State Counsellor holds talks with DPN

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomed the Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) from the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) yesterday in the meeting hall of Nay Pyi Taw’s National Reconciliation and Peace Centre main office building.

The State Counsellor delivered an opening speech followed by a talk by Khu Oo Reh, leader of the DPN, clarifying the nine proposals in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

This was followed by those in attendance discussing codes of conduct in political discussions concerning the NCA, and the State Counsellor appraising the topics discussed and giving a closing speech.

Attending the meeting were Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe, Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr. Tin Myo Win, Union Attorney-General U Htun Htun Oo, Deputy Minister U Min Thu, DPN’s leader and Karen National Progressive Party’s (KNPP) Secretary Khu Oo Reh, member of the central committee of Shun State Progressive Party (SSPP) U Sai Htoo, members including NMSP executive committee member Dr. Nai Shwe Thein and Nai Aung Ma Nge, U Min Htun from ANC, Ta Nyi Lu from WNO, and members from the Technical Support Group including Nai Banyar Aung, Ku Taw Ral, Ko San Aung, Naw Chaw Su, Khun Naung Min Banyar, Kyar Shel Bo and Sai Aung Thaing. —Myanmar News Agency

Central Committee holds meeting to boost SMEs

AT the Central Committee for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (1/2017) meeting held yesterday morning in the Credentials Hall of the Presidents Palace, Chairman of the Central Committee President U Htin Kyaw addressed those who attended the meeting.

The President stressed that Small and Medium Enterprises play an important role in the country’s economic development and are pioneers in creative enterprises and can better adapt to the changing market demands than larger businesses, and can do this faster.

Because SMEs exist in all sectors of the economy, they have the capacity to extend employment opportunities to suburban areas as well as prevent internal migration and urbanization.

The President likened the SMEs to an economic engine of the country.

“Not only should we encourage development of SMEs, but review and amend necessary policies, laws, bylaws, rules and regulations so that they can better complement the SMEs,” the President said.

In undertaking this reform process, the President said it was important to strengthen the framework at the national, state and regional levels. There are four essential factors to keep in mind when considering developing SMEs: First, reducing the risks fledgling enterprises face; second, the flow of investment.
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw debates survey on traditional cultures and customs of ethnics

2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 4th regular session held its 11th day meeting at 10 am yesterday. At the meeting, Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, replied to the discussion made by U Sai Thant Zin of Hsipaw constituency that the wording “To record survey works, for traditional cultures and customs of national ethnics not to be extinct and simultaneously to be exploited, maintained and propagated,” should be amended in accord with aims and objectives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

The Union Minister added, “Original statement submitted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture says that traditional cultures and customs of national ethnics are to be surveyed and recorded collectively. Over the discussion made by U Sai Thant Zin, I hereby want to say that it has been described in the revised statement as to “record survey works, for traditional cultures and customs of national ethnics not to be extinct and to develop simultaneously.” The objective of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture is exploration, maintenance and propagation of the traditional cultures, customs and cultural heritages of national ethnics.”

As regards the discussion over policy and principles of the bill on the national planning law, 2017-2018 financial year, U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Labor, Immigration and Population, U Hla Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, U Kyaw Myo, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications, Dr Tun Naung, Deputy Minister for Electric Power and Energy, U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance, and U Tin Htut, Nay Pyi Taw Council member, with explained by U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Construction.

Afterward, Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw said, “Over the projects of respective departments and organizations to be reduced, devaluation and rejection of projects are to be decided with the approval of Hluttaw at the same time.”

The Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw announced that getting the approval of the Hluttaw over the bill on national planning for 2017-2018 financial year, according to paragraphs & approving the whole bill will be carried out in the 4th regular session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to be held in the next week.

As regards the bill on protection of personal security and freedom of citizens, findings and conclusion notes of the Combining Committee of the Bill, was read out in the 9th day meeting hall of Hluttaw building.

Involvement of Tatmadaw in peace sector important

A WORKSHOP by a group representing 22 political parties which will take part in discussion on the security sector at the coming Union Peace Conference — 21st Century Panglong took place at Orchid Hotel in Yangon on 27 February to 1 March. After the workshop, Secretary of Working Committee of Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC), Tar Hla Pe from Ta’ung Palaung National Party, secretary of the working committee Min Zayar Oo of Mon National Party, secretary of UPDJC’s political parties Sai Kyaw Nyunt from Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, Representative Daw Khin Sein Myint from Tai Lai (Red Shan) Nationalities Development Party and Sai Huy Aung Chairman of Tai Lai (Red Shan) Nationalities Development Party held a press conference.

“Security sector was the main topic during the three-day discussion. Defence sector was discussed on a prioritised basis as UPDJC decided to discuss it in the coming Union Peace Conference — 21st Century Panglong. All parties agreed the point that armed groups must be under the purview of the civilian government when a federal union emerges,” said Sai Kyaw Nyunt. The parties have reached full consensus about deployment of the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed forces and security matters to be tackled in line with the law, Tar Hla Pe said. “We’ll discuss union-level security sector, taking suggestions from 22 parties,“ he added. He continued that the Tatmadaw’s involvement in peace sector is important and the peace process will achieve success only when the government, political parties and civil society organisations build the nation together in the future. Five representatives were chosen from 22 political parties to discuss security sector. UPDJC is consisted of five representatives from the government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups, said Min Zayar Oo.—Ye Khuang Nyunt

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw debates survey on traditional cultures and customs of ethnics

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Visitors to be visited most of the local people during water festival

Maldives, a south Asian island country, will be visited by many local people during the water festival, according to the travel and tourism agencies.

Most of the local people will visit the Maldives because hotels are giving discount for the month of April.

Most of the local visitors have reserved rooms for a four-day, three-night trip, said Ko Zye Aung from Happy Travel and Tours.

The visitors can enjoy a relaxing spa treatments, diving and speed boat excursions. Trips to the Maldives cost between Ks700,000 and Ks1.2 million per person for four days and three nights.—209

Mahn Win Hla Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Photo: MNA

Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture. Photo: MNA

U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance. Photo: MNA

U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Labor, Immigration and Population. Photo: MNA

U Hla Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation. Photo: MNA

Announcement by the Union Election Commission (Unofficial translation)

All Hluttaw Representative Candidates participating in the by-elections on 1 April 2017 need to submit an account detailing expenditures for the election using form (20) within 30 days of announcement of the Hluttaw Representative’s name to their respective Region or State Election Sub-Commission according to Hluttaw Election Bylaw (77).

Hence all Hluttaw Representatives and Electoral Representatives participating in the by-election are to systematically compile a detailed account of expenditures and vouchers/receipts concerning election expenses in keeping with respective Hluttaw Electoral Laws and Bylaws.—Union Election Commission

Thura U Shwe Mann receives Forum of Federations delegation and Qatar Special Envoy

Thura U Shwe Mann and the Special Envoy from Qatar Dr. Mutlaq M. Al-Qahtani. Photo: MNA

CHAIRMAN of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann received a delegation from Forum of Federations yesterday at 10 am and Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs Special Envoy H.E. DrMutlaq M. Al-Qahtani at 4:30 pm at the meeting hall of Hluttaw building.

In the meeting with the delegation from Forum of Federations, discussions were made on realization of a federal system and exchanging of experiences.—Myanmar News Agency
Message of Greetings sent by President U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on the occasion of the Peasants’ Day Celebrations which falls on 2 March 2017

Dear esteemed peasantry,

Today is a historic and auspicious day which has been designated to honor all the peasants in the country. On this day full of Mingalar and historic significance, I wish to send my message of greetings and good wishes for the health and happiness and blessings for auspiciousness for all the peasantry. In addition I also send good wishes for great success in their farming work.

Although 70 per cent of our country’s population live in the rural areas and their main occupation is farming, and although 30 per cent of the GDP is from the agriculture sector, the majority of the peasantry have low incomes and this has affected their socio-economic life as well.

That is why for the development of the agriculture sector, we need to formulate sound policies and strive hard to implement them for the advancement of the socio-economic life of the peasantry.

The building of peace and tranquility and socio-economic advancement is considered by our government to be our goal as well as our duty and we have been working in that direction. During the 10 month period of our government, we have been working towards the goal of developing sustainable agriculture and for the increased production of agriculture and livestock products that would be able to compete internationally. Furthermore, we have laid down (11) goals for food security, ensuring nutritional value in food and food safety, for the peasants to be able to enjoy their rights fully, and increasing foreign and local investments in the agriculture sector. Also, in working for the fulfillment of these goals we have adopted policies for increasing the production capacity of the agriculture and livestock sector, and at the same time to increase the income of peasants with small plots, advancement of the socio-economic life of rural people and sustainable development.

Dearest esteemed peasantry,

As Myanmar is a country where agriculture is given priority and the economy is based on agriculture, to give protection to peasant’s rights and to increase their benefits, a law for the protection of peasant’s rights and increasing their benefits had been passed. Furthermore, a leading committee for the protection of peasant’s rights and advancement of their benefits had been formed and had been working in accordance with the adopted policies.

Just as we have been working hard to increase agricultural production by farming multiple crops on farmland that had to rely solely on rain water introducing irrigation farming, we have also been collaborating with local and foreign organizations to educate peasants on how to grow crops that grow well in specific regions, crop patterns, and farming methods.

We have been undertaking maintenance and repair of projects for utilizing river water and irrigation dams, demonstration classes on how to use water effectively, systematic development of mechanized farming, production of good quality seeds for effective utilization, implementing projects on a wide scale, production of high quality export produce, prevent contamination, preventing losses due to late harvesting, and providing technical skills and know how. We have been laying down firm foundations for the above practices to be successfully distributed to the peasants.

In addition demonstration model plots are being created for educating peasants; also opportunities are being created for peasants to collaborate with agricultural experts for setting up experimental plots for the cultivation of seed strains, crop varieties, and cultivation methods that grow well in their respective regions. These activities are being carried out at the same time in tandem in a states and regions.

The Union government has already permitted peasants to grow crops that are compatible with their regions. In order to ensure that peasants get more income, efforts are being made to secure firm prices in local and foreign markets not only as primary products but as value added products. We have been giving encouragement in this matter. Also, we have been working systematically for the creation of “Wholesale Markets” to ensure that our produce will get firm prices, more income and stable markets at home and abroad.

Dearest esteemed peasantry,

We have been working very hard and making effective and concerted efforts to mobilize peasants with small plots to form themselves into agricultural cooperatives. For latest methods in agriculture and the latest news about the weather, market news and entertainment programs to get into the hands of farmers on a real time basis, the Government and private media companies are broadcasting the news. Now that mobile phones are in the hands of everyone, the latest news are being disseminated via these mobile phones.

The world’s population has been increasing daily and the current population of 7000 million will become 9000 million in the year 2050. That is why we need to produce the required food in greater quantities. For our country also, in preparation for the increase in population ahead, we have been working hard on all fronts with high momentum with the aim of not only securing internal food security but also for export to international markets.

Based on the advantages we have because of our rich land resources and water resources, and good climatic conditions combined with the unified strength of our peasantry, this is an optimum time for all round development including the agricultural sector. This is also an optimum time for uplifting the socio-economic life of the peasantry.

Dear esteemed peasantry,

In conclusion, for the long-term national interest of all Union citizens and including the interest of all the peasantry living in our country, I urge all of you to march towards our ultimate goal of working for equal efforts and meeting all challenges and obstacles that may lie ahead. With these words I send this Message of Greetings.

(Official Translation)

State Counsellor receives Special Envoys from Qatar and China

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received H.E. Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China at the Ministry at 1:30 pm in Nay Pyi Taw and H.E. Mr. Mutlaq M. Al-Qahtani, Special Envoy for the Foreign Minister for Counter-terrorism and Mediation of Conflict Resolution of the State of Qatar at 2:30 pm at the same venue.

—Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi cordially greets Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy from China in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi greets Dr. Mutlaq M. Al-Qahtani, Special Envoy from Qatar in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Apology and Correction

In a front page story in the 28 February edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar, we incorrectly referred to U Ko Ni as “Thura U Ko Ni” in the story headlined “Anti-violence ceremony at Yangon airport.”

The error occurred when the word “Thura” was copied and pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages. The title was inadvertently and incorrectly pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages. The title was inadvertently and incorrectly pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages. The title was inadvertently and incorrectly pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages. The title was inadvertently and incorrectly pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages. The title was inadvertently and incorrectly pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages. The title was inadvertently and incorrectly pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages. The title was inadvertently and incorrectly pasted in front of the name of U Tin Oo in the story during last-minute editing of our pages.

We, with full responsibility and accountability, apologise for this error. —Editor

THE initial Consultation Meeting for United Nations Development Assistance Framework – UNDAF (2018-2022) was held at the Ministry of Planning and Finance in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

U Kyaw Win, Union MInister, pointed out that UNDAF is a strategic results framework that describes the collective vision and response of the UN System to national development priorities and result. So it is covering a medium time frame of 5 years that reflects prioritization of the use of UMN resources in support of national development plans and policies.

UNDAF (2018-2022) is the first experience of Myanmar and the last and current cooperation of the UNCT in Myanmar is broadly defined under the four main pillars of the work of the UN, namely peace building, human rights, humanitarian assistance and sustainable development within the funds and programmes mandates of each UN agency. He also pointed out partnership is important not only for developing the framework but also for the implementing of the activities of each UN agency. —GNLM

Consultation meeting for UNDAF held
**myME to educate 2,500 out-of-school children**

WITH the support of Telenor, the Myanmar Mobile Education Project (myME) hopes to educate roughly 2,500 out-of-school children during this year.

The Norwegian telecom operator and myME recently signed a one-year partnership agreement to extend delivering of non-formal education to children between the ages of 14-16 from Telenor-branded teashops and their communities in Yangon and Mandalay.

The non-formal education programme aims to promote the lives of children working at teashops who cannot go to school due to financial problems.

Telenor, which launched its telecom services in Myanmar in September 2014, has supported the project since late 2014. It provides salaries for all myMe staff, a bus to use as a mobile classroom, several vehicles for teacher and student transportation and other school supplies such as computers.

“Providing functional literacy and vocational skills to out-of-school and working children is the most critical and practical contribution that anyone can make, especially during this historic time of transition in Myanmar,” said Tim Aye-Hardy, the founder of myME. “That is exactly what we do at myME Project and that was the main reason I returned to my motherland after living abroad for 25 years.”

More than 3,000 children from various teashops, road-side restaurants, monastic schools and underprivileged communities from different cities in the country are now receiving non-formal and vocational education under the project.

The myME project was founded by a small group of people in New York City and Myanmar who passionately believe that true reform for Myanmar starts with education.

According to a local survey, 90 per cent of young workers in Yangon are from other regions and states, coming from very poor families.—GNLM

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**Crime NEWS**

**Marijuana seized in Sittway**

SITTWAY local police seized 40 kilograms of marijuana in Darpaing village in Sittway, Rakhine State on 28 February.

Armauk Tusaung with 40 kilograms of illegal marijuana. Photo: MNA

**Fires break out in Buthidaung and Maungtaw**

BUTHIDAUNG and Maungtaw townships saw separate outbreaks of fire on 27th and 28th February, respectively.

The first fire occurred at a house owned by Ma Sofia in Ward 13, Mkyaung Zayy village in Buthidaung Township at about 8pm on Monday, which started from an oil lamp and destroyed the home.

Similarly, another fire broke out in Quarter (2), Laungbhat village, Maungtaw Township, at about 3:30 pm on Tuesday. It was found that the fire started at the kitchen of the house owned by Ma Phartay Mahar Tu, which eventually engulfed the house and destroyed another seven houses. The second fire caused losses of about Ks140,000.

**Child detainee hospitalized for 2nd time**

A child being detained at No 3 Border Police branch is undergoing medical treatment as an in-patient for the second time in Buthidaung Township Hospital.

Yar Seim, 16, suffered from stomach problems and muscle weakness and received medical treatment in Buthidaung Hospital. He also took treatment from 21 February to 26 February because of chest pain and respiratory problems.

Local Police station from Ngakuya Village have taken action against him under section 302/34 of the Penal Code and (Child) Unlawful Association Act 17 (1)/(2) and (Child) Arms Law.—Myanmar News Agency

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**Summer courses aim to promote youth participation in sports activities**

THE Department of Sports and Physical Education in Mandalay Region will launch summer sports trainings in the region between March and 2 April, planning to teach the basic techniques of nearly 20 kinds of sports to trainees.

The programme invites young people to attend these sports trainings including traditional martial arts, football, volleyball, track and field, aerobics, taekwondo, wushu and others, with the department intending to introduce cricket, to the trainees this summer.

Enthusiasts may receive a physical examination by sports sub committees before attending the courses.

The courses aim to promote youth involvement in the country’s sports activities and turn out talented players in different types of sports by training them through a stage-by-stage approach during the three-month courses.

Plans are underway to choose qualified trainees from the courses to continue to train them for sports contests to be held ahead of International Olympic Day, which falls on 23 June, said an official from the department.—200

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**Senior General receives Special Envoy of Foreign Ministry of China**

DEFENCE services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received H.E. Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China at the Bayintaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed in a friendly and frank manner matters relating to internal peace.—Myanmar News Agency

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**MyME to educate 2,500 out-of-school children**

Senior General receives Special Envoy of Foreign Ministry of China

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**Crime NEWS**

**Marijuana seized in Sittway**

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**Child detainee hospitalized for 2nd time**

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**Yaba seized in Loilem and Lashio**

A local anti-narcotics squad from Loilem stopped and searched a vehicle driven by Sai Kyaw Zan Hla with Ma Ei Nwan and U Ti Ya on board at the Tarkaw cooperative inspection gate on Karli-Mongpyin Road on Tuesday and found 30,000 yaba pills in the vehicle.

Another anti-narcotics squad from Lashio searched a motorcycle driven by Sai Laung Hlaing with Ma Yin Wai Nyein aboard on Muse-Mandalay Road near the Oriental toll gate in Lashio on Monday and found 25,500 yaba pills.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force
China-Myanmar border trade value slumped by over US$200mln

THE value of border trade through China-Myanmar border trade camps — Muse, Lweje, Kan Pike Tee, Chin Shwe Haw and Keng Tung — as of 17th Feb in the current fiscal year plunged by US$200.2mln when compared to that in the similar period of last year, according to the official figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The decline in border trade with China was attributed to a dramatic plunge in Muse trade, which usually has the highest trade value out of the 16 border trade camps. The trade value at Muse border trade camp as of 17th Feb this FY was down by nearly US$490mln compared to last year. China-Myanmar border trade from 1st April to 17th Feb fetched US$4.29 billion at Muse border trade camps, US$164.65mln at Lweje, US$303.27mln at Chin Shwe Haw, US$82.60mln at Kan Pike Tee and US$4.275mln at Keng Tung respectively.

Myanmar is currently conducting trade with neighbouring countries through border trade camps, with Thailand via Tachilek, Myawaddy, Kawthaung, Myeik, Htikehthee, Maw Taung and Maese, with Bangladesh via Sittwe and Maung Taw and with India via Tamu and Reef border gates. The value of border trade through 16 border trade camps as of 17th Feb this FY amounted to US$6.27 billion, which is down by US$8.306mln than that of last year. Agricultural products, live-stock, fisheries products, minerals, forest products, industrial goods and other products are shipped abroad, whereas capital goods, raw industrial materials and personal goods flow into the country, it is learnt.—Mon Mon

Fisheries export value up by over US$86mln

THE export value of fisheries product from 1st April to 17th Feb in the current fiscal year increased by US$86.7mln when compared to last year.

The fisheries exports this year as of 17th Feb fetched US$483.994mln, whereas the export value of fisheries last year was US$397.294mln, according to the statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

Fisheries exports attained over US$686mln in 2011-2012, over US$493mln in 2012-2013 and over US$341mln in 2013-2014. The figure was witnessed to decline slightly. And then, the export value was a bit up in 2015-2016 FY with over US$469mln.

Eradicating weather adversely affected fisheries production and fish resources, and offshore fishing does not look very promising, officials said. To boost export volume, all the stakeholders in the fisheries export supply chain, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF) need to exert concerted efforts, officials said.

Those engaged in Myanmar’s traditional fish and prawn farming need to switch over to a modern farming method. Adopting modern farming techniques can help to protect the fish from infectious disease, increase the growth rate of fish and prawn and clean the farming lakes, according to MFF.—Ko Htet

Brick kiln businesses make small profit

EVEN with the highest production rate, brick makers in Thaton Township, Mon State are making only a small profit when the demand and purchase price remains steady, said those engaged in brick kiln businesses.

The owners of brick kilns working on a manageable scale can afford only small amounts of capital and some owners work with an advanced purchase system. After making the bricks, they are forced to immediately sell all the bricks as they need to pay the wages of labourers. In addition, they have to give the bricks to the advanced purchasers.

“This year, there was a scarcity of wood fuel to bake the bricks, prompting the wood price to rise. We do not receive much demand from other townships. Besides, the erratic weather destroyed the bricks. The owners of the brick kilns are financially not doing well,” said U San Khaing, a brick mker from Thaton Township.

A brick sold for Ks45 early this year, whereas the prevailing price of a brick is now around Ks42. The price of the bricks may vary depending on the delivery location, he added.

“There are about 30 labourers per brick kiln. We earn only a small wage of Ks4,000 a day, working outdoors all day in the scorching heat. However, the brick kilns allow us to earn for a living after crop season,” said U Hlay Hlaing, a kiln labourer.

There are officially about 40 brick kiln businesses in Thaton Township. The brick making season is from December to the end of March. A brick kiln is estimated to produce about 400,000 bricks within a season, according to township brick entrepreneurs.—Thet Oo (Thaton)

Jackfruit fetches good price in Pwintbyu Township

JACKFRUIT produced in the villages of Pwintbyu Township fetch a good price, allowing local residents to earn a living wage.

Jackfruit has soft and hard varieties; the prices of the hard variety ranges from Ks5,000 to Ks8,000. The fruit in Aug 2015 in Pwintbyu Township damaged the jackfruit trees due to excess moisture in the soil, causing the fruits to fall too early. The trees will yield again in winter 2017, and the unripe and young jackfruit used in curry sells for Ks1,000 to Ks3,000.

The merchants from Minbu, Salin and Magwe come to Pwintbyu to buy them. Jackfruit trees are perennial and so they are planted in the compounds. They start to yield only after six or ten years of cultivation depending on the soil.—Thura Tun (Pwintbyu)

Trade value with ITC hit over Ks12billion as of 17th Feb

Trade value with the Individual Trading Card (ITC) reached over Ks12.1bn as of 17th Feb in the current fiscal year 2016-2017, according to the statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

Export value with the ITC was over Ks1bn, whereas import value with ITC hit over Ks1bln. The total trade values using ITC amounted to over Ks7.37mln from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, over Ks6.65bn in 2013-2014 FY, over Ks9.372ml in 2014-2015 FY, over Ks4.59mln in 2015-2016, and over Ks12.876mln as of 17th Feb this FY 2016-2017 so far.

Muse and Myawaddy border trade camps are found to have the largest trade value using the ITC. The border trade values with ITC as of 17th Feb in this FY were over Ks742mln in Tamu, over Ks6.81bn in Muse, over Ks6.2 billion in Myawaddy, Ks6.25mln in Tachilek, over Ks2.45mln in Lweje, over Ks2.05mln in Kan Pike Tee, over Ks3.47mln in KaWaung, over Ks5.85mln in Reed, over Ks8.87mln in Maw Taung and over Ks6.4mln in Keng Tung and nearly Ks30mln in Maese, it is learnt.

The Trade Department issued 292 cards from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, 261 cards in 2013-2014 FY, 317 cards in 2014-2015 FY, 146 cards in 2015-2016 and 187 cards as of 17th Feb this FY, according to an announcement released by the aforementioned ministry. A businessman can trade Ks3mln a day with an ITC, and then, the Trade Department granted a permit to trade up to Ks15mln a day, which amounted to a five-day-trade-value.—Ko Ahaun
The bodies of backpackers Hannah Witheridge and David Miller were found on a beach on Koh Tao island in September 2014. Police said Witheridge, 23, had been raped and bludgeoned to death and Miller, 24, had suffered blows to his head.

Thailand sentenced Myanmar migrant workers Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun to death after convicting them of the crime on 24 December 2015.

The decision to uphold the death sentence for the two Myanmar men was handed down on 23 February, but the defence lawyer was not present until yesterday, prompting questions of legal adherence and calls for an appeal.

“The means in which the verdict was read in this case also raises questions regarding adequate adherence to the rule of law. The defence legal team will immediately liaise with Zaw Lin and Wai Phyo to prepare the defendant’s appeal to the Supreme Court on this ruling. It is a deeply disappointing ruling for the defense team given our confidence in the strength of our arguments regarding the inadequacy of forensic in this case,” said Andy Hall, a British rights activist and ex-UNRWA Senior Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar.

“We have not met Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun yet, we don’t even know if they understand the verdict. Both have appeals lodged, but had not been collected, tested, analysed or reported in accordance with international standards,” said Hall.

“The appeals court upheld the death sentence for the two defendants,” Nakhon Chomphon, the defence team’s head lawyer, told Reuters.

It could not be determined whether Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun were informed of the latest decision.

“We have not met Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun yet, we don’t even know if they understand the decision and if it was translated,” said Hall.

The defence has 30 days to make another appeal to the supreme court.

The 2015 verdict followed an investigation and trial that were mired in controversy, including allegations of police incompetence, mishandling of evidence and torture of the suspects.

Thailand did not charge Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun in Yangon after the verdict, with many people believing the two workers were scapegoats.

>> FROM PAGE 1

and capital, third, knowledge-sharing and supporting pioneering efforts, and fourth, advertising effectively and forming strong networks so as to gain a foothold in the international supply chain.

The Central Committee in its current state needs to form a Working Committee and assign tasks and responsibilities, and form subsequent agencies, fund management departments and other necessary departments. This proposal for forming a Working Committee was submitted today in accord with SME Law Act 5, Section 7 and after approval, the Working Committee will be tasked with forming of the necessary departments.

The SMEs are as varied as they are myriad and should therefore be systematically supported from all sectors and given more support starting from the medium enterprises. The SME Development Central Committee Joint Chairperson State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi then delivered a speech in which she addressed SMEs as a sector we cannot afford to ignore as they make up 99 per cent of our economic force, so there is no need to clarify just how important they are in the development of our nation. Concerning SMEs our government departments have classified human resources, technical and creative support, capital funding, better infrastructure, gaining a foothold in the marketplace, imposing reasonable taxes and regulations and creating suitable business environments as priorities. The State Counsellor expressed her trust and belief that invited skilled professionals and experts will collaborate on how best to implement strategies and policies on developing the SME sector.

“We can liken small and medium enterprises to a bridge linking local and foreign sectors.

In establishing SMEs we should bear in mind that our country is a member of the ASEAN community and therefore we need to work within the rules, regulations, and criteria while remaining focused on our country’s needs as well,” she said. “We must also remember that our country is an agricultural nation as many are not aware that SMEs have relevance to the agricultural sector. There are those who regard business as separate from agriculture and more in line with industrial corporations. But in our country we need to link SMEs to the agricultural sector. How will we improve our SMEs to address the food supply needs of the 21st century? How will we increase and better our SMEs with respect to other countries? I want our professionals and skilled experts to take this in consideration. The needs of our own country are paramount, we cannot stand alone, so we need to work out a way that connects with global SMEs to develop our own enterprises.

The most important aspect is education. The government cannot do everything; we are a system that believes on the market economy and we as the government need to consider how to support our SMEs so that they succeed. The Central Committee’s role is to look at the economic and not only nitrify it. We do not impose our policies. I want you to advise us how to effectively support the SME sector to improve the development of our country and connect with the global community economically and socially.

“We need to be broad-minded. We will no longer say that we hold narrow-minded vision, in the long run, but it may be fruitful in the short term. For SMEs to attain prolonged success, we need not only look into global current affairs but also to influence the global currents. And we need to have ingenuity and proceed to implementation of the idea by using ingenuity. We must search for techniques and know-how countries had never used, because our country lagged much behind other countries in the economic field. So to overcome them, we are required to produce the avant-garde and create new markets. As for the technicians and professional experts, they are urged to give advice and suggestions with bravery and openness. They need to venture to test methods that have not been done before. Here, I did not mean foolish courage. Had we implemented the work with the first-ever new techniques, it would be greatly helpful to the development of our SMEs.

Peace, stability and development of the country are closely connected with the economy. On examination of global policies other countries had to pay great respect of fastest-growing economies. Thus, economically developed countries come to influence over the inferiors. We need to alter our country to stand tall in the midst of the world’s countries. For SMEs, we firmly believe that we can not only keep up with other countries but also will be able to try hard to overtake them, by including suitable representatives, experts, technicians, scholars and persons who will ponder the well-being of Myanmar people in the working committee, regardless of our past poor conditions.”

Afterward, U Khin Maung Cho, Union Minister for Industry, Secretary of the Central Committee for the Development of SMEs, said, “To narrow the gap among Regions and States, 53 branch offices have been opened in 15 Regions and States including Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory and 38 districts. The aim and objective of the SME is aimed at leading to increasing job opportunities and socio-economic development of all citizens. SME Development Law has been enacted for supporting the process of SME in accord with the law, the SME Agency and national-level committees will be formed in accord with the law. There are 50694 SMEs, annually opening of regular courses and Mobile Vocational Training courses to spread technical and creative sources, technical and creative support, capital funding, better infrastructure, gaining a foothold in the marketplace, imposing reasonable taxes, credit guarantee and others. In forming organizations, duties need to be assigned definitely and to include entrepreneurs, technicians and professional experts. Committees are needed to welcome them to give necessary advice. And it is necessary to systematically share techniques and knowledge for the development of the SMEs,” the President said.

“Here are six sectors to help SMEs improve, in financial aid, electricity, education, legalism for their handling of the case, including suitable representatives, experts, technicians, scholars and persons who will ponder the well-being of Myanmar people in the working committee, regardless of our past poor conditions.”

A Thai appeals court upheld the death sentence for two Myanmar migrant workers convicted of the murder of two British backpackers on a vacation island in 2014, their lawyer said yesterday.

Mark Angeles

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Thailand upholds death sentence for Myanmar men, appeal likely

President U Htin Kyaw addresses the meeting of Central Committee for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (1/2017) in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO MNA

Zaw Lin (L) and Win Zaw Htun. PHOTO REUTERS

Mark Angeles

A Thai appeals court upheld the death sentence for two Myanmar migrant workers convicted of the murder of two British backpackers on a vacation island in 2014, their lawyer said yesterday.

The bodies of backpackers Hannah Witheridge and David Miller were found on a beach on Koh Tao island in September 2014. Police said Witheridge, 23, had been raped and bludgeoned to death and Miller, 24, had suffered blows to his head.

Thailand sentenced Myanmar migrant workers Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun to death after convicting them of the crime on 24 December 2015.

The decision to uphold the death sentence for the two Myanmar men was handed down on 23 February, but the defence lawyer was not present until yesterday, prompting questions of legal adherence and calls for an appeal.

“The means in which the verdict was read in this case also raises questions regarding adequate adherence to the rule of law. The defence legal team will immediately liaise with Zaw Lin and Wai Phyo to prepare the defendant’s appeal to the Supreme Court on this ruling. It is a deeply disappointing ruling for the defense team given our confidence in the strength of our arguments regarding the inadequacy of forensics in this case,” said Andy Hall, a British rights activist and ex-UNRWA Senior Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar.

“We have not met Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun yet, we don’t even know if they understand the decision and if it was translated,” said Hall.

The defence has 30 days to make another appeal to the supreme court.

The 2015 verdict followed an investigation and trial that were mired in controversy, including allegations of police incompetence, mishandling of evidence and torture of the suspects.

Thailand did not charge Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun in Yangon after the verdict, with many people believing the two workers were scapegoats. (Reuters contributed to this report)
Two women charged with murder over nerve agent attack on Kim Jong Nam

Kuala Lumpur — Malaysian prosecutors on Wednesday charged two women, an Indonesian and a Vietnamese, with murdering North Korean leader Kim Jong Un’s estranged half-brother, who had been behind the deadly attack on the airport shortly after consulting with the police about the assassination attempt.

The police have said the two women and it is almost certain that they are North Korean men. Aisyah told the Indonesian deputy envoy to Malaysia, Kim Chol, despite its objections.

The two women, who came out of the court wearing black, were still at large, to kill him at around 9 am in the departures hall at Kuala Lumpur International Airport’s budget airline terminal on 13 February.

Tun Aung Kyaw, Tun Tun Naing’s deputy envoy to Malaysia, who met Chol in Malaysia on 1 March, 2017.

NEW DELHI — Trade bodies in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu have banned sale of Coca-Cola and Pepsi in a bid to boost local products.

The ban came into force on Wednesday with soft drinks from two multinational companies going off the shelf from state’s thousands of small shops and retail outlets.

The ban was proposed by the state’s top trade bodies — the Federation of Tamil Nadu Traders Associations (FTNTA) and the Tamil Nadu Traders Associations Forum (TNTAF). The trade organizations blame soft drinks companies for exploiting too much water resource and thereby affecting farmers who grapple hard to irrigate their farmland.

These companies exploit lot of water resource, there is water shortage in the state which has pushed farmers to wall,” Tha Vellaiyan, president of FTNTA, told Xinhua over telephone from Chennai.

“And these companies come up with the products that are hazardous to health is that why we are asking our people to stop selling it.”

Reports said about a million shopkeepers are expected to follow the ban order, while big supermarkets and restaurants have sought to follow the recommendation.

In January this year, the Indian government released a report on the autopsy of Kim Jong Nam, in Malaysia on 1 March, 2017.

Photo: PTI

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks during a session of the House of Councillors budget committee in Tokyo on 1 March, 2017. Japan remains committed to exploring the feasibility of a Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade pact without the United States, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Wednesday. “I will discuss with (TPP) countries other than the United States the possibilities we can see in the future,” Abe told a parliamentary session ahead of a ministerial meeting on the initiative in Chile on 15 March.

The new rules agreed in the TPP would be a model for future trade negotiations,” Abe told a session of the House of Councillors Budget Committee, “I cannot put too much emphasis on” the importance of setting high-standard rules like in the TPP on intellectual property and labour conditions among other areas, Abe said.

Abe said he will explain the importance to countries in the Asia-Pacific region involved in an envisioned Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership trade initiative and a proposed Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

Japan is considering sending Senior Vice Foreign Minister Kentaro Sonoura and other officials to round the forum in Chile, a Japanese government source said. The TPP also involves Australia, Brunei, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. The United States and Japan agreed to set up a bilateral high-level dialogue framework on trade and other economic issues during the recent talks between Abe and President Donald Trump.

Trump pulled the United States out of the TPP with an executive order in late January, reversing the predecessor’s decision to join the 2011 national trade pact and during the TPP negotiations. The United States and Japan agreed to explore the feasibility of a Trans-Pacific Partnership without the United States and Donald Trump’s decision to pull out of the agreement.

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The police have said the two women and it is almost certain that they are North Korean men. Aisyah told the Indonesian deputy envoy to Malaysia, Kim Chol, despite its objections. North Korea sent what it called a “high-level delegation” to Malaysia on Tuesday in the hope of securing the early return of the body and the release of the arrested North Korean man, amid increasingly tense relations between the two countries.

“Her eyes were red,” Andreano Erwin, who met Kim Jong Nam’s face at the time of the attack. The chemical had been identified as the highly toxic VX nerve agent. The nerve agent used for the apparent assassination had been classified as a weapon of mass destruction by the United Nations and banned by the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention.

Under Malaysia’s penal code, the two women are suspecting of coating their bare hands with a chemical and then wiping them on Kim Jong Nam’s face. The police have found that the suspects began their “operation” two months before the murder. One North Korean man is in custody, but the police believe that seven more were involved in the poison attack, which led the brother to faint at a clinic in the airport and subsequently die in an ambulance while being transferred to hospital.

The victim, the eldest son of late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, died within 20 minutes after VX was applied on his face as the dose was “so high,” Malaysia’s health minister said on Sunday, after announcing that a report on the autopsy conducted on 15 February had been completed.

Of the seven men, the police have said four suspects managed to fly out of the airport shortly after committing the poison attack by the two women and it is almost certain that they are already back in North Korea.

The police have said the three other men, including a diplomat at the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, are still somewhere in Malaysia. The two women, who earlier indicated to diplomats who were given consular access that they were duped by the North Korean men. Aisyah told the Indonesian deputy envoy Saturday that she was asked to cooperate in a purported reality TV show for the equivalent of around $500. She has not publicly confirmed that the deceased is Kim Jong Nam.

It has repeatedly denounced the Malaysian government for performing an autopsy on one of its citizens, who was found with a diplomatic passport bearing the name Kim Chol, despite its objections. North Korea sent what it called a “high-level delegation” to Malaysia on Tuesday in the hope of securing the early return of the body and the release of the arrested North Korean man, amid increasingly tense relations between the two countries.

“we told her she is not alone,” Indonesia is with.

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

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

Opinion
Taken at face value, everything looks OK

Khin Maung Oo

Every individual likes the best, but only those who try their best with firm resolutions can reach the top. Exceptionally, there are some to whom success does not go, although they have tried and achieved necessary qualifications, but failed by virtue of their.Fr before success looks OK

Khin Maung Oo

“LACK of carefulness blinds us to a nearby cave, but with cau- tionousness we can see even particles of dust in the sun’s rays,” as a Myanmar saying goes. There seems to be an element of hyperbole in such a claim that the pronuncia- tion of 7th letter of Myan- mar alphabet is on the verge of extinction, if the present matter goes uncared, by condoning that it is not very important. We all ac- cept that language, literature and traditions of a race or a country are its cultural heritages. All countries usually value and maintain these heritages. The global countries are trying to develop their status to the utmost and vying for getting cut- ing-edge technology. On the other hand, they never fail to keep their historical and cultural heritage. And they use these heritages for their benefits, especially in tourism industry. In our country, historical and archaeological depart- ments have been trying to maintain, restore and conserve our cultural inheritances. Non-gov- ernmental organizations are also helping us in keeping historical heritages.

Our President of the State himself wholeheartedly encour- aged to hold Nobel literary festi- vals and literary festivals for the development of Myanmar Artistic Literature and Child Literature, believing that literature can lift up the status of a country, and the development of a country can be started by re- scient. We all accept and say that our Myanmar language is deteriorating. Our country abounds with many Myanmar language schol- ars and learned persons. Once in the past, to be exact some forty years ago, the then Myanmar newspapers including dailies pub- lished in English versions includ- ed articles and discussions of well-known savants and writers. These actually helped us, stu- dents, researchers and interested learners from outside. At the same time when our children are learning foreign languages increasingly, responsible officials of the educa- tion department should be more- stress on the role of our mother tongue. As known by all, fac- ebook users are using their newly invented words. They may give reasons that they love avant-garde, so they invent these. Socially-unsuitable ideas and habits used to and disappear naturally. But we need to keep our own im- age. Our nation owes its existence to our ancestors’ maintenance of these characteristics, of which the language is an important factor. We should keep our long living own characteristics, shouldn’t we?

These days, in seeing and hearing some unscrupulous, traitorous, with celebrities, presentations by some presenters, we felt unhappy. Some words they used were miserably pro- nounced. In a TV commercial, the actor wrongly articulated “Mo” for “Hmo” in describing a fungus infection. This may be attributed to the carelessness under the guidance of the respective leaders. This is just one example. Other- wise, other frequently-made errors are “Myaw-lint” for “Hnmyaw-lint” which is meant for “hope”, and “Hnau Gun” for “Maw Gun” which is meant to record a significant event meant to last. As in above-said Mo and Hmo, there can be many more examples related to the lack of knowledge of English, the difference between aspired sound and un-aspired one. Here we need to know the meaning of aspiration. Dictionaries define “as- piration” as the sound ‘h’ as in house. There is a difference be- tween aspirated sounds and un-aspir- ated ones. All sounds can be made aspirated and un-aspirated.

Aspirated sounds are where we breathe out at the same time. It is the strong burst of air, that accom- panies either the release of, or the closure of some obstructions. Ac- cording to Oxford Dictionary of English, “obstruent” is a phonetic usage which means a fricative or a nasal sound. And, Un-aspirated sounds are where we do not breathe out at the same time. Aspiration means the action of pronouncing a word with anh/ sound, as in house, while the word “hour” is pronounced without the initial aspirate. Generally speak- ing, aspiration means “occidental” - in English, “occidental” is a word which is pronounced to feel or see the difference between aspi- rated and un-aspirated sounds, one can put a hand or a lit candle in front of one’s mouth, and say pin [pin] and then bin. One should either a puff of air or see a flicker of the candle flame with pin that one does not get with bin. In most words of English, the initial consonant is aspirated in phin and un-aspirated in bin. In our Myanmar language, Kha - က, Ha - ဟ, Bha - ပ, Hpa - ဟာ, and La - လ are un-aspirated sounds. Thus as- piration sounds include Kha - က, Hsa - စ, Hpa - ပ, Hpa - ဖ, and Hla - လ. To be continued

Is Hsa Lein, “ဗွီစာ” going to disappear from our youths’ lips?

Khin Maung Oo

“Occidental - Sa-Lone” & “incolat - Hsa-Lein” can be said to be attri- buted to the lack of knowledge of English, the difference between aspired sound and un-aspired one. Here we need to know the meaning of aspiration. Dictionaries define "as- piration" as the sound 'h' as in house. There is a difference be- tween aspirated sounds and un-aspir- ated ones. All sounds can be made aspirated and un-aspirated.

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Vice President U Henry Van Thio oversees regional development tasks in Chin State

Vice President U Henry Van Thio comforts a patient receiving medical treatment at People’s Hospital in Paletwa. Photo: MNA

Vice President U Henry Van Thio accompanied by Union Minister and Attorney-General of Mon State, Dr. U Htun Khin Thaw, and departmental officials inspected the site chosen for construction of the office for township education officer at No (1) Basic Education Pathology Department in Matupi Township, Chin State yesterday.

The Vice President and party looked into upgrading of the basic education high school (Branch), patient ward and laboratory at People’s Hospital in Hsamae Township and provided the patients receiving medical treatment at people’s hospital there with cash assistance. In meeting with local people in the meeting hall of the Township General Administration Department, the Vice President pledged to provide necessary assistance for regional development tasks and heard reports on improving the telecommunications system, constructing the inter-township road, availability of electricity and upgrading of schools and hospitals presented by officials concerned.

Then, the Vice President and entourage went to 50-bed People’s Hospital in Paletwa. There, the Vice President met with local residents in the hall of the Township General Administration Department and presented K 10.5 billion contributed by the Ministry of Border Affairs through an official from the township management committee. Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung handed over 50 solar panels provided by Ministry of Border Affairs and Deputy Minister Mag-Gen Than Htut, 250 blankets to the officials. The State Minister for Development Affairs and officials concerned reported on the site chosen for Paletwa-Meeza-Shinletwa Road that will start from the western bank of the Kaladan River.

Afters, the Vice President proceeded to Paletwa Jetty which is included in the Kaladan Multimodal Transport Project where he was presented reports on implementation of the project by the officials from Myanmar Port Authority under the Ministry of Transport and Communications and a supplementary report by Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung.

He also inspected the warehouse, jetty and the site chosen for construction of the Kaladan River-Crossing Bridge (Paletwa). Being located on the western bank of the Kaladan River, construction of a river-crossing bridge is required for convenience of the local residents who cannot directly come to Paletwa by motorcar. The Ministry of Construction will build the Kaladan River-Crossing Bridge in coordination with the Chin State government commencing 2017-2018 fiscal year.

The Kaladan River-Crossing Bridge is expected to cost K 10.5 billion and the bridge will begin in 2017-2018 financial years by spending K 1 billion from the Union Budget and K 2.5 billion from the Chin State Government fund and the project is slated for completion within three years.

During the meetings with local people in Chin State, the Vice President highlighted that job opportunities will be created for the locals with the implementation of the Kaladan River-Crossing Bridge Project and the Kaladan Multimodal Transport Project by the government. Upon completion of the projects, the socio-economic status of the local people will improve and they will have a chance to export their products to other areas, he added. He said that the locals need to make necessary preparations to produce agricultural goods compatible with the climate of the region on a commercial scale.

The Vice President pointed out that stability and peace play a pivotal role in carrying out development tasks, saying that the peace process was being implemented by holding the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference under the leadership of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Su Kyi to ensure stability and peace in the country. He urged the locals to participate in regional development tasks and cordially greeted them.—**Myanmar News Agency**

**Mandalay Hospital needs blood donors for water festival**

**Mandalay** General Hospital needs many blood donors in preparation for the 2017 water festival, said National Blood Donation Bank Pathology Department specialist Dr. Khin Mya Mon.

The general hospital uses over 50,000 units of blood per year. We are collecting blood starting in March because most of the people are travelling during the water festival. The most important thing is saving the life of the patients. So, I want to people to donate the blood, she added.

The National Blood Donation Bank accepts blood donations every day from 5am to 4pm. The Blood Bank accepts blood donations from 7am to 1pm after the Myanmar New Year.

The Mandalay blood bank is the largest in upper Myanmar. The hospital is handling surgeries such as kidney transplants and heart operations. The hospital will be conducting liver transplant very soon. So, we need more blood for the patients. Our hospital treatment system is developed, so we have more patients, said Dr. Khin Mya Mon.

Healthy persons between 18 and 55 are encouraged to donate the blood for the long water festival holidays. There are about 150 to 200 blood donors per day for the general hospital. Currently, the hospital covers 70 per cent of the supply blood for the hospital.—**Myintnauk News Agency**

Dr Aye Zan appointed Mon State Gov Chief Minister

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 261 (c), article 264 (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 82 (a) of Union Government Law and Section 56 (a) of Region or State Government Law, Dr Aye Zan of Mon State Hluttaw representative from Kyaihtyo constituency 2 has been appointed as Mon State Government Chief Minister.

Dr Aye Zan appointed Mon State Gov Chief Minister

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each on the expiry of one-year probationary period.

**Name**

(1) Daw Nu Nu Yin
(2) Daw Khin Cho Ohn
(3) Daw Myint Myint Kyi
(4) Daw May Marlar Maung Gyi
(5) Daw Thida Myo Aung
(6) U Win Thaw

**Appointments**

(1) Director-General, Administration Department
(2) Director-General, Union Attorney-General’s Office
(3) Director-General, Prosecution Department
(4) Governor’s Office
(5) Central Bank of Myanmar Director-General
(6) Board of Directors, Central Bank of Myanmar Director-General

**Regulatory Bodies**

(1) Central Bank of Myanmar Director-General
(2) Monetary Policy Affairs and Financial Institutions
(3) Regulation Department
(4) Central Bank of Myanmar Director-General
(5) Financial Institution
(6) Supervision Department

**Government Departments**

(1) Central Bank of Myanmar Director-General
(2) Monetary Policy Affairs and Financial Institutions
(3) Regulation Department
(4) Central Bank of Myanmar Director-General

**YCDC to distribute water from 13 places during water cutoff**

**Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC)** will distribute water from 13 places while the water supply is cut off for six days in the Yangon Region, according to the Engineering Department under YCDC.

Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department announced that water supply will be cutoff or minimised from March 1 to 6 while repair work proceeds on the drain that supplies much of the city’s water.

“We have planned to distribute water with YCDC cars during the water cutoff. The water vehicles will be available in 13 places,” said U Myo Thein, Deputy Head of the Engineering Department.

The YCDC will distribute the water from the following places: Thakayta (Than Thar Mar road/Kyaung Dine); Yankin (Yan Shun road); Mayangon (Gumadam road); Thangyang (Lay Daung) kan road); South Okkalapa (Thuka Mingalar road); Shwe PoKkan (corner Aung Myittha and Bagam road); North Dagon (Township Development committee office); South Dagon (Zayar Myine road); East Dagon (Minye Kyawswar road); Dagon Seikkan – (Yuzama garden city); Ahtum (Thakin Mya Park) and Dagon township.

City dwellers who have trouble accessing water distribution from the 13 sites should call: 095188428 Eastern Head, 097300058 Western Head, 0905054565 Southern Head and 095081229 Northern Head.

The repairs that will result in water shortages will affect Mingalardon, Dagon Myothit (North) (South) (East) and (Seikkan), Shwe PoKkan, Thakayta, Daungbon, Mayangon, Mingalar Taungnyooint (South) Okkalapa, Thinangyunt, Yankin, Bahan, Ahtum, Sang young and downtown Yangon.—**Myintmauk News Agency**
Trump’s Interior Dept pick expected to win Senate confirmation

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s pick to head the Interior Department is expected to be confirmed easily by the US Senate on Wednesday morning as the White House seeks to increase fossil fuel production from federal lands,

US Representative Ryan Zinke said in his confirmation hearing last month he would consider an expansion of energy drilling and mining on federal lands but would ensure that sensitive areas were protected.

The former Navy SEAL commander is an avid angler who is popular with many outdoor enthusiasts, including Trump’s son Donald Jr.

However, many environmentalists are concerned about his zeal for exploiting coal and other fossil fuels. As a one-term Congressman, Zinke worked to boost mining, including supporting an effort to end a coal leasing moratorium on federal lands, where 40 per cent of US coal is mined, mostly in Wyoming and Montana, his home state.

If the Senate confirms Zinke, he will head an agency that employs more than 70,000 people across the country and oversees more than 20 per cent of federal land, including national parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite.

Zinke needs only a majority of votes in the 100-member chamber and is expected to get most, if not all, of his fellow Republicans, who lead the chamber, and some votes from Democrats.

In January, six Democrats joined 16 Republicans to pass Zinke’s nomination out of the Senate energy panel. The White House is expected to issue an executive order soon reversing former President Barack Obama’s temporary moratorium on coal leasing on US lands, which is part of a wider review of the programme.

Many Democrats oppose Zinke’s support of fossil fuels. “I’m not sure he will be able to stand up to the president and protect the public interest,” said Senator Maria Cantwell, the top Democrat on the Senate environment committee.

Cantwell, from Washington State, where many voters are cautious about opening coal export terminals, will vote against Zinke. The Senate is also expected to easily confirm Trump’s pick to head the Department of Energy, Rick Perry, a former governor of Texas, this week.

France’s Fillon stays in presidential race despite deepening legal probe

PARIS — Conservative French presidential candidate Francois Fillon vowed to stay in the presidential race on Wednesday despite a magistrate’s intention to place him under formal investigation for alleged misuse of public funds.

His statement at his campaign headquarters came after a morning of speculation that he was about to withdraw following his decision to postpone a campaign visit to the Paris farmland.

It came as opinion polls continued to show he would lose the election. The polls showed independent centrist Emmanuel Macron consolidating his status as favourite, and putting far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen also among the leading candidates.

Fillon’s campaign has been dogged since late January by an official investigation into alleged misuse of taxpayers’ money involving hundreds of thousands of euros paid to his wife and family. He had been favourite to win until the affair began.

He has denied wrongdoing along with the allegations by a satirical newspaper that his wife did little work for her salary as a parliamentary assistant and in other roles.

On Wednesday, he revealed that investigating magistrates appointed last week to the case planned to put him under formal investigation, and had summoned him to appear before them on 15 March.

He denounced the process as a “political assassination,” but said he would cooperate with it and appear before the judges as requested.

“I won’t give in, I won’t surrender, I won’t pull out, I’ll fight to the end,” Fillon said.

Kremlin says patiently waiting for US policy action on Russia

MOSCOW — The Kremlin is patiently waiting for US policy action on Russia so that it can understand what the future holds for US-Russia relations, Dmitry Peskov, spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday.

“We have heard different statements from President (Donald) Trump,” Peskov told a conference call with reporters.

“We are full of patience and are waiting for some kind of actions to follow these statements that will allow us to understand ... the perspectives for bilateral relations.”

Wife of French presidential candidate Fillon held for questioning — report

PARIS — Penelope Fillon, the wife of presidential candidate Francois Fillon, was being held for questioning in connection with allegations she did little work for payments she received as his assistant, news website Mediapart reported on Wednesday.

The report was released by Mediapart reporter Michel Delean on Twitter.

Her lawyer could not immediately be reached for comment.

North Korea says claim its citizen killed in Malaysia by VX agent ‘absurd’

SEOUL — North Korea said on Wednesday the claim that VX nerve agent was used to kill one of its citizens in Malaysia was “absurd” and lacked scientific basis, calling it an assertion made by the United States and South Korea to tarnish the North’s image.

Last week, Malaysian police said VX nerve agent, a chemical classified by the United Nations as a weapon of mass destruction, was used to kill Kim Jong Nam, estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, on 13 February.

South Korean and US officials have said they believe North Korean agents killed Kim Jong Nam.

Norway did not violate mass killer Breivik’s human rights-court

OSLO — Norway has not violated the human rights of mass killer Anders Behring Breivik despite his charges of abuse since he was jailed for massacring 77 people in 2011, an appeals court ruled on Wednesday.

The Borgarting appeals court overturned a 2016 verdict by a lower Oslo court that Breivik’s near-isolation in a three-room cell amounted to “inhuman and degrading treatment” under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Italy gives partial pardon to ex-CIA officer, making jail unlikely

ROME — The Italian president said on Tuesday he had given a partial pardon to former CIA officer Sabrina de Sousa, who has been convicted in absentia in Italy for the kidnapping of an Egyptian cleric there. President Sergio Mattarella’s decision to reduce de Sousa’s conviction to three years from four means that she can now apply for alternative sanctions to prison.

De Sousa, a dual US-Portuguese citizen who denies involvement in the abduction, was detained by Portuguese police last week. Her lawyer said she had already been freed from prison as a result of Mattarella’s move and would no longer be extradited.

US signals that reviewing role in top UN rights body

GENEVA — The US Trump administration is reviewing its participation in the top United Nations human rights body, with an eye to reform and a balanced agenda that ends the forum’s “obsession with Israel”, a senior US official said on Wednesday.

“Instead of this Council to have any credibility, let alone success, it must move away from its unbalanced and unproductive positions,” Erin Barclay, US deputy assistant secretary of state, told the UN Human Rights Council.

“As we consider our future engagements, my government will be considering the Council’s actions with an eye toward reform to more fully achieve the Council’s mission to protect and promote human rights.”

France’s Fillon stays in presidential race despite deepening legal probe

PARIS — Conservative French presidential candidate Francois Fillon vowed to stay in the presidential race on Wednesday despite a magistrate’s intention to place him under formal investigation for alleged misuse of public funds.

His statement at his campaign headquarters came after a morning of speculation that he was about to withdraw following his decision to postpone a campaign visit to the Paris farmland.

It came as opinion polls continued to show he would lose the election. The polls showed independent centrist Emmanuel Macron consolidating his status as favourite, and putting far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen also among the leading candidates.

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“I won’t give in, I won’t surrender, I won’t pull out, I’ll fight to the end,” Fillon said.
**Russia, China block UN sanctions on Syria over gas attacks**

UNITED NATIONS — Russia on Tuesday cast its seventh veto to protect the Syrian government from United Nations Security Council action, blocking a bid by Western powers to impose sanctions over accusations of chemical weapons attacks during the six-year Syrian conflict.

China backed Russia and cast its sixth veto on Syria. Russia had said the vote on the resolution, drafted by France, Britain and the United States, would harm UN-led peace talks between the warring Syrian parties in Geneva, which began last week.

Nine council members voted in favour, Bolivia voted against, while Egypt, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan abstained. A resolution needs nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the United States, France, Russia, Britain or China to be adopted.

Russian President Vladimir Putin described the draft resolution on Tuesday as “totally inappropriate.”

“For my friends in Russia, this resolution is very appropriate,” US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told the council after the vote.

“It is a sad day on the Security Council when members start making excuses for other member states killing their own people. The world is definitely a more dangerous place,” she said.

The vote was one of the first confrontations at the United Nations between Russia and the United States since US President Donald Trump took office in January, pledging to build closer ties with Britain because the UN/OPCW investigation and long said there was not enough proof for the Security Council to take any action.

French UN Ambassador Francois Delattre said the failure by the council to act would “send a message of impunity.”

China’s UN Ambassador Liu Jieyi said it was too early to act because the international investigation was still ongoing.

“We oppose the use of chemical weapons,” he said.

The draft resolution would have banned the sale or supply of helicopters to the Syrian government because the UN/OPCW inquiry found Syrian government forces had used helicopters to drop barrel bombs containing chlorine gas.

It also proposed targeted sanctions — a travel ban and asset freeze — on 11 Syrian military commanders and officials, as well as on 10 government and related entities.—Reuters

**Iraqi army controls main roads out of Mosul, trapping Islamic State**

MOSUL — US-backed Iraqi army units on Wednesday took control of the last major road out of western Mosul that had been in Islamic State’s hands, a general and residents there said, trapping the militants in a dwindling area within the city. The army’s 9th Armoured Division was within a kilometre of Mosul’s “Syria Gate”, the northwestern entrance of the city, a general from the unit told Reuters by telephone.

“We effectively control the road, it is in our sight,” he said.

Mosul residents said they had not been able to travel on the highway that begins at the “Syria Gate” since Tuesday. The road links Mosul to Tal Afar, another Islamic State stronghold 60 km (40 miles) to the west, and then to the Syrian border. Islamic forces captured the eastern side of Mosul in January after 100 days of fighting and launched their attack on the districts that lie west of the Tigris River on 19 February. If they defeat Islamic State in Mosul, that would crush the Iraq wing of the caliphate that attack.

“Today’s clash or confrontation is not a result of our negative vote. It is a result of the fact that you decided on provocation while you knew well ahead of time our position,” said Safronkov.

Western powers put forward the resolution in response to the results of an investigation by the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The international inquiry found Syrian government forces were responsible for three chlorine gas attacks and that Islamic State militants used mustard gas. British UN Ambassador Matthew Rycroft told the council before the vote: “This is about taking a stand when children are poisoned. It’s that simple. It’s about taking a stand when civilians are maimed and murdered with toxic weapons.”

Clorine’s use as a weapon is banned under the Chemical Weapons Convention, which Syria joined in 2013. If inhaled, chlorine gas turns to hydrochloric acid in the lungs and can kill by burning lungs and drowning victims in body fluids.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government has denied its forces have used chemical weapons. Russia has questioned the results of the UN/OPCW inquiry and long said there was not enough proof for the Security Council to take any action.

The world is definitely a more dangerous place, even with chemical weapons,” he said.

The fighting was concentrated near a district police headquarters located not far from a military training school, according to one police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to talk to the media.

A security official said one attacker was barricaded inside the police building.

A separate attack appeared to have targeted an office of Afghanistan’s intelligence agency on the eastern outskirts of Kabul. However a senior army official said that attack appeared to have been quickly suppressed.

Two terrorists entered a building. One blew himself up and the second was shot by Afghan security forces,” said Abdul Nasir Zaee, commander of 111th corps based in the east of the city.

**Taliban claim multiple attacks in Afghan capital Kabul**

KABUL — Afghan Taliban militants said they attacked police, military and intelligence targets in Kabul on Wednesday and security officials confirmed ongoing attacks in at least two areas of the city, but there was no official word on casualties.

A resounding explosion was heard across the city followed immediately by gunfire between security forces and an unknown number of attackers in the west of Kabul.

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“The Taliban, who sometimes exaggerate the impact of their operations, said the attacks had caused heavy casualties but there was no immediate comment from police and no official word on casualties.

Last month, a suicide bomber killed at least 20 people outside the Supreme Court in Kabul. Militant group Islamic State claimed responsibility for that attack.

The attacks come shortly ahead of the period when the Taliban, seeking to re impose Islamic law after their 2001 ouster, announce their spring offensive and underline warnings from Afghan officials that they face a very difficult campaign season.

Government forces have struggled to control the Taliban insurgency since the NATO-led combat mission ended in 2014. According to US estimates, they now control less than 60 per cent of the country although they have managed to hold on to all of the main provincial centres.—Reuters
US, China discuss ‘mutually beneficial’ economic relationship

WASHINGTON — US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi on Tuesday discussed improving and maintaining a “mutually beneficial economic relationship” between the United States and China, the State Department said.

Tillerson and Yang, China’s top diplomat, affirmed the importance of “regular high-level engagement” between the two countries during their meeting in Washington, and discussed North Korea’s nuclear programme, the State Department said in a statement. China’s state media quoted Yang as saying: “The meeting was the latest exchange aimed at re-setting relations between the two countries.”

On Monday, Yang, who outranks China’s foreign minister, met at the White House with Trump, who has attacked China of unfair trade policies, criticized its island-building in the strategic South China Sea, and accused it of doing too little to contain its neighbour, North Korea.

In December, Trump incensed Beijing by saying the United States did not have to stick to the “one China” policy, under which Washington acknowledges the Chinese position that there is only one China, of which Taiwan is a part. He later agreed in a phone call with Xi to honour the policy.

In an interview with Reuters last week, Trump urged China to do more to rein in North Korea’s missile and nuclear programmes. He said he had dismissed Trump’s remarks, saying the crux of the matter was a dispute between Washington and Pyongyang.

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US general wants Russia to open up major exercise to observers

VIENNA — The US Army’s top European commander on Wednesday called on Russia to open up its major military exercise later this year to observers to assuage its neighbours.

Russia has unveiled plans to stage its Zapad 2017 exercise near its western borders this autumn but has not said how many troops will take part.

Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaite said the Baltic countries were concerned about the exercise and called on NATO for additional security measures. “For me, Zapad represents an opportunity for the Russians to demonstrate that they are committed to security and stability in Europe also through transparency, by inviting media, by inviting observers, more than the minimum required by Vienna, to demonstrate, to show what’s going on, to be transparent,” US lieutenant general Ben Hodges told reporters in Vienna.

“Potentially beneficial to Europe, it’s a way to engage the media, it’s a way to engage the outside world,” Hodges said. “It’s also the whole world.”

The Cold War-era treaty known as the Vienna Document sets out rules for large-scale exercises and other military activity.

The US forces’ response to Russia’s military exercise “will depend on what our leadership says is the appropriate posture”, Hodges said.

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Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga gives a press briefing in Tokyo on 1 March, 2017. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Japan will coordinate closely with the United States to build a robust bilateral alliance, the top government spokesman said on Wednesday, after US President Donald Trump renewed his vow to “make America great again” in his first address to Congress.

“Uncertainties grow in the world, further strengthening the Japan-US alliance with the stronger United States will greatly contribute to peace and stability of not only Japan and the United States but of the Asia-Pacific region and the world,” Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at a press conference.

In his first address to Congress since taking office, Trump said on Tuesday he will boost the US economy through increases in defence infrastructure investment, tax reforms and other measures.

“Defence Secretary Mattis has made clear that Japan is different from other countries which host the US military,” Suga said. “I think that stays the same.”

In a further sign of US determination to defend its allies, Mattis said Japan’s cost-sharing burden for hosting US forces is “a model” for other nations to follow in the press conference after his talks with Defence Minister Tomomi Inada in Tokyo.

Trump said during his presidential campaign that Japan, South Korea and other US allies should pay a larger proportion of the costs of US troops deployed in the countries, or else defend themselves.

“Kyodo News

Kyoko Hayashi, atomic bomb survivor writer, dies at 86

TOKYO — Kyoko Hayashi, who chronicled with her novels the city of Nagasaki, where the United States dropped a second atomic bomb in World War II, died on 19 February, her family said. She was 86.

“Born in Nagasaki, Hayashi spent her childhood in Shanghai before returning to her home city in 1945 prior to being exposed to the nuclear attack on 9 August that year at the age of 14 around 1.4 kilometres away from ground zero.

The native of the southwestern Japan city, whose real name was Kyoko Miyazaki, was awarded the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for “Mat-suri no ba” (The Site of Rituals) in 1975. The story depicted in simple writing style her own experience as an atomic bomb survivor, when she wandered around the epicenter after the atomic bomb devastated the city.

Hayashi continued to express anger at nuclear weapons, reflecting fears over internal exposure to radiation.

“From Trinity to Trinity” was released based on her trip in 1999 to the Trinity Site in the state of New Mexico in the United States, where the first atomic bomb experiment was conducted on 16 July, 1945.

The cause of her death was not immediately known.—Kyodo News

Kyoko Hayashi. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

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In a gaffe that stunned the Dolby Theatre crowd in Hollywood and a television audience worldwide, “Cullinan mistakenly handed the back-up envelope for Actress in a Leading Role instead of the envelope for Best Picture” to Beauty and Dunaway, PwC said.

“Once the error occurred, protocols for correcting it were not followed through quickly enough by Mr Cullinan or his partner,” the Wall Street Journal and celebrity website TMZ.com reported that Cullinan had posted a backstage photo of actress Emma Stone on social network Twitter minutes before the mix-up.

“The photo, from Cullinan’s Twitter account, was later deleted but was still viewable on Monday on a cached archive of the page. Cullinan could not immediately be reached for comment.”

The mistake was not rectified until the “La La Land” cast and producers were on stage giving their acceptance speeches. It was left to the musical’s producer, Jordan Horowitz, to put things right.

“Guys, guys, I’m sorry. No. There’s a mistake,” Horowitz said. “Moonlight,” you guys won best picture. This is not a joke.”

It took three hours for PricewaterhouseCoopers, which has been overseeing Academy Awards balloting for 83 years, initially to confirm that Beauty and Dunaway received the wrong category envelope.

PwC said it took full responsibility and apologized to the casts and crews of “La La Land” and “Moonlight.”

“We sincerely apologize to Warren Beauty, Faye Dunaway, (host) Jimmy Kim,” the firm said.

The account for the Academy Awards blunder continued.

LOS ANGELES — Emma Watson has said she finds it difficult to disappoint her young fans. Watson said, “When am I a celebrity sighting versus when am I going to make someone’s freakin’ week? Children I don’t say no to, for ex a m p l e.—PTI

LOS ANGELES — Emma Watson has said she does not like taking selfies with fans as privacy means a lot to her. Watson has said taking selfies with fans is not an abstract idea: “When am I a celebrity sighting versus when am I going to make someone’s freakin’ week? Children I don’t say no to, for example.—PTI

The 26-year-old actress, who stars as Belle in the upcoming “Beauty and the Beast,” said she found the courage to say no to “Beauty and the Beast,” said she means a lot to her.

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“Guys, guys, I’m sorry. No. There’s a mistake,” Horowitz said. “Moonlight,” you guys won best picture. This is not a joke.”

It took three hours for PricewaterhouseCoopers, which has been overseeing Academy Awards balloting for 83 years, initially to confirm that Beauty and Dunaway received the wrong category envelope.

PwC said it took full responsibility and apologized to the casts and crews of “La La Land” and “Moonlight.”

“We sincerely apologize to Warren Beauty, Faye Dunaway, (host) Jimmy Kim,” the firm said.

Los Angeles — An accountant for the Academy Awards botched the meticulous procedure for announcing the Oscar for best picture when he handed victory to “La La Land” before declaring “Moonlight” the real winner, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) said on Monday.

Accountant Brian Cullinan, who media reports said had been tweeting backstage shortly before, gave presenters Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway the wrong envelope for the movie industry’s top award on Sunday, the accounting firm said in a statement.

In a gaffe that stunned the Dolby Theatre crowd in Hollywood and a television audience worldwide, “Cullinan mistakenly handed the back-up envelope for Actress in a Leading Role instead of the envelope for Best Picture” to Beauty and Dunaway, PwC said.

“Once the error occurred, protocols for correcting it were not followed through quickly enough by Mr Cullinan or his partner,” the Wall Street Journal and celebrity website TMZ.com reported that Cullinan had posted a backstage photo of actress Emma Stone on social network Twitter minutes before the mix-up.

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Sistine Chapel gets full digital treatment for future restorations

VATICAN CITY — The last time the entire Sistine Chapel was photographed for posterity, digital photography was in its infancy and words like pixels were bandied about mostly by computer nerds and NASA scientists.

Now, after decades of technological advances in art photography, digital darkrooms and printing techniques, a five-year project that will aid future restorations has left the Vatican Museums with 270,000 digital images that show frescoes by Michelangelo and other masters in fresh, stunning detail.

“En the future, this will allow us to know the state of every centimetre of the chapel as it is today, in 2017,” said Antonio Paolucci, former head of the museums and a world-renowned expert on the Sistine.

Michelangelo’s ceiling frescoes include one of the most famous scenes in art — the arm of a gentle, bearded God reaching out to give life to Adam.

The Renaissance master finished the ceiling in 1512 and painted the massive “Last Judgement” panel behind the altar between 1534 and 1541.

The last time all Sistine frescoes were photographed was between 1980 and 1994, during a landmark restoration project that cleaned them for the first time in centuries.

The new photos were taken for inclusion in a new three-volume, 870-page set that is limited to 1,999 copies and marketed to libraries and collectors.

The set, which costs about 12,000 euros ($12,700), was a joint production of the Vatican Museums and Italy’s Scripta Manent high-end art publishers.

Post production computer techniques included “stitching” of frames that photographers took while working out of sight for 65 nights from 7 pm to 2 am, when the chapel where popes are elected is closed.

The project was known to only a few people until it was unveiled in the chapel on Friday night.

The set includes the entire chapel, including the mosaic floor and 15th century frescoes by artists who have long languished in Michelangelo’s giant shadow. More than 220 pages are printed in 1:1 scale, including ‘The Creation of Adam’ and Jesus’ face from the Last Judgement.

Each volume weighs about 9 kg (20 pounds) and fold-out pages measure 60 by 130 cm (24 by 51 inches).

The old photos taken during the last restoration were done with film.

“We used special post-production software to get the depth, intensity, warmth and nuance of colours to an accuracy of 99.9 per cent,” said Giorgio Armaroli, head of Scripta Manent.

“Future restorers will use these as higher standards,” he said, adding that each page was printed six times.

Brush strokes are clearly visible as are the “borders” delineating sections, known as “giornate,” or days. Since frescoes are painted on wet plaster, artists prepare just enough for that what they can complete in each session.

The photographers used a 10-metre-high (33 feet) portable fold-out scaffold and a special telescopic lens. The results are now stored in a Vatican server holding 30 terabytes of information.

— Reuters

With a roll of the dice and shouts of ‘yalla’, Jews and Arabs face off

JERUSALEM — In the early evening on a backstreet in downtown Jerusalem, Arabs and Jews are milling in a refugee neighbourhood in north Jerusalem, who had to cross checkpoints to get there. The city is segregated in many ways, so we wanted to create some crossover between neighborhoods, he said. “Politics is not at the center of this, but it’s around.” — Reuters

A woman dances as Arab and Jewish players compete in a backgammon championship

The gathering is the latest in a series of events organized by Double Yerushalmi, a group trying to build closer ties between Arabs and Jews through cultural activities like singing, dancing and the increasingly popular shesh besh championship.

To the strains of Arabic music — not usually heard in the western, mainly Jewish side of Jerusalem — around 50 players turned up on Monday, sitting hunched over the backgammon tables, shaking dice and clicking the counters like pros.

Cigarette smoke hung heavy in the air, beers and energy drinks were consumed and shouts of “yalla” and “kadima” — Arabic and Hebrew for “come on” — rang out. Tables were bashed.

“You want to win, but it’s friendly too,” said Karem Joubran, a 27-year-old from Shuafat camp, a Palestinian refugee neighbourhood in north Jerusalem, who had to cross checkpoints to get to the event. “It’s good, it brings people together.”

Joubran said he usually speaks Hebrew to his Jewish opponents, but sometimes comes across a Jewish player who speaks decent Arabic and they chat and joke. They tend to avoid politics or the postacies of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — their common ground is backgammon. Zaki Djermal, an Israeli of Syrian Jewish descent, is one of the organizers of the gathering, which has met six times in recent months — half in Arab neighborhoods, half in Jewish ones — and has seen its popularity grow steadily.

“The city is segregated in many ways, so we wanted to create some crossover between neighborhoods,” he said. “Politics is not at the center of this, but it’s around.” — Reuters

Net-A-Porter founder Massenet joins rival Farfetch

LONDON — Natalie Massenet, founder of online fashion retailer Net-A-Porter, has joined the rival Farfetch Group as non-executive co-chair, Farfetch said in a statement on Tuesday.


Analysts said at the time the resignation of Massenet, a highly regarded figure in the fashion world and chairman of the British Fashion Council, was a blow for the new group. Massenet will work alongside London-based Farfetch’s chief executive, founder and executive co-chairman Jose Neves.

“She will have a particular focus on growing the global brand and strengthening its partnerships with the fashion industry,” the statement said.—Reuters
Murray against wild cards for drug cheats

DUBAI — World number one Andy Murray is giving wild cards to players returning from doping bans but the 29-year-old understands why tournament organisers make an exception for “big names”.

Maria Sharapova has been given wild-card slots for tournaments in Stuttgart, Madrid and Rome despite falling down the rankings as she serves a 15-month doping ban for testing positive for meldonium at the 2016 Australian Open.

With Sharapova’s ban ending in April, Wimbledome organisers are grappling with the potential dilemma of whether to hand the 2004 champion a place in this year’s competition in July.

“I think you should really have to work your way back. However, the majority of tournaments are going to do what they think is best for their event,” Murray told the Times newspaper.

“If they think having big names there is going to sell more seats, then they’re going to do that. She (Sharapova) has an opportunity to try to improve her ranking up until that point and potentially not need a wild card.”

“But then if she doesn’t, that becomes Wimbledon’s decision and how they want to play that,” added the Briton.

“I’m sure they’ll think long and hard about it and how they feel people will view it and then make the right decision for them.”

— Reuters

Guardiola says Man City owner wants him to stay for ‘long time’

LONDON — Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has said the club’s owner, Arab billionaire Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, wants him to stay in charge of the club beyond his current three-year contract.

Guardiola, who took over at City before the start of the season, won two Champions League, three La Liga and two King’s Cup titles as Barcelona coach. Two domestic doubles followed at Bayern Munich.

The Spaniard met Sheikh Mansour for the first time during City’s recent warm-weather training break in Abu Dhabi.

“He would like that I stay here for a long, long, long, long time. But of course it depends on the results,” Guardiola told British media.

“If not, they would say: What happened? What can we do? What do we need to improve? That’s the process. To finish the process, they are going to help us.

“We didn’t speak about targets. They will be happy if we win. I know we have to win but I’ve handled that in the past and I will in the present.”

City are third in the Premier League, 11 points behind leaders Chelsea, who have played one game more, and face second-tier Huddersfield Town in an FA Cup fifth-round replay on Wednes-

day. Guardiola’s men also hold a 5-3 advantage from their Champions League last-16, first-leg tie against French side Monaco, who they face in the return leg in France on 15 March.

The manager said he would wait until the season is over before taking a call on the future of several of his players, including goalkeeper Joe Hart.

Hart, who is England’s first-choice keeper, has joined Italian side Torino on loan, with Guardiola saying Claudio Bravo from Barcelona as a replacement.

Guardiola has rotated between Bravo and Willy Caballero this season.

“I am so happy with Willy and Claudio,” Guardiola added. “We are going to talk about (Hart’s future) at the end of the season.”

“I trust a lot in both and we’ll decide — not just the goalkeepers, the midfielders, wing-

ers, strikers, full-backs — we are going to decide at the end of the season.”

Caballero is out of contract in June along with midfielders Gabriel Jesus and Yaya Toure. So are defenders Gaël Clichy, Pablo Zabaleta and Bacary Sagna.

— Reuters

Shakespeare favourite to replace Ranieri at Leicester

LONDON — Craig Shakespeare is the bookmakers’ favourite to succeed Claudio Ranieri as manager of Leicester City after taking charge of Monday’s impressive 3-1 victory over Liverpool.

Assistant coach since 2011, Shakespeare is now 5-4 favourite ahead of Dutchman Guus Hiddink, former England manager Roy Hodgson and Nigel Pearson, the man who was succeeded by Ranieri.

“It appears that the shortlist for Leicester manager is down to four with Craig Shakespeare leading the way following Leicester’s victory over Liverpool,” a spokesman for bookmakers William Hill said on Tuesday.

As job interviews go, Shakespeare could hardly have done better on Monday as champion Leicester produced their best display of the season in the Premier League. Jamie Vardy scored twice and Danny Drinkwater once as Leicester ended a run of five successive defeats to move out of the relegation zone.

“I have said before that, do I think I’m capable of it? Yes. Does it faze me? No,” Shakespeare said.

“But I think it is the powers-that-be, the owners, who decide and do their job, it is their diligence to look. I am sure they will do that.”

— Reuters

Liverpool post 19.8 mln pounds loss despite record revenue

LONDON — Liverpool reported a 19.8 million pounds (£24.51 million) pre-tax loss for the year ended 31 May, 2016, mainly due to investment in players, despite overall rev-

ue rising to a record 301.8 million pounds.

The English Premier League club’s financial results reveal a significant drop on the 60 million pounds pre-tax profit posted the previous year, which was mainly due to the sale of their Uruguayan striker Luis Su-

arez to Barcelona.

The cost of signing man-

ager Brendan Rodgers in Oc-

tober 2015, the appointment of Jurgen Klopp and his back-

room staff and the recruitment of 12 new players contributed to the loss.

Strikers Roberto Firmino and Danny Ings, midfielder Marko Grujic and defend-

ers Nathaniel Clyne and Joe Gomez were among the players added to the squad during the year.

Despite failing to qualify for the Champions League, Liverpool’s overall revenue rose by 3.9 million pounds, largely due to the Merseyside club reaching the Europa League and League Cup finals last season.

Liverpool were the only club in the top 10 of the Deloitte Football Money League not playing in the Champions League last season.

“The increase in the under-

lying revenue adds further strength to the club’s financial position,” Liverpool’s chief op-

er Andy Hughes, said in a statement on the club website.

(www.liverpoolfc.com)

Media revenue rose by one million pounds to 123.6 million and match-day income by 3.4 million pounds to 62.4 million, while commercial revenue fell 700,000 pounds to 115.7 million.

Commercial revenue was affected by building a new main stand at Anfield, restrict-

ing access to the stadium on non-match days.

“All three main reve-

nue streams continue to show strength and commercial rev-

enues held firm irrespective of the impact of the main stand at Anfield,” Hughes added.

— Reuters