STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with a group of about 50 physically challenged people yesterday at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center in Nay Pyi Taw and welcomed their collective desire for peace in Myanmar.

In a speech to Wheel Chair Train for Peace, the group that travelled for 12 days from Myitkyina township in Kachin State to Nay Pyi Taw in order to highlight the need for peace, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said that all Myanmar citizens need to come together to strive for peace. She said the group representing Wheel Chair Train for Peace showed that physical limitations have no bearing on a person’s participation to achieve peace in their homeland.

“Failure to gain peace is attributed to the disability of spirit, absolutely not to physical and intellectual disability. We need to collectively help the spiritually disabled. Though this group faces suffering and physical disabilities, it is heartening to see the strength of their spirits, making a good example for the whole nation. The ability to overcome all difficulties encountered is true strength.”

SEE PAGE 9 >>

US$90 million in losses due to attacks on border trade zone

CLASHES between armed ethnic groups and the Tatmadaw in November in north-eastern Shan State effectively halted border trade with China, causing losses of US$90.5 million in just five days, a military leader said yesterday.

“The attack on Mongko is believed to have threatened the China-Myanmar main trade route because Mongko is located at a strategic point,” said General Mya Tun Oo, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), at a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the clashes, the armed groups set fire to trucks, blocked the highway seven times and killed four civilians, including two drivers.

Three-hundred armed members of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) led by Phone Tar Shwen planned to raid Mongko and Muse in the second week of November and a combined group comprised of about 200 troops of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the MNDAA attacked the Mongko outpost of the Tatmadaw on 20 November from four directions.

They also attacked eight other locations, including the 105-mile trade zone and military outposts.

Civilians were killed in mine attacks and sabotage acts of the combined troops of the KIA, MNDAA, Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Arakan Army (AA) in the 22 November clash at the Mongko outpost and another skirmish on 1st December. The Tatmadaw forces gained control of the Union Highway on 26 November.

The Tatmadaw is committed to achieving eternal peace in the country and the democratic system does not accept armed conflicts, said General Mya Tun Oo. SEE PAGE 4 >>
Pyithu Hluttaw: Okkalapa Pagoda, Rehabilitating illegal tenants

THE 14th day of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 4th regular meeting continued yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker informed the members that it was continuing the hearing duties between Pyithu Hluttaw committee members and the appointment of new members.

The Vice Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw, U Hla Win San from South Okkalapa constituency posed a question: “How will ministers concerned handle the building of high-rise buildings over 70 meters high in the vicinity of Okkalapa Pagoda in North Okkalapa?”

To this the Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko replied that, in accord with the accepted submittal of lowering landowner U Hla Aung’s original approval of constructing five-storied buildings with basement+12.5 story buildings to basement+8.5 storied buildings was approved on 8 April 2015 at the Yangon Region Government meeting No. 18/2015, decision clause 7, the Yangon City Development Committee has viewed and found the proposals of building constructions are in accord with the set rules and therefore had been approved. The Okkalapa pagoda was erected in 1990 and has a height of 108 feet.

In the seventh State Sangha Maha Nayaka (First Sect) second ninth meeting on 10 June 2015, it was declared that the Region Government to carefully analyse building projects with experts so as to avoid obstructing the preservation of the pagoda and thereby causing its infrastructure. On 3 August 2015 an investigation team was formed and in the Region Government meeting in 3 March 2016 it was approved that the building of high-rise buildings will be allowed in height of 96 feet, which was approved.

Similarly, the Okkalapa Pagoda board of trustees submitted to the Ministry of Religious Affairs to halt construction of the 8 stored Sakura Co. building 59 feet from the pagoda. The Ministry of Religious Affairs together with Yangon Region Government and the YCDC entered discussions and found the building to be in temporary permitted building height and after submitting to the YCDC meeting on 29 August 2016 approved construction of the building at the proposed height of basements+8.5 storied/96 feet.

U Kyaw Min Hlaing of Utararhiti constituency asked, “Is there consideration to abrogate the classification of settlements and farmlands in Uttararhiti Township as forestry areas?”

To this Union Minister U Ohn Win from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation replied that in the (7/2016) meeting decision clause 5, the Pyi Taw Pyi on 1 June 2016 that 12 designated villages in Uttararhiti Township and 49 villages in Nay Pyi Taw Pyi’s constituency’s vicinity will be classified as villages and farmlands and include those in the survey on illegal tenants in Nay Pyi Taw Pyi’s Council’s Area, and were approved as agricultural farmlands and horticultural zones with the granting system of long-term grants still in function.

Further explained that after careful inspection of the 6,838.483 acres in the Nay Pyi Taw Council forestry area, 807.736 acres of village lands, farmland and public areas will be cleared from being listed as forestry areas. Also the remaining 1,570.367 acre in Uttararhiti Township will be permitted as agricultural lands for local residents and long-term grants for 50.94 acres of horticultural zones will be permitted as well.

Later, Union Minister U Ohn Win and Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein responded to questions posed by U Sai Oo Kham from Hsenwi constituency and U Win Thein Zaw from Salingyi constituency.

Daw Mi Kyun Chan from Paung constituency pointed out the Union government to name the Thanlaw bridge connecting Mawlamyine and Chaungzon “Bogyoke Aung San Bridge” in honour of the late national leader, to which U Tin Ko Ko Oo from Bilin constituency voiced his approval and Hluttaw Speaker announced that Hluttaw representatives wishing to discuss on this matter could put down their names on the waiting list.

Nineteen Hluttaw representatives discussed a matter presented by U Khin Cho from Hlaingtaw constituency: “We would like to urge the Union Government to approve our proposals to plant bamboo.” U Saw Victor Clyde from Thandaunggyi constituency said that if we were to review cutting down of trees and bamboo from the territories ofakalapa Pagoda in North Okkalapa, in a short time we can revitalise the landscape back into a lush and thriving scene, especially the planting of species of bamboo in appropriate districts and regions will help preserve the soil and prevent soil erosion and landslides.”

To this appeal, eight Hluttaw representatives engaged in a discussion with Union Minister U Ohn Win, after which the Hluttaw Speaker with approval from the majority of the Pyithu Hluttaw announced approval of the appeal.—Myanmar News Agency

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 4th regular session holds its 14th meeting

At the 14th meeting of the 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw’s 4th regular session held yesterday morning, U Win Maw Tun, Deputy Minister for Education, replied to a question raised by U Hla Aung Oo of Yangon Region constituency 2, as to whether there has been any arrangements for making magistrates and judges in courts of justice, law officials and well-known lawyers teach “Basic Law” in state high schools at least once a week as an additional subject, over deterioration of “rule of law” at present, with a view to keeping rule of law adjustable in future.

“Presently, character cultivation and civil ethics are additionally taught in history and other related subjects, though we was not officially included in the high school syllabus, but arrangements for teaching made to be included in new syllabus,” U Hla Aung Oo said.

“Although civil ethics and character cultivation were not officially included in high school syllabus, it was being taught additionally, in history and other related subjects. Yet, the knowledge on civil rights and privileges of citizens, responsibilities and duties to be performed by citizens, principles of democracy, good practices of democracy to be abided by the citizens and basic principles of human rights.”

“Law officials are occasionally sharing knowledge on laws and leaflets are being delivered to students. Educating knowledge on the law will be carried out. Townships and district law officials will also conduct similar educating and sharing talks by linking with ministries and regional administrative bodies. So, the ministry of education has no arrangements, for making magistrates and judges in courts of justice, law officials and well-known lawyers teach “Basic Law” in state high schools at least once a week as an additional subject, in existing syllabus and in the new syllabus under revision.”

Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, replied to a question raised by U Aung Myo, Sagaing Region constituency 2, as to whether there have been any arrangements to deal with the matter through negotiation for having the Holy Black-Robed Buddha Image that U Aung Zeya, King Alaungphaya, used to bring whenever he set out for frontier areas, that was brought back to Shwebo.

“The Holy Black-Robed Buddha Image was aged to be 100 years or more, and was estimated to be an antique. According to the law of protecting and conserving antiques, the Ministry is liable to keep the antique as an item of cultural heritage if the antique is considered to be easily harmed or decayed or damaged. Yet, the above-said Buddha Image is being used as an antique of worship as a religious symbol, hence the Ministry has no right to protect and conserve it as an item of cultural heritage under section 8, subsection-b and subsection-1. The Reverend Mother, Dr Pannya Thiri, of Dhamme Thakha Nunn in Mayangon township, has been keeping this Buddha Image to Thubtha binny, letting people worship this Buddha Image and other historical Buddhist Images at any time. On 20 clause (11) of the Nay Pyi Taw Region Religious Affairs Department negotiated with the Mother Superior Dr Pannya Thiri to bring back the Buddha Image to Shwebo. But the negotiation was unsuccessful, as Dr Pannya Thiri did not agree with it,” Thura U Aung Ko said.

Afterward, U Win Maw Tun, Deputy Minister for Education, replied to questions raised by U Han Win Thein of Taninthayi Region constituency 11, U Kyaw Ni Naung of Shan State constituency 4, U Tin Ko Ko Oo from Bilin constituency, U U Maung Maung, and U U Tun Ko Ko Oo from Mawlamyine and Chaungzon, respectively.

As regards the Bill on Statistics, U Hla Aung Oo of Yangon Region constituency 2 said, “Policy makers and those who make planning wholly depend upon facts and figures included in the statistics. Thus, facts and figures are very important for the country. So, statistics are drawn to draw statistics accurately were made after compiling a law on statistics. Facts and figures in the statistics are important so much so that it can lead to the ruin of a country.”

In 1988, the Socialist Republic of Myanmar and the USSR implemented the projects based on fake statistics, facts and figures submitted from the bottom level, coming to the state of causing disorders and splits. Especially, it will be a great burden for data collectors and central committee members in superior levels. Provided that there is a person who intentionally changes or adds or fills the false figures, knowingly that they are incorrect, among responsible officials, false policies and projects will happen to be compiled like the above.

At that time, the country will be greatly harmed. For this, fines and punishments are urgently needed to be promulgated as an amendment in the law, as a lack of prescription that forbids the personnel so that they dare not include wrong data, knowingly.”

—Myanmar News Agency
VP U Henry Van Thio oversees development tasks in Chin State

Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspected an airport construction site in Chin State yesterday.

The Vice President and entourage arrived at the construction site for Lailimpi’s airport where an official from the Department of Civil Aviation explained on the choice of location for the airport and requirements in the construction process. Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung gave a briefing about future construction plans.

After inspecting around the site and technical equipment and bulldozing works, they toured on motor vehicles around Lailimpi and monitored the progress of development works in that township.

Then a cordial meeting was held with local residents in the Lailimpi’s sports stadium where explanations were given on how the State was working on supporting development processes in Lailimpi.

Town Elder Dr. Sar Sar presented topics in need of development including betterment of roads in the city, improving the system of communications, constructing a Mindat-Lailimpi road, receiving stable electric power, upgrading schools and hospitals to which officials present explained the development works in progress in the respective sectors.

Deputy Minister Major-General Than Htut then handed over cash assistance of K50 lakhs from the Ministry of Border Affairs to Dr. Sar Sar.

The Vice President and entourage arrived at Yayza Town in the afternoon and visited construction works for expanding the 16 bedded hospital. He then consoled the patients and gave them cash assistance.

Afterwards the Vice President met with local residents and elders in meeting hall of the Township General Administration Department Office and explained the government’s plans in helping regional development efforts. Town Elder U Raw He presented requirements in the city’s development process to which each official of each respective sector gave replies and explanations. This was followed by the Vice President receiving souvenirs gifts from residents of Yayza.

The Vice President and entourage then travelled to Matupi in the evening and inspected the sick ward, surgery rooms and ward expansions and then visited and gave words of encouragement to patients after which he gave them cash assistance.

Afterwards the Vice President met with local residents at the Bonetlaw Hall and explained the State’s plans in helping regional development efforts. In the meeting a Town Elder presented requirements in Matupi’s development plans to which the respective officials of each sector gave replies and explanations.

The Vice President then gave financial assistance of K100 lakhs from the Ministry of Border Affairs to a member of Township Management Committee. Then, Union Minister U Win Khaung and Deputy Minister Major-General Than Htut presented 50 solar panels and 250 blankets given by the Ministry of Border Affairs to officials concerned.

The Vice President then inspected Kobwe and Sanbaung among other wards in Matupi that were devastated in a landslide during the Komen storm. A department official briefed the Vice President on the progress of current works and long-term objectives that need to be implemented with help from the State.

Then the Vice President and entourage observed the progress of Matupi township’s development, improvement of water currents into the city, possible sites for city expansion, and sites of the landslide devastation from ThemiByul golf course observation deck.

They then toured Matupi town bypass on motor vehicles.

The Vice President stressed to the citizens of each region visited in the day to effectively utilize the natural resources available to them, the importance of shifting from nomadic terrace cultivation to long-term crops.

He also explained how they are working on safeguarding the people from calamities and preventive measures to avoid similar events that had occurred. He also explained how in developing preventive measures from natural disasters like landslides consideration is put into supplying the region with adequate electricity and drinking water. In this endeavor, he suggested that a joint committee should be formed as soon as possible, comprising experts on geology, geography and irrigation and led by the Chief Minister of Chin State.—Myanmar News Agency
Pagoda trustees to build more guest houses for pilgrimage season

THE Alaungdaw Kathapa Pagoda’s board of trustees want to increase the number of guest houses for pilgrims from across the country.

The pagoda hosts two festivals each year that draw thousands of people who make the pilgrimage from across Myanmar. Currently, Alaungdaw Kathapa pagoda has 45 guest houses with a capacity of about 3,265. At the height of the pilgrimage season, the current housing situation is insufficient, trustees said.

“The pagoda board on the road during the pagoda festival season. Some of the pilgrims are over 70 years old. So, it is not good for them to sleep on the road,” said U Maung Maung Cho, the vice chairman of the pagoda trustees.

The Pagoda Board of Trustees plan to submit a proposal to the State government and Union ministers to get the land for this purpose.

“Then, the trustee will build the building on the land. We also have planned to supply the water and electricity to the building,” said U Maung Maung Cho.

“Even though we have donors to construct the building, construction permit is difficult. Currently, we are building the health center for the pilgrims,” he added.

The festival of the Alaungdaw Kathapa Pagoda is held every year from 25 December to 25 April.

The Alaungdaw Kathapa Pagoda is most crowded with pilgrims on the full moon of the lunar month of Tabodwe and in the following month on the full moon of Tabaug.—Myanmar Alinn

MFF to spend Ks600m on nurturing young players via football academy

THE Myanmar Football Federation is set to spend about Ks600 million on developing young footballers through the new Myanma National Football Academy in Yangon, said its Chief Minister, U Aye Mya Tun Oo, referring to the increasing inclusiveness of the country.

“The Tatmadaw has opened its doors to peace for inclusiveness of the peace process,” said General Mya Tun Oo, urging ethnic armed groups to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

Following the Mongko issue, he clarified the Rakhine issue, saying that the military launched area clearance operation in northern Rakhine only after nine police officers were killed in attacks on border outposts on 9 October. He also disclosed that violent attackers are still holding arms that they have taken from the police outposts and that security forces are discovering improvised explosive devices and homemade guns from attackers in northern Rakhine.

“We need time to bring the rule of law to northern Rakhine. The threat from the drug traffic is getting bigger,” said General Mya Tun Oo, referring to the increase in the volume of drug seizures worth about Ks11.1 billion in 224 cases from 2011 to 2015 to about Ks5.56 billion in 61 cases in 2016.

Regarding the alleged human abuses, he pledged the Tatmadaw would take serious action if evidence of abuse are found.—Myanmar News Agency

70% of coral reefs along Myeik Archipelago damaged: FFI

ABOUT 70 per cent of the coral reefs along Myeik Archipelago, a part of Tanintharyi Region, were damaged by overfishing, according to Fauna and Flora International (FFI).

Illegal and unreported fishing is threatening the natural coastal environment. Declines in the fish population due to overfishing can have an adverse effect on marine biodiversity, destroy the environment and marine ecology, according to the FFI, an international conservation NGO.

Conservation efforts are being made in prioritised preservation areas to restore coral reefs, said an official from the FFI, which conserves threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing sustainable solutions based on sound science and which take into account human needs.

Because of its natural attractions, marine tourism has gradually developed in the Myeik Archipelago that lies in the Andaman Sea off the coast of southern Myanmar. The archipelago has become a popular destination among international travellers, but the destruction of coral reefs may have a negative impact for the region’s tourism development, FFI official said.—200

Fire destroys monastery and house in Maungtaw

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The target budget will cover costs of food, educational expenses, medical charges, training fees and related expenses.

Selection of talented players for the programme is planned to start in the second week of March by the MFF, which will choose youths under 11 years of age from the largest 52 cities across the country.

Plans are underway by the MFF to collect population data of young people in towns in collaboration with the Sports and Physical Education Department, with the MFF inviting youths to send their application forms through online, U Phone Zaw Naing said.

The MFF on 17 February launched the football academy established on Waizayanda Road in Thingangyun Township near the MFF’s offices.

The total costs of the project reached US$2.784 million, including the contributions of US$500,000 from the FIFA and $284,794 from the MFF under the FAP grant.

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Domestic gold price soars to record high of Ks903,500

WITH the global gold price turning upward, the domestic gold price reached a record high of Ks903,500 per tical on 27th February for the second time in four months, according to the local gold market.

The domestic gold price hit a record high of Ks903,500 per tical on 4th Oct 2016. With the global gold price rising as of 23rd February, the gold price rose to a high of above Ks895,000 per tical in the domestic market and it reached over Ks900,000 on the evening of 24th February. The domestic gold price remained on the rise, with the price of Ks902,400 on 25th February and Ks902,000 on 26th February. The gold price continued to soar to Ks903,500 on the afternoon of 27th February, it is learnt from local gold and jewellery merchants.

The global gold price rose against the decline in the US dollar index on 24th February, with a price of US$1,257 per ounce at closing time on 24th February. The gold price on 20th February was US$1,235 per ounce in the global market, whereas it jumped to US$1,258 on 27th February, it is learnt.—Kyaw Htet

Efforts for permaculture to be widely practiced

EFFORTS will be exerted so that the permaculture is widely practiced across the country in order to reduce the cultivation cost with the use of biomass and resource recycling, said Dr Thet Khang, a project manager of Farmer to Farmer Project.

The awareness campaigns and courses of permaculture, the development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient, will be conducted in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Mandalay regions for farmers and those engaged in agriculture and livestock so that they can adopt this system. The plan will further proceed to the rural areas, it is learnt. This system was developed in Australia based on agroecology, which utilise biowaste and household waste recycling to treat farmland.

The system includes techniques such as intercropping trees, mixed farming, planting perennialals, water harvesting, and resource recycling. Using natural resources, the practice of permaculture can reduce the cost of fertilizer and pesticides. Permaculture is successfully practiced in Australia, Kenya, Serbia and Ethiopia.—200

Earthen utensils industry facing extinction in Rakhine

PRODUCTION of pottery became obsolete in Rakhine State because people preferred using industrial products, according to Rakhine State craftsmen.

"Today, people are using the industry products, so pottery handicrafts businesses are almost extinct. Hundreds of pottery handicrafts businesses closed. Currently, only five pottery businesses are producing based on the water pots," said U Kyaw Shwe from Kyaukpyu. About 10 years ago, there were about 55 pottery businesses in Yanbye island. The finished pottery products were exported to Yanbye island, Minbya and Myeik townships.

"People from towns and rural regions are not using the handicraft products, they only use the plastics, steels and ceramics. We are selling for a few people who are using the pots for offering on the altar and drinking water," said Daw Khin Thein Shwe, a seller of the handicraft pottery from Kyaukpyu.—Mystimakha News Agency

Shrimp larvae to be bred in Ayeyawady and Rakhine

FIVE million shrimp larvae will be experimentally bred in Ayeyawady Region and Rakhine State, according to a local shrimp farming association.

If the experimental farming brings forth a fruitful result, it will help reduce the trade deficit and fulfill the requirements of local consumption, said an official from the association. Marine Genetics will farm five million larvae of shrimps under the name of Best Burma PL. In the shrimp farming process, the biosecurity, management and aeration techniques will be shared with local businessmen. The black tiger shrimp, a native species, is farmed extensively in the country but has been known to be prone to disease. The new white shrimp larvae has been imported from Thailand at a high price. Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) white shrimp are being experimentally bred in order to be free from pathogenic organisms in the local shrimp farming sector, it is learnt.—Mon Mon

FMI share price jumps to Ks19,000

THE share price of First Myanmar Investment on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) surged to Ks19,000 at closing time on 28th February, according to stock trading data of YSX.

The high share price resulted from FMI’s investment seminar held on 4th February by U Thein Wai, FMI’s executive chairman, in order to discuss FMI’s current businesses and its future direction. The share price rose to Ks15,000 on 15th February, then FMI’s share price climbed up to Ks17,000 on 27th February from 16,000 on 24th and 15,500 on 23rd Feb. FMI share price hit its highest mark of Ks41,000 on 29th and 30th March 2016, whereas the price hit a low of Ks15,300 per share on 25th Nov 2016. FMI share price turned to a downward trend in December, plunging down to Ks13,500 per share on 30th Dec 2016, it is learnt.

Currently, there are four companies trading shares on YSX; FMI, Myanmar Thailawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) and First Private Bank (FPB). On 28th Feb, a total of 24,112 shares worth Ks237,308,600 were traded on YSX, with the stock trading volumes of 3,125 from MTSH, 297 from MCB and 3,410 from FPB. The share prices at the closing time were Ks19,000 for FMI, 4,300 for MTSH, Ks8,800 for MCB and Ks30,500 for FPB respectively, according to the official figures of YSX. —Mon Mon

For Rent / For Joint Venture

Cordially invite entrepreneurs (foreign/ local) who are interested in industry, warehouse, industrial land, showroom and government grant-land at the following locations:

1. Coffee mix manufacturing industry: building and warehouse (Hlaing Tharyar Industry Zone)
2. Warehouse at industrial land (Shwe Pyi Thar Industrial Zone)
3. Thirimon (Bayintnaung) Plaza (3 storey & rooms space) Mayangone Township
4. (1) Area government grant-land, Banyardala Street, Tamwe Township (good location)
5. (0.5) Area government grant-land, Banyardala Street, Tamwe Township (good location)
6. (8) Area government grant-land, Mingalaron Township near Alpine and Pepsi industries (Pyi Road)

Contact Phone: 01-291175, 01-290054, 01-202860
09 799302653, 09 795448987
09 36706534
Cambodia’s Hun Sen says he and Trump object to ‘anarchic’ media

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia’s authoritarian Prime Minister Hun Sen has expressed sympathy for US President Donald Trump’s antipathy towards the media, saying both he and Trump saw the media as stirring anarchy.

Hun Sen, whose rule of more than 30 years has been marked by accusations of human rights abuses and corruption, said Cambodian journalists who reported on human rights could undermine national security.

“Donald Trump understands that they are an anarchic group,” Hun Sen said of journalists at an event on Monday, in comments later posted on his Facebook page. Hun Sen had said before the US election in November that he hoped Trump would win as he would be good for world peace.

Political tension has been increasing in Cambodia in recent months as opponents of Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge guerilla, accuse him of unfair manoeuvring to maintain his grip on power in local elections in June and a general election next year.

Hun Sen has warned that an opposition election win could lead to the return of civil war. He has long dismissed Western concerns about human rights, democracy and corruption.

Last week, the US embassy said it was deeply concerned about legislation introduced by Hun Sen’s ruling party to make it easier for the government to dissolve political parties, saying it restricted freedom of expression and legitimate political activity.— Reuters

China says hopes US defence spending benefits global stability

BEIJING — China’s Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said it hoped US defence spending would be beneficial to maintaining global peace and stability, after the White House proposed a 10 per cent increase in military spending.

The proposed rise in the Pentagon budget to $603 billion comes as the United States has wound down major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and remains the world’s strongest military power.

An official familiar with the proposal said US President Donald Trump’s request for the Pentagon included more money for shipbuilding, military aircraft and establishing “a more robust presence in key international waterways and choke points” such as the Strait of Hormuz and the disputed South China Sea.

That could put Washington at odds with China, which claims most of the South China Sea and has alarmed its neighbours by building artificial islands and airports there, among other facilities.

“We hope that relevant US policies and measures can benefit the maintenance of global peace and stability,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a daily news briefing, when asked about the proposed US increase.

It was hypothetical to link the rise to the situation in the South China Sea, Geng added.

“But on the South China Sea issue we have repeatedly said that the situation is at present developing well, in a positive direction, and is stable,” he said.

China hopes countries outside the region — usually a reference to the United States — can respect the efforts of China and Southeast Asian nations to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea, Geng said.

The United States already has the world’s most powerful fighting force and spends far more on defence than any other country. China unveils its defence budget for the year at this weekend’s opening of the annual meeting of its largely rubber stamp parliament.

China last year set military spending at 954.35 billion yuan ($138.93 billion), likely underestimating its investment, according to diplomats.

The 7.6 per cent increase was China’s lowest in six years, however, and its first single-digit rise since 2010, following a nearly unbroken two-decade run of double-digit jumps.

The influential state-run Global Times tabloid on Tuesday called for a rise of at least 10 per cent this year, to deal with the uncertainty brought by Trump.

“The US is a military superpower,” it said in an editorial. “But it still wants to expand its military, which foreshadows the unavoidability of further strategic turbulence internationally.”— Reuters

Philippine president says some police to reinjoin drugs war

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said on Tuesday he would recall some police to fight his controversial war on drugs, nearly a month after suspending the entire force from all operations in the bloody campaign.

In an about-face on his decision to remove the 160,000-member Philippine National Police (PNP) from his signature campaign, Duterte said the country was beset by insecurity and law enforcement challenges and he needed more manpower to sustain the crackdown on drugs.

Duterte has been scathing in his criticism of police corruption after it was discovered that rogue drugs squad officers had kidnapped and killed a South Korean businessman at PNP headquarters.

After harassing police from the anti-drug campaign, Duterte handed the lead role to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and has called for the military to provide firepower for its operations.

On Tuesday, he said those police recalled to operations would have to be supervised by PDEA agents.

“So, I need more men. I have to call back the police again to do the job most of the time on drugs, not everyone,” he told reporters. “And it’s meant to be PDEA-supervised, whether done by the military or the police. There should always be a PDEA... who will be supervising everything,” Since the 30 January police suspension, the drug trade has come back out of the shadows, more than half a dozen drug users and dealers in some of Manila’s toughest areas told Reuters. PNP chief Ronald dela Rosa said on Monday drugs had returned to the streets in the past few weeks and police were ready to reinjoin the campaign because “the sooner we return, the better.”— Reuters
**Indonesian, French FMs meet to discuss enhancing bilateral cooperation**

JAKARTA — Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi met with her French counterpart Jean-Marc Ayrault on Tuesday, discussing ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, two Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) documents were signed by related officials of the two countries on education and diplomatic training and space activities sectors.

Besides discussing development of regional and international issues in which Indonesia and France have interests in, Retno and Ayrault also identified further cooperation in economy, trade and investment that can be expanded by the two countries.

Regarding the ongoing negotiation process of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Indonesia and European Union (EU), the two ministers agreed to speed up the process so as to reach agreement that paves the way for the implementation.

Possibilities to expand cooperation in counterterrorism, maritime, palm oil, tourism and efforts to build smart cities were also featured in the discussions of the two ministers.

Ayrault’s visit to Indonesia was also intended to prepare for the official visit of French President Francois Hollande to Indonesia scheduled next month.

Prior to his meeting with Retno, Ayrault was officially received by Indonesian President Joko Widodo in the presidential palace.

France is a significant European trade partner to Indonesia with two-way trade recorded at 2.34 billion US dollars last year.

Indonesia exports electronic equipment, rubber, footwear, garments, fishery products, coffee, tea, woods and cacao to France.

French investment in Indonesia was recorded at 730.8 million US dollars from 2010 to 2015, comprised of various projects in telecommunications, warehouse, transportation, water, electrical, food processing, chemical and pharmacy sectors.

**KUALA LUMPUR — Two women — an Indonesian and a Vietnamese — will be charged on Wednesday with murder over the killing in Malaysia of the estranged half-brother of North Korea’s leader, Malaysia’s attorney general said.**

Police have said the women smeared VX nerve agent, a chemical on a UN list of weapons of mass destruction, on Kim Jong Nam’s face in an assassination attempt on February 13, 2017.

US and South Korean officials believe Kim was the victim of an assassination orchestrated by North Korea. He had been living in exile, under Beijing’s protection, in the Chinese territory of Macau, and had criticised the regime of his family and his half-brother Kim Jong Un.

Malaysian police arrested Doan Thi Huong, the Vietnamese woman, and Indonesian Siti Aishah in the days after the attack.

Police are also holding one North Korean man and have identified seven other North Koreans wanted in connection with a case that reads like the plot to a spy movie.

Both women will be formally charged on Wednesday under section 302 of the penal code, which carries the death penalty.

“I can confirm that,” Attorney General Mohamed Apandi Ali told Reuters in a text message.

He said the North Korean in custody would not be charged yet. His remand period ends on Friday.

The security camera footage, which has been released in the media, showed two women assassinating Kim Jong Nam in the departure hall of Kuala Lumpur International Airport, and the victim stumbling into a clinic. He died within 20 minutes of the assault.

Both women have told diplomats from their countries that they had been paid to take part in what they believed was a prank for a reality television show.

—Reuters

**Malaysia to charge women with airport murder of North Korean**

**Bangladesh police break up protest over gas price increase**

DHAKA — Bangladesh police used tear gas and water cannon to break up hundreds who took to the streets on Tuesday to protest against an increase in the price of gas.

The Energy Regulatory Commission last week announced an increase in gas prices by an average 22.7 per cent in two phases starting next month.

The second increase in less than two years is being introduced despite objections from political parties and industry groups, including the $28 billion gas export sector.

Many Bangladeshi use gas for cooking and for running vehicles. It is also used to generate electricity.

Police said they broke up the protest after the activists tried to block roads in the centre of Dhaka during a half-day strike called by leftist political parties.

“We had to use water cannon and fire tear gas as the protesters paid no heed to our requests to move away,” police official Sheikh Abul Bashar told Reuters.

Demonstrators said police detained about a dozen protest leaders and about 20 people were injured.

“The government has illogically burdened people with the increase,” a student union leader, Lucky Akter, told reporters. “We demand the government scrap the decision.”

—Reuters

**Senior North Korea envoy visits Beijing after China coal ban**

BEIJING — A senior North Korean diplomat arrived in Beijing on Tuesday for talks, China said, the first such high-level visit since June, after the Asian giant halted coal imports from its impoverished neighbour this month under UN sanctions.

North Korea’s main diplomatic ally said it would ban coal imports about a week after the isolated country tested an intermediate-range ballistic missile, for the first time since US President Donald Trump took office.

The North’s Vice Foreign Minister Ri Kil Song arrived in Beijing at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and will hold talks with his host, the Chinese foreign ministry said.

“This visit of the North Korean vice foreign minister is normal diplomatic contact and exchange between China and North Korea,” foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular briefing.

Ri will meet other Chinese diplomats, including vice foreign minister Liu Zhenmin, on the visit set to run until 4 March, Geng added.

North Korea’s state-run KCNA news agency confirmed the visit.

South Korea’s foreign ministry said it was aware of Ri’s visit. “We will be travelling to China but did not elaborate, and declined to comment when asked if the visit might be related to the killing of Kim Jong Nam’s estranged half-brother.

Before he was killed at the Kuala Lumpur airport on February 13, Kim Jong Nam lived quietly in the Asian gambling hub of Macau, a Chinese territory, avoiding controversy and seemingly relaxed about political sources close to him have said.

— Reuters

**Claim’s Day Notice MV Intrepid Voy. No. 8 (C) mv intrepid voy. no. (c) consignees of cargo carried on MV Intrepid Voy. No. (c) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.L.P. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**Claim’s Day Notice: MV Calypso Voy. No. 8 (C) Consignees of cargo carried on MV Calypso Voy. No. (C) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-1 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

**Claim's Day Notice**

**TRADERMARK CAUTION**


In respect of “Pumps and mixers”.

Fraudulent or unauthorised use, or actual or colourable imitation of the mark shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw La Min, H.H.P.

For Xylem IP Management Sàrl, C/o Kelvin Chin Yangon Ltd., Level 8A, UFC Tower, Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Theirin Phyu Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 1 March 2017

lmm@kcyangon.com
Punitive Action must be taken against Fake drug manufacturers and sellers

Tommy Pauk

We learnt the miserable news about the findings of fake drugs in the local markets in Myanmar from the dailies in the recent months. The news says, “Various imitation medicines and fake BPI medicines were seized.” It was a very cruel and inhuman act of making fake BPI (Burma Pharmaceutical Industry) drugs and other brand of potent drugs. BPI is famous for its drugs and highly potent medication in Myanmar. Local people nationwide rely on BPI medicines and the physicians recommend BPI drugs to all the patients to use for treating illness. We were deeply concerned about the presence of fake drugs in Myanmar market when we learnt about that news. We simply understand that all drugs sold at the pharmacies must be guaranteed for their potency and high-quality.

In any society, the medicines are regarded as most essential things for maintaining human life, curing diseases and relieving pain etc. Basically, medicines are used to cure, halt or prevent or relieve distress; ease symptoms; or help in the diagnosis of certain illness. Everybody might need some kind of medication to be used for any ailment or injury in their life time. It is extremely important for the sick persons to find out or buy or use the genuine drugs for chronic disease or some illness or infirmity. Drug manufacturers as well as the sellers must be honest and reliable for their drugs on sale.

The perpetrators are, by no means, to be given harsh punishment. They are much more callous than narcotic drug pusher because they sell these fake drugs to those who are under the treatment with some BPI medication and other brand of drugs for their chronic disease or some illness or infirmity. People trust BPI (Burma Pharmaceutical Industry) drugs and normally when they are sick they buy and take BPI medicine from pharmacy. Majority people keep BPI drugs and other imported drugs at home as home remedies. Inno- cent people cannot examine and decide whether the drugs at the markets or drug stores are genuine or not. The unscrupulous people manufacture fake BPI drugs illegally and distribute to the markets as BPI drugs are the most demanding. At first people were not aware of the fake BPI drugs mixed together with the real BPI drugs at the market. Later people became aware of the fake BPI drugs at the market only after they had found the impotencies of the fake drugs, and they realized that the BPI drugs they had bought were fake ones. Consequently, the side effects and contents of the fake drugs give adverse effects to the users very badly.

Actually, people know that BPI drugs are potent and their potencies are higher than any imported drugs from neighboring countries. We trust BPI products and take or use them in accordance with the instructions when we suffer from some illness. BPI is a state-owned industry and its medical products such as tablets, capsules, liquids, and ointments are manufactured in conformity with WHO standard. BPI drugs have been produced by modern pharmaceutical science for many decades. Burma Pharmaceutical Industry (BPI) was changed to Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory (MPPF) after 1988. It is under the administration of Ministry of Industry (1). Significantly, these drugs have contributed to Myanmar public health and they are of high quality and potency. Medical Doctors and healthcare professionals highly recommend BPI or MPPF drugs as they are potent and the patients also prefer to take BPI drugs for use as pain relief or for use as medicinal treatment. Therefore, the usual medications or home remedies or recommended medicines are the production of BPI or MPPF in Myanmar indeed.

The unscrupulous persons make a fortune out of fake drugs — BPI brand and other demand- ing imported drugs. The licensed drug dealers of various places in Myanmar are specialized in legally imported medicines whether they are genuine or not. Even if they are found to be genuine, the dealers also need to check the manufactured dates and expiry dates of the medicines on sale. We, in Myanmar, have National drug law which was promulgated in 1992. The law enforcement has to only investigate the illegal fake drug dealing and fake drug making but also to eliminate them in Myanmar so that the consumers will escape from the danger of harm from fake drugs. The authori- ty concerned or FDA (Food and Drug Administration) must inspect the drugs sold at the drug stores in Myanmar on periodic basis. Whoever violates the National Drug Law must be given penalty in accordance with the law. Actually, fake drugs are poisons for the innocent users and their infirmity get even worse. Since the fake drugs exacerbate the illness of the concerned people, they become aware of the fact that they have unknowingly bought the fake drugs from the drugstore. FDA and law enforcement forces must combat the fake drug makers and sellers across the country and especially the border area in Myanmar. The illegal or fake drugs are secretly manufactured. Moreover, the illegal drugs and fake drugs distribution network must be exterminated by the law enforcement forces so that the public health can be safe and secure. In fact, a making- fake- drug is a criminal act which either kills or harms to the innocent people. In conclusion, the makers and sellers of fake BPI drugs or any other fake drugs shall be severely penalized. We, people in Myanmar hope to enjoy good health with genuine and potent drugs forever!
Kachin state government will establish a fund with the use of income from selling illegal timber through the tender system to carry out rural development in the state.

Authorities from the state government and forest department will monitor illegal timber extraction around the clock and seize illegal timber in real time.

“We will build schools, hospitals and clinics to develop the rural area. If we have extra funds, we will build camps for internally displaced persons and roads and bridges. Illegal timber extraction occurred because the state does not produce the finished products. So we will take action against the owners of illegal timber extraction, replant trees in areas where timber is rare and provide awareness training concerning illegal timber extraction,” said the minister.

Kachin state forest department arrested 13 illegal timber extractors and seized nine trailers, one vehicle and one saw mill near Palamau village, Myeikgyina town on 18 February. Illegal timber is seized in Kachin state every year. Most of the seized timbers are teak and hardwood.

According to statistics, illegal teak weighing 603.4232 tonnes, hardwood weighing 53.7605 tonnes and other kinds of illegal timber weighing 8634.3992 tonnes were seized between April, 2016 and January 2017.— Myitmyakha News Agency

State Counsellor receives JICA President Mr. Shinichi Kitaoka

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counsellor and the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received a delegation led by Mr. Shinichi Kitaoka, President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to the achievements of the mutual cooperation between Myanmar and JICA in diverse areas and potential cooperation for the future.—Myanmar News Agency

Thura U Shwe Mann receives Italian ambassador

Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann received HE Mr. Pier Giorgio Aliberti Ambassador of Italy to Myanmar at the meeting hall of Hluttaw building yesterday. At their meeting, they discussed bilateral relation and legal affairs.—Myanmar News Agency

Electric Power and Energy Minister receives Charge’ d’ Affairs of the State of Kuwait

H.E U Pe Zintun, Union Minister for Electric Power and Energy receiving the credence note from Mr. Ahmad Al Murtadha, Charge d’ Affairs of the Embassy of the State of Kuwait on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of National Day and 26th Anniversary of Liberation Day which held on 27th February 2017 at Sedona Hotel, Yangon.—GNLM

State Counsellor meets with Wheel Chair Train for Peace

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There will be no progress unless there is courage to overcome these difficulties. Peace must be achieved for the eternal development of the country. Therefore, weak spirit that can harm the peace must be cured, practically, not in words only. It must be proved by working. Hence, they must be encouraged that they can overcome all the difficulties and weakness that they have. Only with concerted efforts of all in unison can peace be achieved. The destiny of a country must be created by all those living in the country. It cannot be achieved with the effort of an individual or a group. The government alone cannot bring about it.”

A campaign by Wheel Chair Train for Peace to bring awareness about the civil war, peace dialogues, and assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) began in Myitkyina township in Kachin State on 15 February. From there, the convoy stopped in Mogaung, Mohnyin, Katha, Taungu, Thabeikkyin, Leip hangla, Mandalay, Meiktila, Tak ton and Pyinmama and four other towns. They arrived in Nay Pyi Taw on 27 February. Pupils from Khawchek School for the Blind made up most of the group.

The State Counsellor said the path to peace, much like the decision of the Wheel Chair Train for Peace to undertake a nationwide campaign, takes motivation and desire.

“The entire public is now showing its sincere good will for peace. I’d like to request all the armed forces to negotiate or to give a little soft heart of what we can give for the country. In the 68-year duration of the civil war, all I can say is that either we are all right or we all are wrong. If there is true desire for peace, nothing is impossible,” said Rev. Thein Lwin, Chairman of Board of Yangon Khawchen School for the Blind.

The campaign includes a selection of disabled athletes who have helped collect more than 40,000 signatures calling for peace. Following this, the State Counsellor and responsible officials of Wheel Chair Train for Peace exchanged gifts. DAW Aung San Suu Kyi individually greeted all those present at the meeting, posing for many photos.

Present at today’s ceremony were Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports, Dr Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, U Khin Maung Tin, Deputy Minister for Ministry of State Counsellor’s Office and responsible officials. —Myanmar News Agency
Trump seeks ‘historic’ US military spending boost, domestic cuts

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is seeking what he called a “historic” increase in defence spending, but ran into immediate opposition from Republicans in Congress who must approve his plan and said it was not enough to meet the military’s needs.

The proposed rise in the Pentagon budget to $603 billion (485 billion pounds) comes as the United States has wound down major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and remains the world’s strongest military power.

The plan came under fire from Democratic lawmakers, who said cuts being proposed to pay for the additional military spending would cripple important domestic programmes such as environmental protection and education.

A White House budget official, who outlined the plan on a conference call with reporters, said the administration would propose “increasing defence by $54 billion or 10 per cent.” That represents the magnitude of the increase over budget caps Congress put in place in 2011.

But Mick Mulvaney, the White House budget director, said the plan would bring the Pentagon’s budget to $603 billion in total, just 3 per cent more than the $584 billion the agency spent in the most recent fiscal year, which ended on 30 September, 2016.

The rise would be slightly higher than the country’s current 2.5 per cent rate of inflation.

“President Trump intends to submit a defense budget that is a mere 3 per cent above President (Barack) Obama’s defence budget, which has left our military underfunded, undersized, and unready to confront threats to our national security,” John McCain, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement.

The defence boost would be balanced by slashing the same amount from non-defence spending, including a large reduction in foreign aid, the White House budget official said.

Trump does not have the final say on federal spending. His plan for the military is part of a budget proposal to Congress, which, although it is controlled by his fellow Republicans, will not necessarily follow his plans. Budget negotiations with lawmakers can take months.

McCain told reporters he would introduce a budget with the slight military increase and thought it would face opposition in the Senate.

Trump told state governors at the White House his budget plan included a “historic increase in defence spending to rebuild the depleted military of the United States of America.”

He said his proposal was a “landmark event” and would send a message of “American strength, security and resolve” to other countries.

Officials familiar with Trump’s budget blueprint said the plan would call for cuts to agencies including the State Department and the Environmental Protection Agency.

One official with discussions over State’s budget said the agency could see spending cut by as much as 30 per cent, which would force a major department restructuring and elimination of programmes.

The United States spends about $50 billion annually on the State Department and foreign assistance.

More than 120 retired US generals and admirals urged Congress on Monday to fully fund US diplomacy and foreign aid, saying such programmes “are critical to keeping America safe.”

Trump has vowed to spare middle-class social programs such as Social Security and Medicare from any cuts.

Nancy Pelosi, the top Democrat in the House of Representative, was quoted as dismissing the same amount from non-defence spending, including a large reduction in foreign aid, the White House budget official said.

Trump’s plan to slash funding for federal agencies to free up money for the Pentagon showed he was not putting American working families first.

“$54 billion cut will do far-reaching and long-lasting damage to our ability to meet the needs of the American people and win the jobs of the future,” Pelosi said. “The president is surrendering America’s leadership in innovation, education, science and clean energy.”

That official familiar with the proposal said Trump’s request for the Pentagon included more money for shipbuilding, military aircraft and establishing “a more robust presence in key international waterways and choke points” such as the Strait of Hormuz and South China Sea.

That could put Washington at odds with Iran and China. The United States already has the world’s most powerful fighting force and it spends far more than any other country on defence.

About one-sixth of the federal budget goes to military spending.

Trump has said previously he would expand the Army to 540,000 active-duty troops from its current 480,000, increase the Marine Corps to 36 battalions from 23 – or as many as 10,000 more Marines – boost the Navy to 350 ships and submarines from 276, and raise the number of Air Force tactical aircraft to 1,200 from 1,100.

He has not said where he would place the extra hardware and forces or made clear what they would be used for. The United States has been shutting some of its military bases in recent years.

Trump has also said he would bolster the development of missile defences and cyber capabilities. Last week, he told reporters the United States had “fallen behind on nuclear weapons capacity.” He pledged to ensure that “we’re going to be at the top of the pack.”

Putin says draft UN resolution to sanction Syria ‘inappropriate’

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday a draft UN Security Council resolution put forward by Western powers to sanction Syria’s government over the alleged use of chemical weapons was inappropriate.

The Security Council will vote later on Tuesday on a resolution drafted by France, Britain and the United States to ban the supply of helicopters to the Syrian government and to blacklist Syrian military commanders.

“I think it is totally inappropriate,” Putin told a news conference in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, after meeting his Kyrgyz counterpart Almazbek Atambayev.

“It would undermine trust in the negotiating process. Russia will not support any new sanctions against the Syrian leadership.”

Russia’s Deputy UN Ambassador, Vladimir Safronkov, told reporters on Friday that Moscow would veto the draft resolution.— Reuters

South Korea suggests suspending North Korea’s UN seat

GENEVA — South Korea called on Tuesday for “collective measures” against North Korea, including possible suspension of its UN membership, saying the use of chemical weapons to assassinate a political foe could be an “act of terrorism.”

“The North Korean government has forfeited its seat in the United Nations,” the South Korean foreign minister, Kang Kyung-wha, said in a letter to the UN, which she said was “a wake-up call.”

Choi Yun-sung, head of South Korea’s UN mission in Geneva, said his country would consult with “like-minded states” on possible measures, including those that would “seriously undermine the country’s membership.”

Two days earlier, North Korea was able toINUICP to adopt a resolution, drafted by the United States, that would have suspended North Korea’s rights and privileges as a UN member, setting a precedent for future conflict.

In his letter, Choi said his country would consult with “like-minded states” on possible measures, including those that would “seriously undermine the country’s membership.”

He said the draft UN resolution is a “wake-up call” to the international community to confront North Korea’s use of chemical weapons.

“North Korea is either in violation of the UN Charter or in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention,” he said, adding that his country would consult with “like-minded states” on possible measures, including those that would “seriously undermine the country’s membership.”

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Russia, Turkey in talks over supply of air defence systems

BISHKEK — Russia and Turkey are in talks over the possibility of an air defence systems supply contract but no specific agreements have been concluded yet, Russia’s Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Fomin told the media.

“There is no process of supplying air defence systems. There is a process of negotiations. The talks are continuing but there are no supplies. Supplies will be possible only if agreements have been concluded but there have been no such agreements yet,” Fomin said.

The head of Russia’s Rostec corporation Sergey Chemezov last week said that Turkey had displayed interest in Russia’s air defence systems S-400 and negotiations over possible supply were afoot. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Russia’s talks with Turkey on the issue were proceeding positively.

A Turkish television broadcaster NTV said Russian and Turkish presidents might discuss the issue at a meeting of the Russian-Turkish High Level Cooperation Council in March.—TASS

Taliban kill 12 Afghan police with silenced weapons

LASHKAR GAH — Taliban fighters in the southern Afghan province of Helmand attacked a check-point with silenced weapons and hand grenades early on Tuesday killing 12 policemen and stealing weapons and ammunition, officials said.

But a provincial official said that it could be an insider attack as one of the guards was still missing.

“The investigation is ongoing to find out if somebody from inside has defect ed to the Taliban and paved the way for this crime,” he said.

The attack, in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, underlined the threat facing Afghan security forces in the opium-producing province, where they struggle to match well-equipped Taliban fighters who now control several districts.

The police killed in the attack had been pulled back from the southern district of Khamishin district which security forces abandoned last year.

“The Taliban attacked a guard with silenced guns and then entered the check post,” Helmand deputy police chief Haji Gulal told reporters.

“They attacked other policemen with hand grenades and killed all of them. They later took their weapons and ammunition and escaped,” he said.

In a separate incident, another 12 policemen were killed in the Marjah district of Helmand after an hour-long gunbattle, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

Taliban fighters now control most of Helmand, including areas in Lashkar Gah. British and US forces suffered their heaviest casualties of the war in the province in years of fighting following the removal of the Taliban in 2001.

Afghan security forces now control less than 60 per cent of the country, according to US estimates, with the Taliban in control of about 10 per cent and the remainder contested between government and insurgent forces.—Reuters

Zimbabwe public sector workers to protest over bonuses

HARARE — Zimbabwean public sector workers will hold a demonstration on Monday calling on the government to pay bonuses for 2016, the civil service union said, setting them on collision course with President Robert Mugabe’s cash strapped administration.

Without balance of payment support from foreign lenders, the southern African nation is spending more than 90 per cent of the national budget on salaries, leaving no money for infrastructure or bonuses that were due by December.

Last July, doctors joined nurses, teachers and other civil servants in a national shutdown over unpaid wages, which coincided with anti-government protests called by social media groups over a deteriorating economy.

The Apex Council, which represents all civil service unions, issued a notice of the strike to the government. It accused the government of trying to undermine unions by directly engaging workers in a survey to determine whether public employees could opt for residential land in lieu of the bonuses.

Public sector unions last month rejected the land proposal.

The government then issued forms to every civil servant asking whether they preferred residential land instead of cash bonuses, angering the unions.

“Bonuses are part of our conditions of service so we can’t mix that with land. The government is being provocative and disrespectful by engaging workers directly,” Apex Council president Cecilias Alexander said.

Alexander said next Monday’s demonstration “will show that we have a constituency that we represent.”

Public Service and Labour Minister Prisca Mupfumo defended the survey, saying it would determine how the government should proceed on the issue of bonuses.

“We will continue to dialogue with them but we do not tolerate threats,” Mupfumira said. —Reuters

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 2nd March (Thursday) 2017 “PEASANT Day” under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

claim's day notice

MV SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES Phone No: 2301185

claim's day notice

MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES Phone No: 2301185
El Niño may be fast-tracking to arrive by summer — Braun

CHICAGO — The path to another round of El Niño in 2017 appears to be shortening, as tropical Pacific Ocean waters have been warming at a substantially faster rate than normal.

Weather forecasters have been eyeing for a couple of months a possible return this year of El Niño, which normally comes around every two to seven years and last occurred in 2015/16.

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation is one of the most widely followed long-term indicators of climate, as both its warm and cool phases can trigger varying effects on weather patterns globally. El Niño, which is associated with warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures (SSTs) along the equatorial Pacific, is known to bring a more volatile weather to some parts of the world and is closely watched by agricultural and energy markets. Some notable impacts include droughts in Southeast Asia and heavy rains and erosion along the Pacific coasts of North and South America.

La Niña, the cool phase of ENSO, just concluded its six-month run last month. In the last several weeks, remnants of the colder waters have been all but eliminated.

In the week centered on 22 February, the SST anomaly was positive 2.3 degrees Celsius in the Niño 1+2 region, the easternmost of the four Niño regions, directly off the coast of Peru. Warming in this region sometimes precedes the onset of El Niño (http://retu.rs/2izC0-Og).

To put this into perspective, since weekly record-keeping began in 1990, the only other instances that featured warm SST anomalies in the Niño 1+2 region occurred during the mega-El Niños of 2015/16 and 1997/98, as well as the moderate-to-strong El Niño in early 1992.

The week centered on 25 January, 2017, also recorded a 2.3 degree anomaly, so the latest value is not necessarily an outlier. But if this trend eventually translates into a full-on El Niño later in the year, the outcome would be unprecedented.

A record-breaking El Niño surfaced in mid-2015 and lasted through early 2016, after which SSTs dropped off and gave way to the relatively weaker La Niña event to cap off the year.

But following the previous occurrences of strong El Niño — 1997/98, 1982/83, 1972/73 — the warm cycle did not appear again until three or four years later. So the possible return of El Niño this year would present a unique situation against which there is not much comparable data.

This month for the first time, El Niño is the most favoured scenario over neutral or La Niña conditions starting in July or August, according to the International Research Institute and the US Climate Prediction Centre. The probability for El Niño between August and October stands at 51 per cent, while the chance of La Niña is at 38 per cent (http://retu.rs/2izB2Ch).

But some models are calling for El Niño’s arrival a bit earlier than the progression of the SSTs in recent weeks.

Monday’s run of the CFS version 2 model, maintained by the US National Centres for Environmental Prediction, shows steady El Niño conditions — SST anomalies of at least 0.5 degree Celsius — for most of the Northern Hemisphere spring and then a moderate to strong event in place by the summer (http://retu.rs/2izS0D7).

The forecast trends are starting to show a divergence between the statistical and dynamical models, the latter of which is based on the actual atmospheric and oceanic state rather than historical tendencies.

Since the dynamical models are now mostly calling for El Niño by the start of Northern Hemisphere summer, this gives confidence that environmental conditions are indeed turning favorable for the quicker return of the warm cycle.—Reuters

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rakhmon during their meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 27 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Putin stresses Russia never interferes in other countries’ domestic policy

BISHKEK — Moscow has never interfered in internal political processes in other countries and the change of power should process strictly under law, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday.

“As for internal political processes, this is not our business. We never interfere in the internal political processes of other countries, especially of our allies,” the Russian leader said after talks with Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev.

“I fully join what has been said by President Atambayev: we proceed from the fact that we must value stability in the post-Soviet space,” Putin stressed.

The Russian president added: “We proceed from the fact that any change of power must proceed within the framework of the Constitution and the effective law.” — TASS

Vietnamese capital to build 5-storey underground parking

HANOI — Vietnamese capital Hanoi will build three five-storey underground car parks, according to the city’s People’s Committee on Tuesday.

Among five floors of the underground car park in the city’s Thong Nhat Park, the total construction area of the car park is over 15,000 square metres with over 5,600 square metres on each floor, providing enough space for 390 cars.

On the ground, there should be trees, operating house, and other supporting buildings with total investment of some 100 billion Vietnamese dong (4.48 million US dollars).—Xinhua
LOS ANGELES — Three people were killed and two critically injured when their light aircraft crashed into a house on Monday, causing several fires in a residential neighborhood in southern California, the local fire chief said.

The Cesna 310 crashed at about 4:30 pm (0030 GMT Tuesday) shortly after take-off from Riverside Municipal Airport, 60 miles (100 km) east of Los Angeles. The pilot and two passengers died. The two survivors, both women, were found inside the ruined house in critical condition, Riverside Fire Chief Michael Moore said. The house was destroyed.

TV images of the scene showed firefighters spraying water on several houses ablaze and covering what appeared to be a body with a sheet.

At least five families were forced to leave their homes, a local Red Cross official said. The passengers were from San Jose in Northern California and in the area for a cheerleading event at Disneyland, Moore said. FAA spokesman Ian Gregor said the plane crashed “under unknown circumstances” shortly after taking off from the airport, bound for San Jose.

The incident will be investigated by the FAA and National Transportation Safety Board, he said. — Reuters

**INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Provision of Consulting Services to Verify the Network Performance of the Mobile Operators Network

Ministry of Transport and Communications now invites eligible Consulting firm to indicate their interests to provide hands on Provision of Consulting Services to verify the performance of mobile operators’ networks by doing the drive test and QoS measurement.

Expression of interest and other supporting documents (such as the experience on the similar tasks, the profile of the team members, company registration) must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, by mail or by fax or by e-mail) on or before 1630 hours of 8 March 2017.

**The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Electricity and Energy MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) 5/2017**

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

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<th>Sr. No</th>
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<td>Spare Parts for GCS (Myagyalga) (1) Lot</td>
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<td>Water transfer Pump Skid Mounted with Engine (300 GPM x 150 Ft hd) (25-40) HP (5) Sets</td>
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<td>DMP/L-040(16-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>Container (1/2017)</td>
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Tender Closing Date & Time - 28-3-2017, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 27th February, 2017 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise Ph. +95 67 - 411206 / 411274
Future’s self-titled album tops Billboard 200 chart

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Future topped the weekly US Billboard 200 chart on Monday, scoring his fourth chart-topping album.

Atlanta rapper Future’s self-titled album sold 140,000 units in its first week, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan for the week ending 23 February.

The rapper released another album, “HNDRRXX,” on Friday, which Billboard said is projected to top the charts next week.

Future’s album knocked off last week’s chart-topper, the soundtrack to the “Fifty Shades Darker” film, which dropped to No. 3 this week. Bruno Mars’ “24K Magic” held steady at No. 2.

New entries in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 album chart this week included R&B singer Charlie Wilson at No. 7 with “In It To Win It,” alt-rocker Ryan Adams’ “Prisoner” at No. 8 and bluegrass-country artist Alison Krauss at No. 9 with “Windy City.”

On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online single sales, Ed Sheeran’s “Shape Of You” held onto the top spot with another 147,000 copies sold.—Reuters

Stephen Moyer to feature in Fox’s Marvel drama

LOS ANGELES — “True Blood” star Stephen Moyer has been signed on to star in Fox’s Marvel action-adventure.

The 47-year-old actor will feature in the untitled film from director Bryan Singer, confirmed The Hollywood Reporter.

Moyer will essay the role of Reed, who is an ambitious attorney trying to strike a work-life balance as struggles with the demands of his job at the DA’s office and shoulders responsibilities towards his family.

The script of the film will be penned by Matt Nix, which focuses on two ordinary parents who discover their children possess mutant powers.

They are forced to go on the run from a hostile government as the family joins up with an underground network of mutants and must fight to survive. The drama will also star Blair Redford and Jamie Chung. —PTI

Ed Sheeran performs Shape Of You with classroom instruments

LOS ANGELES — Singer Ed Sheeran performed his latest hit “Shape Of You” on the rhythm of classroom instruments.

The 26-year-old musician appeared on the “Tonight Show” and crooned his special rendition of his recent with a little help from Jimmy Fallon at the xylophone, reported People. While Sheeran performed the song with a banana-shaped fruit shaker in hand, he was supported by a group who played other mini instruments such as synthesiser, tambourine and guitar, among others.

Earlier, “Tonight Show” Music Room also saw ultimate a capella collaboration for many recording artists including Adele, Mariah Carey, Idina Menzel, One Direction, Metallica and Sesame Street. —PTI

Oscars draw lowest US audience since 2008 with 32.9 mln viewers

LOS ANGELES — ABC’s Sunday night broadcast of the Academy Awards drew 32.9 million US viewers, the smallest audience for the Oscars since 2008, according to Nielsen data released by the Walt Disney Co unit on Monday.

This year’s audience dropped 4 percent from the 2016 Oscars, which drew 34.4 million viewers. The 2008 Oscars averaged 32 million viewers.

Despite the low numbers, the Oscars are still expected to be the most-watched non-sporting event on US television this year. The decline in viewership for the Oscars breaks the streak of higher ratings for award shows in 2017 after both the Grammys and Golden Globes showed gains over last year.

The awards ceremony went a few minutes past midnight on the East Coast and ended in controversy when “La La Land” was mistakenly named best picture winner after presenters were given the wrong envelope.

The actual winner, announced minutes later, was “Moonlight.” —Reuters

Selena Gomez, The Weeknd enjoy romantic date night

LOS ANGELES — Actress-singer Selena Gomez and her alleged boyfriend The Weeknd stepped out together in Paris mere blocks away from where the “Starboy” hitmaker ex Bella Hadid was partying.

The duo was all smiles as they were spotted enjoying a romantic night at La Reserve, reported Hollywood Life.

The 23-year-old “Hands to Myself” singer looked elegant in a sleeveless black turtleneck dress, with her hair tied back in a top ponytail, while the Weeknd, 27, dressed a bit more casually in a tan jacket and a black ball cap.

The pair, who have been spotted on several dates here and Italy over the last two months, touched down in the famously romantic city just ahead of the start of Paris Fashion Week, which kicks off today.—PTI
Faith puts Ghana at heart of global Christianity

ACCRA — Ghana is embracing the Christian faith with a fervor that is increasingly shaping its national identity.

The country is central to a wave that puts West Africa at the heart of global Christianity, said professor Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu of Trinity Theological Seminary in Accra.

“By the middle of the 20th century, African Christianity was going to be the hotbed of Christianity,” said Asamoah-Gyadu, an authority on African Christianity.

“The custom is beginning for much of Africa to shape church history for many years to come,” he said.

Some 41 per cent of the world’s 560 million Christians live in Africa and it could rise to 53 per cent by 2050, said an article this year in the International Bulletin of Mission Research. Muslims are a minority in Ghana.

Isaac Ollennu’s story is typical. The 36-year-old Accra country works with a Chinese import company, putting him in the middle class. He says he prays throughout the day and often wakes at 3 am to pray.

“My faith is everything to me,” he said. Christianity was brought to the Gold Coast by Roman Catholics and mainstream Protestants but Pentecostal faith featuring ecstatic worship and a God of miracles has underpinned the recent rise of faith, said Asamoah-Gyadu.

“Pentecostal religion promises breakthroughs... You tithe, you pray and you will get (what you want),” he said. Churches spread because authority flows through spiritual experience, rather than church hierarchy or formal education.

Charismatic faith came from North America and people were receptive because with traditional beliefs in which people appeal to spirits to solve problems, he said.

“It also appealed to social aspirations. Wealthy pastors are seen as blessed and their entertaining, informal services cater to popular taste. Nana Kofi Acquah, a preacher, said Christian leaders also make faith compatible with Ghanaian culture.”

Reuters
Emotional night as Leicester begin post-Ranieri era

LONDON — Leicester City fans trudged towards the King Power Stadium for Monday’s crucial home clash against Liverpool still reeling from last week’s sacking of title-winning manager Claudio Ranieri.

Muralis of the popular Italian, who led the club to the most improbable of Premier League titles last May, still adorn walls surrounding the ground and many fans were sporting Ranieri face masks in the build-up to the 2000 GMT kickoff.

While some celebrated the 65-year-old’s achievement with banners and chants, others mourned his passing.

One fan was photographed driving a black hearse around the streets surrounding the stadium with flowers arranged in the windows spelling out “RIP Football”.

Inside the stadium, a banner reading “Grazie Claudio” while a rendition of the opera classic “Nessun Dorma” was played over the loudspeakers, stirring memories of Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli singing on the day Leicester were presented with the title.

“The programme notes penned by Leicester’s Thai chairman Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha offered his thoughts on the “painful” sacking that shocked English football last Thursday.

“We made the most difficult decision we have ever had to make in seven years with Leicester City,” he wrote.

“I don’t expect everybody to understand and I know that some people are angry about it. But we have to think about the club’s long-term interests and the best way to bring the club we love forward.”

He also paid tribute to Ranieri’s “warmth, charm and good humour”.

Emotions aside, the immediate priority for Leicester is to retain their top-flight status.

After five consecutive defeats they began Monday’s game in the bottom three following results at the weekend.

Ranieri’s former assistant, 53-year-old Craig Shakespeare, was in charge on Monday and is among the candidates to replace Ranieri on a full-time basis.— Reuters

Federer returns with easy win over Paire in Dubai

DUBAI — Roger Federer breezed back into action to reach the second round of the Dubai Open with a straightforward 6-1, 6-3 win over erratic Frenchman Benoit Paire on Monday.

In his first match since memorably claiming his 18th grand slam title by beating Rafael Nadal at the Australian Open a month ago, the 35-year-old was immediately back in the old routine to give Paire the runaround.

There was precious little resistance from the Frenchman as Swiss maestro Federer, the seven-times champion and third seed, delighted a large Centre Court crowd with flashes of brilliance. Paire was warned for unsportsmanlike behaviour at one point after hurling his racket and also needed treatment on a foot injury. Federer claimed victory in less than an hour.

“I think I returned very well for a first round. I was able to get my second serves in deep, was able to go into the offensive quickly,” Federer, who does much of his training in Dubai, told a news conference.

“Didn’t have to move that much. It was very quick rallies. So we’ll see how that’s going to turn out. But obviously couldn’t be a better first round for me here in Dubai.”

Top seed and world number one Andy Murray also returns after a lengthy layoff, which included a bout of shingles, when he takes on Tunisia’s Malek Jaziri on Tuesday.— Reuters

Villarreal keeper Asenjo suffers fourth ACL injury

MADRID— Villarreal goalkeeper Sergio Asenjo has ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee, effectively ruling him out for the rest of the season, the club said.

Asenjo suffered the fourth such injury of his career, although the first to his left knee, during his team’s 3-2 home defeat to Real Madrid on Sunday evening.

“Tests done to Sergio Asenjo have confirmed that the goalkeeper has suffered a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament to his left knee,” the La Liga club said in a statement.

Asenjo, who has made 29 appearances in all competitions this season for Villarreal, will have to undergo surgery. The typical recovery time for a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament is around six months.

The 27-year-old suffered his first ACL setback in 2010 while on the books of Atletico Madrid and tore it again a year later while on loan at Malaga.

Villarreal then lost Asenjo for seven months in April 2015 after he ruptured his right ACL for the third time.— Reuters

Barcelona have resources to upset PSG but need belief, says Iniesta

BARCELONA — Barcelona must believe in their ability to make history as the first Champions League team to overturn a 4-0 first-leg deficit when they line up against Paris St Germain at Camp Nou on 8 March, captain Andres Iniesta said on Monday.

“Considering how complicated it was, we have to believe, we must believe,” Iniesta said ahead of the last-16 second leg. “I think we have the resources to cause them problems.

“A 4-0 result is substantial but we might have an option to get back in the tie.”

Barcelona’s star-studded attack led by Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar have scored the most goals in La Liga this season, at 65 — five ahead of leaders Real Madrid, who have a game in hand.

Messi has scored 10 goals in this season’s Champions League but Suarez, who has 18 in La Liga, and Neymar have just two apiece in Europe’s elite club competition and need to find their goalscoring touch again.

While their Feb. 14 mauling in Paris made for a difficult period at the club, Barca have ground out a couple of La Liga victories since, winning at home against Leganes and, on Saturday, beating Atletico Madrid 2-1 away.

“To win at the Calderon stadium after the week we had was to celebrate,” Iniesta said at a promotional event.

Iniesta said he hoped coach Luis Enrique would sign a new contract after his current deal expires at the end of the season.

“There are no doubts regarding our commitment to him,” Iniesta said. “I hope he has the desire to continue in this team in order to continue to win titles.”— Reuters