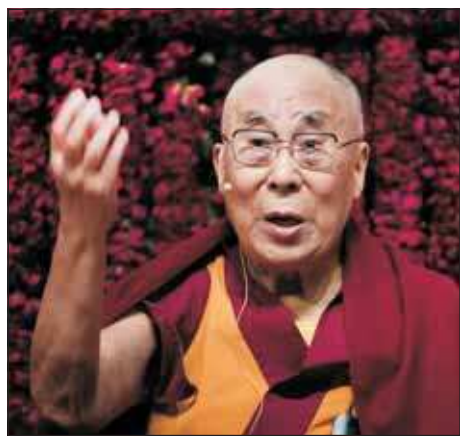


The Asian Reporter

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Dalai Lama appears on John Oliver's show

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Nike unveils hijab for Muslim athletes

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Naan Pizza features the flavors of India

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Myanmar's ex-colonial capital captivates with faded glory



CAPTIVATING CAPITAL. The hilltop Kyaik Than Lan pagoda offers a 360-degree panorama of Mawlamyine and remains a prime attraction for pilgrims, locals, and a trickle of foreign tourists. Despite the intrusions of modern technology and being Myanmar's fourth-largest city, Mawlamyine (as Moulmein is now officially spelled) still maintains an air of distance from the world's mainstays, in part because of its geography. It's a long, 186-mile road journey from the country's international gateway of Yangon, the other options being a rickety train ride or sporadic flights. (Denis D. Gray via AP)

By Denis D. Gray
The Associated Press

MAWLAMYINE, Myanmar — On the stairway rising to Moulmein's great Buddhist shrine, the visiting British writer Rudyard Kipling was inspired to pen one of the most anthologized poems of the English language.

"By the old Moulmein pagoda, lookin'

lazy at the sea/There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me." go the opening lines of *Mandalay*, verses imbued with nostalgia for the wind-swept palms and twinkling temple bells the young poet left behind for the gray skies of England.

Today, 128 years after Kipling's infatuation, the Kyaik Than Lan pagoda remains a prime attraction for pilgrims

and tourists. Its soaring, gilded stupa gleams on a ridge overlooking a city of greenery and watery expanses that have retained links to the British colonial past that Kipling chronicled. The Burmese women he noticed can be seen there too, some wearing the traditional *sarongs* long discarded in most of Asia, some chatting on smartphones as they circumambulate the

Continued on page 2

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