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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: rural citizens are country's backbone

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi spoke to youths from rural areas of Myanmar yesterday, stressing their importance in the path toward peace and calling them the "backbone of the country", noting that those in rural areas make up 70 per cent of the nation's population.

The talk with the youths took place yesterday at Myanmar International Convention Centre 2 in Nay Pyi Taw, where the State Counsellor told the youths that the peace talks were always open to the groups that had not signed the peace agreement, but that it was not possible to wait for all to sign in order to hold the second Panglong peace conference.

"The groups who have already signed can be involved fully,

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks to youths from rural areas of Myanmar at MICC-2 in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Gov't confirms plans to enact commission recommendations

THE recently appointed National Security Advisor U Thaug Tun yesterday reaffirmed the Union government's commitment to implement the large majority of the recommendations promptly in northern Rakhine and reiterated that there was no ethnic cleansing against the Muslims community there.

At a briefing to representatives from the diplomatic corps and UN Specialized Agencies in Yangon

yesterday, the National Security Advisor referred to the State Counsellor's recent interview with the BBC and restated the government's stand on and commitments to the peace and national reconciliation in Rakhine State. He also recalled progress made by the government during a year in office as well as the priorities and the future direction for the country.

He also stated that a few of the recommendations would be

contingent upon the situation on the ground, but said there would be speedy progress.

Speaking to diplomats in Yangon yesterday, the National Security Advisor also highlighted a number of positive developments in the conflict areas in northern Rakhine, disclosing that the government is working to close down camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kyaukpyu, Sittwe and Ramree.



National Security Advisor U Thaug Tun speaks to diplomats in Yangon. PHOTO: REUTERS

Responding to the allegations of human rights violations, he updated the efforts of the Investigation Commission. He mentioned the latest visits conducted by commission members to affected areas in Rakhine and Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh. He reiterated that the government would take firm action in accordance with the law if there is clear evidence of wrongdoing.

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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: rural citizens are country's backbone

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and the groups who have not signed yet can become involved to some extent. We will give a chance for all to be involved," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said.

"The most important thing is to exchange views and negotiate on different views. They have the right to see things differently, but have a responsibility to adjust. So that we can get peace based on different views and can make the same goals for peace. The country will be stable when there is rule of law. Rule of law is important for reconciliation so that it is a value for peace."

In yesterday's youth discussions, the people from rural areas shared their thoughts on their country.

Ko Htwe Po, a youth from Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region, said he felt left behind in the world because there was no peace.

"Everyone is urged to work together for peace with good will and intention. My region is peaceful with good road connections and this is the result of peace. That is why I want peace" Ko Htwe Po said.

Ma Phyu Sin Pwint from Namhsan Township, northern Shan State in the Palaung Self-administered Zone, said there was much fighting in her region that hurt many people. She wanted to ask the armed groups on how to achieve peace quickly. She also wanted to ask the Tatmadaw when the armed groups will be allowed to sign.

Ma Lu Ain from Myitkyina Township, Kachin State said there is a lot of fighting in Kachin State that causes ethnic villagers to flee to refugee camps.

"Work quickly to get peace so that everyone can go back to their own place and live", Ma Lu Ain said.

Ko Htein Lin Aung from Aunglan Township, Magway Region noted that rule of law is important to have peace.

"To achieve eternal peace, all need to work together with one blood, one voice, and one mind" he said.

Ko Khaing Min Htet from Amarpura Township, Mandalay Region, said even though the Yangon-Mandalay area has no issue with peace, fighting in Laukkai affected Mandalay with an increase in crime.

Ma Mi Aye Mon from Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State said her area once was a black area. Now (with peace), Mon State is developing. Peace is resolving matters through discussion. Do not resolve differences with arms. Build trust by meeting at a table. We all can live together only with peace.

Ma Nan Phyu Hnin Thet from Hpakant Township, Kachin State said, "I am also a member of the public so I want peace as



Ko Htwe Po



Ma Lu Ain



Ko Khaing Min Htet



Nan Phyu Hnin Thet



Ko Thar Maung



Ma Thein Thein Ei



Kun Soe Maung



Ma Win Mar Khaing



Ma Phyu Sin Pwint



Ko Htein Lin Aung



Mi Aye Mon



Ko Hlaing Min Soe

soon as possible. Without peace, transportation is difficult here, and we are economically behind. I feel that we are plummeting lower each year in my own village, let alone the cities. Recently kindergarten classes have opened up and school supplies are being sent but due to the difficulty of transportation they are still not here yet."

Ko Hlaing Min Soe from Einme, Ayayawady Region, said "farmers in our region cannot return agricultural loans to the government this year as rice plantations were damaged by the floods. Meanwhile, the price of paddy is declining due to instability in border areas. To improve the socio-economy of farmers, the government should set the price for paddy."

Ko Thar Maung from Laukkai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, said: "Armed conflicts are happening because of misunderstandings between ethnic groups. I think the political road to peace needs to be discussed

“The most important thing is to exchange views and negotiate on different views. They have the right to see things differently, but have a responsibility to adjust. So that we can get peace based on different views and can make the same goals for peace.

between ethnic brothers and sisters with a real want for peace in mind. Frequent clashes happen in Kokang, and since we are a mountainous landscape our main business is agricultural work. People are still unable to return to their homes and villages. Some even have overgrown sugar cane fields that have been lying for 3 years.

Ma Thein Thein Ei from Kyarinseikgyi Township, Kayin State, said her region has a long history of violence but has learned the benefits of peace.

"We desire peace. Kayin State suffered casualties from war for 60 years. However, ever since

we united with armed groups within our state in the cause for peace we are reaping its benefits slowly but surely. In the past there was difficulty in commerce, society, education and transportation due to conflicts and regional development was abysmally slow. But now with unity in peace efforts, we were able to link roads between communities and cities for better health, education and social development."

Ko Kun Soe Maung from Taunggyi in Shan State said he believes the youth of the country is its future.

"It's hard for us to call our-

selves highlanders right now. The region we're living in doesn't have the smell of gunpowder or the sound of firearms but my heart aches for our brethren. Our heart aches when a Shan suffers. Our heart aches when a Kayin suffers. Our heart aches when our ethnic brethren all over Myanmar suffers. There are those who fled the region, both legally and illegally, due to war or failure in their agricultural work. Appointing graduated ethnic youths in government departments can influence other ethnic brethren to contribute to peace efforts too. I believe the union government will be able to fulfil this."

In concluding, the State Counsellor encouraged everyone to work toward peace without giving up by seeking solutions and by questioning and listening to each other until arriving upon a solution.

"I trust in success because of the strength of the people", she said.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw arrives back from China

A Myanmar delegation led by President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin left Beijing yesterday morning and arrived in Kunming, Yunnan Province at 12:30 pm local standard time, where Mr Chen Shun, Vice Governor of Yunnan Province and Kunming-based Myanmar Consul-General U Soe Paing welcomed them at the airport.

The president received Mr Chen Hao, Party Secretary of Yunnan Province at Haigeng Garden Hotel and attended a luncheon hosted by Mr Chen Hao. In the afternoon, the president and his team visited Stone Forest, a famous site in Yunnan Province.

The Stone Forest is a collection of naturally occurring limestone pillars that resemble a forest of trees 96,000 acres. The stones have lasted for millions of years and were once under water. The stones emerged as they are seen today when the sea levels went down.

The Stone Forest is a tourist destination and attracts foreigners for its mysterious natural beauty. There are also extraordinary rock caves and beautiful wide lakes in the Stone Forest.

In the evening, the president and party left Kunming International Airport for Nay Pyi Taw by special flight and arrived at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport at 6 pm.

The president and entourage were welcomed by Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, U Thant Sin Maung, Union Minister for Transport and Communications, Dr Myo Aung, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council and wife, the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, Mr Chen Chen, charge d'affaires of Chinese Embassy in Myanmar and responsible persons at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.—

Myanmar News Agency



President U Htin Kyaw being welcomed back at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. PHOTO: MNA

Rakhine State Chief Minister meets Maungtaw residents, inspects land reclamation tasks

A meeting between the Rakhine State government and local people took place at Thiri Mingalar Hall in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State yesterday morning.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu made an opening address and was briefed about the socioeconomic status of the region and was brought up to date on the economic, road transportation and regional de-

velopment tasks by the local people. Rakhine State cabinet members and officials gave sector-wise clarifications regarding the necessities presented by the local people.

Then, the state chief minister and officials presented fiber boats, life jackets, relief items, bags of rice and Gazi-branded water tanks through Township Administrator U Myint Khaing,

who expressed words of thanks.

Afterward, the State chief minister and party inspected land reclamation tasks with the use of heavy machinery in Wabeik Village, Kyeekanpyin Village-tract and proceeded to Myinlut Town to examine construction of new buildings and arrangements made to establish a new village in Kyaukpandu Village-tract.—

Yamanya



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu inspects land reclamation tasks in Maungtaw. PHOTO: TIN SOE

Under '95 model buses granted 3-month extension

PASSENGER buses made before 1995 were granted to run for three more months on the YBS bus line, according to an official from Yangon Region Transport Authority.

Although authorities previously announced that buses made

before 1995 would have to deregister no later than 16 April, the deregistration period has been extended for three months because of a shortage of new buses.

Under the latest announcement, buses made before 1995 will have to leave the YBS line

starting on 15 July.

The 1995 model CNG passenger buses Dynas and BMs have been issued with car import slips since November, 2016. A total of over 1,000 vehicles have already been issued with the slips as of yesterday.—200

Fifteen people detained for illegal entry into Myanmar

EARLIER this month, security forces patrolling along the sea coast apprehended a vessel carrying 15 people who the authorities say had illegally entered Myanmar's territorial waters in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State and placed them under arrest.

The security forces spotted the boat at 1am on 1 April. When the security forces signalled for the boat to stop, they tried to escape. Three men, seven women and five children are being questioned by the authorities.—

Myanmar News Agency

Former ten-household head missing in Maungtaw Township

A FORMER ten-household head in Kunthibin Village, Maungtaw Township in Rakhine State has been missing since Monday.

Mawphee Arlaung, 40, a former ten-household head, departed

his house at 3 pm on Monday to catch shrimp and did not return. His wife Sartika Bakon filed a case at the local police station and the investigation is ongoing.—

Myanmar News Agency

Gov't confirms plans to enact . . .

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He further explained the complex nature of the situation in Rakhine State and the challenges faced by the government, pointing out the government's continued efforts to address the issue by stressing the importance of building trust and confidence between the communities, addressing poverty and underdevelopment and finding a lasting solution.

The National Security Advisor provided an update on the progress made in healthcare, education, infrastructure and electricity, and highlighted the measures taken by the government in response to recommendations in the interim report published by the Advisory Commission on

Rakhine State.

He emphasised that criminal acts to instill terror in the population cannot be condoned under any circumstances and that any attempt to sow the seeds of terror in one country can affect the peace and stability of the region and beyond.

He expressed appreciation to the donor countries and international organisations for their assistance and expressed the hope that international community would continue to provide understanding and constructive support for the government's endeavor to build peace, justice and development for all the people living in Rakhine.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Over 64,000 tourists visited Shwedagon Pagoda last month



Tourists visit Myanmar's national landmark Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

SHWEDAGON Pagoda, the most famous pilgrimage site in Myanmar, was visited by more than 64,000 foreign travellers last month, an increase of over 5,500 visitors when compared with the similar period of last year, according to the Pagoda Board of Trustees. In March 2016, the Pagoda hosted over 58,000 foreigners.

Pagoda authorities collected more than Ks510 million plus US\$360 entrance fees and \$9,400 donated by international tourists, mostly from neighbouring Thai-

land.

According to statistics of the Pagoda authorities, about 15,000 Thais, 6,229 Chinese, about 4,500 Koreans, 3,293 Japanese and 3,153 French visitors, as well as a few Chilean, Serbian, Pakistanis, Czechs and Israelis, visited Shwedagon Pagoda in March alone. A collective blood donation activity will take place at the Pagoda on the first day of the Myanmar New Year, which falls on 17 April, with the Pagoda authorities inviting people to participate in

the blood contribution for people in need. Yangon's most famous landmark is crowded every day with a large number of devotees and merit makers who walk around the stupa and make offerings to the Buddha statues. For foreign visitors, it is a great place to enjoy observing Myanmar's cultural standard through ancient architectures. The Shwedagon Pagoda is situated on Singuttara Hill, Shwedagon Pagoda Road, Dagon Township, downtown Yangon, just west of Kandawgyi Lake.—200

Forty FDI proposals still to be verified according to old law

FORTY proposals of foreign direct investment (FDI) submitted under the old foreign investment law amounting to over US\$2 billion still need to be verified, said an official from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The DICA will verify all current and future FDI proposals with the new foreign investment law that was enacted on 1 April, according to Myanmar

Investment Commission media conference.

"We are trying to verify and approve the 40 proposals submitted according to the old foreign investment law. We will verify and approve these proposals as soon as possible. But we will apply the new policy from now on," said U Aung Naing Oo, Director-General of DICA.

To encourage foreign direct investments in underdeveloped

regions, DICA will grant tax holidays to FDIs in investment zones. Zone 1 will be granted a tax holiday of seven years, Zone 2 for five years and Zone 3 for three years.

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has approved 1,135 foreign businesses that brought US\$6.61 billion and 49 local companies which earned Ks15.8 trillion during this fiscal year.—Myitmakha News Agency

Beer and goods sold without paying customs duties seized

AUTHORITIES seized beer from China and other goods which were being sold without paying customs duties at Yaypu checkpoint, Hsenwi township, Shan State (North) on 4 April.

The businessmen bought Chinese beer and other goods with custom duties unpaid to sell them during the Water Festival.

"We started checking at the

checkpoint at 1 am. We seized the Chinese-made beers at 2am which had customs duties unpaid. They were covered with packages of instant noodles on which duty had been paid. We gave them back the instant noodles for which customs duties had been paid", said U Tet Tun Aung, deputy director from the customs department.

"Chinese-made beers sell well during the water festival as they are cheap. Also, they can be bought everywhere. So the beers are entering from China as well as drugs," said U Myo Thant, a local resident from Lashio.

Moreover, motorbikes, bags and clothes were seized at Yaypu checkpoint.—Myitmakha News Agency

16-bed station hospital to be built in Dabayin township

The government will build a 16-bed station hospital at Songon village, Dabayin township, Sagaing region in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Songon villager Daw Ma Ngo donated a five-acre plot of land while the U Myint Hsaung and Daw Khin San Hlaing family donated Ks 3.5 million for construction of the hospital.

Over 16,000 family members from 2,600 households are living in 17 villages in Dabayin township. These villages are less

developed villages. The villagers can receive health care provided by local health personnel only. Hluttaw representatives and public officials inspected these villages and confirmed the necessity for better health care. Hluttaw representatives then arranged to build the 16-bed station hospital at the centre of these 17 villages.

The 16-bed station hospital will be built with an aim to provide better health care to the villagers.—Aung Lin

Prize presentation for winners of painting contest

THE presentation ceremony for winners of a painting competition jointly organised by the Taungoo District Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) and the Township Artists and Sculptors' Association was held at the district public library in Taungoo on Sunday.

The competition was held with a view to stimulating the imagination of the children and enriching their general knowledge.

At the ceremony, Daw Thandar Linn, the head of the township IPRD, explained the aim of the competition. Artist Ko Chan Aye from the Township

Artists and Sculptors' Association presented his assessments of the paintings. Then the prizes were presented to the winners. Well-wishers donated Ks50,000 for the development of the library.

The ceremony was attended by about 60 people from the township women affairs committee, township maternal and children care association, Township Artists and Sculptors' Association, students, parents and teachers. Books, journals and newspapers were exhibited by the district IPRD with the pamphlets distributed to the attendees.—Shwe Win (Pyay)

New cyclone shelters in Kayin State

NEW cyclone shelters will be built in Hlaingbwe and Hpa-an townships in Kayin State, southern Myanmar, to provide protection to residents from natural disasters, according to Kayin State government.

People residing in Hlaingbwe Township and Hpa-an, the capital town of the state, are vulnerable to natural disasters, including cyclones.

The two towns yearly experience flooding in June, July and August due to heavy rain.

The new 60x60x28-foot cyclone facility in Hlaingbwe Township is designed to accommodate more than 400 people, while another shelter in Hpa-an Township can house approximately 400 people.

The National Natural

Disaster Management Committee (NNDMC) allocated Ks118 million for the project to be implemented in Kamawkach Village in Hlaingbwe Township and a further Ks116.8 million for another project on Kyain Ale Street in Ward-1 in Hpa-an Township.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the project in Hlaingbwe Township was recently held in the designated area. State authorities also inspected the project area in the town of Hpa-an to start construction.

Upon completion of the new schemes, emergency disaster management training and activities are planned for both cyclone facilities.—Nay Myo Lwin (IPRD)



An official performing the groundbreaking ceremony for the project in Hlaingbwe Township. PHOTO: NAY MYO LWIN (IPRD)

LOCAL Business

MRTV announces content providers for Digital Free-to-Air of its Multi-Channel Playout System

List of Content Providers for Digital Free-to-Air channels in Multi-Channel Playout System of MRTV

1. Invitations were sent out to 42 companies/entities that passed the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) as Service Providers for 5 Free-to-Air Channels in Multi-Channel Playout System of MRTV.
2. Of the 42 companies/entities that passed the EOI stage, 29 submitted RFP. Consultant Tun Group Asia Limited conducted selection in stages and announced on 3 February 2017 on the selection of 10 companies/entities as preliminary Content Providers.
3. The 10 selected companies/entities were individually assessed for transparency, strong financial investment situation, legal background history and conformance to policy guide-

line. Findings on their submission by sectors, answer to questions and conducts were assessed in stages. The following 5 companies/entities are announced as Content Providers for Digital Free-to-Air channels in Multi-Channel Playout System of MRTV.

- (a) Mizzima Media Co., Ltd.
- (b) Young Investment Group Co., Ltd.
- (c) Kaung Myanmar Aung CO., Ltd.
- (d) Fortune International Ltd.
- (e) DVB Multi Media Group Co., Ltd.

Myanma Radio and Television

External trade value up by over US\$1 billion during last FY

EXTERNAL trade with foreign partners in the current fiscal year climbed up to US\$28.80 billion, an increase of US\$1.08 billion compared to that of the previous year, according to the official statistics provided by the Commerce Ministry.

The country is conducting foreign trade through border camps and normal trade. Normal trade performed better, with trade values of US\$21.37 billion, than the trade values via border trade camps of US\$7.43 billion.

Export value last year totalled US\$11.62 billion, whereas import value amounted to US\$17.18 billion. Imports surpassed exports last year, resulting in a trade deficit of US\$5.56 billion.

There were trade deficits of US\$91.9 million in 2012-2013, US\$2.55 billion in 2013-2014, US\$4.91 billion in 2014-2015 and US\$5.41 billion in 2015-2016, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO).

The government is putting forth concerted efforts so as to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items, except for essentials, according to the second five-year National Development Plan. — *Ko Khant*

Commerce ministry continues efforts to enter foreign markets

THE Commerce Ministry exerted efforts for the country's exports to attain more market shares in foreign countries, it is learnt.

The delegation led by officials from the Commerce Ministry and entrepreneurs went to visit the U.S., Switzerland, South Korea, China, Thailand, Italy, Viet Nam, India and Japan in order to achieve more export markets and

produce value-added agricultural products. The concerted efforts are being made with a view to tripling export volume. External trade with foreign partners in the incumbent government period has risen by over US\$1 billion from fiscal year 2015-2016.

The Commerce Ministry hopes to increase the export earnings by laying down the six main

objectives: trade promotion; trade facilitation; trade negotiation; trade liberalisation; trade education and consumer protection, according to its one-year performance. Myanmar is also making efforts to enhance re-export trade and grant permits for more items, negotiating with the departments concerned. Sugar, betel nut, fuel oil, clothes, garlic, sesame seeds,

dried pepper, peanuts, cotton, electrical appliances, beverages, food, edible oil, and tyres are re-exported. The country earns more revenue from re-export trade with the increase in trade volume. The Commerce Ministry will also verify and approve the proposals concerning the commodities which can be re-exported, it is learnt.—*Ko Khant*

Commercial tax on gold purchases to start this month

IN a bid to levy a commercial tax on gold purchases, a stamp duty will be issued at the end of April, said an official from the Internal Revenue Department.

Previously, a five per cent

commercial tax was paid by the gold shops. Now, one per cent of the tax will be imposed on gold buyers. The gold and jewellery shops have not collected the tax yet, it is learnt. The aforementioned

department is prepping for printing of stamp duty so as to ensure strict adherence to tax rules. The tax collected by the shops will be received by the government as revenue which will be applied to

infrastructural improvements to benefit the public, he added.

If the taxation affixing a stamp on receipt comes into force, the sales tax can be levied on the actual total amount of sales.—*200*

5,000 tonnes of grapes to be purchased for new winery

FIVE thousand tonnes of grapes will be bought at the end of April for a wine factory which will be opened in Nay Pyi Taw, said Ko Hlaing Hlaing Tun, the vineyard owner from Yamethin Township, Mandalay Region.

"This wine factory will be opened in Nay Pyi Taw at the end of April. An experimental production run resulted in a fruitful result, so we planned to purchase the grapes in order to come into operation", Ko Hlaing Hlaing Tun said.

"We will buy the grapes from Alekon and Ywatan village tracts for the factory. The wine produced from this plan is targeted to place on foreign markets. The grape price is possibly to

remain stable due to the demand from the wine market, unlike the declining market last year", he continued.

The prevailing market price of grapes per viss is Ks2,000 for Bq variety and Ks3,000 for Bb variety. The price is likely to ascend. The yield this year declined against that of last year because of heavy precipitation before harvest time.

The price of grapes is usually on the decline in the rainy season. The price plunged down to below Ks1,000 per viss in the last rainy season. During this rainy season, grapes are likely to fetch around Ks1,500 to Ks2,000 per viss with the possibly stable market, it is learnt.—*200*



Grapes are seen at a farm in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Region. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Political Scenario In One Year Together With The People

ONE year term from the inception of elected new government has ended leaving some voices of disapprovals on one side and satisfying remarks on other side among the people. The government understand those complaints against the incumbent government come from their dissatisfied feelings on the performance of the government as they still could not have seen their life better than before till the end of one year period under the new government.

Region and State governments are slammed by the people of their regions and states. Especially, Yangon Region government is the most stricken by the broadside of the people. However it is unfair to blame the incumbent government for the unsatisfactory result of their effort in sorting itself out the messy tangle that has amassed for many years by a series of social, economic and political blunders made by previous governments.

When the incumbent government tried to change the systems that people had abhorred for a long time it was found difficult to do successfully because they had to restrain their action on encountering the politically sensitive and touchy issues in the course of their endeavor. People were dissatisfied with the performances of the new government that they thought did not reach their expectation.

However, despite high criticism people made, they still harbored their trust and support for the government since they thought the incumbent government was free of corruption, entertained good will toward the people and the country and upheld the moral rectitude.

Beginning from people uprising

When we talk about the November 2015 general election, we need consider a great milestone of the history registering people uprising in 1988 calling for the emergence of a democratic nation. The people had suffered utter oppression under the dictatorial regime for many years and when it came to unbearable stage in all aspects, people from all walks of life and from every nook and cranny took to the road to demonstrate their wish to force out the oppressive system and put democracy in place and for a democratic state to emerge. The 1988 political uprising had paved the way to the emergence of

a democratic nation and generated a political party by the name of National League for Democracy (NLD).

The NLD party was born of the people, endured the hardship together with the people, and grew to be invincible solidified party. Now, although NLD party can grasp the state power after landslide victory in 2015 general election, the party leaders never enjoy the special privilege apart from their official provisions and they are still struggling to get out of the difficulties and crises together with the people.

The incumbent governments, is now trying to solve the problems calmly step by step at their utmost capacity but within a prevailing parameter.

People's government and the challenges

Landslide victory in 2015 general elections indicated the massive support of the people to NLD party. Despite winning the heart and soul of the people together with their support NLD government cannot undertake their tasks at full throttle on account of the lack of sincere political atmosphere where there are many political constraints that hamper the system-changing process of NLD government during the first year of its tenure. However, NLD party can resolve the major challenges to some extent in a calm and clever way.

NLD proclaimed in election campaign to amend the Constitution, to cease the civil war, to secure the peace and stability, to boost the national economy, to promote education and health care, to alleviate poverty and to create more job opportunities as primary and priority tasks. Those work are to be realized by the incumbent government without failure as they are campaign promises of the party, though how much difficult to achieve them.

The chaos, a vicious legacy left by the previous governments, are more deeply entangled than we thought. The mission to sort out this chaos in such a gloomy political at-



President U Htin Kyaw welcomes Philippines President Mr. Rodrigo Duterte in Nay Pyi Taw's Presidential Palace. PHOTO: MNA



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers a speech at the 2017 Annual Boao Forum for Asia. PHOTO: MNA



Vice President U Henry Van Thio together with other attendees at the NWRC World Water Day 2017 ceremony. PHOTO: MNA

mosphere is a very delicate task. A false step can ignite a disastrous consequences. Most of the people, understanding the difficult position of NLD are cooperating and supporting the party though they are not happy with the performance of party and its government in some respects.

Strength born out of difficulties and crises

The incumbent governments, is now trying to solve the problems calmly step by step at their utmost capacity but within a prevailing parameter. It seems the government is now on the right track advancing steadily in tackling the chaotic problems. Furthermore, the continued encouraging support of the international government institutions and non-government organizations since the time of 1988 political uprising engender the relentless strength for the NLD government.

To take time to change

According to the words of Ambassador of Ireland to Myanmar spoken at the political dialogue program of Myanmar National TV held on 7 January 2017, Ireland attained independence in 1922 and soon after the independence civil war broke out in Ireland. After stamping out the civil war, rehabilitation works were carried out. Ireland, then was the poorest country in Europe. Citizens of Ireland had to work in other countries like America, England and even to Asian countries.

In 1973 Ireland became an EU nation and saw many changes in economy and now Ireland can stand as a developed and prosperous country. He continued, "Last year, Myanmar held the election successfully and Ireland and EU countries welcome heartily the transforming process to democratic institution.

Naturally transformation from one system to another has to take time. We also took

time to change. We also had difficulties and hardships in the course of transforming the nation.

We had civil war and we had to take time to overcome the difficult times. Endeavor for economic development also needs time."

He then said, "Myanmar has, now, the Myanmar Investment Law that certainly can attract the foreign investors and more and more foreign tourists are also coming. It is a common experience to have obstacles doing something new. We are very enthusiastic to share our experience to Myanmar in building a new economic structure and prosperous nation.

We have to create the job opportunities and potential for socioeconomic development. We also like to share our experience on how to overcome the conflicts and how to build the peace and stability in the country."

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Political Scenario In One Year Together With The People

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The advice and experience sharing of a career diplomat is of much value for the new government of Myanmar.

The Tatmadaw; ethnic forces; the National League for Democracy, the mother-party; and international relations are directly related to the political landscape arranged by the incumbent government.

Tatmadaw and Myanmar Politics

Since independence struggle, Tatmadaw has been involved in Myanmar politics. As armed struggle was one of the wings of political activities throughout the history of anti-colonialism, anti-fascist and independent movements, the role of the Tatmadaw was of vital importance. General Aung San, who was and still is respected as the founder of the Tatmadaw, himself was politician and leader of the Tatmadaw and thus the history of relations between the Tatmadaw and Myanmar politics cannot be erased or altered.

The important fact which should not be neglected is that General Aung San, the founder of the Tatmadaw, was a politician. This politician who chose the armed struggled line had to found the Tatmadaw.

After independence, leaders of the Tatmadaw founded political parties with the concept that engaging in the politics is a must for them.

It can be found that there is a thin line between the Tatmadaw founded by politicians and political parties who founded the Tatmadaw.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of democracy, is a daughter of General Aung San and she is building trust based on loving-kindness. She holds a positive attitude towards the Tatmadaw. She puts the national reconciliation at the top of her political agenda. Therefore, Tatmadaw is one of the most important figures in national reconciliation process.

But, due to the limitation enshrined in the Constitution, the role of the Tatmadaw is high and there needs discussions between the Government and the Tatmadaw concerning matters on defence and home affairs.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said in her interview with BBC recently that the Constitution enshrined the fact that only the Tatmadaw has the right to manage the military affairs and that is why she has been trying to amend the Constitution.

She also disclosed that amending the Constitution is one of her objectives because prescribing a Constitution which is based on the federal system is the final goal of NCA.

Change and the role of the Tatmadaw

To make a real change in Myanmar, Tatmadaw plays a vital role in the current political landscape. Political outlook and attitude and goodwill towards the people of Myanmar top military leaders are of most importance for all the conditions.

Although there are different views on the military leaders among all individuals in Myanmar, most of them accept the concept of "Leadership of the Democracy Leader" and they hope to see emergence of military leaders endowed with bright outlook for democracy.

She puts the national reconciliation at the top of her political agenda. Therefore, Tatmadaw is one of the most important figures in national reconciliation process.

Union Spirit

It will take time to remove the misunderstanding among ethnic groups on Bamar which is the result of a long civil war and incitement to racial and religious hatred. Therefore, a meaningful Union Spirit among all the nationalities is urgently required for building internal peace.

Such institutions as National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, the Peace Commission, Joint Committee for Union Peace Dialogue were reformed, reorganized and peace talks have been held simultaneously.

At the same time, human rights values are respected and regarding human rights issues, confrontations are avoided but applying positive engagements and cooperation. It may take time but can see a bright future for internal peace.

To become strong and consolidated political party

At the time when democracy forces, with the support of the people, have a chance to grab some powers, there exists numerous forces at home and abroad to do nation-building tasks but on the other hand, there also exists loopholes because weakness of unity within the party and unsystematic measures.

It can be seen that the party needs many leaders with



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks to students in a round-table discussion on a visit to Roosevelt High School in Washington, US, on 15 September 2016. PHOTO: MNA



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint shakes hands with Vice Chairman of People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia. PHOTO: MNA



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than posing for a photo with Cambodian Ambassador. PHOTO: MNA

gentlemen type who have a broad political outlook and who can organize a strong political party of the people. The most skilled politicians who are very useful for the nation as well as for the party seemed gone astray in foreign countries. They are to be reorganized systematically by the party.

Government and international relations

In the international view, Myanmar's affair is very complicated. But, with the unified efforts these problems can be solved and national development can be achieved. This is the positive view.

As mentioned above, the National League for Democracy and its leaders have been always sided with the people they have been steadfastly striving for ensuring democracy and human rights risking their lives. As a result, they win strong political support from international community.

As showing support for Myanmar's democracy reform and human rights campaigns, the United States of America terminated National Emergency with respect to Myanmar and removed the sanctions with four President's orders in October 2016.

European countries also contributed to the funds of peace. They shared experiences on peace process and arranged study tours for persons

engaged in peace process.

During the visit of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to Japan, the host pledged to provide Yen 40 billion in five years for national reconciliation process and building democracy.

These are some examples. International community is keen to support Myanmar with goodwill and they also want to participate in democracy and human rights.

Together we shall build country of democracy

According to the nature of Myanmar, it is needed to study her political, economic and social affairs.

In retrospect, Myanmar's development depends much on politics and this situation have existed for more than half century. Political instability caused power abuse, bribery, and seeking self-interests. This is the history that these situations have spoiled all economies and social standards of Myanmar.

It is safe to say that Myanmar has achieved political stability to some extent. Although there are some heavy burdens as amending constitution and cease fire, democracy foundation has been laid.

As said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, people do not hesitate to make comment on government or its leaders. They are daring to express their opin-

ion. Media gains freedom and transparency for a certain degree.

With political stability and the country is led by corruption-free leaders it is good foundations for building the nation.

As mentioned above, experts and skilled persons at home and abroad are to be organized. The main task the government should carry out is to purge the remnant naive and dishonest persons from the bureaucratic mechanism and also from the government.

Anyhow, people are trustfully following the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be always with the people sharing weal and woe, it is sure to see prosperous Myanmar in the near future.

Although there are some heavy burdens as amending constitution and cease fire, democracy foundation has been laid.

Opinion

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We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

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.

No one is above the law

Khin Maung Oo

THE term, "Law" is the word we hear almost always in our societies. Despite being a word we get used to, it is necessary for us to be well convinced of its meaning so that we will come to know its essence and coverage of its effect. One of the definitions defined in dictionaries is meant for "The whole system of rules that everyone in a country or society must obey." Everyone means every person or all people, so it includes from grass-root people to the king or governing body. Law, rule, act, regulation, order, principle and code are legal terms. Generally speaking, these are what we must abide by. Even if people live alone, they need to live in their own way. For example, when a person keeps Sabbath, he must curb his mind because minds are apt to wander. Failing that, he cannot concentrate his mind. A person who keeps Five Precepts is living under the rules. Although we have inborn human rights—freedom of expression, freedom of choice, we are required to keep social ethics, code of practices and code of conduct. Being humans living together in a community or society, we need to live in peace in our environment.

In fact, we make laws ourselves. Legislature panel formed by parliamentarians we select draw up laws and enact them. They are then to be promulgated by the parliament for us to follow. So, drawing up a law can be said to be of great importance for all citizens. Executive bodies execute their duties by exercising laws, rules and regulations. What I mean is that we all will be subject to loopholes if there are weak points in these laws and rules. Something may be suitable at one time, but not everything is right and suitable all the time. With the passage of time, it may need amending. Here and there in our country, we hear and experience inexorable rise of crime and complaints of judicial orders. "There is no smoke without fire," as the saying goes. Provided that there are strong laws and rightful judicial orders, we will never face such complaints. These are, in fact, caused by lack of rule of law in the country. It is said that people of power in authority and wealth manipulate laws and rules with loopholes for own sake. There seems to be an element of hyperbole that lack of rule of order has deep-rooted in our country. Ultra-opportunists are now above the law. If the great problem goes uncared, they will be above the law and the country will be ruined in less than a decade.

The only recipe to overcome the national problem is the emergence of a flawless constitution that will guarantee the secure future of our country and our people. It is generally accepted that we can guess the status of peace, stability and development of a country by studying its constitution. Even as laypersons, we notice that our leaders have already pondered over the problem. As conscientious citizens, we as well should have decided to make active participation for the emergence of the constitution, we hoped for long.

Etiquette: After You

San Shwe Aung

ETIQUETTE may be defined as conventional behavior, properties of conduct as established in any class of community or for any function and occasion. It is a prescribed or accepted code of usage in official ceremonies and formal observances. It is also behavior regarding professional practice or action among the members of a profession in their relation and dealing with one another.

Etiquette in Myanmar

Myanmar is a country of people with deep rooted custom and religion. For a westerner visiting Myanmar, there are a number of things that they need to observe. Some of the Myanmar etiquette rules may be strange for westerners. However, if you follow some simple rules, your stay in Myanmar will be happier. Myanmar people are very friendly and helpful, especially towards visitors. Respecting Myanmar culture, custom and etiquette rules will gain respect

and friendship from Myanmar people. The followings are some of the general rules that you should always bear in mind in front of Myanmar people.

- Myanmar people have different view on upper and lower parts of the body. Upper part is considered sacred while lower part is considered inferior to the upper part, even considered dirty. Therefore, never mix the things you use for your upper part with that of the lower part. For example, towel used for the lower part should never be mixed with the upper part, especially the one used for the head and the one for the feet.
- Never raise your underwear above your head. This is considered very rude.
- Never clean your feet in the basin you used to clean your hands and face.
- Never use the water from the drinking pot to wash your feet. Myanmar people will consider this an insult.

- Never put your feet on the pillow used for the head, or sit on the pillow for the head.
- Never use your feet to point to a thing or a place. This is an insult for Myanmar people.
- Never touch a person's hair, head or cheek, even if you consider it as a friendly gesture. Myanmar people would not consider it friendly, and will think you are rude.
- Don't touch any part of a lady's body. It is very impolite or even rude for Myanmar ladies.
- Don't cough, sneeze or blow your nose in the dining table. Other people will be offended.
- Don't point your feet towards Buddha's image, elder person or any sacred place. Better not to point your feet to anybody at all.

If you observe these simple rules, you will avoid most of the problems and embarrassments while you are in Myanmar. The Myanmar people appreciate the effort of your trying to observe their local way of living. Try wearing Burmese clothes, like the Longyi (for women) and Pasoe (for men). These are worn in place of pants or skirts, as they have plenty of ventilation compared to their Western counterparts. Try some of the local customs, too, like wearing thanaka makeup. Thanaka is a paste made from Thanaka tree bark, and is painted on the cheeks and nose. The Myanmar say Thanaka is an effective sun block. Participate in local festivals. So long as you do respect the proceedings, tourists are allowed to participate in any traditional celebrations going on at the time of your visit. For an example of a traveler-friendly festival, read

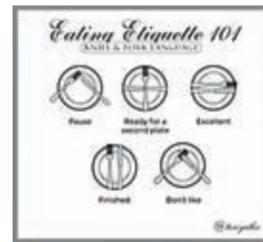


about celebrating Thingyan Festival in Myanmar. The Myanmar people, like their religious compatriots around Southeast Asia, have strong feelings about the head and feet. The head is considered holy, while the feet are considered impure. So keep your hands off people's heads; touching other people's heads is considered the height of disrespect, something to avoid doing even to children. Watch what you do with your feet, too: you shouldn't point to or touch objects with them, and you should tuck them under yourself when sitting on the ground or floor. Don't sit with your feet pointing away from your body, or worse, pointing at a person or a pagoda. Don't show affection in public. Myanmar is still a conservative country, and the locals may be offended by public displays of affection. So when traveling with a loved one, no hugs and kisses in public, please!

Politeness and Etiquette

'Politeness' may be defined as management of our words and actions, whereby we make other people think or feel better opinion of us and ourselves. It was Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield who first used the word 'etiquette' in its modern meaning, in his Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman. This work comprised over 400 letters written from 1737 or 1738 and continuing until his son's death in 1768, and were mostly instructive letters on various subjects. The letters were first published by his son's widow Eugenia Stanhope in 1774. Chesterfield endeavored to decouple the issue of manners from conventional morality, arguing that mastery of etiquette was an important weapon for social advancement. The Letters were full of elegant wisdom and perceptive observational deduction. Chesterfield epitomized the restraint of polite 18th-century society, writing, for

instance about open laughing vis-à-vis smiling in public, in 1748: "I would heartily wish that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill-manners; it is the manner in which the mob expresses their silly joy at silly things; and they call it being merry. In my mind there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter. I am neither of a melancholy nor a cynical disposition, and am as willing and as apt to be pleased as anybody; but I am sure that since I have had the full use of my reason nobody has ever heard me laugh." By the Victorian era, etiquette had developed into an exceptionally complicated system of rules, governing everything from the proper method for writing letters and using cutlery in having dinners (eating etiquette) to the minutely regulated interactions between different classes and gender.



Etiquette in Japan

What Does A Bow Mean In Japan? The meaning of a bow totally depends on the situation, depth, and length of time you hold your bow. Bowing in Japan shows respect for the person or thing you're bowing to. Societal ranking in Japanese is really important. If you're higher up in society from another person, you'll notice that they talk more politely to you (to a greater extent than what we do in Western cultures), bow more deeply, and



The Japanese are very formal. Moments of silence are far from awkward. Smiling does not always mean that the individual is expressing pleasure. Business cards are to be handed out formally following this procedure: Visiting card with writing facing upwards; bow when giving and receiving the card; grasp it with both hands; read it carefully; and put it in a prominent place. The Japanese feel a "Giri," a duty or an obligation to reciprocate a gesture of kindness. These are basic Japanese etiquette.

Western office and business etiquette

The etiquette of business is the set of written and unwritten rules of conduct that make social interactions run more smoothly. Office etiquette in particular applies to co-worker interaction, excluding interactions with external contacts

such as customers and suppliers.

When conducting group meetings in the United States, the assembly might follow Robert's Rules of Order, if there are no other company policies to control a meeting. These rules are often echoed throughout an industry or economy. For instance, 49% of employers surveyed in 2005 by the American National Association of Colleges and Employers found that non-traditional attire would be a "strong influence" on their opinion of a potential job candidate. Business etiquette at companies such as IBM and GE influences global business etiquette and professional standards. Business etiquette can vary significantly in different countries, which is invariably related to their culture.

For example: A notable difference between Chinese and Western business etiquette is conflict handling. Chinese businesses prefer to look upon relationship management to avoid conflicts stemming from a culture that heavily relies on guanxi (personal connections); while the west leaves resolution of law through contracts and lawyers. In 2011, a group of etiquette experts and international business group formed a non-profit organization called IITTI (pronounced as "ET") to help human resource (HR) departments of multinationals in measuring the etiquette skills of prospective new employees during the recruitment process by standardizing image and etiquette examination, similar to what ISO does for industrial process measurements. Etiquette in retail is sometimes summarized as "The customer is always right."

After you

It is a common view in daily TV news that a visiting leader of a country visiting another country having been ushered by the host country President or Prime Minister to a meeting hall or a joint news

conference. The polite gesture means that I will be following or going "after you".



This "After You" polite gesture is practiced by all civilized people in the world in entering into a lift or an elevator, climbing onto a bus, alighting a train and so on. Once a public service and a famous new renowned branded product (such as new iPhone or a new Samsung phone) are liked by many people to get or buy, in a bank or an IT store, people tend to automatically queue one after another. The late comers, of course, do not complain but take a queue behind the last person of the queue. Taking a place behind the last person means you have polite attitude of "After You". Not before you! "I want always to be Before You" attitude is rude and show disrespect of the people who arrive long before, at the same time or few seconds before you. However, in daily life in our country, we have been experiencing a lot of people including but not limited to, bus drivers, taxi drivers, parents registering for new academic year their children in a primary school, people paying bills at the telephone offices are having "Before You" attitude and behavior. This impolite behavior needs to be changed. We should therefore be polite in ushering person who arrive at the same time with you or just few moment before you by saying "After You, please".

Quenching thirst, improving health in Bawsai

Min Ye Kyaw Kaung

Bawsai in Shan State is familiar to many Myanmar people as a remote area known to be plentiful in minerals but lacking in safe drinking water.

Since childhood, we have learned about Bawsai as it is described in geography books. Bawsai, rich in mineral resources, is home to the majority Danu ethnic tribe, with a minority of Pa-O and Bamar people.

Bawsai regularly faced a scarcity of water, causing hardships for the ethnic people.

"We don't need gold, we need water" was a popular slogan in the region.

Today, the local ethnics can access water from water supply facilities, and the region is now accessible by road.

What is even more joyous for Bawsai residents is the establishment of Bawsai Hospital. In the past, unknown illnesses and lengthy journeys to faraway hospitals in Heho and Taunggyi resulted in the loss of

many lives.

The 16-bed hospital was inaugurated recently with the presence of the Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe, local authorities, members of Parliament and representatives of the philanthropic organisation Kanbawza Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation.

While touring in Shan State, I came across an invitation letter to the opening of the hospital and market. I then headed to Bawsai.

I left in the early morning hours of 7 April and saw locals collecting water from the tubewells and reservoir on Bawsai Road that had been donated by KBZ Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation. I asked a local resident about the accessibility to water, and he gleefully told me they now had 24-hour access to clean water. Before, they had to travel seven miles just to get water from a lake with water so stagnant that it was almost impossible to drink.

Continuing on to Bawsai, I saw water taps and tubewells in each village I passed on

the concrete road. U Khin Aung from the KBZ Group of Companies said Bawsai until recently did not have even the most rudimentary infrastructure.

"This region had legged behind in development, but it has started to enjoy the fruits of development with the very recent completion of the 19-mile-long Bawsai-Heho Road and the establishment of high schools, hospitals, markets, and fire departments.

As recently as a few years ago, Bawsai experienced extreme scarcity of water.

"You had to spend half a day travelling long distances to collect water. Efforts to dig wells were futile and geologists even concluded the region had no water sources," said U Khin Aung.

In 1999, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project to establish irrigation canals and dykes was attempted but with no success, forcing local residents to be thrifty in using the unsafe water from the lake for drinking and other uses.

A drought in 2011 was another blow for Bawsai, causing the lakes to dry up. Locals

had to pay Ks3,000 for a 52-gallon tank of water, and even that was limited. Donors from Aungpan and Heho donated water, and then Brighter Future Myanmar stepped in.

"The chairman of KBZ heard of this and organised water tankers to carry water from the Pindaya-Zawgyi stream to local residents about nine times a day. Lakes were maintained in order to store much more water than before.

It was in 2014 when the Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation drilled tubewells in Bawsai with the use of machinery.

"Every drill struck water," U Khin Aung said, calling the achievement "a miracle".

"Today, Bawsai owns 20 tubewells and a water supply facility. Water, water everywhere in Bawsai".

Bao Sai Road was smooth and even, dotted with pilgrimage vehicles to Pindaya and ox carts from far villages coming to collect water. I observed houses with full water tanks and the people happily taking showers. Some cattle were drinking water from a lake with a reddish hue. A signpost



Water supply facilities benefit people in Bawsai, helping them to overcome challenges for water. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

nearby read: "Do not wash tractors, cars and ox carts here. Sd by Monk and Chairman".

Soon we arrived at Bawsai hospital. It was quite spacious for a 16-bed hospital, and the lodgings for medical staff and wards were fully furnished and connected with TV and SkyNet. The opening ceremony for the hospital was conducted on 7 April, World Health Day.

Some of the ethnic people wanted to see the hospital so badly that they left their villages in groups at night to gaze in awe at

the hospital.

I observed the many smiles of the local residents. It was certain they were jubilant over the opening of the hospital, market and fire departments.

"I am elated to have been able to collaborate with the people and the government in constructing the Bao Sai hospital and market, just like how the State Counsellor has said 'together with the people' in national development and contributing to the health sector", said Daw Nang Lang Kham.

The Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation was established in 2007 and has made numerous donations to the social, religious, health and education sectors, and play a major role in preventing natural disasters. To date, the foundation has donated over Ks115.8 billion and has received several humanitarian awards from home and abroad. Of these numerous donations that include the new hospital and market, the ethnic people including Danu of Bawsai now have a reason to be joyful.

Putin says expects 'fake' gas attacks to discredit Syria's Assad

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Russia had information that the United States was planning to launch new missile strikes on Syria, and that there were plans to fake chemical weapons attacks there.

Putin was speaking hours before US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was due to arrive in Moscow for talks with Russia's foreign minister and days after denouncing last week's US missile strike on a Syrian air base as illegal.

Standing alongside Italian President Sergio Mattarella who was in Moscow for talks, Putin, when asked by a reporter if he expected more US missile strikes on Syria, said:

"We have information that a similar provocation is being prepared — in other parts of Syria including in the southern Damascus suburbs where they are planning to again plant some substance and accuse the Syrian authorities of using (chemical weapons)."



Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures during a joint news conference with Italian President Sergio Mattarella after their talks at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia on 11 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

He did not offer any proof for that assertion.

Russia has defended the Syrian government, a staunch ally, against US allegations it was behind the nerve gas attack in Syria's Idlib province last week which killed scores, saying there is no evidence to underpin such an allegation.

Putin said on Tuesday Russia would be ur-

gently asking the global chemical weapons watchdog — the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons — to investigate the incident.

Speaking after Tillerson said earlier on Tuesday he hoped Russia would conclude it was wrong to align itself with the Syrian government, Putin said Moscow

would tolerate Western criticism of its role in Syria but hoped that attitudes would eventually soften.

Putin's spokesman has said there are no scheduled plans for Putin to meet Tillerson on Wednesday, but Russian media have cited unnamed sources as saying that such a meeting will happen. —Reuters

Nearly half of young German voters back Merkel, poll shows

BERLIN — Almost half of Germany's first-time voters back Chancellor Angela Merkel, a poll by the Forsa Institut showed on Tuesday, providing a strong backbone of support as she prepares to bid for a fourth term in September.

Among all potential voters, conservative Merkel had 43 per cent support, compared to 32 per cent for Martin Schulz, the chancellor candidate for the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD). But that lead extended to 47 per cent against 29 per cent among those aged 18 to 21, the poll showed.

"Young people know Chancellor Merkel, with whom they grew up," said Manfred Guellner, who heads the Forsa institute. He said the poll showed that "especially young people are looking for stability and continuity in these uncertain times."

The elder stateswoman of western European politics, Merkel has come



German Chancellor Angela Merkel. PHOTO: REUTERS

under fire at home for initially opening Germany's doors to more than one million refugees. Ahead of what is likely to be a close-fought ballot, she has toughened her stance on immigration in recent months.

She faced criticism on Tuesday from the SPD, the junior partner in her coalition government, after giving her chief of staff, Peter Altmaier, a leading role in drafting the election programme for her Christian Democrats (CDU).

The appointment of Altmaier, who coordinates policy on migrant issues within the coalition, "violates the established political rules," SPD general secretary Katarina Barley told the RND newspaper chain.

Altmaier said on Twitter that, while he looked forward to helping shape the CDU's programme, the party's general secretary Peter Tauber would remain its election campaign manager, adding that the SPD had similar arrange-

ments.

Measured by party, the Forsa poll — conducted for Stern magazine and broadcaster RTL — put Merkel's CDU and their Bavarian sister party (CSU) at 36 per cent, 6 percentage points ahead of the SPD of former European Parliament president Schulz.

A second survey by INSA for the mass-circulation Bild newspaper ahead of the 24 September, national election gave the CDU/CSU a 1.5 point lead in the Forsa poll, the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, which had seen its support weaken in recent months, was steady at 8 per cent.

The AfD added 1 point to 10 per cent in the INSA poll.

Both Merkel and Schulz are hoping to form new governments with smaller partners, but the two polls suggested another "grand coalition" of their parties is likely. —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Second suspect of Stockholm truck attack released from arrest

STOCKHOLM — Sweden's prosecution authority said on Tuesday it had revoked the arrest of second suspect in the deadly Stockholm truck attack.

"According to the prosecutor, the suspicions have weakened and there is, therefore, no ground to apply for a detention order," the prosecution authority said in a statement. The man will not be released due to an earlier decision that he should be expelled from Sweden, the authority said. —Reuters

Russia, before Tillerson visit, says hopes USA does not strike North Korea

MOSCOW — The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday it hoped that planned talks in Moscow with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson would be productive, but said it was extremely concerned by Washington's stance on North Korea.

Tillerson is due to hold talks with Sergei Lavrov, his Russian counterpart, on Wednesday.

The foreign ministry, in a statement dedicated to his visit, said it was extremely worried by the possibility that the United States might decide to take unilateral military action against North Korea. —Reuters

China will get better US trade deal if it solves North Korea problem — Trump

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said in a note on Twitter on Tuesday that he told China's President Xi Jinping that Beijing would get a better trade deal with Washington if it helped solve the US problem with North Korea.

"I explained to the president of China that a trade deal with the US will be far better for them if they solve the North Korean problem!" Trump, who held talks with Xi in Florida last week, wrote on Twitter.

"North Korea is looking for trouble. If China decides to help, that would be great. If not, we will solve the problem without them!" he added in a second note. —Reuters

Syrian foreign minister to visit Moscow soon for talks — RIA

MOSCOW — Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem will travel to Moscow soon on an official visit, the RIA news agency cited the Syrian ambassador to Moscow as saying on Tuesday.

Talks will focus on US allegations of a poison gas attack in Syria's Idlib province and the subsequent US missile strike on a Syrian air base, the ambassador was cited as saying. —Reuters

Blast in southeast Turkey occurred during repair of vehicle, minister says

ISTANBUL — An explosion that rocked Turkey's southeastern city of Diyarbakir and wounded several people on Tuesday occurred during the repair of a vehicle, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said.

Soylu's comments were broadcast live by CNN Turk. A police source said the explosion appeared to have taken place in a vehicle repair section of a police compound, causing part of the roof to collapse and wounding at least four people. The Dogan news agency said one was in critical condition.

The blast comes ahead of a hotly contested referendum on Sunday on broadening President Tayyip Erdogan's powers, a constitutional change opposed by many in the country's predominantly Kurdish southeast. —Reuters

Islamic State has lost most territory it held in Iraq — Iraqi spokesman

BAGHDAD — Islamic State has lost most of the territory it has held in Iraq since 2014, an Iraqi military spokesman said on Tuesday.

At the height of its power, the militant group controlled about 40 per cent of Iraq, joint operations command spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Rasool told a news conference.

That area has been whittled down to about 6.8 per cent of Iraqi territory after extensive military operations, which are still going on in the city of Mosul, he said.

Islamic State militants still control the towns of Qaim, Tal Afar and Hawija in Iraq, as well as Raqqa, their de-facto capital in Syria.

The coalition battling Islamic State is made up of tens of thousands of members of the Iraqi security forces, led by the army, and thousands of Shi'ite volunteers, many from militia groups, commonly referred to as the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU).



A member of the Iraqi Federal Police works on a vehicle in an area controlled by the Iraqi forces fighting the Islamic State in western Mosul, Iraq on 11 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

The United States and other Western countries have assisted with air support, intelligence and equipment, Rasool said.

The battle for Mosul, one of Iraq's largest cities, began last October and the outcome will likely determine whether Iraq's vari-

ous sects can work together to keep the country from fracturing.

The eastern half of the city is now completely un-

der the control of Iraqi security forces, Rasool said. But the push against Islamic State in Western Mosul is bogged down with Iraqi

security forces fighting in a warren of small streets in the old part of the city.

The federal police said in a statement on Tuesday they have been reinforcing their positions in Western Mosul in preparation for a push on the al-Nuri Mosque where Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate in 2014.

Islamic State has used hundreds of car bombs along with drones rigged with explosives in Mosul. Its fighters have pulled civilians into the conflict by placing snipers in residential areas, using civilians as human shields and executing those who try to escape, coalition spokesman Col John Dorrian said at the news conference.

Dorrian said the fight in Western Mosul had been tough but said Islamic State fighters had no escape.

"Do not lose sight of the fact that even though the fighting is going to be very hard, this enemy is completely surrounded," Dorrian said. "They aren't going anywhere." — Reuters

South Africa's top court to hear case for secret no-confidence ballot on Zuma

PIETERMARITZBURG, (South Africa) — South Africa's top court said on Tuesday it will consider whether a motion of no confidence against President Jacob Zuma should be taken by secret ballot.

The rand extended its gains to 1 per cent against the dollar after the announcement, and opposition parties said there could be a better chance that the motion, when taken, would succeed, if it was held by secret ballot.

The ruling African National Congress party, which

has a majority in parliament, has said it will vote against the motion, which is due on 18 April. A secret ballot, however, would allow for anonymous dissent.

Zuma, 74, has survived four previous no confidence votes. But opponents, led by the main opposition party Democratic Alliance, believe a recent cabinet reshuffle that led to the dismissal of respected finance minister Pravin Gordhan may have angered enough ANC members to desert Zuma.

"We only need 65 to 70

people from the ANC, and the secret ballot can deliver the votes to remove Zuma," Bantu Holomisa, head of the smaller United Democratic Movement (UDM), which is also backing the no-confidence vote against Zuma, said.

He earlier posted a court document on his Twitter feed showing the chief justice of the Constitutional Court had given the go-ahead for the parties in the case to give their written submissions by 21 April — days after the no-confidence vote is sched-

uled to take place.

"The debate on the no-confidence motion against Zuma will have to be postponed, we have written to the Speaker of parliament to pushed it back," Holomisa told Reuters. "In the event that the Speaker fails to do so, we will seek a court order blocking the debate from going ahead." The National Assembly is listed as a respondent in the case.

The ANC Chief Whip's office has rejected calls for a secret ballot for the no-confidence motion. — Reuters



South Africa's President Jacob Zuma reacts during a rally following the launch of a social housing project in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa on 1 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV MCC MERGUI VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC MERGUI VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.4.2017 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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV FSL SANTOS VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV FSL SANTOS VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185



A source in the defense and industrial sector earlier told TASS that serial production of the modernized Tu-160M2 missile carrier would begin in 2020. PHOTO: TASS

Russia to put upgraded Tu-160 strategic bombers on serial production

MOSCOW — The serial production of upgraded Tupolev Tu-160M2 (NATO reporting name: Blackjack) strategic missile carriers will begin from 2022 and a total of 30-50 such aircraft are planned to be produced, President of Russia's Aircraft-Building Corporation Yuri Slyusar said on Tuesday.

"We are concluding R&D work in 2021 and starting from 2022 we are beginning the serial production of these machines. We are discussing the exact figure with the customer. I believe their number will range from 30 to 50 machines," Slyusar said in an interview with Rossiya-24 TV Channel.



Tupolev Tu-160 strategic bomber. PHOTO: TASS

A source in the defense and industrial sector earlier told TASS that the serial production of the modernized Tu-160M2 missile carrier would begin in 2020 and two-three

such aircraft were planned to be produced each year.

Along with the production of Tu-160M2s, operational long-range combat aircraft, such as Tu-160 and Tu-95MS

missile carriers and Tu-22M3 strategic bombers, will be modernized.

The idea to restart the production of Tu-160 planes in their upgraded version was put forward by Russian Defence Minister Army General Sergei Shoigu in April 2015 during his visit to the Kazan aircraft enterprise, part of the Tupolev aerospace company.

In May that year, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave instructions to resume the production of these aircraft. Deputy Defense Minister Yuri Borisov said in October 2016 that 50 such planes were planned to be produced. —TASS

Leftist Melenchon surges as French election candidates bicker

PARIS — A new poll on Tuesday showed far-left wildcard Jean-Luc Melenchon nipping at the heels of the frontrunners in France's presidential race, building on his recent surge as sniping between the top contenders gathered pace.

With just 12 days to go until the first round of voting, polls are tightening and possibilities for May's second, deciding round, tipped for weeks to be between far-right leader Marine Le Pen and centrist Emmanuel Macron, are opening up.

Conservative candidate Francois Fillon stepped up his attacks against Macron, with whom he is in competition for centre-right voters, calling him a liar. Macron responded, on Sud Radio: "Mr Fillon is a man of little worth." Meanwhile Melenchon's support jumped seven percentage points to 19 per cent in a monthly Ifop-Fiducial poll for Paris March and Sud Radio, putting him in third place ahead of Fillon.

He is also targeting Macron's voters — but this time those to the left or centre-left. Melenchon and Fillon, on 19 per cent and 18.5 per cent, respectively, still lag Le Pen on 24 per cent and Macron on 23 per cent. But the two frontrunners are losing steam.

Macron is widely expected to win against Le Pen if both progress to the second round. The poll also showed some 32 per cent of voters could abstain in the first round on 23 April.

Melenchon's rise in polls, the latest episode in an election campaign full of surprises, has unnerved financial markets and prompted a warning on Tuesday by the head of business lobby group Medef Pierre Gattaz.

Calling both Melenchon's and Le Pen's programmes "an absolute catastrophe" for France, Gattaz warned on Europe 1 radio against a possible Melenchon-Le Pen second round.

"That Le Pen-Melenchon second round shouldn't take place," he said.

Though Melenchon is on the polar opposite of the political spectrum from Le Pen, in particular on immigration, they both distrust the European Union, want to renegotiate France's role in it and hold a referendum on EU membership.

The turbulent presidential campaign has become increasingly bitter in recent weeks as candidates eye the finish line.

Fillon has been under fire since January over allegations his wife was paid hundreds of thousands of euros for minimal work as a parliamentary assistant for several years. The couple are formally being investigated by magistrates.

He again accused the Socialist led-government of helping to spread the allegations on Tuesday. A daily Opinionway poll showed Macron winning the second round against Le Pen, with Melenchon in fourth place right behind Fillon in the first round.—Reuters

INVITATION FOR PRICE QUOTATIONS

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of the National Electrification Project (NEP). The Department of Rural Development (DRD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in its role as implementing agency of the NEP, intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this credit to eligible payments under the Contracts for which this invitation for Quotation is issued.

DRD now invites eligible suppliers to express their interest in supplying the following items:

Item No	Reference No	Description	Quantity (No)
1	C2-G.8	GSM Telephone Handset (cell phone)	12
2	C2-G.10	MIS Server for Union	2
3	C2-G.11	Microsoft Office 2016	70
4	C2-G.13	Plotter	1
5	C2-G.14	Double Cabin Pickup vehicles	2
6	C2-G.16	Laptops for Union Staffs	34

Eligible suppliers having expressed interest will receive an INVITATION TO QUOTE (ITQ). Sealed Quotations will be submitted to the address below at the latest at the dead line of **May 12, 2017** after which no Quotations will be accepted.

The goods will be contracted in 6 (six) separate contracts. Suppliers will be selected following the Shopping Method as per the "Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers" dated January 2011.

Please submit your Expression of Interest for receiving the ITQ to: U Myint Oo, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Development, Office No.(14), Nay Pyi Taw. For detailed information please contact U Kyaw Swa Aung, Director, Procurement and Logistic Section, Mobile phone 0943434333 or office phone 067409529/ Email: neppmo.drd@gmail.com.

Indian cargo ship released, 9 hostages missing

NAIROBI — Somalia security forces have rescued an Indian cargo ship which was hijacked by Somali pirates on April 1 but nine members of the 11-crew are missing, a regional maritime official said on Tuesday.

John Steed, the regional manager of not for profit group, Oceans Beyond Piracy said the hostages are believed to be being held between the vicinity of Hoby and Haradhere in central Somalia.

"The Indian ship was released by Somalia security forces on Monday night but nine of the 11 crew members

are missing having been taken ashore by the pirates. The vessel is sailing away," Steed told Xinhua by telephone.

The pirating of the Indian dhow came after the fuel tanker, Aris 13, was held for four days by armed pirates. The Indian ship, Al Kausar was one of three foreign vessels to be hijacked after a five-year lull. "We haven't established where the hostages were taken," said Steed, noting that Somali pirates are holding 17 hostages from Iran and India. "The pirates are holding 17 hostages at the moment. Eight are Iranians while 9 are Indians,"

Steed said, adding that efforts are underway to secure their release. Al Kausar was chartered by a Somali businessman and was carrying commercial goods.

The vessel which was en route from Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Bosasso in Somalia was hijacked in the vicinity of Socotra (Island).

The release of the Indian vessel comes after sailors from Indian and Chinese Navies on Sunday freed a Tuvalu-registered vessel which had been boarded by pirates. The vessel had 19 crew members.—Xinhua

Washington Post, NY Times win Pulitzers for work on Trump, Putin

NEW YORK — The Pulitzer Prizes on Monday honoured The Washington Post for hard-hitting reporting on Donald Trump’s presidential campaign and The New York Times for revealing Vladimir Putin’s covert power grab, praising their probing of powerful people despite a hostile climate for the news media.

The Daily News of New York and ProPublica, a web-based platform specializing in investigative journalism, won the prize for public service journalism for coverage of New York police abuses that forced mostly poor minorities from their homes.

Other winners included an international consortium of more than 300 reporters on six continents that exposed the so-called Panama Papers detailing the hidden infrastructure and global scale of offshore tax havens used by the high and mighty.

The Pulitzers, the most prestigious honors in American journalism, have been awarded since 1917, often going to famed publications such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal.

But they are also given to smaller, lesser known publications across the country whose work does not always gain national attention when it is published.

Reporter Eric Eyre of Charleston Gazette-Mail in West Virginia took the prize for investigative reporting for exposing opioids flooding into depressed West Virginia counties with the country’s highest overdose death rates.

The staff of the East Bay Times of Oakland, Cal-

ifornia, won the breaking news award for coverage of the “Ghost Ship” fire that killed 36 people at a warehouse party, exposing the city’s failure to take actions that might have prevented the disaster.

While the Pulitzer ceremony highlighted the news media’s importance to democracy, it has been challenged by so-called fake news, which once referred to fabricated stories meant to influence the US election but has become a term used by Trump to dismiss factual reporting that is critical. Trump has frequently excoriated the media and in February called it “the enemy of the American people.”

Operating in the glare of the presidential campaign, David Fahrenthold of The Washington Post took the national reporting award. The judges said he “created a model for

transparent journalism in political campaign coverage while casting doubt on Donald Trump’s assertions of generosity toward charities.”

Fahrenthold found that Trump’s charitable giving had not always matched his public statements. He also broke perhaps the biggest scoop of the campaign, revealing Trump had been captured on videotape making crude remarks about women and bragging about kissing and grabbing them without their permission.

The Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan, a longtime Republican, took the commentary prize for a series of critical pieces about Trump during the real estate magnate’s successful 2016 run for the White House.

The New York Times staff won the international reporting prize for arti-

cles on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s efforts to project Russia’s power abroad, a particularly pertinent story given US intelligence conclusions that Putin’s government actively tried to influence the US election in Trump’s favour.

The Times revealed “techniques that included assassination, online harassment and the planting of incriminating evidence on opponents,” the judges said. The 19-member Pulitzer board is made up of past winners and other distinguished journalists and academics. It chose the winners with the help of 102 jurors. More than 2,500 entries were submitted this year, competing for 21 prizes in categories.

Seven awards recognize fiction, drama, history, biographies, poetry, general nonfiction and music.—Reuters



L-R; Michele McNally, assistant editor and director of photography of The New York Times; David Furst, international picture editor; photojournalist Daniel Berehulak, celebrate the announcement of the 2017 Pulitzer Prizes in The Times newsroom, in New York, US on 10 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



Hong Kong leader-elect Carrie Lam attends a news conference in Beijing, China on 11 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

New China-backed leader of Hong Kong says no room for independence

BEIJING/HONG KONG — Hong Kong leader-elect Carrie Lam said on Tuesday there is no room for moves towards independence in the former British colony which she said needs the support of the central government in Beijing to boost economic development over the next five years.

Leaders in Beijing have been increasingly concerned about a fledgling independence movement in the financial hub that returned to mainland rule in 1997 with a promise of autonomy.

Hong Kong has seen tumultuous times over the past couple of years, with pro-democracy protests quelled, an increase in what many residents see as creeping interference by Beijing and the rise of a small but vocal movement pushing for independence.

“On the issue of Hong Kong independence, in line with what the premier has said, there is no future and no room,” Lam told reporters in Beijing after Premier Li Keqiang presented her with a letter of appointment as chief executive, paving the way for her to take office on 1 July. “In the next five years, in particular in economic development, there are many areas in which

we need support from the central government,” added Lam, who also met President Xi Jinping.

The Chinese-controlled city’s former chief secretary was chosen in March to become its first female leader by a 1,200-person “election committee” stacked with pro-Beijing and pro-establishment loyalists.

Lam has said unifying society and healing political divisions would be among her most urgent tasks. Making housing more affordable in one of the world’s most expensive property markets is also among her top priorities. Huge pro-democracy protests in late 2014 brought parts of the city to a standstill and hindered policy-making and legislative work.

The promotion of independence has long been taboo in Hong Kong amid fears in Beijing the notion could spread to activists in other places and become a challenge to central government rule. The next few months will be critical for incumbent leader Leung Chun-ying and Lam, with Xi expected to visit on 1 July to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong’s handover from British to Chinese rule, with protests expected.—Reuters

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

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

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AGENT FOR: M/S CHUN AN SHIPPING PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Phone No: 2301185



Janet Jackson takes the stage to accept the Ultimate Icon Award during the 2015 BET Awards in Los Angeles, California, on 28 June 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Janet Jackson splits with husband 3 months after birth of son-reports

NEW YORK — Pop star Janet Jackson has split up with her Qatari businessman husband just three months after giving birth to her first child, according to media reports.

People magazine, Us Weekly and Entertainment Tonight all said sources had confirmed that Jackson, 50, and Wissam Al Mana had broken up after five years of marriage.

Representatives for the singer declined to confirm the split, which follows the birth in January of Jackson's first child, a boy the couple named Eissa.

Britain's Mail on Sunday publication, which was among the first to report the separation, quoted a source close to the singer as saying it was amicable. It was not known when the couple separated.

"They're both busy people but determined to be good parents, even if they're apart. It's amicable and Eissa will stay with his mother, who is basing herself in London," the source told the Mail on Sunday.

Jackson and Al Mana, 43, married in 2012, and a year ago the singer postponed her "Unbreakable" world tour so they could focus on starting a family.

Jackson, the fiercely private youngest child of the famed Jackson singing family, had two previous marriages: a year-long union with soul singer James DeBarge in the mid 1980s, and to dancer Rene Elizondo Jr from 1991-2000. —Reuters

Streaming keeps Drake's 'More Life' atop Billboard 200 chart

LOS ANGELES — Canadian R&B artist Drake kept his reign at the top of the weekly US Billboard 200 album chart on Monday, boosted by strong online streaming of his "More Life" record.

"More Life" sold 16,000 albums and 86,000 songs and was streamed 167 million times in its third week of release, totaling 136,000 album units sold, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

The Billboard 200 album chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

This is not the first time

Drake has dominated the charts on the strength of streaming.

Last year, his "Views" album spent 13 non-consecutive weeks atop the Billboard 200 chart, regularly clocking more than 100 million streams a week.

New entries in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart include rapper Kodak Black at No 3 with "Painting Pictures," heavy metal band Mastodon at No 7 with "Emperor of Sand" and Christian music group MercyMe at No 10 with "Lifer." On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online single sales, rapper Kendrick Lamar debuted at No 1 with his latest song "Humble" selling 111,000 copies.—Reuters

Ryan Phillippe rubbishes Katy Perry dating rumours

LOS ANGELES — Actor Ryan Phillippe has refuted reports of him romancing pop star Katy Perry by tweeting that he is "not dating" her.

His tweet came after a few tabloid reports claimed that the actor and pop star were spotted getting cozy at Elton John's birthday bash.

Phillippe, 42, slammed the reports, saying that he "barely knows" the 32-year-old songstress. "I AM NOT DATING KATY PERRY. BARELY KNOW HER. PLEASE STOP FLYING HELICOPTERS OVER MY HOUSE. SHE IS NOT HERE," he tweeted in all caps.—PTI



Actor Ryan Phillippe. PHOTO: REUTERS

Singer Katy Perry poses at Elton John's 70th Birthday and 50-Year Songwriting Partnership with Bernie Taupin benefiting the Elton John AIDS Foundation and the UCLA Hammer Museum at RED Studios Hollywood in Los Angeles, on 25 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bradley Cooper, Irina Shayk welcome their first child

LOS ANGELES — Actor Bradley Cooper and his girlfriend Irina Shayk have welcomed their first baby.

The 31-year-old Russian supermodel, who has been dating Cooper, 42, since spring 2015, gave birth two weeks ago, reported People magazine.

However, no other details were made available.

Shayk's pregnancy news came out in November after she showcased a baby bump while walking the runway at the 2016 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show.

The two were first romantically linked in May 2015 when they were spotted kissing in New York City.—PTI



Actor Bradley Cooper and his girlfriend Irina Shayk. PHOTO: PTI

UK coffee chains offer discount to drinkers with own cups to cut waste

LONDON — Two major cafe chains on Monday cut the price of a coffee for drinkers who bring their own cups in a bid to tackle the waste caused by disposable cardboard cups and help the environment.

To mark UK Coffee Week, sandwich chain Pret A Manger and the French bakery Paul both promised

discounts to any customers who bring in their own reusable cup and order a hot drink.

Pret customers can get 25 pence (\$0.30) off their drink at any Pret in the London area, while the new "Paul Cares policy" is awarding a 10 pence discount at its United Kingdom locations.

The move comes as environmental campaigners put pressure on coffee chains to prioritise recycling with research showing an estimated 2.5 billion paper coffee cups thrown away in Britain each year, most of which are not recycled.

"Paul Cares" is our way of demonstrating our

commitment to a passion we share with our customers which goes beyond the cup — lightening the environmental footprint of all we welcome through our doors," Paul's UK CEO Jean-Michel Orioux said in a statement.

Orioux said the reusable cup discount will be a permanent fixture at Paul's

UK stores and the chain also relaunched reusable cups available for purchase.

Pret's trial will run until the end of April and will then be reviewed, a spokesman said.

Starbucks already gives customers with personal cups a discount and met a target for five per cent

of all drinks to be served in personal tumblers by 2005.

UK Coffee Week, which runs until Sunday, is a fundraising initiative in which participating stores raise money for Project Waterfall, which aims to bring clean water facilities to coffee-growing communities around the world. —Reuters

Sparkling diamond earrings seen fetching up to \$70 mln at auction

LONDON — Two dazzling pink and blue pear-shaped diamonds are together expected to fetch close to \$70 million when they go under the hammer next month.

Sotheby's said the Apollo and Artemis stones are "by far the most important pair of earrings ever offered at auction". They will be offered to buyers separately at the auction house's 16 May Magnificent Jewels and Noble Jewels sale in

Geneva.

The 14.54 carat Apollo Blue is an "Internally Flawless Fancy Vivid Blue" stone with an estimated price tag of \$38 million-\$50 million while the Artemis Pink, a 16-carat "Fancy Intense Pink" stone, is seen at around \$12.5 million-\$18 million.

"I am certain there hasn't been another pair of coloured diamonds of this size and importance ever



Two dazzling pink and blue pear-shaped diamonds. PHOTO: REUTERS

put into auction — certainly the highest estimated pair of earrings ever to appear at auction," David Bennett, worldwide chairman of Sotheby's International Jewellery Division, told Reuters.

"We are selling them separately because there

may well be somebody who wants them as a pair but it's also possible somebody might want just one or the other separately."

Last week, a 59.60-carat pink diamond sold for a record \$71.2 million in Hong Kong. —Reuters

Banksy works highlight of Los Angeles street art auction

LOS ANGELES — More than a dozen works by the elusive British graffiti artist Banksy are among a collection of street and contemporary art up for auction in Los Angeles next month.

Banksy's "Umbrella Rat," an original aerosol stencil of a rat holding an umbrella that was found on a metal door in Berlin, is one of the top items on offer by Julien's Auctions, estimated between \$30,000 to \$50,000.

Michael Doyle, an auctioneer at Julien's Auctions, said "Umbrella Rat" could fetch as much as \$100,000.

"Most of the time these (works) get covered up by the city or different private building owners so it's very rare to find an existing piece of street art that is actually from the streets," said Julien's auctioneer Michael Doyle.

Other Banksy works expected to go under the hammer at the 11 May auction include "Black Bobby," a 2003 black aerosol stencil of a British policeman estimated to fetch between \$20,000 and \$40,000. A 2004 screenprint entitled "Bomb Love," of a girl hugging a missile, is expected to fetch

upward of \$5,000.

British artist Banksy - who is presumed to be a man but has kept his identity secret - rose to prominence through the Bristol street art scene in the west of England.

He is known for creating works on buildings displaying ironic and provocative social commentary, and political stunts such as his recently opened 'Walled Off Hotel' in the Palestinian city of Bethlehem.

"In these political times, his artwork is taking on even increasing significance and being valued

higher because the political message speaks to people more directly," Doyle said.

The highest price for a work of art by Banksy was set in 2008 when "Keep It Spotless," was sold for \$1.8 million at Sotheby's in New York.

The auction in Los Angeles will also feature a 1975 Andy Warhol screenprint of Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger, estimated between \$30,000 and \$40,000, and works by Shepard Fairey, best known for creating the "Hope" poster for Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential campaign. —Reuters

British fashion retailer Jaeger goes into administration

LONDON — Fashion retailer Jaeger, known for its classic British clothing ranges, has gone into administration, the administrators said in a statement, putting nearly 700 jobs at risk.

Jaeger, founded in 1884, is famous for its woollen coats and suits, but the company has struggled in the past few years to stand out in a fiercely competitive fashion retailing market.

The appointment of the administrators, Alix-Partners, was made at the request of Jaeger's directors after attempts to sell the business were unsuccessful, the statement said.

"Regrettably despite an extensive sales process it has not been possible to identify a purchaser for the business," joint administrator Peter Saville said in the statement.

Jaeger has approximately 680 staff in its 46

stores, 63 concessions and head office in London and logistics centre in Kings Lynn in eastern England.

A person familiar with the matter told Reuters on Friday company had filed a notice to enter a form of creditor protection to buy it some breathing space after investment group Better Capital sold the retailer's debt to another company.

Jaeger provided clothing for Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expedition and was famous for dressing film stars such as Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe.

It went into administration in 2012 before being bought by Better Capital.

The administrators said the company would continue to trade while they worked with all stakeholders to find the most appropriate route forward. —Reuters

MRTV		Programme Schedule (12-4-2017, Wednesday)	
6:00 Am	◆ Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw	3:20 Pm	◆ Sunday Talks
7:00 Am	◆ Breakfast News	4:35 Pm	◆ NRC Thingyan Programme
7:35 Am	◆ Money Talk Myanmar	5:10 Pm	◆ Documentary (Thingyan)
8:50 Am	◆ Documentary (Thingyan)	5:30 Pm	◆ MRTV Travelogue
9:40 Am	◆ Pyi Thu Ni Ti	6:15 Pm	◆ Documentary (Thingyan)
10:30 Am	◆ Documentary (Thingyan)	6:30 Pm	◆ Real Story nReal Movies
10:45 Am	◆ Monthly Wealth Report (April)	7:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
11:30 Am	◆ Public Debate	8:00 Pm	◆ News/International News/ Weather Report
12:30 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series	8:35 Pm	◆ Talk Show (Ms. Victoria KWAKWA)
1:00 Pm	◆ Myanmar Movies	◆ Documentary	
2:30 Pm	◆ Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competition	9:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
3:10 Pm	◆ Kyae Pwint Myaye Yin Kone Than	◆ Fine Arts — Bosom of Dramatic Performance	

mitv Myanmar International		Programme Schedule	
(12-4-2017 07:00am ~ 13-4-2017 07:00am) MST			
07:03 Am	News	10:03 Am	News
07:26 Am	Fascinating Shopping in Thirimingalar Market	10:25 Am	Conflict & Solution Between Man & Elephant
07:34 Am	Amazing: May Phoo Han	10:42 Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
07:46 Am	Mulberry Art Painting: Muu Muu	10:52 Am	Kayah Style
08:03 Am	News	(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)	
08:25 Am	Traditions and Customs of Inlay Thingyan	(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)	
08:34 Am	Htan Taw Drums (Part-I) "Osi"	Prime Time	
08:46 Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances	07:03 Pm	News
09:03 Am	News	07:26 Pm	A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-1)
09:26 Am	Young Lady Musician: Nge Nge Lay	07:47 Pm	Toddy Palm Product Shop
09:42 Am	Manuha Temple Festivities	08:03 Pm	News
		08:26 Pm	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations-Lacquaware Making
		08:52 Pm	Traffic Police
		(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)	
		(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)	
		(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)	
		(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)	

Hull's Jakupovic demands improvement away from home

LONDON—Hull City cannot rely solely on their home form and must quickly start racking up points away from their KCOM Stadium to avoid relegation from the Premier League this season, goalkeeper Eldin Jakupovic has said.

Hull, who are 17th in the table, two points above the drop zone, have triumphed in four of their last five home games but have not won away since August.

"We have to just keep going and take points away from home," Jakupovic told British media. "We have three more

home games but the next match is important for us."

Hull travel to Stoke City on Saturday and also play Southampton and relegation rivals Crystal Palace away from home.

"We could win all three home games and get to 39 points. Would that be enough? Maybe, but we need away points. Every point will be massive, not just for us but for Palace and Swansea, and everybody," Jakupovic added.

"We have to just keep going, try not to think about the table too much. We have to be cool and play our game."—Reuters



Hull City's Eldin Jakupovic. PHOTO: REUTERS



Players of Myanmar and Viet Nam vie for the ball during the match of 2018 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualification in Viet Nam yesterday. PHOTO: MFF

Viet Nam beat Myanmar to seal AFC Women's Asian Cup in Jordan

HOST Viet Nam defeated Myanmar 2-0 and secured a ticket to next year's AFC Women's Asian Cup yesterday.

Both teams used the key players during the match and bucked that trend early on; cancelling each other out in a tense opening period, before Myanmar veteran Naw Ar Lo Wer Phaw brought the game to life

in the 27th minute.

The two teams had no goal yet till the end of the first half.

The game was alive and Viet Nam could give more pressure to Myanmar in the beginning of the second half.

Nguyen Thi Tuyet Dung and stroke the ball into an empty net at 55 min and their strategic play become more brilliant.

Huyng Nhu also kicked straight to the goal net 82 min and Vietnam and the goal means sure win for Viet Nam.

After the final day match, Vietnam got 12 marks and had a chance to participate in AFC Women's ASIAN Cup in Jordan but Myanmar pleased with 9 marks and lose the chances of AFC dream.—Kyaw Zin Lin

LONDON — Arsenal's hopes of finishing in the Premier League top-four suffered a huge blow as they suffered a humiliating 3-0 defeat at relegation-threatened Crystal Palace on Monday.

Palace, winners of four of their previous five league games, started in confident fashion and opened the scoring when former Tottenham Hotspur winger Andros Townsend swept the ball home at the end of a smart passing move after 17 minutes.

Palace striker Christian Benteke then had a goal ruled out for off-side before Yohan Cabaye's superb curled effort and Luka Milivojevic's penalty in five second-half minutes completed a miserable night for Arsene Wenger's struggling side.

Arsenal, who have finished in the top four in 20 consecutive seasons, have 54 points from 30 games — seven points and two positions behind fourth-placed Manchester City, who have played a game more.

Crystal Palace stay 16th but now have 34 points from 31 matches, six more than Swansea City, who occupy the final relegation place in 18th and have played a game more.—Reuters

Arsenal's top-four hopes suffer major blow with 3-0 Palace loss



Crystal Palace's Yohan Cabaye celebrates scoring their second goal. PHOTO: REUTERS

Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez looks dejected after the match. PHOTO: REUTERS