffering from tensions and conflicts. Reconciliation is both a political concept but also a human concept. You need reconciliation between the people in all the ethnic states to rebuild trust. You need to rebuild trust and a sense of living together - this is what will make the Golden Land shine.

At a certain stage this overall political transition will need to look at ways to deal with the

past, to possibly have transitional and restorative justice, heal peoples' wounds, otherwise peace will not last and the transition will remain incomplete. If people do not feel that their grievances have been addressed, old wounds shall open up again one day. This is a very difficult process in all transitions, but a necessary one. I hope that the people of Myanmar will value and embrace the country's diversity as a treasure, not a curse. For me as a European, this seems the only way for a brighter future, more socio-economic development and full democracy.

Q: What is your impression for the "Golden Friendship" with EU and Myanmar and your thoughts on terrorism?

A: I hope that the relationship between Myanmar and the EU will continue to be a golden relationship and I think we have started well. The basis of our relationship is the EU's respect for Myanmar's sovereignty and independence, while honestly expressing opinions. This mutual respect allows us to have open and frank discussions where we share ideas; sometimes we agree and sometimes we disagree. As Europeans we tend to be outspoken, we say things clearly because we believe this is the best way to move forward. If you just keep silent and say 'yes' to everything, I'm not sure you can move forward. Being able to freely exchange ideas and opinions reflects the beauty of a true friendship and I think this is what Myanmar and the Europeans share.

You mentioned a difficult issue, terrorism. This is not only a Myanmar issue; this is a regional and an international issue where Myanmar, Europe and the whole world share challenges

in common. How to fight this rather new and emerging threat that is international terrorism? Through cooperation. No one will be able to tackle terrorism alone. Global threats require coordination and a global response. This is why it is in the interest of Myanmar to have the strongest possible cooperation with its neighbors and the wider international community.

What happened in October last year when the border post guards were attacked is very worrying, and the EU has immediately condemned this attack against the Myanmar authorities. It is very worrying because it shows that there is a new trend building up there. If Rakhine, as claimed by a number of constituencies, is increasingly hosting terrorist activities it only shows my previous point; we need more cooperation.

When people in any region start to become desperate and lose hope then this is the best breeding ground for terrorism. (MRTV: They are vulnerable, they have no choice?). Exactly. If they are poor and segregated and if they have no hope for their children then they will do things that are dangerous. So the best way to address terrorism is not only international cooperation but it's to try to work on the ground to give a sense of future to all the people.

Q: My last question is about EU and Brexit. How will it affect small countries like Myanmar?

A: Brexit has been a shockwave and a great surprise for everybody including half of the British who did not want to leave the European Union. But it is a democratic choice we have to respect it. The European Union is a free union and you can get in freely and you can get out freely.

I do not think Brexit will have a big impact on Myanmar because the EU will continue to be here with 27 European States continuing their strong support to Myanmar. The UK will work bilaterally. And we should not forget that while everyone is talking about one country leaving the EU, there are currently six countries that want to join the EU as soon as they can, and are negotiating their accession. This shows that the European project is still very attractive and in a state of expansion. And in today's unstable and unpredictable world, Europe is definitely a pole of stability, politically and economically. ■