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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Environmentalists are planning to conduct a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Risk Assessment (BESRA) in three townships along the Chindwin River. **FILE PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

## Biodiversity conservation project in Chindwin River to kick off next month

A RESEARCH study under the project of mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Chindwin River Basin will be officially launched on 1 April in three townships along the river, said Daw Khin Ohnma Htway, director of Myanmar Environment Institute (MEI).

The research programme will be carried out in 15 villages,

including six in Khamti, three in Kalaywa and six in Chaung U townships, which are the main areas of biodiversity conservation. Researchers will monitor the values of biodiversity and observe the environmental impacts and livelihood problems in the communities

The research programme is planned to start from early

April and continue until late May. The results of this study will be revealed to the public through the regional government, Daw Khin Ohnma Htway added.

The project of mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Chindwin River Basin is aimed at building the capacity of civil society

and government agencies in assessing potential impacts of development and climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services and livelihoods, mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services values in policies and plans, and raising awareness of biodiversity conservation.

—Win Oo (Zeyataing) ■

## Fishery exports likely to fetch \$1 billion

The Myanmar Fishery Products Processors and Exporters Association (MFPPEA) has demanded tax relief for the fishery export industry to increase the sector's income to US\$1 billion.

The association members made the demand during the 15th regular meeting of vice president 1 and the entrepreneurs held at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry on 7 March 2018.

Myanmar exported fishery products worth some \$650 million, as of the end of February in the current fiscal year (FY). The figure is some 50 per cent more than that achieved in the same period last FY. The fishery export sector intends to earn up to \$700 million this year, said U Myo Nyunt, secretary of MFPPEA.

Fishery products processing enterprises need tax relief to meet the food safety criteria of international markets and compete against international countries. To ensure the food safety of seafood, industrial materials and other necessary ingredients used for value-addition have to be imported from abroad, and businessmen are burdened with custom duties. To save overhead costs, fishery products processors and exporters have demanded a tax exemption, he maintained.

**SEE PAGE-3**



## 'BEST BANK IN MYANMAR'

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# Thiri Mingala Maha Sasana Beikman opened

THIRI Mingala Maha Sasana Beikman was opened in the compound of the Abaya Labamuni Kyauktawgyi Pagoda in Insein Township yesterday in the presence of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

The construction of the religious building was funded by members of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air).

Also present at the ceremony were Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Tilawka Bhivamsa, Ovadacariya of Insein Township Ywama Pariyatti Monastery State; Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandima Bhivamsa, Secretary of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee; Thanlyin Minkyaung Pariyati Monastery Sayadaw; members of the Sangha; Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla; Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San; Tatmadaw senior



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing touches a device that unveils the stone inscription to the new religious building in the compound of Abaya Labamuni Kyauktawgyi Pagoda, Insein Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

officers from office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army); Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Thet Pone; Yangon Command's Tatmadaw officers and families; well-wishers; donors; and invited

guests.

Officials opened the Sasana Beikman by cutting the ribbon and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing unveiled the stone inscription of the building.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and the attendees received the Five Precepts from Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Tilawka Bhivamsa, Ovadacariya of Insein Township Ywama Pari-

yatti Monastery State, and heard the prayers on Metta Sutta by the sayadaws.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing offered the Sasana Beikman to Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Tilawka Bhivamsa, Ovadacariya of Insein Township Ywama Pariyatti Monastery State, and the offertories to the sayadaws.

Following the ceremony, a day's meal was also offered by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and other attendees to the monks.

The Thiri Mingala Maha Sasana Beikman was constructed on 1 March 2017 with more than Ks1.9 billion, and cash donated by the families of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, and Air).

The Sasana Beikman Building can accommodate nearly 500 monks who can sit for an examination at a time, and some 1,500 people for the religious ceremony.—Myanmar News Agency ■



On a clear, sunny day in Yangon, the area around Inya Lake attracted couples, families, vendors and tourists. **PHOTO: MARK ANGELES**

## Singapore makes highest investments in hotels, commercial complexes

SINGAPORE brought in foreign investments worth US\$1.79 billion into hotels and commercial complexes, followed by Thailand with \$446 million, according to statistics provided by the Hotels and Tourism Ministry.

Singapore invested in 29 hotels and apartments, while Thailand invested in 11 hotels

and apartments.

Some 56 foreign projects of hotels and commercial complexes with an estimated capital of some \$3.08 billion were registered by the Hotels and Tourism Ministry, with some 33 buildings completed, 11 under construction and 12 granted permits by the Myanmar Investment Commission.

Viet Nam, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg and UAE also invested in hotels and commercial complexes in the country. Singapore has made foreign investments worth \$1.8 billion in Myanmar, with 35 projects as of January of the current fiscal year. —Ko Khant ■

## Farmers educated on good agricultural practices

AN educational workshop on good agricultural practices (GAP) for farmers was held at the vegetable farmland in Nyaung Hna Pin Village, Hmawbi Township, Northern District of Yangon, yesterday.

The workshop, with 75 farmers in attendance, was conducted under the instruction of Department of Agriculture (headquarters), Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, and under the supervision of Yangon Region's Department of Agriculture. At the workshop, Department of Agriculture's head of Northern

Yangon District U Soe Khaing, head of Hmawbi Township of Department of Agriculture U Htun Lwin, agricultural head of Nyaung Hna Pin vegetable farm U Augn Htay and officials from You and I group educated the farmers. Vegetable producers from Nyaung Hna Pin vegetable farm are transporting and selling the organic products at markets in Yangon and even planning to export them.

GAP are specific methods which, when applied to agriculture, create food for consumers or further processing that is safe and wholesome.—Zarni ■





## Literary talks held on 60-year Myanmar-Japan diplomatic journey

A literary talk on a book detailing the 60-year Myanmar-Japan diplomatic journey, conducted by the Book Club of Pynmana, was held at Kantaw Mingala Hall in Pynmanna Township yesterday.

In his opening speech at the event, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint said literary talks were playing an important role in the development of Myanmar literature.

“Literary talks mainly focus on topics of public interest, such as youth and job opportunities, youth and drug problems, and the agricultural sector for farmers, among others,” he said.

Book clubs are formed first with book lovers, and public literary talks are conducted with the aim of helping the community centres benefit the people.

Peace talks are also held at the community centres.



Members of the Pynmana Book Club discuss about a book on 60 years of Myanmar-Japan diplomacy with the book's author Khin Maung Tin (M.A.), center, in Pynmana. **PHOTO: MNA**

The book discussed at the event mentioned the 60-year Myanmar-Japan diplomatic journey, Myanmar-Japan relations, economy and the social fabric of Japan, among other issues.

Khin Maung Tin (M.A.), author of the book, also participated in the talk. Book Club's Chairperson Daw Lei Lei May, Deputy Chairperson U Aung Naing Oo, Secretary U Htun

Htun Soe and members Daw Khin Nyein Aye, U Myo Thura Soe, U Soe Thiha Thein, Daw Kyi Phone Win, Daw Khin Swe Yu, Daw Aye Aye Lei and Daw Than Than Shwe participated in

the discussion.

The book featuring 57 chapters, included topics such as Japan's history, total sectors' indexes, international relations, economy, culture, social and geographical features, airline systems, traffic jam solutions, the national diet system (Japan's bicameral legislature), industrial and financial work, power supply system, media, and the situation between the incumbent government and opposition parties.

Japan's enthusiastic support towards Myanmar's democratic transition, the Japanese government's positive attitude towards Myanmar and Japan's loan assistance to Myanmar are also mentioned in the book as part of the good diplomatic relations between the two countries.

— Myanmar News Agency ■

## Press conference to be held for resettlement of IDPs in Rakhine State

A press conference is scheduled to be held at the auditorium of the Ministry of Information at 2 pm on 14 March (Wednesday)

regarding latest developments in Rakhine State and bringing back those who fled from their areas after terrorist attacks

erupted in Northern Rakhine State. Local and foreign media are invited to attend the press conference.—MDN ■

## 13 townships in Mandalay to get water supply during summer

ACCORDING to the Rural Development Department, 13 townships in Mandalay will be provided with water supply during the summer.

Safe drinking water is a nationwide priority. In the future, more drinking water supply will be based on piped water systems. Myanmar has many dams and reservoirs for drinking water, while villages tend to use open water ponds for water storage.

Every summer, the central part, coastal areas and the delta regions across the country face water shortage, especially in villages that rely on natural resources, which tend to dry up due to inadequate rainfall.

Director U Min Han said, “As for our department, plans are underway to supply water to 13 townships, including six villages in Thabeikkyin, three villages in Kyaukse, seven vil-

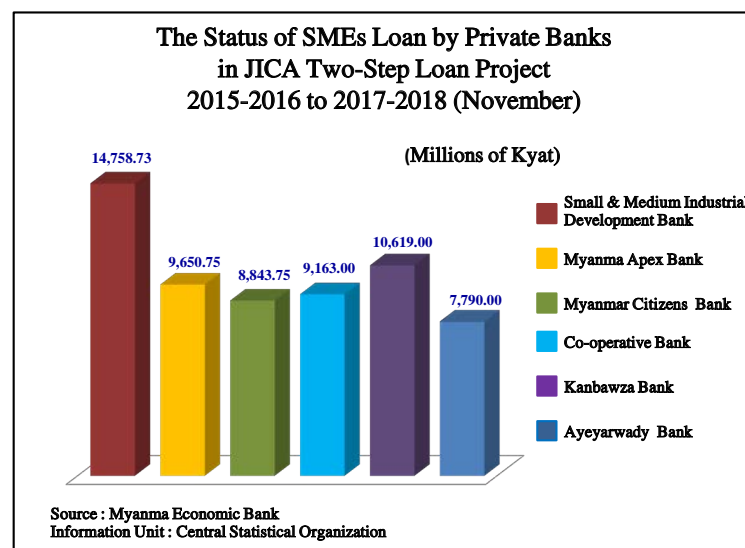
lages in TadaU Township, one village in Myittha Township, four villages in Meikhtila Township, 18 villages in Ma Hlaing, three villages in Wan Twin Township, 11 villages in Tha Sie, one village in NyaungU, and three villages in Kyauk Padaung.

The department will supply water, as well as cooperate with firefighters to provide large volumes of water.

The Department of Rural Development is estimated to have spent Ks35.587959 million on water distribution.—Nadi Hlaing ■



Local villagers carry water from a nearby pond which is their main source of usable water. **PHOTO: MNA**



## Fishery exports likely to fetch ...

**FROM PAGE-1**

In a bid to penetrate more international markets, MFPPEA will exhibit Myanmar's fishery products at the Brussels Seafood Show, the Boston Seafood Show and the China Seafood Show.

The United States has

banned Myanmar's sea food imports, as the fishing nets used in Myanmar's fishing boats have not installed a turtle excluder device. So, U Myo Nyunt has requested the Fishery Department and the Myanmar Marine Fisheries Association to tackle this export challenge.—Htet Myat ■

## Slight earthquake rocks in Tatkon Township

No casualties were reported following a slight earthquake with the magnitude of 3.8 on the Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar about 18 miles west of Tatkon, latitude 20.11°N, longitude 95.94°E, depth 10 kilometers

about 26 miles north-northwest of Nay Pyi Taw seismological observatory was recorded at 2:43 pm yesterday, according to a source from the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.—Myanmar Digital News ■



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edited.

# Children in Dala invited to visit community centre for physical development

CHILDREN and young adults living in Dala Township in South District, Yangon have been invited to visit the town's community centre for physical and mental development.

The community centre of the township Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) includes a playground with sports facilities, a gym and a library. The centre has been developed with the aim of creating a better recreation place for residents to improve their knowledge and participation in sports activities.

Daw Mary Soe, head of the township IPRD, said the community centre was a good place for residents to ensure their physical and mental development through various sports activities. Nowadays, a majority of young people is spending their time surfing the internet. They need to



Children playing with hula hoops as part of physical development activities in Dala Township's IPRD community centre. **PHOTO: NAING LIN KYAW (DALA)**

engage in some sports and fitness activities to maintain their health. The centre is expected to help people improve their health.

She noted that children could play cane ball, basketball and tennis within the compound of the centre during their leisure

time, especially on weekends, summer holidays and every evening on weekdays. —Naing Lin Kyaw (Dala)

## River erosion prevention work to be completed in 19 villages along Ayeyawady River by March-end

THE work to prevent river erosion in 19 villages along Ayeyawady River will be completed by the end of March, U Toe Aung, head of Mandalay Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems (DWIR), told Myawady Daily.

This project is being conducted with an allocated

budget of Ks4.2 billion. Villages that are part of the project are located in the compound of Amarapura, Madaya, Singu, Ngazun, Myingyan and other townships in the Mandalay Region.

To put in place measures to prevent river erosion, the DWIR is executing nine projects, while another authorised

company has taken control of 10 projects. These projects will deal with transport difficulties to a certain extent, including the maintenance of pagodas, farm lands, monasteries and houses of the local people near the bank. The project began in January, and activities in some areas are 50 per cent complete. —GNLM ■

## Two men killed in road accident on Yangon-Pyay Road

TWO men, including a driver, were killed after a truck collided with a express bus on Yangon-Pyay Road on Sunday early morning, according to a police report.

The accident occurred near milepost No. 134/7 in front of a golf course in Nattalin Township, Thayawaddy District, Bago Region, at some 2.10 am on 11 March.

While travelling to Pyay from Yangon, the light truck, driven by U Aung Naing, 53, collided head-on with the express bus, driven by U Nyan Win, 33, on the other side of the road. The collision killed the driver and a passenger of the light truck, while two other passengers in the bus sustained moderate injuries. They are receiving medical treatment at Nattalin General Hospital. U Aung Naing has been charged under Section 304 (a), 337 and 338 of the Penal Code for reckless driving.

A police officer commented that a majority of road accidents occur due to violation of traffic rules, including careless and reckless driving, and the use of cycle helmets. Many people die in traffic accidents, he added.—071 ■

## Four arrested for opium smuggling

THE police on Saturday arrested four men after they were found to be in possession of a cache of white opium powder, according to Myitkyina Township police.

Investigators said an anti-drug squad seized approximately 2.42 kilograms of white opium powder and oil having an estimated value of more than Ks193 million (one kilogram of opium powder is currently worth Ks80 million)

from three suspects — Thaung Zu, 25, Thaung Zee, 24, and Thaung Wuo, 22— during an operation at Balamintin toll gate in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, on Friday evening.

According to the follow-up investigation reports, the suspects confessed they bought the opium powder and oil from Maran Baranja, 28, of Jarainran Village in Lwejel Township, to transport them at a certain

price. The police then arrested Maran Baranja the next day.

Charges are being filed against the four suspects under the existing Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

“Concerted efforts have been made to eliminate illegal drug smuggling and reduce cases of gambling in the region on a regular basis,” said a police inspector.—Win Naing (Kachinmyay) ■





Photo: Phoe Khwar

## Over 76,000 tourists, foreign businessmen visit Myanmar in Feb

SOME 76,031 people entered Myanmar in February 2018, including 57,450 travellers with tourist visas and 18,581 with business visas, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

From April 2017 to February 2018, some 699,252 foreigners visited Myanmar, including some 480,490 tourist visa holders and 218,782 business visa holders.

There are some 1,474 hotels, motels, guesthouses and inns in Myanmar, having a room capacity of some 58,249, according to the Hotels and Tourism Ministry.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism issued some 4,371 tour guide licences, 3,449 local tour guide licences and 2,534 transport licences by December 2017.

Famous tourism attractions in Myanmar are Mandalay, Yangon, Bagan, Inlay, Kayin, Mon, Myeik Archaeology, Chin Hills and beaches such as Chaungtha, Ngwe Saung and Ngapali.

Additionally, tourists like to explore cultural zones, such as the Bagan-Nyaung U cultural zone, Ava cultural site and Pyin Oo Lwin.

The Hotels and Tourism

Ministry has created eco-tourism sites and community-based tourism places, such as Thandaunggyi in Kayin State, Pa-O community involved tourism in Shan State, Kayah cultural community tour, CBT with dolphins along Ayeyawady River, Phoe Kyar Elephant camp, Popa Mountain National Park, Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary and other wildlife sanctuaries.

Tourists visit Myanmar through three international airports, as well as the border checkpoints on bikes or in vehicles. Tourists also flock to Myanmar in luxury cruise liners.— Ko Htet ■

## Border imports via Kawthoung decline slightly

THE import of commodities from Thailand to Myanmar through the Kawthoung cross-border gate reached US\$52 million, which showed a slight decrease of over \$2 million as against the same period in the last fiscal year (FY), according to the Commerce Ministry.

As of 16 February, bilateral trade through the Kawthoung border point totalled \$166 million, including \$114 million in exports, an increase

in value of \$62 million over the last FY.

In the past 11 months of this FY, the overall value of trade between the two countries from this border point increased by over \$59 million.

At this time during the last FY, Myanmar imported a wide range of products worth more than \$54 million from Kawthoung.

Products from Thailand flow into the country via the Tachilek, Myawady, Kaw-

thoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese border points of entry. Thailand's exports from the seven border trade stations were worth \$901.453 million, in total.

Myanmar principally imports a wide range of consumer products, food, soft drinks, cooking oil, plastic ware and cosmetics, while exporting marine products, agricultural commodities and other items to the neighbouring country.—Shwe Khine ■

## Corn buyers hesitate over inferior quality

MYANMAR'S corn fetches a good price in China, but the market is cooling due to the inferior quality of the crop, U Tun Aung, director of Myanmar Corn Farmers' Association, told Myawady Daily.

Fresh corn was harvested last month, but the price is high in Muse. Also, inferior quality corn cannot attract buyers, he said.

Improper use of pesticides, fertilisers and chemicals, and unsystematic means of storage harm the quality of corn. Corn produced in northern Shan State and Kayah State is less popular than that of the Ayeyawady and Magway regions.

Locally produced corn cannot compete with that from Malaysia, China and Thailand in the

export market.

There are some 3.5 million acres of corn farms across the country, with the monsoon corn primarily being produced in northern, southern and eastern Shan State, and Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Kachin states, and winter corn produced in Ayeyawady Region, as well as Pinyinmanar and Lewetowns in Nay Pyi Taw.

The export volume of corn is expected to reach 1.4 million tonnes, while some 1.3 million tonnes of corn have been exported to international buyers until now.

China is the main buyer of Myanmar's corn, and it is also exported to Viet Nam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. — GNLM ■

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- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- Market Place by City Mart (Junction City)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
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# China's parliament puts Xi on course to rule for life

BEIJING — China's Xi Jinping on Sunday secured a path to rule indefinitely as parliament abolished presidential term limits, handing him almost total authority to pursue a vision of transforming the nation into an economic and military superpower.

The move reverses the era of "collective" leadership and orderly succession that was promoted by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to ensure stability following the turbulent one-man rule of Communist China's founder Mao Zedong.

The historic constitutional amendment breezed through the rubber-stamp parliament with 2,958 in favour, two against and three abstentions despite an unusual bout of online criticism that censors have scrambled to extinguish.

Xi stood up first at the imposing Great Hall of the People in Beijing to cast his paper ballot in a red box, as delegates of the National People's Congress applauded after each vote on the constitutional amendment to lift the two five-year term limit for the presidency.

The first constitutional amendment in 14 years had been expected to breeze through the legislature, which has never rejected a Communist Party diktat in its half-century of existence.

"This is the urgent wish of the common people," Ju Xiuqin, a delegate from northeastern Heilongjiang province, told AFP, echoing party claims that the amendment had the unanimous support of "the masses".

Xi, 64, has consolidated power since 2012 when he was appointed to the country's top



The rubber-stamp parliament is being held at the the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. PHOTO: AFP

office: general secretary of the Communist Party.

While the position has no term limits, his two predecessors both gave it up after two terms as part of an orderly process established by Deng.

## 'Soft coup'

The country's presidency is a largely ceremonial office, but the constitutional limits meant Xi would have had to give it up in 2023.

But with the new amendments, he could now have a lifetime to push his goal of turning China into global economic powerhouse with a "world-class" military by mid-century.

His rise has been accompanied by tighter restrictions on civil society, with the detention of activists and lawyers, and stricter limits on the already heavily

controlled internet.

At the same time, he gained a measure of popularity among Chinese people through a relentless crackdown on corruption that has punished more than a million party officials, and sidelined potential rivals.

"I think that during the past five years, he has been carrying out a soft coup, including making the Politburo a mere figurehead," Chinese political commentator Wu Qiang told AFP, referring to the 25-member Communist Party body one level under the ruling council.

"He wants to prevent power from falling into the hands of technocrats like Jiang (Zemin) and Hu (Jintao)," Wu said, referring to Xi's two predecessors.

While attention has focused on the term limits, the amend-

ments also include major provisions that will engrave Xi's eponymous political mantra in the constitution and hand the Communist Party an even larger role in the country's affairs.

In a written report, the head of the parliament's Standing Committee, Zhang Dejiang, said the amendments "will ensure the constitution improves and develops in step with the times and provide a firm constitutional guarantee for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era".

## Secret path

The Communist Party says the move merely aligns the presidency with the limit-free titles of party secretary and military chief, claiming "the masses" unanimously called for the removal of term limits.

But the proposal was kept secret until it was revealed in a state media report on February 25, a week before the legislature's opening session.

The party later disclosed that Xi had presided over a meeting of the Politburo in September during which the leadership decided to revise the constitution.

The party then sought proposals and opinions, culminating in a decision in late January to introduce constitutional amendments at the NPC. "Xi Jinping has presided over so many important projects such as economic reforms and the fight against corruption. There was a consensus that we supported him having more time to finish his work," said Dou Yanli, a delegate from eastern Shandong province.

The surprise move triggered a backlash online, prompting censors to block phrases and words such as "I disagree" and "emperor" and the image of Winnie the Pooh, the cartoon bear to which Xi has been compared.

Activists fear that removing term limits may lead to a further tightening of already strict controls on media, civil society and religion, as Xi tries to impose his highly ideological vision of socialism on every aspect of society.

Beijing-based activist Hu Jia, who says authorities forced him to leave the capital during the congress, called the amendment "illegal".

"Xi asked all people to obey the constitution, and then used the amendment to place himself above it. He used the constitution as the ultimate legal weapon that binds officials and all citizens." —AFP ■

## Scuffles in Hong Kong at key vote for democrats

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's best-known young activists were heckled by Chinese nationalists in tense scenes on Sunday as the city's pro-democracy camp tries to claw back lost seats in controversial by-elections.

Sunday's vote once more exposed the city's deep political divide and comes as China takes an increasingly tough line against any challenges to its sovereignty.

High-profile candidate Agnes Chow was barred from standing because her party promotes self-determination for the semi-autonomous city.

Soon after polls opened, several men and a woman heckled

Chow as well as leading pro-democracy activists Joshua Wong and Nathan Law near a polling station where they were supporting pro-democracy candidate Au Nok-hin, according to an AFP reporter at the scene.

One of the men barged into Wong, who led mass demonstrations in 2014 calling for greater democratic freedoms.

"Traitors and running dogs!" a man repeatedly yelled while others hurled obscenities.

Wong told reporters that threats to freedoms in the city "prove that it's more necessary for us to vote".

Beijing has been incensed at

the emergence of activists advocating independence and views calls for self-determination as part of a dangerous splittist push.

The by-election was triggered after Beijing forced the disqualification of six rebel lawmakers who had swept to victory in citywide elections in 2016.

Some were former protest leaders, others openly advocated independence. All were ousted from their posts for inserting protests into their oaths of office. **'Silent majority'**

Four of the six vacant seats are being contested on Sunday.

"The election is not just about selecting me as a candi-



A man shouts at disqualified pro-democracy lawmaker Nathan Law. PHOTO: AFP

date, it is also about voting for justice," said Au, who stepped in to contest the Hong Kong Island seat after Agnes Chow was disallowed. Democracy campaigners were deeply angered

by the ban on Chow which they said was political screening. The seat was originally held by Law, also a 2014 protest leader, who was among the six thrown out of office.—AFP ■



# Macron pledges 700 million euros for new solar projects

NEW DELHI — French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday pledged hundreds of millions of dollars for solar projects in developing countries, as world leaders met in India to promote greater investment in renewable energy.

Macron, who in December warned that the global shift to a green energy future was too slow, said France would extend an extra 700 million euros (\$861.5 million) through loans and donations by 2022 for solar projects in emerging economies.

France had already committed \$300 million euros to the initiative when it co-founded with India a global alliance in 2015 to unlock new cash for solar projects in sunny yet poor nations.

“We need to remove all obstacles and scale up,” Macron said at the launch of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi on Sunday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi — who has committed to reducing India’s sizeable carbon footprint through a massive scale-up in renewable energy — said it was vital that nations were not priced out.

“We have to make sure that

a better and cost effective solar technology is available to all,” Modi told the gathering of investors and world leaders from about 20 mainly African nations.

“We will have to increase solar in our energy mix.”

India, the world’s third-largest polluter, is undergoing spectacular growth in its solar sector and is on track to become one of the world’s largest clean energy markets. It pledged at the Paris climate summit in 2015 to source at least 40 per cent of its energy from renewables by 2030, mainly via solar. The energy-hungry giant of 1.25 billion people is banking on solar to electrify homes for hundreds of millions of its poorest citizens without adding to its considerable emissions output.

Macron and Modi hope the alliance will spur \$1 trillion in new solar spending by 2030 in 121 countries lacking investment in the sector.

These countries have “the paradox of being the sunniest in the world while enjoying the least solar energy,” said Ségolène Royal, a former French minister in India as a special envoy for the alliance. Macron told world leaders in Paris in December that “we



French President Emmanuel Macron (L) and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi on March 11, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

are losing the battle” against climate change and urged faster action to combat global warming.

The French leader called on

private sector attendees in New Delhi to engage more actively because “solar investments are becoming more profitable”.

He and Modi will open a new

100 megawatt solar plant near the holy Indian city of Varanasi on Monday. The French leader will also visit the Taj Mahal in Agra later Sunday.—AFP ■

## British minster calls for legal limit on time spent on internet by teens

LONDON — Britain’s culture minister said Saturday the government is looking at imposing a legal limit on the time children spend on the internet.

It follows a report by the country’s children’s commissioner Anne Longfield, showing that 12 to 15 years olds spend more than 20 hours a week online.

Teens aged under 18 face being cut off from social media sites after a few hours’ browsing under proposals being drawn up to tame the “wild west” of the internet, the Times newspaper in London reported Saturday.

Ministers are looking at imposing a limit on time spent by children on social media platforms amid concern that overuse damages mental health.

Matt Hancock, secretary of state for digital, culture, media and sport, told the Times he wants varying time cut-offs

for different ages on sites over concern that overuse of the internet by children can damage their mental health.

Hancock told the newspaper: “There is a genuine concern about the amount of screen time young people are clocking up and the negative impact it could have on their lives. It is right that we think about what more we could do in this area.”

Time limits would be enforced using a new legal requirement for social media companies to ensure that anyone setting up profiles is aged above 13. Details of how such a scheme might work are yet to be developed but they are likely to extend a law requiring pornographic websites to ensure that users are over 18, by means of a credit card, says the report.

In her report Longfield says a third of Britain’s internet users are aged under 18, while a sep-

arate report claims 75 per cent of children aged 10 to 12 have social media accounts.

The moves come just weeks after Jeremy Hunt, the health secretary, warned that excessive social media use posed as big a threat to children’s health as smoking or obesity.

Hunt said he wanted to ensure children accessed only age-appropriate material online, with government ministers likely to place responsibility for implementing age checks on internet site companies. Hunt warned that if an age verification scheme is not robust the government may legislate further.

The Times comments that some will see Hancock’s proposal as heavy handed, adding the minister wanted to start a debate over the extent to which the state should regulate activity on the internet. —Xinhua ■

## BMW to recall 3,501 defective vehicles in China

BEIJING — BMW China Automotive Trading Ltd will recall 3,501 vehicles in China for defective front fork arms.

The recall, which will start on 30 March, will involve series of 118i, 120i, 125i, 218i, 220i and X1, according to a notice released by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection

and Quarantine. These vehicles were manufactured between 19 December, 2017 and 26 December, 2017, said the notice.

The defective front fork arm will cause vehicles to lose control and lead to potential safety hazards. The company will replace the defective parts free of charge.—Xinhua ■

## Small aircraft crashes in western Germany, two dead

FRANKFURT — A small aircraft crashed on Saturday afternoon in the western German city of Bensheim, leaving two people dead, local media Hessenschau reported.

The tragic accident took place around 3:40 pm local time, about 40 minutes after the air-

craft had taken off from Worms for a round-flight, according to local police.

In addition to the pilot, a 18-year-old female passenger on board lost life too.

The cause of the air crash remained unclear so far —Xinhua ■



## Only effective rule of law will bring about change

**F**OR a nation to bring about development it is important that the rule of law is enforced. It carries with it many benefits. In countries that enforce the rule of law, there is a state of peace that ushers development while nations lacking rule of law have non-existent developmental progress.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi recently spoke about the importance of rule of law and its effect on national development in her address at the Conference on the Justice Sector Coordination for Rule of Law. She said that genuine rule of law will bring a level playing field to both foreign and domestic businesses which will “encourage investment and drive our country’s development.”

Despite a mountain of challenges, Myanmar is working tirelessly to establish its rule of law and national peace. While the investment sector is taking some time to gain traction, there are growing prospects for both foreign and domestic investment. Up to the month of January in the 2017-2018 financial year foreign investments have checked in at USD 970 million and domestic investments amounted to Ks 3279 billion.

In the current financial year foreign investments in Myanmar are roughly at USD 5.2 billion with Singapore being the biggest investor, said the Myanmar Investment Commission. Till date, they have invested up to USD 4,955.474 million in Myanmar and combined with investments in Thilawa SEZ, the sum total investment reaches USD 5,235.764 million.

Potential investors want strong investment laws that will protect them and they want to know what kind of profit they will be making. On top of this, they are also concerned about the stability, peace and rule of law of the country they are considering investing in. Myanmar as a nation places emphasis on job creation, innovation, total revenue, market dominance, local commodity demand, technological adaptations, conservation of the natural and socio-economic environment, responsible investment, and adherence to existing laws.

Regardless of the complexity of the situation, Myanmar prioritizes rule of law, peace and stability and has seen improvements in investments coming into it. Regardless of the complexity of the situation, Myanmar prioritizes rule of law, peace and stability and has seen improvements in investments coming into it. If we further enforce the rule of law, then both foreign and domestic businesses can work on the same level playing field and disputes will be resolved pursuant to established laws and procedures under a strong and transparent legal framework.

To develop and attract more investments we need strong rule of law, national stability and effective laws. These are not only the foundation for developing the investment sector but also for the development of the nation, which is why it is important for all Myanmar citizens to strive for national development in accordance with existing laws.

“If there is genuine rule of law, both foreign and domestic businesses can compete fairly. If they feel that the law is transparent and predictable, that there is a level playing field and that disputes will be resolved pursuant to established laws and procedures under a strong legal framework, this will encourage investment and drive our country’s development”, she said. ■

## Union Taxation Law and Myanmar’s economic prospect

By May Nwe Aye

**P**ERSONS, groups and businesses are responsible to contribute taxes for the support of a government so that the government should get involved in nation-building tasks and developments. Taxes due must be collected as required. On 7th day meeting of the seventh session of the second Pyidaungsu

Hluttaw, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance submitted Union Taxation Bill to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on behalf of the Union Ministry. The findings in the Bill and the report by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint-Bill committee were read out during the session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 28 February, 2018. Those who wanted to discuss about the Union Taxation Bill were advised to send their

names and their constituencies for registration not later than 6 March, 2018.

The Union Taxation Bill presented to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the report of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee will be discussed extensively by the Hluttaw representatives and the Tax Law would be enacted by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw later. After the enactment of the Taxation

Law, it would create a wide range of opportunities to collect taxes from those who evaded taxes on their properties and businesses. Under these circumstances, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee has already submitted a final report to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The Hluttaw representatives would discuss the pros and the cons of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee and the report submitted by the coordination committee. According to suggestions of the Taxation Law coordination committee, 3% should be imposed on those for their failure or reduction of incomes during the period of the first six months, 5% for the second six months. First of all, taxpayers are advised to keep their money in the bank as the first priority. In the same way, 5% should be imposed on the money and stock shares for the first six months, 7% for the second six-month period. Therefore the taxpayers should keep their money in the bank as the first priority.

Secondly, taxes should be

levied by the government on the money in the bank according to the Taxation Law. In order to let the taxpayers know clearly the procedures should be included in the Taxation Law.

Prescriptions should also be included in the law to prevent illegal individuals, groups and businesses from committing tax evasion.

Imposing taxes on land, buildings and their immovable properties, gold and other valuables, vehicles and movable things, tangible or intangible, should be included in the law for taxation. According to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee income tax per cent on properties should be 7% for the first six months, 10% for the second six months.

The taxpayers should know clearly about trading on movable and immovable properties, thereby inclusion of prescriptions in the Law to be abided by them. Trading on some properties could last for several months. These activities could evade all prescriptions and restrictions of the law. In the case of real estate, effective procedures should be established beforehand by the departments concerned. Upon a fixed-term basis, the price and date of the contract must be made. So, the taxes during the first six months could be less than those in the second. The taxpayers should be excused for quick im-

plementation of the provisions of the contract during the prescribed period.

Increase in taxes can be visibly seen during this fiscal year. In addition, money from overseas banks out of various reasons can be put in our banks so that it can be used in financial market, investment and trading sectors. Investments create job opportunities and production and service sectors, thereby boosting to business and increasing taxes.

It is very important for the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to enact the Taxation Law for taxpayers to be able to help in nation-building and development sectors. It is believed that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw would enact the Taxation Law for the benefits and general development of our country. It is interesting how the Hluttaw representatives would discuss the Bill submitted by the Union Government or the report by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee. Whatever can it be either the Bill or the Report, the 2018 Taxation Law enacted by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw would pave the way for Myanmar’s economic prospect.

*(The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author, and do not reflect those of the GNLM.)*

Translated by Arakan Sein

In addition, money from overseas banks out of various reasons can be put in our banks so that it can be used in financial market, investment and trading sectors. Investments create job opportunities and production and service sectors, thereby boosting to business and increasing taxes.

**A**S English is a living language, several skills are required to be fluent in English. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are normally mentioned in learning a language especially English which is taught as a Second Language in many countries around the world.

Learning, teaching, grammar and pronunciation should be added for the long-term learning process even if they are already part and parcel of the four skills.

### Listening

Many people have difficulty when it comes to developing listening skills. This normally starts in childhood and then well continues into adulthood. Being able to understand what is being said provides you the opportunity to use that information to your benefit in all areas of your life. Attentive listening includes eye contact, posture, facial expressions, gestures, and genuine interest in what the other person is saying.

### Speaking

Here are some suggestions for how to improve English speaking skills.

The best way is to find an

English-speaking partner; if you cannot, try to practice with music and movies. These days, teaching aids are easily available but if you are not interested and don’t use them properly and continuously, you won’t get it. Remember you need to keep on learning it with great interest for a long time. Still you are unlikely to learn to speak a new language perfectly, but perfection is not your goal. Your main goal should be effective communication.

### Reading

If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all. (Oscar Wilde) When I have a house of my own, I shall be miserable if I have not an excellent library. (Jane Austin) Becoming a proficient reader requires mastery of several skills that need to be applied simultaneously. Obviously, this doesn’t happen overnight. To improve your reading speed, practice for about 15 to 30 minutes each day. Good readers increase

their vocabulary every time they read and are able to recall these words when they see them again.

### Writing

Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are key in written communications. The readers will form an opinion of you, the author, based on both the content and presentation and errors are likely to lead them to form a negative impression. Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. And, of course, a well-written CV or resume with no spelling or grammatical mistakes is essential if you want a new job. Poor writing skills create poor first impressions and many readers will have an immediate negative reaction if they spot a spelling or grammatical mistake.

### Learning

Learn to enjoy every minute of your life. Stay positive and happy.

## Several skills needed to be fluent in English

By Arakan Sein

Success is no accident; there are no secrets to success. A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instills a love of learning. Success stems from the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty and persistence. The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice. (Brian Herbert)

### Teaching

No one should teach who is not in love of teaching. (Margaret Sangster) Effective teachers are always on the prowl for new and exciting teaching strategies that will keep their students motivated and engaged. Whether you are a new or experienced teacher, you may feel inundated by all of the new educational buzzwords, theories and new strategies that are out there. With all of this information available, it’s hard to decide which strategies are right for your classroom.

Sometimes, the old tried-

and-true ones that you have been using in your classroom just happen to work the best. Teaching strategies that are considered ‘new’ may not fit into your teaching style.

### Grammar

As English grammar is totally different from that of Myanmar language, sometimes, it is hard to understand the usage and structure of English. For example, the verb tense tells the reader of your sentences when the action is taking place—in the past, the present and the future. It must be consistent on the use of verb tenses. Proper grammar is also essential for understanding English as a Second Language.

### Pronunciation

There are 26 letters in the English Alphabet but there are 44 sounds in the Language. This means that the number of sounds in a word is not always the same as the number of the letters. Even if your vocabulary and grammar are perfect, it can

still be difficult for people to understand you because of your pronunciation. English vowels make it tricky to know how to say a word. The best way to learn is by listening and practicing. Even most native speakers sometimes don’t know the rules either. Now let us have a look : PREsent (n); preSENT (v); ADDRESS (n); address (v); and look again at the word “accept”, the first letter ‘c’ is pronounced as ‘k’ and the second ‘c’ as the ‘s’ sound.

English is easy to learn but hard to master because it is a living language. Learning and mastering English is a must for future leaders to deal with their counterparts from around the world. To be fluent in English, the following tips are suggested:

1. Think in English
2. Talk to yourself
3. Use a mirror
4. Listen and repeat
5. Sing along to English songs.

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## Human Rights and Youth

By Win Aung Kyaw MBA, Ph.D

WE, all human beings are born free and equal in fundamental rights and inherent dignity. In fact, human rights are moral norms that explain certain standards of human behavior. In addition, they are inherent in all human beings whatever our nationality or ethnic origin, color, place of residence, sex, language, or any other status. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Youth do experience struggles in the exercise of their rights and there may have gaps in the protection of the human rights of youth.

Moreover, there are barriers in the protection of the human rights of youth. Young people experience troubles in the exercise of their rights because of being young. Some barriers such as cultural norms, weak institutions that do not have youth specialized services, poverty among youth, lack of real engagement with youth, etc. caused troubles. For example, youth do not receive equal pay for equal work. In some countries minimum salaries were lower for youth compare to adults.

Generally, many people know something about their rights. They know they have the right to food and a safe place to stay. However, there are many other rights. For example, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), five basic human rights such as right to equality, freedom from discrimination, right to life, liberty and personal security, freedom from slavery, and freedom from torture and degrading treatment. These rights are very fundamental and vital rights that every individual including youth should have. Legal rights comprise, civil and political rights, the rights of women, minorities, and groups, environmental rights and social rights, which each and every individual including youth is legally eligible to.

In addition, when people not well known about human rights, abuses such as discrimination, intolerance, injustice, oppression and slavery can arise. According to United Nations Resolution 64/292, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation at 28th July 2010. Moreover, the resolution acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights.

As a matter of fact, the precise meaning of the term right is controversial while there is consensus that human rights embrace a wide variety of rights such as the right to a fair trial, free speech, prohibition of genocide, right to education. However, there is disagreement about which of these particular rights should be included within the general framework of human rights where as some suggest that human rights should be a minimum requirement to avoid the worst case abuses.

In order to contribute for youth to the enjoyment of human rights, the international community must provide the necessary means and ways for educating youth in both intellectual and practical skills. Meanwhile, to achieve full enjoyment of human rights youth must also be at the forefront of efforts to encourage social and economic progress and integrity.

To sum up, democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and interrelated. In addition, all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent.

Many activities and programs designed to educate Human Rights in all levels of community is essential not only for all stakeholders such as international organizations, governmental bodies, NGOs, private sectors, media but also for youth themselves to show their concern. ■

**References:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). International Human Rights Law: Institutions and Mechanism, Open Society Foundations (2013).



# Trump sees 'tremendous success' in upcoming N Korea talks

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump predicted “tremendous success” on Saturday in upcoming groundbreaking talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and suggested the reclusive state wants to “make peace” despite a years-long nuclear standoff.

The comments came after the American leader said he has received encouragement from the leaders of China and Japan, and assurance that North Korea had promised not to shoot missiles in the interim, as he moves toward the high stakes summit, announced suddenly this week.

“I think North Korea is going to go very well, I think we will have tremendous success... We have a lot of support,” Trump told reporters before boarding his Marine One helicopter to travel to a rally in Pennsylvania.

“The promise is they wouldn’t be shooting off missiles in the meantime, and they’re looking to de-nuke. So that’d be great.”

At the rally, he told supporters that the United States had “shown great strength” when tensions were high with Pyongyang, but he went so far as to say the reclusive regime’s leaders “want to make peace.”

“I think it’s time,” Trump said.

He also boasted that his reducing the North Korean nuclear threat helped save the

Winter Olympics that were held last month in South Korea.

“It’s a little hard to sell tickets when you think you are going to be nuked,” the president added.

Earlier, Trump said China’s President Xi Jinping was appreciative of his decision to opt for diplomacy rather than “the ominous alternative,” while Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was “very enthusiastic” about talks with North Korea.

Trump reached out to the Asian leaders in phone calls Friday after his stunning decision to accept an invitation to meet Kim before the end of May.

The turnabout — a huge surprise after months of intensifying brinksmanship over the North’s nuclear and missile programs — caught even Trump’s top aides off guard.

Just hours before Trump made his announcement on Thursday, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had said direct talks with North Korea were “a long way” off.

White House officials initially waffled on the president’s intentions.

“We’re not going to have this meeting take place until we see concrete actions that match the words and the rhetoric of North Korea,” White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders



President Donald Trump told supporters at the Make America Great Again Rally that his reducing the North Korean nuclear threat helped save the Winter Olympics last month in South Korea. **PHOTO: AFP**

told reporters Friday.

## - Emphasizing the positive -

But in a series of tweets late Friday and Saturday, a seemingly ebullient Trump emphasized the positive.

“North Korea has not conducted a Missile Test since 28 November 2017 and has promised not to do so through our meetings. I believe they will honour that commitment!” he said. Trump praised a possible future agreement with the nuclear-armed North as “very good” for the international community as a whole.

He also tweeted that Xi “appreciates that the US is working to solve the problem diplomatically rather than going with the ominous alternative. China

continues to be helpful!”

A White House readout of the conversation said the two leaders committed to keeping the pressure on North Korea until it takes “tangible steps toward complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization.”

North Korea’s ambassador to the United Nations, Pak Song Il credited the turnabout to Kim’s “broadminded and resolute” decision to contribute to peace and security in the Korean Peninsula. “The United States should know and understand our position and should further contribute to the peace and security-building in the Korean Peninsula with (a) sincere position and serious attitude,” he wrote in an email to The Washington Post.

## - ‘Diplomacy without diplomats’ -

Not everyone was so sanguine about the prospects of a breakthrough, however, and some Democrats shuddered at the thought of such sensitive — and potentially explosive — negotiations in the hands of an impulsive, inexperienced president.

“If you want to talk to Kim Jong Un about his nuclear weapons you need experienced diplomats,” Hillary Clinton, Trump’s rival in the 2016 presidential elections, told Dutch tabloid *Algemeen Dagblad*. The former diplomatic chief said the State Department was “being eroded,” and experienced diplomats on the North Korean issue were in short supply because many have left.

“You cannot have diplomacy without diplomats,” she said, adding that “the danger is not being recognized by the Trump government.”

Clinton’s words echo those of veteran diplomat and former US ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, who warned that negotiating with North Korea was not “reality television.”

“It’s a real opportunity... I worry about the president’s unpreparedness and lack of discipline. But I commend him for his very bold move in accepting the invitation,” Richardson told AFP on Friday.—AFP ■

# Bannon tells French far-right: ‘history is on our side’

PARIS — Former top Trump aide Steve Bannon told the French far right on Saturday that “history is on our side” as he addressed the party conference of a National Front that is seeking to bounce back from crushing electoral setbacks.

“The tide of history is with us and it will compel us to victory after victory, after victory,” Bannon, once a powerful figure in the Trump administration and former head of Breitbart News, told the FN conference in its northern stronghold of Lille.

“Let them call you racists, let them call you xenophobes, let them call you nativists. Wear it as a badge of honor. Because every day we get stronger and they get weaker,” Bannon said in an address which drew strong applause from FN leader Marine Le Pen.

Le Pen, who will wind up the gathering with a speech on Sunday, suffered a bruising loss to centrist Emmanuel Macron in last year’s presidential poll and the party won only eight seats in the general election that followed.

Her poor showing in a final TV debate against Macron raised questions about her fitness to lead one of the world’s biggest economies and in the months since both party and leader have appeared somewhat deflated.

Le Pen arrived in Lille having vowed to ditch the tainted FN brand, seen as a key hurdle to winning power, in favour of an as yet unannounced new name. The party canvassed 51,000 members last year about the name change proposal and on Saturday it emerged that



Marine Le Pen applauds Steve Bannon after his speech to the National Front annual in Lille at which he said typical rightwing views should be able to be worn as a “badge of honour”. **PHOTO: AFP**

just 52 per cent had voted in favour among the 30,000 who responded. That compared with 90 per cent of respond-

ents wanting a referendum on continued EU membership and 98 per cent wanting to cut immigration to France.—AFP ■



# Syria army cuts off main rebel town in Ghouta as death toll tops 1,000

DOUMA/ BEIRUT — Syrian regime forces on Saturday cut off the largest town in Eastern Ghouta from the rest of the rebel-held enclave near Damascus, pressing on with a 20-day assault that has left more than 1,000 civilians dead.

Government troops and allied militia launched their military campaign for Eastern Ghouta on 18 February and have since overrun more than half of the area, defying global calls for a halt to the violence.

The assault has followed a divide-and-conquer strategy, eating away at rebel-held territory, and government forces on Saturday successfully isolated Ghouta's main town of Douma in a blow for the beleaguered rebels.

Regime fighters cut off a road linking Douma with the town of Harasta further west and also captured the town of Misraba, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"Regime forces have therefore divided Eastern Ghouta into three parts — Douma and its surroundings, Harasta in the west, and the rest of the towns further south," the Britain-based monitor said.

Shelling and air strikes slammed into Douma on Saturday, trapping residents inside their basements for hours, AFP's correspondents in the town said.

Rescue workers and medics were struggling to navigate the town's rubble-littered roads to bring wounded residents back to field clinics.

At least 20 civilians — including four children — were killed in Douma on Saturday, in addition to 17 civilians in other battlefield towns, said the Observatory.



Syrian regime forces sit inside a tank in the town of Afrin in the besieged Eastern Ghouta region on 10 March, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

The deaths raised the assault's total toll to 1,031 civilians, including 219 children, according to the Observatory. More than 4,350 have been wounded.

'Bomb shelters full'

Douma's opposition-run local council issued an urgent "distress call" on Saturday to international organisations.

"The bomb shelters and basements are full, and people are sleeping in the streets and in public gardens," the statement said.

"For three days, it has been hard to bury the dead because of the intense bombing on the cemetery," it added.

Eastern Ghouta is the last remaining opposition-controlled zone on the outskirts of the capital, and rebels there have regularly fired rockets

onto Damascus.

On Saturday, at least one child was killed and four other civilians wounded in rebel shelling on eastern districts of Damascus, according to state news agency SANA.

Rebels have tried to slow the advance with an attempted counter-offensive, but President Bashar al-Assad's forces steamrolled their efforts.

Syrian state television broadcast live footage from Misraba hours after it was captured by the army on Saturday, showing dozens of civilians in a dark basement, surrounded by troops.

One elderly man broke down into tears as he relayed how his family had fled to Douma under fierce bombardment.

Eastern Ghouta is home to around 400,000 people, living under a five-year siege that has made food and medical aid ex-

ceedingly rare.

On Friday, an aid convoy by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered food to hunger-stricken residents.

It was the second convoy in one week, after deliveries on Monday were interrupted by heavy bombardment.

'Scared faces'

The UN refugee agency's Syria representative, who entered Ghouta with Monday's convoy, said the area was "on the verge of a major disaster".

"I've never seen such scared faces in my life," Sajjad Malik said on Friday.

He described seeing a five-storey building that had been reduced to rubble, with a powerful stench emanating from

several bodies trapped underneath.

Two Islamist groups are the most prominent rebel factions in Ghouta, but jihadists from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) — once linked to Al-Qaeda's Syria branch — also have a presence.

On 13 Friday, HTS members and their relatives were bussed out of the enclave.

Rebels said they would be taken to HTS territory in the northern province of Idlib, in an arrangement struck following consultations with the UN and international players.

Such evacuation deals have been repeatedly agreed in Syria's seven-year war, most notably in the second city of Aleppo in late 2016.

After a ferocious month-long government assault, thousands of rebel fighters and civilians were bussed out of the city's east.

That paved the way for Syria's government to announce the full recapture of Aleppo — the largest defeat to date for the fractured opposition movement.

Syria's conflict erupted with protests against Assad but has since developed into a full-blown war drawing in world powers.

Russia has intervened on Assad's behalf while Turkey has backed rebels against his regime, rival jihadists and Kurdish forces. Saturday, Ankara-backed rebels advanced against Kurdish militia in northwest Syria, coming to within two kilometres (just over one mile) of the flashpoint town of Afrin, the Observatory said. Elsewhere in Syria, the White Helmets rescue force suffered its first female fatality on Saturday, after air strikes hit a rebel-held town in Idlib province.—AFP ■

## Pakistan student hurls shoe at former PM Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE — An Islamic seminary student hurled a shoe at Pakistan's former prime minister on Sunday, an act considered a major insult in the Muslim country.

Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted last year over graft charges, appeared visibly shocked as the shoe hit his shoulder while he

was addressing a gathering at a seminary in Lahore.

The incident came a day after an individual hurled ink at Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, a member of the ruling party and a close Sharif aide, while he was speaking at a party rally in eastern Pakistan.

The shoe hurling was broadcast live on Pakistani TV channels. In the Muslim world, such a gesture is considered particularly insulting.

The perpetrator then jumped on stage where Sharif was standing and began chanting before he was overpowered by the crowd and handed over

to the police.

According to police officials, the man is a student at the seminary.

Minutes later, Imran Khan, leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf opposition party and an arch rival of Sharif who has frequently criticised the former prime minister, condemned the

incident.

"This is not the way to express yourself and I condemn whoever did it," Khan said.

Sharif, a three-time prime minister, was ousted by the judiciary in July 2017 over corruption charges which he is currently facing in Pakistani courts.—AFP ■





PHOTO:TASS

## Early voting at Russian presidential election held in Northern Ireland first time

LONDON — Northern Ireland saw early voting at the Russian presidential election for the first time on Saturday, chairman of the district election commission Ivan Volodin told TASS.

“About fifty people participated in the voting. Many married couples with children were among those coming to exercise their voting right. Many people extended appreciation to the embassy for the opportunity to vote in Belfast, which was opened for

them for the first time,” Volodin said.

“Neither elections of the Russian President nor parliamentary elections have been ever held before in this region of the United Kingdom,” commission member Konstantin Shlykov told TASS. Voting stations will be opened on the presidential election day in the Russian embassy in London and in the consulate-general in Edinburgh.—Tass ■

## Colombians vote in elections seen as test for peace deal

BOGOTA — Colombia votes Sunday to elect a new Congress with a resurgent right, bitterly opposed to a peace deal that allows leftist former rebels to participate, expected to poll strongly.

The election is set to be the calmest in half a century of conflict in Colombia, with the former rebel movement FARC spurning jungle warfare for politics, and the ELN — the country’s last active rebel group — observing a ceasefire.

“This is the first election in half a century when we will vote in peace, without the FARC as an armed group, but as a political party,” said President Juan Manuel Santos, who signed a peace deal with the FARC in November 2016.

The peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guarantees their new political party 10 of the 280 seats in the new Congress.

The party uses the same Spanish acronym, which now stands for the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force, and replaced its crossed-rifles insignia with a red rose.

But opinion polls give it little chance of adding to its 10 free seats, following a disastrous campaign during which its rebels-turned-politicians were largely drowned out by a tide of public revulsion over crimes committed during the conflict.

Candidates were mobbed by angry crowds at rallies and the party had to cancel its public meetings.

“What is at stake for the FARC is positioning and the



Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said that following a peace agreement with former rebel movement FARC, the country is set for the first election in 50 years “when we will vote in peace”. PHOTO: AFP

possibility of establishing itself with an eye to what really interests it politically: elections” for mayor and governor in 2020, said Carlos Arias Orjuela, a political consultant at Externado University.

The fledgling party suffered a fresh blow only days before the election when its leader, Rodrigo “Timochenko” Londono, pulled out of the presidential race after undergoing heart surgery.

### - Right closing on victory -

With the left divided, the stage is set for hardline conservatives who oppose the agreement to win an absolute majority in Congress, and push on to win the presidential election in a few months.

Opinion polls predict a triumph for ex-president and senator Alvaro Uribe and his Centro Democrático party, along with other parties opposed to the peace agreement that has polarized the South American country.

Under the peace accord, FARC disarmed its 7,000 fighters in order to join the political process, agreed to confess to wartime crimes and pay reparations to victims.

This infuriates many Colombians, in particular the right wing, which is vowing to win the presidential election and amend the peace deal.

But much of the peace agreement has already been implemented, including the rebels

disarming and demobilizing.

Analysts say a hard-right government could block the implementation of the rest of the pact, including agrarian reform and the special justice deal under which repentant rebels can avoid jail by paying reparations.

“The mere fact of not applying what has been signed would be enough for this agreement to be ineffective,” said Frederic Masse, an expert on the conflict at Colombia’s Externado University. “It would be a more pernicious strategy than to renegotiate.”

Felipe Botero, political scientist at the University of the Andes, said resurgent conservatives could even let the laws implementing the deal lapse, to

the extent that they “are never voted on or not presented” to the new Congress.

### Party primaries

With Santos stepping down as president after two terms, a sideshow to the legislative elections is the primary elections for both main political blocs, taking place at the same time.

The first round of the presidential election is set for 27 May, with the run-off planned for 17 June.

Current polls show conservative Ivan Duque, a former Bogota mayor who is planning to run for Uribe’s Centro Democrático party, leading the presidential race.

Duque is followed by leftist Gustavo Petro — who is seeking to become the first left-wing president in Colombia’s history — and former Medellin mayor Sergio Fajardo, a centrist candidate.

The vote takes place against the backdrop of economic concern in Colombia, which registered 1.8 per cent growth in 2017, its weakest for nearly a decade.

Neighbouring Venezuelans have added new pressure, arriving en masse as they flee economic and humanitarian crisis in their own country.

More than 36 million people are eligible to vote in the election, though traditionally abstentionism hovers around 60 per cent.

Polls open at 8:00 am (1300 GMT) and close at 4:00 pm.—AFP ■



# Anti-cholesterol drug Praluent cuts death risk

MIAMI — The anti-cholesterol drug Praluent (alirocumab), made by France's Sanofi Pharmaceuticals, is linked to a 15 per cent lower risk of major cardiovascular events like heart attack and stroke, a study said on Saturday.

Alirocumab was also associated with a 15 per cent reduction in death from any cause, marking the first evidence that this relatively new class of drugs, called PCSK9 inhibitors, can extend lives.

The benefit was even greater among those with stubbornly high "bad," or LDL cholesterol, above 100 mg/dL. That group saw a 29 per cent reduction in death from any cause after taking the drug for two years.

PCSK9 inhibitors are monoclonal antibodies which target and inactivate a specific protein in the liver, dramatically reducing the amount of harmful LDL cholesterol circulating in the bloodstream.

Research has shown these drugs, delivered by injection every two



The anti-cholesterol drug Praluent is approved in more than 60 countries outside the US, according to France's Sanofi Pharmaceuticals. PHOTO: AFP

to four weeks, may work even better than statins, which are the traditional first line of treatment for high cholesterol.

High cholesterol is a key factor in coronary artery disease, the most common kind of heart disease and the number one killer of men and women worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

But neither Praluent or its main competitor, Repatha (evolocumab) made by Amgen Phar-

maceuticals, has achieved major commercial success due to their hefty annual price tag of more than \$14,000 (11,300 euros) per patient.

Last year, researchers reported similar results for Repatha, which also cut the risk of heart attack, stroke, and hospitalization for blocked arteries by 15 per cent.

"Now that we have two trials that consistently show benefits from PCSK9 inhibitors, and given the mortality benefit

that we are reporting here for the first time, I think these results may change the equation for these drugs," said Philippe Gabriel Steg, chief of cardiology at Hopital Bichat in Paris and co-chair of the study.

"We're not just talking about preventing nonfatal events such as heart attacks but actually preserving life."

## Cost concerns

The findings de-

scribed on Saturday at the American College of Cardiology conference in Orlando, Florida, were based on an international trial of nearly 19,000 people in 57 countries, randomly assigned to either alirocumab or a placebo.

Those enrolled were over 40 and many had been treated with the maximum amount of statin therapy possible but were still unable to get their cholesterol down.

The trial included those whose LDL cholesterol remained 70 mg/dL or above, non-HDL cholesterol 100 mg/dL or above.

Participants were followed for up to five years, with 44 per cent participating for three years or more.

The injections were well tolerated by patients, with mild itching, redness or swelling at the injection site occurring in about three per cent of patients receiving the drug and two per cent getting the placebo.

"I believe this study is going to change practice," said Mount Sinai Medical Hospital's physi-

cian-in-chief, Valentin Fuster, who was not involved in the research.

However, he cautioned that drugs' high price remains an obstacle.

"Up until now, the feasibility and affordability of using these types of drugs has been extremely difficult," he told a press briefing.

"I hope this particular study really is a trigger, is a catalyzer, for making these drugs much more available today in people who need it."

Praluent is approved in more than 60 countries outside the US, according to Sanofi, while Repatha was put on the US market in 2015.

In a statement on Saturday, Sanofi and Regeneron said they would work to lower the price for patients at high risk.

"We commit to working with all health plans that agree to remove access barriers for high-risk patients to offer a more cost-effective net price for Praluent," said Leonard Schleifer, president and chief executive officer of Regeneron.—AFP ■

## China says still talking with US on trade

BEIJING — China's commerce minister said on Sunday that Beijing and Washington are still holding economic talks as he warned that a trade war would harm both nations.

President Xi Jinping's top economic advisor, Liu He, held trade discussions with US officials at the White House earlier this month but the meetings yielded few breakthroughs.

US President Donald Trump has since announced tariffs on steel and aluminium imports, drawing threats of retaliation from China and other nations.

"We are continuing our discussions," Commerce Minister Zhong Shan said during a press conference held on the sidelines of the annual parliamentary session underway in Beijing.

"Because no one is willing to start a trade war, and everyone knows trade wars hurt others without helping themselves," Zhong said.

That may not reflect the current mood in Washington.

Last week, Trump tweeted the US could win a trade war.

Zhong also took issue with the statistics

behind the trade imbalance — which showed a record \$375.2 billion US deficit with China during Trump's first year in office.

He cited American government research that he said showed the figure for the surplus in China's favour overstated by roughly 20 per cent and said that if the US dropped restrictions on high tech exports to China it would further reduce the surplus by 35 per cent.

"There is still much for us to do, one side cannot call the shots, we need to work hard together," Zhong said.—AFP ■

### Declaration to Know Public Concerned with Remaining Family Own Property of the Dead Person, U SAN MYINT (a) S. GURU SARMI

According to the instructions for delegating of our friends 1. U THEIN SHWE, holder of 12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 025639 and brother and sisters (2) U NI NI (a) MEE MEE, 12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 015420 3. DAW MARATHI, 12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 018300, 4. KHIN MARLAR 12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 010877, 5. AYE AYE THAN, 12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 018036, 6. KHIN KHIN SAN, 12/Pa Za Ta (Naing) 017710 who live in No. 117, Ahnawrahtar Street, Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region declared to know public.

The mentioned our friends, are son and daughters, born from U SAN MYINT (a) S. GURU SARMI and DAW SOON DARAM (a) DAW SAUNG DARUN AMAR, resided at No. 120, Maharbandoola Street, No. (2) Ward, Pazundaung Township, Yangon and they are residing at Yangon. The left son and daughters are residing at abroad The Father, U SAN MYINT (a) S. GURU SARMI was passed away on (28.12.2017) and left undermentioned property and business.

- (60) years lease grant land area (0.052) acre, land plot No. (1-2B), Settlement Block No. (2), Survey Block No. (9K<sup>2</sup>), Pazundaung Township, Yangon and (7) storey (1) building known as No. (120), Mahar Bandoola Street, Pazundaung Township constructed on the said land.
- Left one of the family own Economic Business "Myanmar Cotton Mattress Shop Business". The mentioned building and economic business are the property which have benefit rights on a live left mother, DAW SAUNG DARUN AMAR include all of family under Hindu Law.

All of the said property is not only individual owned by dead person, U SAN MYINT (a) S. GURU SARMI all of whole family owned property under workshop, food according to Hindu Law and declared to known seriously prohibit, not to make the said property sale, mortgage, gift, renting, transfer with other way without agreement by all of family.

According to instruction for delegating.

U TIN MAUNG THEIN (LL.B)  
Serial : 5991/1993  
Ph : 09 5124559

U TIN SHWE (LL.B)  
Serial 8007/2011  
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### The Advocates

No. 10/12, First Floor, Room (H), 35th Street (Lower), Kyauktada Township, Yangon.



# ‘Drop in, play, learn’: Zimbabwe music legend Tuku’s open door to new talent

PARIS — If you’ve ever dreamt of playing alongside Afro-jazz legend Oliver “Tuku” Mtukudzi, just drop into his studio in Zimbabwe and pick up an instrument.

Mtukudzi — one of Africa’s most famous and admired musicians — has an open-door policy at his arts centre in Norton, 50 kilometres (30 miles) west of Harare.

Aged 65 and with more than 60 albums under his belt, the self-taught singer and guitarist says the centre provides a home for all musicians, particularly youngsters who often face disapproval from their parents at home.

Named “Pakare Paye”, which translates as “same old place” in the Shona language, it charges no fees, employs no tutors and follows no curriculum.

“This is not a school,” Mtukudzi told AFP during a break from rehearsals at the sprawling complex of thatched and brick one-storey buildings.

“We don’t deal with education here — we deal with talent. A college says, ‘we will teach you’ but we say ‘you have got it, let’s learn’”.

The husky-voiced Mtukudzi, whose stage name is Tuku, said he started to plan the centre after realising the problems he confronted in the 1970s when he began singing still existed.

Zimbabwean parents often frown on the arts as a profession, preferring their children take up careers in the law or medicine.

Seeking a mentor

For decades, young artists



Zimbabwe Afro-jazz legend Oliver “Tuku” Mtukudzi, one of Africa’s most famous and admired musicians, has an open-door policy at his arts centre in Norton, 50 kilometres (30 miles) west of Harare. **PHOTO: AFP**

seeking a supportive mentor would head to Mtukudzi’s house in the town of Kwekwe, carrying their song scripts or just showing off their dancing and choreography stunts.

His daughter Shami jokes that “our house was the first arts centre”, recounting how the home was flooded with aspiring artists.

“These children are not appreciated at home, they are looking for somewhere to be appreciated and I offer that,” Mtukudzi said.

“Then I thought — let me look for a place where I can attend to the youngsters.”

Set on a three-hectare (seven-acre) plot and equipped with a recording studio, multiple in-

door and outdoor stages and accommodation chalets, the centre has fostered many musicians and performers since it was opened in 2004.

Mtukudzi allows students to just come along and try out instruments. He listens carefully and when he has identified which ones they are good at, he encourages them to practise hard.

His approach is to set them on the path to becoming self-taught, like he was, rather than being the teacher, but he helps them later on to fine-tune their talent.

Guitarist Rodwell Roda, 33, is one graduate who started music when he was just 14 years old.

“My parents did not want me to play a guitar,” said Roda,

who now plays in Tuku’s resident band, The Black Spirits.

“So I used to borrow a guitar from friends and practise outside. “The moment I came here, I started to learn more things, and learnt to be more humble... It doesn’t mean to play with him, you have to have pride.”

A ‘free platform’

Fiona Gwena, 26, is another graduate who also now sings with Tuku and plays percussion.

“I just had a passion for music so after school I heard of this place and came here in 2012. It’s a free platform,” said Gwena.

Three years ago, Bright Shumba, 31, quit his job as a heavy-duty machine operator in the western coal-mining town of Hwange to pursue his dream.

“My wife and mother didn’t understand that I chose to leave my job (for music). Luckily I met Tuku. To me he is not just an artist... he is like a spiritual father,” said Shumba.

Using his personal savings, Mtukudzi bought an old factory, tore it down and built the centre, which also teaches sound engineering, theatre and dance.

Funding now comes from income earned on the chalets as well as a traditional restaurant open to locals and tourists.

“I want to showcase what they can do, and from there I inspire them by appreciating them,” said Mtukudzi.

Shrugs off celebrity

Through nearly four grim decades of brutal repression of dissent and economic collapse under former president Robert Mugabe, Mtukudzi has come to embody achievement.

He made his first recording in 1973 at the then Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation.

He later toured the world and is still releasing albums — the 67th named “Hanya’Ga” meaning “Concern” in February — and he was rated by Forbes magazine one of Africa’s 10 most bankable artists.

But he shrugs off such acclaim. “I don’t even understand the word celebrity,” he said.

Instead he sets great store by the words of his mother, who said that he would never sing a note better than his first scream after his birth.

“It means when I was born I had already started singing. This is who I am.”—AFP ■



Szuzsanna Domokos, director of the Franz Liszt Memorial Museum and Research Center, holds famous Hungarian composer Franz Liszt’s manuscript which is previously thought lost in the museum in Budapest, Hungary, on 10 March 2018. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

## Manuscripts believed to be of Hungarian composer Franz Liszt presented in Budapest

BUDAPEST — Manuscripts believed to be of famous Hungarian composer Franz Liszt were presented in the Franz Liszt Memorial Museum and Research Center here on Saturday in a solemn ceremony.

They were purchased from a private heritage by the Liszt Academy, with the help of state subsidies.

“These manuscripts rep-

resent a tremendous value as they keep the handwriting of Franz Liszt, founder of the Academy of Music,” Andrea Vigh, rector of the Liszt Academy of Music said at the event, adding “The manuscripts contain the Hungarian spirit of Franz Liszt.”

Liszt was a Hungarian musician in the 19th century, recognized as one of the greatest

in the world.

He developed his brilliant talent as one of the outstanding pianists of his time, as a bold innovator in composition, a conductor and an influential teacher.

The historically significant, unique national relics will be preserved by the Franz Liszt Memorial Museum and Research Center.—Xinhua ■



# Mexican regional cuisine drives booming food scene

MEXICO CITY — Sure, every foodie loves tacos and enchiladas.

But what about lesser-known Mexican classics like cochinita pibil, the impossibly flavorful, slow-roasted pork dish from the Yucatan peninsula? Or escamoles, the ant larvae from central Mexico known as “insect caviar”? Or empanadas de mole, pastries filled with the savory chocolate sauce of the Oaxaca region?

Mexico has always been a major player on the world food scene. But increasingly, top chefs are embracing and promoting the country’s richly varied regional cuisine, driving the Mexican gastronomic experience to a whole new level. One of the poster boys for the trend is Alejandro Ruiz, whose Mexico City restaurant Guzina Oaxaca drew a rave review in *The New York Times* with its “chic interpretations of traditional classics.”

Ruiz comes from the village of La Raya in the southern state of Oaxaca, where he grew up grinding corn and cooking for his family to help his mother, who worked full-time washing clothes.

His restaurant, which opened in 2014, is a celebration of his home state, a mountainous region known for its huge diversity of ingredients and deep culinary traditions.

“Where I come from, the kitchen is the most important part of the home,” Ruiz told AFP.

“What I do (in the kitchen) is who I am, it’s where I was born, it’s my mother’s milk. It’s in my DNA. What’s my identity? Oaxaca.”

**- ‘Whole other level of flavor’ -**

Oaxaca isn’t the only region whose traditional cuisine has



A Mexican woman prepares meals with mole in San Pedro Atocpan, where nine in 10 residents make a living from the sauce of pre-Hispanic origin. **PHOTO: AFP**

been elevated to new levels of chic. Mexico stretches from the deserts of the northern border to the tropical forests of the south, with long Caribbean and Pacific coastlines in between, giving it immense biodiversity and a sprawling palette of ingredients.

Its flavours are also shaped by its complex history, blending influences from its many indigenous groups, the Spanish conquistadors, European elites, slaves from Africa, immigrants from all over and the ever-present United States.

Laura Siciliano-Rosen, co-founder of the food blog *Eat Your World*, loses count listing her culinary adventures in Mexico’s myriad regions and sub-regions.

Dining in Mexico, she says, one minute you can be eating sinfully delicious tacos. Then, a few hours by bus — or a few Mex-

ico City blocks or market stands away — “suddenly you’re eating turkey and hardboiled eggs and these really rich pastes, ‘recados,’ from the Yucatan peninsula, which is just a whole other level of flavor that only exists there.”

Mexican food’s strength is its “regionality,” she says — something that is only just starting to be exported abroad.

“The more people are learning about the regionality of the cuisine and how distinct and complex it is, the more they’re blown away, like ‘Wow, this is real Mexican food,’” she says.

**- Peruvian fusion, Mexican diversity -**

William Drew, of the prestigious *World’s 50 Best Restaurants* list, says this is exactly what has propelled Mexican restaurants onto the closely watched ranking.

“The diversity is extraordi-

nary,” he says.

“If you think you know what Mexican cuisine is, then you probably haven’t experienced enough of it.”

Mexico has two restaurants in the current top 50, which remains dominated by Europe: Enrique Olvera’s Pujol and Jorge Vallejo’s Quintonil, both in Mexico City. But Mexico’s top chefs are nervously eying their colleagues to south, in Peru — whose fusion-fueled cuisine makes it a rival contender for the title of Latin America’s hottest food destination. Peru’s mix of Andean, European and Asian influences — symbolized in recipes like “ceviche,” a refreshing dish of raw fish marinated in lime — has made its cuisine all the rage.

In fact, Peru has two spots on *Restaurant’s* current top 10: Virgilio Martinez’s Central at

number five, and Mitsuharu Tsumura’s Maido at number eight.

The top Mexican restaurant, Pujol, comes in at 20.

**- Street food -**

That is making some people in Mexico nervous.

Mauricio Avila works at the Mexican culture ministry, and his job is to compile and preserve Mexico’s gastronomic heritage.

“Mexicans love food, and we’re proud of our food, but we don’t advertise it. We’ve always believed it wasn’t fancy enough for foreigners,” he says.

His office is actively encouraging the trend of celebrating Mexico’s traditional regional cuisines. The government has released a 78-volume collection on “Indigenous and Popular Cuisine” — each dedicated to a place, an ingredient or an ethnic group. It is also working on an index of ingredients. Sasha Correa, a Venezuelan gastronomy expert at Spain’s renowned Basque Culinary Center, says Mexico has an allure all its own. “In a short time, Mexico has not only joined the phenomenon (of high-end dining in Latin America), it has done it with force, personality and a lot of distinctive elements,” she says.

And pity the misguided foodie who travels to Mexico City and only eats in trendy restaurants, when it is bursting with amazing food at nearly every street corner.

“An ideal trip to Mexico City is doing a mix” of the two, says blogger Siciliano-Rosen.

“But if you can’t do the high-end, just do the low-end 100 percent, because there’s so much variety, it’s so accessible, and you can try anything and it’s all going to be good.” —AFP ■

## Big competition at Bangkok’s elephant polo games

BANGKOK — Elephants tromped across a manicured pitch in Bangkok on Thursday in the kick-off of a polo tournament raising money for the animals, who are celebrated as a national symbol but often subject to abuse.

Dozens of elephants were trucked down to the Thai capital for the four-day King’s Cup Elephant Polo Tournament, an annual charity event that brings players from around the world to a field on the banks of the Chao Phraya river.

During lumbering matches that resemble a slow-motion version of horse polo, handlers — known as “mahouts” — steer the

animals while players wielding extra-long mallets take aim at a small white ball rolling underfoot.

The cup, now in its 16th year, has raised \$1.5 million for charities that help Thailand’s wild and domesticated elephants, according to event host Anantara Hotel.

The tournament has faced criticism in the past from animal rights activists, who say mahouts must inflict pain on the elephants to manoeuvre them around the pitch and provoke crowd-pleasing roars. But event organisers insist the competing elephants — which include both animals who work in Thailand’s tourism industry and others who are domesticated

but unemployed — receive plush treatment and plenty of time to rest. “They are elephants that may normally work in camps somewhere...and our aim is to bring them here for a week of vacation so to say. We have our vets here, they are being well fed, they’re having a very good time,” Tim Boda, one of the event’s organisers, told AFP.

“They come and play maximum about 35 minutes per day,” he added. The money raised from last year’s competition was donated to trainings for mahouts and vets, plus projects aimed at mitigating conflict between wild elephants and Thai villagers, ac-



The cup has raised \$1.5 million for charities that help Thailand’s wild and domesticated elephants. **PHOTO: AFP**

cording to event organizers.

A 2017 report by World Animal Protection found Thailand to be the global epicentre of the ele-

phant tourism industry, in which businesses charge visitors for a chance to ride and bathe the beasts. —AFP ■



# Sagaing makes their second win in MNL by beating Myawady

AS an exception match of the Week-7 of MPT Myanmar National League 2018, Sagaing United played against Myawady FC yesterday evening at Aung San Stadium in Yangon. MNL has postponed its games due to the Myanmar's national team participating in the AFC Asian Cup qualification rounds.

Sagaing could take the victory along with beating Myawady with 2-1 result.

Myawady were better at the kick off with a leading goal, scored by its sparkling player Thet Wai Moe even at the 9 minutes mark. But Sagaing soon got the upper hand and they could respond with an equalizer six minutes later with a long shot kicked by Sagaing's expatriate player Friday.

After 1-1, Sagaing players seem to be in improved mindsets with mixed stable and speedy play.

Myawady altered their style of play with making three substitutions in the 15 minute after the restart of the second half.

As Sagaing made frequent attacking, Myawady played de-



Sagaing United striker Samuel attempts to score goal in yesterday's MNL match at Aung San Stadium. **PHOTO:MNL**

fensive style with careful football blocking in their backing position.

However, at the 60 minute mark, Sagaing gained their second or leading goals scored by

Thiha Zaw via free kick.

In the remaining minutes, Sagaing were clever enough to manage the match with defensive style and ended the match with their win.

Sagaing United now stands in the 10<sup>th</sup> place with 8 played, 2 win, 2 draw and 4 losses while Myawady stands in the 12<sup>th</sup> or last place with 8 played, 2 draw and 6 losses.—KyawZin Lin ■

## We Are One Cup 2018 coming to Myanmar

WITH the aim of raising new, talented and innovative amateur youth footballers across Myanmar, We Are One Cup 2018 will be held in eight major cities of upper and lower Myanmar according to an official page of We Are One Cup. The tourney will be taking place in Mandalay, Taunggyi, Lashio and Myitkyina in the upper part of Myanmar and in Yangon, Mawlamyaing, Patheingyi and Magway in the lower part of Myanmar. Among the eight major cities in which We Are One Cup will be taking place, initial football tourneys (qualification to quarterfinal matches) will be starting soon in the two cities of Yangon and Mandalay. The prizes will be awarded much deservedly to the Champion teams along with other runners up according to the We Are One Cup page. Ks 5,000,000 will be awarded to the winner team while Ks 2,000,000 to the second runner up, Ks 1,900,000 to the third runner up, Ks 1,700,000 for the fourth runner up and Ks 1,500,000 to the fifth to eight runner ups.—KyawZin Lin ■

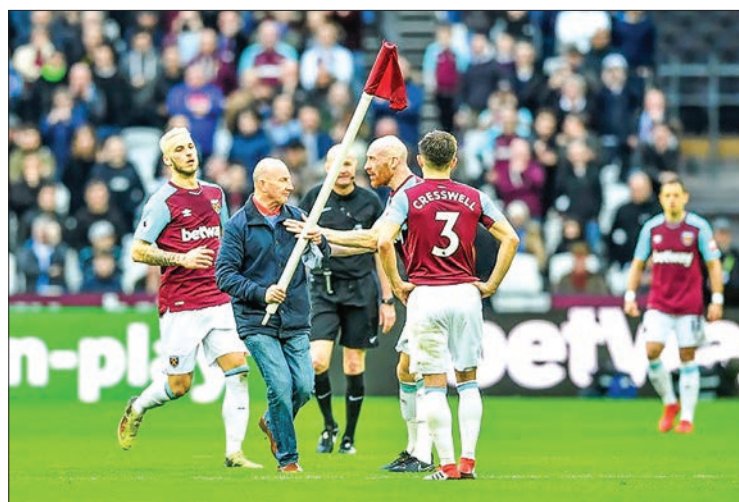
# West Ham face FA probe after fans mar Burnley loss

LONDON — West Ham face a Football Association probe after the troubled club's owners David Gold and David Sullivan were forced to flee their seats when furious fans ran riot at the London Stadium.

Several West Ham supporters invaded the pitch during Saturday's 3-0 Premier League defeat against Burnley, while hundreds of fans gathered beneath the directors' box to protest against Gold and Sullivan.

Fans made throat-slitting gestures while missiles were seen to be thrown in the direction of the executive seats amid chants of "sack the board" and "you killed our club".

On the pitch, the toxic atmosphere boiled over after West Ham captain Mark Noble grappled one fan to the floor and team-mate James Collins marched two others away. Burnley's coaching



West Ham defender James Collins (2R) confronts a pitch invader carrying a corner flag during the English Premier League match against Burnley at The London Stadium in east London on 10 March, 2018. **PHOTO:AFP**

staff let children shelter in their dug-out to avoid being caught in the chaos that left police investigating two allegations of assault.

West Ham said an emergency meeting had been called with

all London Stadium stakeholders, which includes Gold and Sullivan, whose decision to uproot the club from Upton Park to Stratford has caused resentment.

The FA is also set to launch a probe, with a spokesman saying:

"The FA strongly condemns the crowd disturbances seen today at West Ham United versus Burnley and will be seeking observations from West Ham as well as awaiting the match referee's report."

The east London club, currently just three points above the relegation zone, could be hit with a heavy fine or even forced to play matches behind closed doors as punishment for the disturbances.

In their own statement the Premier League said: "It is essential that everybody who plays or attends a Premier League football match can do so safely."

"There is no place at any level of the game for what happened at the London Stadium."

"While the official investigation of the incidents will be carried out by the Football Association, we will be asking our own questions of West Ham United

about what happened this afternoon, especially to ensure similar events never reoccur."

'Horrible atmosphere'

West Ham manager David Moyes admitted he understood why tempers had frayed, but the Scot condemned the ugly scenes. "As a supporter you can't cross the line. You can't come on the pitch. That's the rule," Moyes said. "What we need is the club, supporters, players, everyone, is to pull together."

Noble's ascent from boyhood West Ham fan to key player for the club had made him a favourite of the Hammers support.

But even the east London-born star admitted the situation was out of control.

"I'm a West Ham fan and I've always protected the club. But if someone approaches me, I'll protect myself," he said of his clash with the fan.—AFP ■