PAKOKKU — Myo Myint fondly remembers when his one-acre farm regularly produced 100 baskets of rice. But as rainfall became erratic in this arid region, he started growing betel leaves, a less thirsty cash crop.

This summer, the 50-year-old is considering leaving fallow his land in Myanmar’s central “Dry Zone” because when the stream behind his house dries up in March, the cost of irrigation outstrips the income from any crop.

A 2016 drought followed by heavy rains already battered his farm.

“Water is becoming more scarce every year. I want to keep growing the crops but there’s not much I can do without water,” he said, sitting beneath the ground floor of his stilt house.

His village of Myay Ni Twin, in Pakokku township, is around two hours’ drive from Bagan, Myanmar’s top tourist destination known for its ancient Buddhist temples.

“When I was growing up, the stream didn’t go dry. Now there’s less rain, and it’s very hard to plant things,” he said.

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UPDJC committees conclude discussions

THE Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) successfully concluded discussion meetings on politics, society, economics, security, land rights and environmental issues held at Nay Pyi Taw’s National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, which lasted from 8 to 10 March. Working committees from government organisations, ethnic armed groups, and political parties attended. Secretarial meetings for the UPDJC were held before each discussion meeting.

Afterwards, the various discussion meetings for each working committee were held in their designated places with the working committee for political affairs with U Khin Zaw Oo, Dr. Lian Mhone Sar Kaung and Sai Kyaw Nyunt leading the discussions.

SEE PAGE 3 >>

Union Government announces official Thingyan public holidays

The official Thingyan holidays for this year have been reduced from 10 days to five (13 April to 17 April) because of “hindrances to office work, banking services in relation to other countries and delays in transportation and commodity flows,” the government said in a news release yesterday. The complete announcement is on Page 3.
2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 4th regular session holds 13th day meeting

AT the 13th day meeting of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 4th Regular Session held at 10 am yesterday, Mahn Win Khang Than, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, announced that the State goodwill visit of Myanmar delegation led by President U Htin Kyaw at the invitation of King of Cambodia from 3 February 2017 to 6 February 2017 has been put on record by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Afterward, U Thein Tun of Kyaunggon constituency discussed findings and a conclusion report (revised) of the combining committee on bills concerning projects included in the Annexe 2 of a bill on the national planning for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

U Thein Tun said, “Combining committee on the bills and combining committee on the public account discussed that altogether 44 factories under No. 1 Heavy Industries and No. 3 heavy industries, the Ministry of Industry & petro-chemicals transportation and distribution branches of Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy would be suspended currently. Currently-suspended projects are not those being implemented just on these days. When the State-owned finances invested in respective fiscal years were re-scrutinised, the amounts were found to have been very great in volume. Provided that they are suspended or abolished, we should take notice that there will be wastages of people’s finances. Being national multi-development projects, we should study and assess as to which kinds of potential consequences these projects will meet. And, the public should be informed transparently which kinds of projects will be substituted for the development of the country. So, the above-said 44 factories should be divided into two categories—those to be suspended completely and those to be supervised by the government.”

Over the discussion made by U Thein Tun, Hluttaw representatives took part in the discussion.

Afterward, Mahn Win Khang Than, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, announced that putting the motion, clarification made by members of respective Union Organisations and getting the approval of the Hluttaw concerning approval, refusal and reduced allowance concerning the projects included in Annexe 2 of bill on the project will be carried out.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi oversees entrance exams in Nay Pyi Taw

UNION Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi visited BEHS 3 in Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw and oversaw students taking the third day of university entrance exams. The third day’s subject was mathematics.

Over 90 per cent of students registered in exam centres in each township of Uttarathiri, Zeyathiri, Pobbathiri, Takton, Dekkhinathiri, Zabuthiri, Pyinmana, Lowe turned up for the third day of entrance exams.—Myanmar News Agency

29th ASEAN–Australian Forum held

THE 29th ASEAN–Australia Forum was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 9-10 March 2017. The Forum was co-chaired by U Myint Thu, Director General, ASEAN Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and H.E Mr. Gary Quinlan, Deputy Secretary if the Department of Foreign Affairs and trade of Australia. Representatives from all ASEAN Member States, Australia and the ASEAN Secretariat attended the Forum.

At the Forum, participants discussed the developments in the region and the need to have closer collaboration in addressing the shared challenges. Both ASEAN and Australia stressed the importance of ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture.

The Forum further discussed ways to enhance ASEAN–Australia cooperation through the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum(EAMF), and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus mechanism (ADMM-Plus). They also expressed their willingness to work closely together to counter terrorism and violent extremism in the region, including through the implementation if the renewed ASEAN–Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism and the renewed ASEAN-Australia Meeting on Transnational Crime Consultations with Australia. The Forum also reflected in the success of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) in boosting economic ties between ASEAN and Australia and fostering closer economic integration within ASEAN.

The Forum reviewed the implementation of the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action (2015-2019) to implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership, which was adopted at the ASEAN-Australia Commemoratives Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw in 2014.

The Forum also deliberated on the preparation for the ASEAN Australia Special Summit to be held in Australia in March 2018.—Myanmar News Agency

Defence Services C-in-C Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Angkor Wat Temple in Siem Reap. PHOTO: MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing returns

DEFENCE Services Command-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party accompanied by the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces Deputy Commander-in-Chief visited Angkor Wat Temple and Bayon Temple in Siem Reap at 8:15 am local time yesterday.

In the afternoon, the Senior General and party also went on a tour of the Cultural Village, one of the famous places in Siem Reap.

Afterwards, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party left Siem Reap in Cambodia for Nay Pyi Taw at 5:30 pm local standard time. The Senior General and party were welcomed back by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (army) Vice Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, high-ranking officers of the office of the Commander-in-Chief, the Commander of the Nay Pyi Taw Command and Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Sok Chea, deputy chief of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Yangon Mr Nguyen Thanh Vinh and officials at the airport.—Myanmar News Agency

Thura U Shwe Mann receives dean of the European Court of Auditors

CHAIRMAN of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann received a delegation led by H.E. Mr. Baron Karel Pinxten, dean of the European Court of Auditors “Audit Group III” at 10:30 am yesterday in the meeting hall of Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on measures taken by the Commission for the Assessment of Legal Affairs and Special Issues and assistance to be provided by the EU.—Myanmar News Agency
IDPs who fled Laukkai receive assistance

The Department of Relief and Resettlement and donors provided assistance yesterday to internally displaced persons who fled from the battle in Laukkai yesterday at Mansu shan in Lashio, Shan State.

Shan State Deputy Commissioner U Myint Than handed over to the abestrians 88 bag of rice, 121 viss of cooking oil, 729 tinned fish, and Ks3,335,400.

Myanmar Tatmadaw’s No. 10 battlefield medical battalion and the township health department provided health care services, drinking water and meal boxes to 266 members of labour families who arrived in Mansu shan monastery from different places.

The department of social welfare and resettlement in Lashio district and donors arranged 5 vehicles for family members to return to their hometowns.

UPDJC’s working committees conclude . . .

>> FROM PAGE 1

The working committee on economic issues discussed term-papers submitted by Pa’O, Kayin, Chin States and Bago and Taninthayi Regions. Reports from the discussion will be submitted to the Joint Committee’s Secretary Group.

The working committee discussing security issues was led by Major General Soe Naing Oo, U Myo Win and U Tar Hla Pe and talked about two major headings and other subheadings on the security sector. The committee discussed appointing topics for the headings and subheadings and procedures for the coming committee meetings. The working committee discussing land rights and environmental issues was led by U Aung Soe, Kon Myint Hun and U Myint Soe. Reports from the discussions among the committee concerning four term papers submitted from Pa’O, Kayin, Bago and Taninthayi that are to be submitted to the UPDJC’s Secretariat Group.

With the findings and reports from the various working committees submitted to the UPDJC, the Joint Committee announced they will hold their conference on 11 March. —Tha Zar, Phyoe Thant

President offers “Soon” to Sayadaws and religious title recipient monks for 2017

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw attended a ceremony to offer “soon” to the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws, Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Sayadaws and religious title recipient Sayadaws for the 2017 at the Sasana Beikman on the precepts of the Upasatansi Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Also present were members of the Sangha led by chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and Mandalay Bhamo Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Raththa Guru and Abhidhaja Agga Maha Sadharmajotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa, Vice President U Myint Swe and wife, Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint and wife Daw Cho Cho, wife of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Daw Nant Kyun Kyi, Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Hway Yee, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and wife Daw Aye Thida, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services Vice Senior-General Soe Win, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and wife, Union Ministers, the Union Attorney-General, the Union Auditor-General, the Chairman of Union Civil Service Board, the Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, the Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, Mayor of Nay Pyi Taw Council and their wives, departmental heads, officials and invited guests.

First, the congregation led by President U Htin Kyaw received the 9 precepts delivered by the Chairman of the SS-MNC Bhamo Sayadaw and the members of the Sangha recited the parittas. The President then donated the offerings to the Chairman of the SS-MNC Bhamo Sayadaw.

Afterwards, Vice President U Myint Swe and wife, Vice President U Henry Van Thio, the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and wife, wife of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker, the Chief Justice of the Union, the Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union and wife, the Chairman of the Union Election Commission and wife, the Defence Services Deputy Commander-in-Chief, the Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw and wife, Union Ministers, the Union Attorney-General, the Union Auditor-General, the Chairman of UCSB, the Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, the Governor of the CBM, the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, Deputy Ministers, the Members of Nay Pyi Taw Council and their wives and the departmental heads offered alms to the members of the Sangha.

Similarly, Daw Khin Thet Huey, wife of the vice president, Daw Cho Cho, wife of the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and wife of the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Daw Nant Kyin Kyi donated offerings to the nuns. The congregation respectfully listened to a sermon delivered by the SS-MNC Presiding Sayadaw and patron of Myominkyaung Pahtamapyan Sarnthintaik in Thanlyin Township Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandimabhibhivamsa and shared merits gained.

Then, the President and party offered “soon” (mid-day meal) to members of the Sangha.

—Myanmar News Agency
Local Business

Energy generation reaches record high in five years

The country’s energy generation and consumption this fiscal year reached a record high in the past five years, according to the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy.

To fill the power requirement of the country, the ministry generated more than 17 billion units of power, including over 9.7 billion units from hydropower projects and over 8 billion units from heat over the past 11 months of this FY.

According to the ministry’s official figures, the MoEE produced over 12 billion units in 2012-2013 FY. It increased to over 12 billion units in 2013-2014 FY, 14 billion units in 2014-2015 FY and over 15 billion units in 2015-2016 FY.

When compared with last FY, the ministry’s power generation increased by almost 2 billion units this FY.

According to the ministry’s prediction, the country’s power consumption will reach to more than 19.50 billion units next fiscal year. The energy consumption across the nation is estimated to hit between 3,300 and 3,500 megawatts during this summer.

The Ministry of Electric Power and Energy is putting forth continues efforts to fill the country’s growing electricity demands—Win Win

KBZ sponsors Bloomberg Investment Myanmar

IN their endeavour to provide an international standard of banking services to the citizens of Myanmar, Kanbawza Bank Ltd. has partnered with a myriad of international associations and businesses and is now hosting the Bloomberg Investment Myanmar event at the Sedona Hotel in Yangon as a platinum sponsor.

The event took place on 9 March with international delegates, international and local business people and experts in attendance discussing the country’s investment and business perspective.

Kanbawza Bank Ltd. Directors Daw Nang Lang Kham and Daw Nang Kham Noung welcomed honoured guests to the private breakfast.

“For our country to develop as quickly as possible, we need to keep that in mind we are striving for development for the future generations while working towards it,” Daw Nang Lang Kham said in her welcoming speech.

U Nyo Myint, Senior Managing Director of KBZ Bank, opened discussions with the heading “A Final Frontier Opens Up – Is This Finally the Real Deal?” He talked on business perspectives in Myanmar and KBZ Bank’s working in the country’s financial sector as well as expanding business across ASEAN and in America as well.

The event was broadcast on the respected economic television channel Bloomberg under the heading “Bloomberg Invest Myanmar.” In attendance were the British Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Andrew Patrick and other officials from various embassies, Chairman of Bangkok Bank Mr. Chatsiri Sophonpanich, local and foreign business leaders, representatives and economists, all discussing the country’s investment potential and economic prospective.

—Thura Lin

Import value up by $165 million since April

The total value of imports during this fiscal year hit US$15.024 billion, an increase of nearly $165 million compared with last FY, the Ministry of Commerce.

The country bought $6.160 billion worth of capital goods, $5.309 billion worth of industrial raw materials and $3.554 billion worth of personal goods mainly from its neighbours.

From 1 April of last year to 24 February of this year, the government sector bought capital goods, raw materials and personal goods that amounted to over $849.830 million from international trade partners, while the private sector imported $14.174 billion worth of products.

The import value over the same 11 months of last financial year totalled $14.858 billion, including $2.406 billion from the government sector and $12.452 billion from the private sector, with the country importing $7.578 billion worth of capital goods, $4.300 billion worth of industrial raw materials and $2.980 billion worth of personal goods.

4th Japanese-style flea market on 12 March

The fourth Japanese-style flea market is set to take place on 12 March in the People’s Park near Pyay Road entrance in Yangon on a grand scale, according to the Myanmar-Japan Socio-Economic Development Association.

Members of the Myanmar-Japan Socio-Economic Development Association (SEDA), seafarers in Japan, Japanese organisations and Myanmar companies will sell a wide range of Japanese products for less than Ks100,000 in over 90 booths.

Clothing, high-tech electronics, cosmetics, household utensils, kitchen wares and consumer goods will be displayed for sale at the market.

Organised by the Myanmar-Japan SEDA, the third occurrence of the flea market was held at People’s Square in Yangon on the Union Day, which fell on 12 February.

The association plans to organise Japanese-style flea markets in the country on a monthly basis, its spokesperson said.—200

Exports by government sector drops by $1.2 billion

Myanmar government exported US$3.332 billion worth of products over the first 330 days of this fiscal year, according to the Commerce Ministry.

When compared to the first 11 months of last financial year, the export value declined by $1.2 billion during this FY. The government sector exported minerals, industrial finished goods and other products worth $4.936 billion to foreign trade partners in FY2015-2016.

During 2016-2017 FY, the sector sent $386 million worth of minerals, $3.398 million worth of forestry products, $0.043 million worth of agriculture products, $2.669 billion worth of industrial finished goods and others worth of $273 million to foreign importers.

The government of Myanmar is putting forth concerted efforts to improve the country’s economy by encouraging private entrepreneurs.

The export value from the private sector rose by over $1.5 billion compared with the similar period of last FY. According to the figures released by the ministry, the private sector exporters sold $6.898 billion worth of goods including animals and fishery products between 1 April and 24 February.

Currently, Myanmar continues to trade with Asian countries, ASEAN member states, island nations, Middle East countries and some European and African states, and other western countries mainly through sea.—Khine Khant

Photo: Phyo Linh

The country exported $10.231 billion worth of products this fiscal year, through sea routes. PHOTO: PHYO LINH

The country's energy generation reached a record high in the past five years, according to the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy. The total value of imports during this fiscal year hit US$15.024 billion, an increase of nearly $165 million compared with last FY, the Ministry of Commerce. The fourth Japanese-style flea market is set to take place on 12 March in the People’s Park near Pyay Road entrance in Yangon on a grand scale, according to the Myanmar-Japan Socio-Economic Development Association. The government sector exported minerals, industrial finished goods and other products worth $4.936 billion to foreign trade partners in FY2015-2016. During 2016-2017 FY, the sector sent $386 million worth of minerals, $3.398 million worth of forestry products, $0.043 million worth of agriculture products, $2.669 billion worth of industrial finished goods and others worth of $273 million to foreign importers. The government of Myanmar is putting forth concerted efforts to improve the country’s economy by encouraging private entrepreneurs. The export value from the private sector rose by over $1.5 billion compared with the similar period of last FY. According to the figures released by the ministry, the private sector exporters sold $6.898 billion worth of goods including animals and fishery products between 1 April and 24 February. Currently, Myanmar continues to trade with Asian countries, ASEAN member states, island nations, Middle East countries and some European and African states, and other western countries mainly through sea.—Khine Khant
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw marks milestone in implementing People’s Voice, People’s Will, People’s Expectation

SECTION 11, Paragraph (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar states, “The three branches of the sovereign power namely legislative power, executive power and judicial power are separated, to the extent possible and exert reciprocal control, check and balance among them.”

Hluttaw is a deliberative assembly with the authority to make laws. Hluttaw, practicing the legislative power, focuses on making laws that will bring about peace, law enforcement and national reconciliation for emergence of a federal democracy country in which the entire people enjoy prosperity.

Transparency

The regular meetings of the Second Hluttaw commenced on 1 February 2016 and the representatives elected by the people on behalf of the people discussed matters on whether there is a transparency and accountability in the executive and judicial branches; whether there is a check and balance system in spending allotted budget; and making laws that will benefit the people.

They also raised questions and made proposals regarding policies and procedures of executive and judiciary branches of the State. The respective hluttaws have been alive and kicking with active discussions among representatives and officials as Union level responsible officials were invited to Hluttaw to make clarifications.

Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hlut-taw Mahn Win Kaing in his speech said that the first regular session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw commenced on 8 February 2016; and that in accord with the Section 12, paragraph (a) of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law, the sessions of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw were convened and the fourth regularly session could be held. He also said that Hluttaws are platforms of the people or a post erected specially for people to air their grievances.

In a year, Pyidaungsu Hlut-taw elected the president and the vice-presidents; agreed the appointments of chairman and members of the Constitutional Tribunal, and chairman and members of the Union Election Commission; formed 22 Union ministries; agreed the appointments of the Attorney General of the Union and the Auditor General of the Union; formed Hluttaw committees; formed Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission; and formed Myanmar Parliamentar-y Union.

20 Laws

The Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, in a year, enacted new laws, amended and revoked the old ones totaling 20 laws which will benefit much to the country.

The Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, in a year, enacted new laws, amended and revoked the old ones totaling 20 laws which will benefit much to the country.

On 6 April 2016, the State Counsellor Law was enacted to be able to build a federal union with flourishing democracy in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. This law is also aiming at creating market oriented economic system enabling the entire citizens to enjoy peace and prosperity.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw repealed “the Law Safeguarding the State from the Danger of Subversive Elements” on 26 May 2016 and the “Emergency Provisions Act” on 4 October 2016. It also enacted Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law which grants rights of the people to assemble and process enshrined in the constitution on the same day.

President U Htin Kyaw (Centre), Vice President U Myint Swe (Left) and Vice President U Henry Van Thio are seen at the oath taking ceremony at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is seen together with Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and dignitaries at 37th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi strikes a gong at an ASEAN event at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. PHOTO: MNA

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PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

People’s Voice, Hluttaw’s Voice, People’s Will, Hluttaw’s Will

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Myanmar Investment Law was also enacted on 18 October 2016 to promote investment in the interest of the people and to create job opportunities thereby enhancing human capacity and to gain technical know-how for industrial development and to emerge international business and investment. On 2 December 2016, the Third Amending Law of the Ward and Village Tract Administration Law was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Moreover, Union Budget Law 43/2016 for 2016-2017 fiscal year and the Older Person Law (44/2016) were also approved.

Discussions on Bills

The Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw revealed that National Planning Bill for 2017-2018 which will be approved in the respective fiscal years and to be approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw proposed by the Union government and Union Budget Law, and Tax Bill were under discussion.

Induction Programme

Induction Programme of Hluttaw was launched in February 2016 in the Hluttaw complex in Nay Pyi Taw. This is for the representatives to widen their knowledge. The programme helps consolidate building democracy in the country and assist in shaping functions of the Hluttaw in post-election period.

Hluttaw representatives could discuss matters on how to build and promote their leadership roles in the respective committees and how to implement the objectives of a committee in Hluttaw procedures to meet success. This means that in a year they could focus on Hluttaw affairs that could be beneficial to the nation and its people.

Speakers of the respective Hluttaws including elected representatives, Tatmadaw representatives, invited former parliamentarians of world countries and the existing representatives, Resident Representatives of UNDP and officials, and officials of IPU and the House of Commons totaling 465 persons participated in the programme.

According to Speaker Mahn Win Kyaw Than, the programme could inject some fresh ideas into the minds of the representatives as a preparatory measure for the time when they are tasked with tough duties of capacity building and coordination and cooperation. The programme also enhanced their ability of making legislation, conducting representation and watching. By studying the comments made at home and abroad they would understand the leadership role. The programme also highlighted opportunities and challenges faced by women representatives and thus all the representatives came to know how to support them to become brilliant ones.

ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

Myanmar hosted, from 29 September to 3 October 2016, the 37th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly organized by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Its theme entitled “Vibrant AIPA for a progressive ASEAN Community”. Organizing such a meeting successfully shows that Myanmar has dedicated herself into fulfilling obligation as a member country and it is also a proof that Myanmar won trust of member countries. Moreover, further cooperation could be made among members and as a result appropriate achievements can be made in ASEAN region. The meeting produced good advices of member countries leading to making right decisions and realizing such decisions into reality.

There left to discuss 28 laws during the remaining four-year period of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. These laws are designed to bring about prosperity of the people.

At the meeting, six committees held separate sessions and made 26 important decisions concerning political, economic, social and women’s affairs for the regional countries. This can be called a historic milestone.

Making Important Decision

During the one-year period of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw since its commencement, it could serve the interests of the nation and the people such as debating matters on signing of 15 international treaties and agreements.

With the aim of fighting against terrorist acts in the western part of Myanmar, trans-border crimes and organized crimes and illegal drug trade, Myanmar intends to join “BIMSTEC” Convention as well as to be a party to ASEAN Convention on Prevention against trafficking in person of women and children. To establish tourism industry among Greater Mekong Region, Myanmar is preparing to sing agreement on it. These are the decisions made by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Make approvals

Hluttaw representatives debated on such 11 topics as promoting economy of the State and uplifting the socio-economic life of the people; rehabilitating victims of natural disaster; imbibing more loans to farmers; promoting the agriculture sector; supplying more powers; ensuring smooth transportation; upgrading fire extinguishers and search and rescue systems; and eradicating poverty. They supported the proposals and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved them.

International Democracy Day

International Democracy Day for the year 2016 was held in Hluttaw complex in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 September under the theme “Democracy 2030”. At the ceremony papers that will help assist marching towards the goal of a federal state in which all citizens are enjoying prosperity.

Plans for the good of the nation

Works done by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in a year can be seen as measures for sustainable development of the nation including promoting human rights.

“In line with the motto “People’s Voice, Hluttaw’s Voice, People’s Will, Hluttaw’s Will, People’s Expectation, Hluttaw’s Implementation.”, Hluttaw representatives are always observing the real life of the people and their desires as they are elected by the people to represent them. They are never losing sight of serving the interests of the people,” said Mahn Win Kyaw Than, the speaker.

28 Laws under debate

There left to discuss 28 laws during the remaining four-year period of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. These laws are designed to bring about prosperity of the people.

The laws include various topics such as systematic spending of budget allotted for projects across the country; ensuring systematic taxation; protecting of people’s rights and guaranteeing their security; matters on foreigners; dams and reservoirs for farmers; worksite safety and health for workers; smooth transportation for the convenience of people; and matters relating to companies for smooth flowing of foreign investments.
Water-saving tech, veg gardens grow hope in Myanmar’s Dry Zone

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Myanmar recently emerged from decades of military dictatorship only to face a bigger existential threat. The Southeast Asian nation of 50 million people is the world’s second most vulnerable country to climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index from research group Germanwatch. Studies have shown the onset of the monsoon is becoming more variable, increasing the risk of drought.

The Dry Zone, an area comprising 58 municipalities in Mandalay, Magwe and Sagaing, is home to around 10 million people, who mostly rely on rain-fed agriculture. It suffers from year-round water shortages.

A recent assessment by the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance (MCCA), an initiative funded by the European Union and United Nations, predicted a temperature increase of up to 3 degrees Celsius by 2050.

Myo Myint dreams of a hands-on approach to growing nutritious food in using drip irrigation and hydroponics. Non-profit Terre Des Hommes (Tdh), Italy has set these up in 45 villages with funding from Lifo.

“Myo Myint is a former soldier of the armed forces, said the firm’s director of research. “Despite the low irrigation, no one has tried drip irrigation yet. Myo Myint is one of the first of the soldiers who attempted it.”

A 2013 study funded by Lifo identified the Dry Zone as Myanmar’s most water-stressed region and one of its most food-insecure areas. Inadequate water sensors made abroad are already available, but their inclusions are in English and they are not widely used, nor calibrated by soil type.

Dry Zone projects’ soil sensors work with loam and clay, and its staff will train farmers to use it properly, the firm said.

The service - expected to retain an affordable price of around Ks9,000 ($22) - is now being tested in three Dry Zone towns, said Proximity’s user research manager Louisa-Jane Richards. A study of growers of flowers, vegetables and beef - a mild stimulant that is chewed - found they were over-irrigating by around 30 per cent, she said.

Cutting that to 15 per cent could save a farmer with 0.5 acres (0.2 hectares) of land 170 gallons of water a season.

HOME GARDENS

Families in the Dry Zone are also getting help to grow nutritious food in gardens using drip irrigation and hydroponics. Non-profit Terre Des Hommes (Tdh), Italy has set these up in 45 villages with funding from Lifo.

Myo Myint, a dusty village in Myingyan township, shares a pond with five other villages. But when its water disappears in the dry season, locals must rely on acidic well water and fresh vegetables become pricey.

Maung Maung, 46, now makes Ks1,000 a day selling must from the hydroponic garden behind his house, a 3-metre by 2-metre plot of vivid green surrounded by sandy soil. The gravity-fed system irrigates leafy vegeta- bles in discarded water bottles while leftover water collected at the bottom is re-cycled.

Maung Maung, who uses about 5 gallons of water a day, also grows mustard leaves, morning glory and lettuce, which go into the family meal.

“We used to eat vegetables only when we could afford it, about three times a week. Now we eat fresh, pesticide-free vegetables every day,” he said.

The extra income from selling his surplus produce will help in the coming dry months. Like many villagers, his main crop is pigeon pea, whose price has plummeted this year.

SYSTEM-WIDE SHIFT

Beyond immediate food and water needs, the Dry Zone is also experiencing dramatic shifts.

In many villages, most farmers are in their forties and fifties, as young people have left. Maung Maung’s three adult children work at factories in Mandalay, Myan- mar’s second-biggest city.

Pasquale Capizzi, MCCA’s chief technical advisor, said Myanmar needed to tackle both immediate natural disasters and the more gradual impacts of climate change.

“Response ... must involve society as a whole,” encompassing local and national government, businesses, communities and civil society, he said.

“You must adapt with different crops, different agricultural techniques, different mechanisation and productivity improvement - but in some areas you may have to be prepared to learn another trade,” he said.

Climate change will intensify risks such as cyclones, floods and droughts, he added, but will also have “silent effects” on soil salinity, health and yields.

People’s efforts to adapt, said Capizzi, must be supported to reinforce “the innate resilience of communities not to accept fate, but to bounce back and improve.”

(Reporting By Thin Lei Win, editing by Megan Rowling; Please credit the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, resilience, women’s rights, trafficking and property rights. Visit http://news.trust.org/)

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV SINAR KAPUAS VOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR KAPUAS VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk, expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV RATANA THIDYA VOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV RATANA THIDYA VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk, expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV BANI BHUM VOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANI BHUM VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk, expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk, expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV CANE FLORE VOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CANE FLORE VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV BANMI BANVOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANMI BANVOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV NANGUN VOY. NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV NANGUN VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV SABA VOY. NO (-)**

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**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV KAPUAS VOY. NO (-)**

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**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO (-)**

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**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV SABANA VOY. NO (-)**

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**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

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**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

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New initiative to use big data to advance social good

Eden Estopace

The big data capabilities of mobile operators will be put to good use to address humanitarian crises, including epidemics and natural disasters.

Sixteen of the world’s biggest operators, which collectively account for over two billion connections across more than 100 countries, have signed up to support GSMA’s Big Data for Social Good initiative launched at the Mobile World Congress held recently in Barcelona, Spain.

The 16 operators were Bharti Airtel, Deutsche Telekom, Hutchison, KDDI, KT Corporation, Millicom, MTS, NTT DOCOMO, INC., Orange, SK Telecom, Teléfonica, Telenor, Telha, Turkcell, Vodafone, and Zain.

“A year ago, the mobile industry became the first sector as a whole to commit to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and, as outlined in our Mobile Industry Impact Report published in September, we are already affecting all 17 Goals to varying degrees,” said Mats Granryd, Director General, GSMA. “We are now focusing on amplifying and accelerating our industry’s impact in achieving the SDGs, and the initiative will contribute greatly to addressing some of the biggest challenges facing humanity: epidemics and natural disasters.”

GSMA said that according to a study published by The Royal Society, 15 million people die and millions more become seriously ill each year as a result of infectious diseases, which are spread through human contact as well as other sources, such as mosquitoes.

It’s also estimated that 1.8 billion people were affected by a disaster in the last decade and economic losses due to disaster amounted to $1.5 trillion from 2003 to 2013.

Through the Big Data for Social Good, mobile operators will provide key insights based on anonymized meta-data generated by their networks to support the response in these critical situations. For instance, by monitoring the flow of people to and from impacted areas, public health organizations can more effectively respond to prevent epidemics, slow the spread of diseases and better target relief efforts. With access to mobile network insights, humanitarian agencies can more accurately aid evacuation, response and recovery efforts.

Trials of Big Data for Social Good, focusing on epidemics, will start from June 2017 in Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Myanmar, and Thailand. Operators involved in the pilot project include Bharti Airtel in India, Telefónica in Brazil, and Telenor in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand.

The multi-operator pilot is set to develop common capabilities to identify, alert, predict and manage the spread of diseases that, if unaddressed, could create epidemics. The trials will enrich this information with third-party data sources such as hospital intakes, death counts, and weather data, among others, to provide meaningful insights that local and international governments and humanitarian agencies can use to make decisions on when, where and how to deploy resources.

The GSMA expects to publish the results of these trials at Mobile World Congress in February 2018.

The United Nations Foundation is a supporting partner of the project and will provide coordination and integration with the broader ecosystem, including organizations such as Global Poverty Project and the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL). Kathy Calvin, President and CEO of the UN Foundation, said data holds enormous possibilities to advance social good and should be used better with innovation and in partnership to save lives, empower more women, and ensure more inclusive digital societies.

“Big Data for Social Good will build on examples from across the globe, of operators large and small, in developed and developing economies, investing in big data to improve society across a number of areas,” added Granryd. “It also complements the experience and insights gained through GSMA programs such as Disaster Response, mHealth, Connected Living and others, with an emphasis on delivering accelerated, demonstrable impact that can be extended further to address other areas of global concern.”

http://www.entrepreneurinnovation.net
Literary talk for students at University of Dental Medicine in Yangon

WITH a view to improving the personality of students and paying respect to their professions, a literary talk was held at the University of Dental Medicine in Yangon yesterday morning. At the talk entitled “Personal and Professional Development (PPD),” writers Tharawun (Pyay) and Maung Thar Cho (Jack — Kungyangon) gave talks to the audience. The literary talk was attended by the rector and faculty members, house surgeons, students and staff — GNLML

Japan provides nearly USD 4.2 million for Peace Process in Myanmar

ON 9 March 2017, Mr. Tateshi HIGUCHI, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Mr. Nicholas George, Director a.i. UNOPS Myanmar, signed the Exchanged Notes in Yangon to grant 487 million Japanese yen (approximately 4.2 million US dollars) for “the Project for Supporting National Reconciliation and Peace Building Process.”

This grant through UNOPS supports to promote reconciliation and peace process between the Government and Ethnic Armed Organizations, to process between the Government and Ethnic Armed Organizations, to contribute to the stabilization and sustainable development in Myanmar.

In the morning in Tokyo between Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor in November 2016, Mr. Abe pledged to support national reconciliation and peace process, which is the top priority of the incumbent Myanmar government. The grant is a part of the plan to provide assistance totally 40 billion Japanese Yen for the next 5 years by Japan to Myanmar for the development in ethnic areas for the next 5 years. —GNLM

Union Minister warns gem industry of environmental damage

THE Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win warned gem industry entrepreneurs to boost the environmentally friendly balance the socio economy for protection of the environment and the conservation of precious stones.

“Entrepreneur should think the nationally owned gem resources in limited quantities to be able to give heritage to the next generation and make adjustments to tremendously balance the socio economy for local people in mining areas with profits from the gem extractions,” said Union Minister U Ohn Win, Chairman of Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Emporium Organizing Central Committee.

“Producers need to follow basic principles such as avoiding environmental impact by conserving the damaged environment caused by gem extraction and produce benefits for all,” said the Union Minister at the meeting for Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Emporium Organizing Central Committee held yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. The Minister urged gem entrepreneurs to sell the finished products made by technology as a priority over selling raw gems, to improve finished products in the domestic market and to penetrate the international market by producing high-quality finished products.

During the meeting, members of gem industries-related committees presented plans for the gem exhibition to be held in March 2017, displaying, selling in Myanmar Kyats, setting the prices, transportation and information releases.

The gem exhibition will be opened from March 19 to 24 at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw and sell at Myanmar Kyats. The gem exhibition will be held with the aim of supplying raw stones to finished product producers, boosting the finished products industry, creating job opportunities, controlling illegal gem trading and supporting finance generation for the gem extractors and national gem traders.—Myanmar News Agency

Price of land near new Thanlwin Bridge rise tenfold

LAND prices near the Thanlwin Bridge project in Chaungzon, Mon State have increased tenfold during the past few years, ever since it was learnt thata bridge would be built across the Thanlwin River, linking the island of Belu Kyun with mainland Myanmar for the first time, residents said. “The price of land has risen quickly to a very high level within two or three years,” said Ko San Maung, a real estate agent residing in Mawlamyine Township, adding that the majority of buyers are from other regions and states.

Entrepreneurs are eyeing locations near the project area to purchase land in order to implement hotel projects, deep sea port projects, resort projects and filling stations. Those businesspersons continue to buy land in downtown Chaungzon, Dawe Village and other parts of the town.

Depending on location, land prices in Chaungzon Township were between Ks1 million and Ks3 million per acre before the bridge project began in 2014. Currently, the price for an acre of farmland near the approach road to the bridge under construction has reached a high of Ks100 million.

Ko Win Ko, a resident, said that he has no plans to sell his property but is monitoring the market condition as the property may be priced too high after the project is completed. —Myitmakha News Agency

Crime

Official from Buthidaung killed

MAHMOUD Sawlaim, an official from Kabi Village in Ahtelkoyevanyaw, Buthidaung, was attacked by a group of six wielding knives and rods and killed on March 9 in the evening.

On the evening before the attack at 8 in the evening, Mahmoud Sawlaim received a call from a local resident, Mahmoud Inas, requesting Sawlaim to come help his wife who was being harassed by other villagers. Sawlaim together with Abula Shain left for Mahmoud Inas’ house in Kabi village and when they took too long to get back, Sawlaim’s father, Maung Furmya followed their trail. When he arrived near Mahmoud Inas’s house he witnessed Sawlaim being attacked by Mahmoud Inas, Abula Shain, Adu Raman (also known as) Wawdilla, Dwela (also known as) Adulla, Abudae and Karla with weapons on each of his right eye, slash wounds on his neck and chest and most of his teeth knocked out.

Sawlaim’s father has reported the six assailants’ attack on his son to Nyaungchaung police station and the case will be handled according to the law.—Myanmar News Agency

Fire breaks out in Maungdaw

A house caught fire after midnight on Wednesday in Sin Taung village in Maungdaw. The house was owned by Nolutamein, who lives in another house in Sin Taung village. No one was living in the house at the time. Damage caused by the fire amounted to Ks 30,000. Police are still investigating the cause of the fire to be able to take action in accordance with the law.—Myanmar News Agency

Photo: Myanmar News Agency

Photo: Myanmar News Agency

Photo: Myanmar News Agency

Photo: State Counsellor’s Office of the Information Committee

RSO member detained in Maungdaw

A member of the Rohinyga Solidarity Organisation (RSO) terrorist group who got involved in the Kyeekyanpyin attacks was detained in Sinthapyin (west) village in Maungdaw. A nine-inch folding knife and a mobile phone containing a Bangladeshi SIM card were seized from Maung Soe, alias Shaungshu Ahaung, on Balubha-warai Street in Sinthapyin (west) village. Upon interrogation, Maung Soe found to be a member of Aau Mol Mya-hidin insurgent group, which is related to the RSO terrorist group which involved in the Kyeekyanpyin attacks on 9 October 2016. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar Gazette

Heads of service organization transferred and confirmed

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred the following persons as head of organizations shown against each from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name
(a) U Nyi Nyi San
Rector
Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar)
Union Civil Service Board
(b) U Aung Tin Soe
Rector
Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar)
Union Civil Service Board
2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of U Htin Kyaw, Inspector-General( Director-General) of the Office of Anti-Corruption Commission, on the expiry of one-year probationary period. —GNML
SEUL — South Korea’s Constitutional Court removed President Park Geun-hye from office on Friday over a graft scandal involving the country’s conglomerates at a time of rising tensions with North Korea and China.

The ruling sparked protests from hundreds of her supporters, two of whom were killed in clashes with police outside the court.

Park becomes South Korea’s first democratically elected leader to be forced from office, capping months of paralysis and turmoil over a corruption scandal that also landed the head of the Samsung conglomerate in jail.

A snap presidential election will be held within 60 days.

She did not appear in court and a spokesman said she would not be making any comment nor would she remain in the president’s Blue House residence on Friday.

“Now, Park is not leaving the Blue House today,” Blue House spokesman Kim Dong-jo told Reuters.

Park was stripped of any comment nor would she testify before the court and a spokesman said she had not said whether he will seek the presidency, leads among conservatives.

“Any comment nor would she testify before the court and a spokesman said she had not said whether he will seek the presidency, leads among conservatives, none of whom have more than single-digit poll ratings,” he said.

“The prospect of a new president in the first half of this year instead of prolonged uncertainty will buoy domestic demand as well as the markets, said Trinh Nguyen, senior economist at Natixis in Hong Kong.

“The hope is that this will allow the country to have a new leader that can address long-standing challenges such as labour market reforms and escalated geopolitical tensions,” he said.

Toyota, Suzuki chiefs talk business with Modi

NEW DELHI — Toyota Motor Corp. President Akio Toyoda and Suzuki Motor Corp. Chairman Osamu Suzuki met Thursday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss their business operations in India, local media reported.

After the meeting, the prime minister’s office said in a statement that the two Japanese companies’ auto production “will promote Make in India, and contribute to employment generation,” according to the reports.

The visit came after Toyota and Suzuki last month signed a memorandum of understanding about a possible business partnership in areas such as environmental, safety and information technologies.

“The partnership is expected to bring together Toyota’s global leadership in technology and manufacturing, with Suzuki’s strength in manufacture of small cars, especially in India. It is expected to enable India to use new technological developments,” the statement said.

According to Japan External Trade Organisation statistics, Suzuki’s India unit commanded the largest share of 46.5 per cent in the Indian auto market in 2015. The Toyota group also saw its cars sell well.

Indonesia to send mission to China to promote tourism

JAKARTA — Indonesia would send a mission to Shanghai to join China’s upcoming largest Business to Business (B to B) Meetings. Incentives, Convention and Exhibition (MICE) event from 21 to 23 March to tap potential Chinese visitors, a senior official at Indonesian Tourism Ministry said Friday.

“We hope that through the Incentive Tourism and Convention Meeting (IT&C) event in Shanghai, our MICE sector can be better promoted, not only to Chinese visitors but also to other nations across the world,” Tourism Deputy Minister for International Marketing I Gde Pitana said.

The tourism event of IT&C was held annually since 2007. Some 640 exhibitors and 440 buyers from 56 countries and regions took part in the event last year.

Pitana said that Indonesian delegation would consist of 10 tourism-related operators, including state-run airlines of Garuda Indonesia and Bali Air.

Besides showcasing the nation’s best MICE accommodations, Indonesian cultural performances and diverse of coffee from various regions across the country would also be shown in the event.

Indonesia’s MICE tourism sector is well-accommodated in the nation’s capital of Jakarta, Bali, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Medan and Lombok.

Citing the data released by International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), Pitana said that a visitor in MICE tourism sector may generate significant earnings to the host areas as they spent seven times higher than regular visitors.

He added that through the upcoming IT&C event, Indonesia aims to receive more visitors from China, the largest market to Indonesian tourism industry.

Indonesia welcomed 1.74 million Chinese visitors last year, or 21.27 per cent higher than a year earlier. That figure made China overtook the rank of foreign visitors in Indonesia throughout last year.

Indonesia has set targets to welcome 15 million foreign visitors this year in which 2.43 million of them were expected to be contributed by Chinese visitors.
Progress made by Kayin State Government in one-year period of new government

Kayin State with an area of 11,730.85 square miles is situated in the southeast of Myanmar. It shares border with Shan State and Kayah State to the north, Thailand to the east, Mon State and Taninthayi Region to the south and Hago Region and Mon State to the west.

Kayin State is constituted with four districts, seven townships, 11 towns, 54 wards, 376 village-tracts and 2097 villages. With a population of over 1.5 million, it is home to Kayin, Mon, Bamar and Pa-O national races.

Peace process
DKBA, KNU, KNU-KNLA-PC are all the national race armed groups in Kayin State that have signed ceasefire agreements of state level and nationwide ceasefire agreement-NCA with the government and are now on the right track of the internal peace process.

Since taking office on 31 March 2016, the Kayin State Government led by Daw Nan Khin Hte Myint has been making all-out efforts in cooperation with national race armed groups who had already signed peace agreements to ensure peace and stability in the state, and as a result, they have been able to build mutual friendship and trust with the armed groups.

The Kayin State Government provided funds and other necessities for the national race armed groups who had returned to legal fold to ensure that the latter fully engage in agriculture and livestock breeding as livelihoods. In the meantime, it has granted permits to companies of national race organizations in implementing regional development undertakings, thereby resulting job opportunities for ethnic peace groups.

As peace and stability prevailed in the region, the Kayin State Government has established Laykekaw, a new satellite town, in Myawady Township.

Transportation
In order to ensure smooth commodities flow in the border area of Myawady, Kayin State the construction of No. 2 Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge was started from the month of August 2015 near Yaypu village in Myawady township and the facility is expected to be completed in the month of March 2017. Upon the completion of the friendship bridge on the east-west economic corridor linking Myanmar-Thailand-Laos-Viet Nam, it will contribute a lot to better transportation and economic development of both Kayin State and the country.

As peace and stability prevailed in the region, the Kayin State Government has established Laykekaw, a new satellite town, in Myawady Township.

 Perspectives and opinions of the whole Kayin people on political, economic, social affairs, land and national resources as well as environmental conservation collected from National Level Political Dialogue for Ethnic Groups (Kayin) will be presented to the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong.

As peace and stability prevailed in the region, the Kayin State Government has established Laykekaw, a new satellite town, in Myawady Township.
PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

A vailability of drinking water

The Kayin State has to encounter with a shortage of drinking water on a yearly basis, and the Kayin State Government thus managed to sink artesian wells in eight different places and constructed a small dam near Tharmanyi village. The small dam was able to accommodate 20 million gallons of water, that could be used for drinking purpose and fire prevention measures. In order to transform the Kayin State into mechanized farming from manual farming, a total of K 90 million fund was allocated to upgrade 500 acres of farmland in Kawkhnkar village. Kawkhnshu village and Khayaw Atwin village in Hpa-an township with the use of modern farm equipment. A farm equipment shop was opened in Htylon village, Hlangbwe township, where one combine harvester, 17 powered tillers and ten motorcycles were sold for K 64.250 million on hire purchase to local farmers.

E ducation sector

In the education sector, altogether 153 basic education schools in Kayin State have been upgraded and opened in the 2016-2017 fiscal year with a total of 538 more teachers appointed.

H ealth sector

With a view to ensuring development of health sector in Kayin State the Anankwin Station Hospital was opened in the 2016-2017 fiscal year while steps being taken for opening of the 16-bed Phalantaung Station Hospital in Sonshimyaing region and Phalantaung village in Myawady district. Meanwhile, more six new rural health care centres and 20 sub-rural health care centres were opened to be able to fully engage in health care activities in the region.

S ports sector

To be able to keep pace with sports activities of other regions, Kayin State competed with 23 sports events out of 28 in Inter-Region and State sports competitions in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, securing championship trophy in football, championship trophy in traditional boxing (C-level) and breaking the record timing 11.22 sec in a 100-meter race (men). In the competitions, participants from Kayin State secured 18 gold, 19 silver and 19 bronze.

E lectric Power sector

The 55.5-mile long Mawlamyine-Myawady 230 KV transmission line that will supply electricity to the residents in Myawady and Kawkareik Townships through the National Grid is under construction and the project is completed by 30 per cent. Construction of a sub-power station in Thunggan Nyinnaung, Myawady Township and 17.31-mile long Myawady-Kawkareik transmission line is 80 per cent and 38 per cent complete respectively. Construction of a 66/11 KV (10) MVA sub-power station in Kawkareik Township is finished by 98 per cent.

The sub-power facilities in Hlangbwe, Myawadyung and Leiktho Townships, Hpa-an-Hlangbwe transmission line and 24-mile long Tsounggo-Leiktho transmission line had been 100 percent completed. The 10/2 MVA transformers in Hpa-an were upgraded to 10/24 MVA sub-power station in an attempt to provide the locals in Hpa-an and Hlangbwe Townships with sufficient electricity. The 23.5-mile long Thandaung-Bawgali transmission line and a sub-power station in Bawgali were constructed using loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the electricity was distributed to the locals commencing 2 February 2017.

Construction of 0.1 mile long 33 KV transmission line, 142-mile long 11 KV transmission line, 39-mile long 400 volt transmission line and installation of 165 transformers were carried out in Hpa-an, Hlangbwe, Thandaunggyi, Kawkareik and Kya-n-Seikkyi Townships in 2016-2017 FY by spending the Kayin State government fund.

Implementation of staff housings

The staff housing projects were developed in Kayin State with the use of K 30.50 million allotted fund. In an effort to implement peace process and regional development tasks, the Kayin State government is cooperating with the state high court and state Hluttaw in a balanced manner.

G eneral

The Kayin State government has been implementing staff housing projects with Japanese assistance for the civil servants. The Kayin State government has built 264 staff accommodations in Hpa-an, 72 apartments in Kawthinshu, 103 apartments in Thandaunggyi, 14 apartments in Kawthankhar and 72 apartments in Kawthinshu Townships in 2016-2017 FY by spending the Kayin State government fund.

Regarding peace process, Kayin State Chief Minister Daw Nan Khin Htwe Myint said that National-level Political Dialogue for Ethnic Groups (Kayin) was held in Hpa-an on 18-23 January and the participants discussed the basic principles of the democracy and federal system in a frank and open manner. Electricity is sine qua non for the general public and the Kayin State government put emphasis on fulfilling people’s demand for power as second prioritized basis. The 49 percent of the people in Kayin State has access to electricity and the regional government is making utmost efforts to increase electricity generation, she added.

As to road transportation, the state chief minister said that construction of 2nd Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge in Kayin State was once suspended as a result of disputes over farmland compensation and the issue was settled in the time of new government and the bridge is expected to open to traffic by this March. She highlighted that Kayin State government significantly achieved successes in many areas during one-year period due to its close collaboration with the state-level Hluttaw and departmental organizations.

Concerning the sports sector, the Kayin State football team emerged champion in the Region/State football tournament in time of our new government. Moreover, Kayin State sports contingent won gold medals in not only Sepak Takraw contest but also traditional Lethwei competition, she added.

With regard to education and health sectors that play an important role in developing a country, the 224 schools were constructed in Kayin State this year and the state government managed to open rural health centers and station hospitals to offer better healthcare system to the needy people and arrangements have been made to open a drug rehabilitation center for youths in Hpa-an, Kayin State and to ensure free medical treatment for them at the hospitals, he said.

The Kayin State government has been selling agricultural equipments, combine harvesters, tractors and qualified seeds that play a pivotal role in engaging in agricultural sector to the farmers from seven townships in the state on 2-year hire purchase.

Kayin State Chief Minister Daw Nan Khin Htwe Myint and officials attend opening ceremony of Anankwin Bridge in Kayin State. PHOTO: MNA

Efforts being made to supply adequate electricity to Kayin State. PHOTO: MNA

Kayin State Chief Minister Daw Nan Khin Htwe Myint and officials observe paving of Eindu-Zarthabyin road. PHOTO: MNA
PRETORIA — South African anti-apartheid veteran Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, ex-wife of the late president Nelson Mandela, is “absolutely fine” after being admitted to hospital for observation, her spokesman said on Friday.

Doctors decided on Wednesday to keep the 80-year-old former first lady in hospital after she underwent a routine checkup. “I was with her and she’s absolutely fine,” her spokesman Victor Dlamini told television broadcaster eNCA.

Madikizela-Mandela spent several weeks in hospital last year for back surgery. During her ex-husband’s 27-year incarceration for his fight against apartheid, Madikizela-Mandela campaigned for his release and for the rights of black South Africans, undergoing detention, banishment and arrest.—Reuters

**Japan to allow home-sharing services nationwide**

TOKYO — The Cabinet on Friday endorsed a bill to allow property owners across Japan to offer vacant homes or rooms to tourists for up to 180 days per year by simply notifying municipalities, amid a shortage of hotels and inns to accommodate the surge in foreign travelers to Japan. The legislation, which the government hopes to see enacted during the current parliament, amid a shortage of hotels and inns to accommodate the surge in foreign travelers to Japan, is intended to provide a much-needed boost to the tourism sector.

The new law would allow hosts to rent out their homes or rooms in areas designated as exclusively residential. But concerns remain about the potential negative impact on the living environment in such areas and on the business of hotels and inns, which are not permitted to operate in such areas in principle. Besides requiring hosts to notify municipalities of their intent to offer home-sharing services, the new law would require them to clearly mark their buildings with signs, keep records of lodgers and clean the facilities periodically. The law would also call for hosts to respond to complaints from local residents and take measures to contain the noise guests may cause. In areas where it is feared living conditions could deteriorate once home-sharing services are permitted, municipalities would be allowed to shorten the 180-day maximum annual operating period. Intermediaries connecting tourists and hosts, such as online marketplace Airbnb, would be required to register with the Japan Tourism Agency. Operators violating the regulations could be ordered to suspend or terminate their businesses and may face prison terms of up to six months or fine of up to 1 million yen ($8,700) if they do not abide by such orders.

“By providing a variety of lodging services, we hope that foreign tourists in Japan can enjoy better comfort and convenience,” Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a press conference, adding that creating regulations will help promote the wider use of home-sharing services.—Kyodo News

**Volkswagen, Tata Motors confirm to explore cooperation**

MUMBAI — Volkswagen and Tata Motors said on Friday they had signed a memorandum of understanding to explore a strategic partnership in India, confirming a Reuters story from Thursday.

The two carmakers said they hoped to jointly develop vehicle components and also possibly production concepts for the Indian subcontinent and overseas markets.

Volkswagen said its Skoda unit would lead the project. “The first step will address topics such as the application of specific market knowledge as well as local development expertise. In the long term, the Volkswagen Group is looking to further expand its product portfolio in the fast-growing emerging markets,” it said.—Reuters

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

[COUNTRY] The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

[NAME OF PROJECT] Myanmar Flood and Landslides Emergency Recovery Project

[Loan No.]: 5889-MY

[Assignment Title]: Interim National Environmental and Social Safeguard specialist

[Reference No.]: C4-1ST-IC05

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has applied for financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Myanmar Flood and Landslides Emergency Recovery Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services. The consulting services (“the Services”) include:

- ensuring adequate integration of environmental and social safeguards consideration into the project;
- providing: technical oversight, guidance and quality control for the preparation and implementation of environmental and social safeguards instruments for sub-projects;
- Assisting the CIUs in the preparation of relevant Terms of Reference and in the assessment of preparatory works conducted on the project road sections;
- Liaising closely with the CIUs in the design and implementation of safeguard related technical assistance and studies;
- Assessing the capacities for safeguards screening, implementation, and supervision/monitoring of relevant staff in the implementing agencies;
- Supporting the design, preparation, and implementation of the Safeguard Training Program for the Project;
- Providing technical inputs and quality assurance on the safeguards implementation reports;
- Advise the CIUs on stakeholder and community engagement;
- Promote a culture of proactive environmental and social considerations and sustainability in the road sector.

This is a part-time position. The Environmental and Social Safeguard Specialist is expected to provide services during a period of 3 years (extendable as follows): 50% of the time during the first 6 months of the contract (3 months of first 6 months), then 25% of the time (1 week per month). The position is renewable annually based on performance and mutual agreement.

The Ministry of Construction (MOC) and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI) now invite eligible individual consultant (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested individual consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (e.g. consultant’s profile, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, etc.).

The minimum qualifications and experience requirements are:

- Must have Master’s degree in environmental engineering, environmental management, natural resources management, environmental and social sciences or related field relevant to environmental and social management in the context of the Project;
- Minimum 10 years of international experience in environmental and social due diligence in development projects in the Asia Pacific and East Asia;
- Working experience with the environmental and social safeguards of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) or comparable bilateral financiers;
- Experience with the World Bank safeguards policies or IFC Performance Standards in a project or program implementation, and supervision/monitoring of relevant staff in the implementing agencies;
- Ability to undertake physically demanding travel to the Project sites in remote areas of Myanmar;
- Familiarity with government and foreign aid project operations;
- Excellent communication skills, including speaking and writing in English;
- Willingness to train local staff on day-to-day basis;
- Good working knowledge of computer programs such as word, excel etc.
- The attention of interested individual consultant is drawn to paragraphs 1.8 of the World Bank’s Guidelines: Selection of Design, Preparation, and Implementation of Consultants (under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants) by World Bank Borrowers/Consultant Guidelines, setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflicts of interest.

An individual consultant will be selected in accordance with the Individual Consultant Selection method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [09:30 to 16:00 hours local time]. Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (by fax or by e-mail)

**Attn:** For Detailed information please contact:

Daw Tin Myo Myint, Director, [E] tmyo_kyaw@uwin.com

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Fax: 9567409210

E-mail: rbd@worldbank.org, ruraldodon@worldbank.org

**2011 March 2017**

**PRETORIA — South African anti-apartheid veteran Winnie Madikizela-Man-**

**dela, ex-wife of the late president Nelson Mandela, is “absolutely fine” after being admitted to hospital for observation, her spokesman said on Friday.**

Doctors decided on Wednesday to keep the 80-year-old former first lady in hospital after she underwent a routine checkup. “I was with her and she’s absolutely fine,” her spokesman Victor Dlamini told television broadcaster eNCA.

Madikizela-Mandela spent several weeks in hospital last year for back surgery. During her ex-husband’s 27-year incarceration for his fight against apartheid, Madikizela-Mandela campaigned for his release and for the rights of black South Africans, undergoing detention, banishment and arrest.—Reuters

**Winnie Mandela ‘absolutely fine’ in hospital: spokesman**


Winnie Madikizela Mandela, ex-wife of former South African president Nelson Mandela, attends the inauguration ceremony of South African President Jacob Zuma at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa, in 2014. Photo: Reuters

**Winnie Madikizela Mandela, ex-wife of former South African president Nelson Mandela, attends the inauguration ceremony of South African President Jacob Zuma at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa, in 2014. Photo: Reuters**

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Gere delights Israeli fans at premier of Israel-US movie

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood actor Richard Gere delighted fans after walking the red carpet in Jerusalem for the Israeli premiere of his new film “Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall Of A New York Fixer.”

The “Pretty Woman” star plays Norman Oppenheimer, a veteran “fixer” in New York’s Jewish community who runs into trouble when he tries to win over a visiting Israeli politician, played by Israeli actor Lior Ashkenazi.

In the film, screened at Jerusalem’s Cinematheque on Wednesday, Gere’s character’s life changes when he buys an expensive pair of shoes for an Israeli dignitary who eventually becomes prime minister.

Israeli-American writer-director Joseph Cedar said he felt compelled to explore the life of a “fixer” — someone who thrives on connecting with people and getting in with the right crowd — from his own personal life experiences.

“It took him (Gere) some time to feel comfortable with a different body language, a story line that I don’t think he’s ever had to bring to the screen, and gradually he felt more and more comfortable until he really became this character,” Cedar told reporters at a news conference on Thursday.

Gere said he was not getting involved in the politics of the region and the challenge for him was portraying an unusual personality.

“I am not interested in politics, I am interested in human beings. The people that I am meeting are also people who are primarily involved with relationships and bridging the problems between human beings... I am coming from a country that is in deep anxiety and chaos right now,” the American actor and humanitarian activist said. — Reuters

Noble, sympathetic Kong reimagined for ‘Kong: Skull Island’

LOS ANGELES — King Kong is back again — not climbing the Empire State Building clutching a distressed damsel in his colossal clutches, but as the mighty protector of a remote island in the 1970s.

“Kong: Skull Island” opens in movie theaters worldwide this week as the 8th installment of the screen classic. It depicts a group of explorers and Vietnam-era soldiers on a secret mission to an unexplored Pacific Ocean island that turns out to be the home of Kong and other man-eating creatures.

The new movie, starring British actor Tom Hiddleston as a renegade adventurer and Oscar-winner Brie Larson as an anti-war photographer, is a far cry from the original 1976 version.

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Los Angeles — Cable channel HBO said on Thursday it is planning a dramatized TV mini-series about the extraordinary 2016 US presidential, one of the first of several such projects being discussed in Hollywood.

No casting, title or broadcast date was announced for the HBO project, which comes from the same team that produced the award-winning “Game Change” film about the 2008 election that starred Julianne Moore as then Republican vice-presidential contender Sarah Palin.

The 2016 election campaign that saw Republican Donald Trump triumph over Democrat Hillary Clinton last November was one of the most dramatic in living memory.

It is also the subject of a TV miniseries treatment being developed by “Zero Dark Thirty” movie screenwriter Mark Boal, the Hollywood Reporter said in February.

A third miniseries project, looking at the behind-the-scenes drama of Trump’s campaign, is also making the rounds in Hollywood, entertainment website Deadline reported last month.

The announcement by HBO, a unit of Time Warner Inc’s premium cable network HBO, averaging around 25 million viewers for its sixth season, the saga will conclude with its eighth season next.— Reuters

War comes to Westeros as ‘Game of Thrones’ unveils July return

LOS ANGELES — The premiere date of HBO’s medieval fantasy series “Game of Thrones” was announced with fiery fanfare on Thursday, as a block of ice was melted live online to reveal the 16 July start of the new season.

More than 100,000 people watched the hour-long Facebook Live stream of a block of ice being melted slowly by blasts of fire. It was interrupted by a few technical difficulties when the stream cut to black.

The highly anticipated seventh season of “Game of Thrones,” tagged “The Great War Is Here,” has been moved to summer from its usual spring air date this year as filming of the show was delayed to capture scenes of winter for the show’s fictional realm of Westeros.

Emmy-winning “Game of Thrones,” based on George R.R. Martin’s “A Song of Ice and Fire” books, follows the epic fantasy of a multi-generational struggle for control of the Iron Throne seat of the Seven Kingdoms.

A teaser trailer released by HBO on Thursday shows the curses of the warring families crumbling to ash, with voices of key characters heard speaking phrases from past seasons in a timeline of events that have led to the battle. At the very end, the voice of resurrected Night Watch leader Jon Snow says, “The same thing coming for all of us. There’s only one war that matters. The great war. And it is here.”

“Game of Thrones” is the most-watched show on Time Warner Inc’s premium cable network HBO, averaging around 25 million viewers for its sixth season, the saga will conclude with its eighth season next.— Reuters

Trump-Clinton election campaign to get HBO miniseries treatment

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The announcement by HBO, a unit of Time Warner, appeared to mark the first of the various ideas to win a commitment from a major broadcaster.

HBO said its series would be based on an upcoming book by political journalists Mark Halperin and John Heilemann about the campaign. Jay Roach, who directed Emmy-winner “Game Change” will return to direct, and Tom Hanks is one of the executive producers.

Len Amato, president of HBO Films, said in a statement that the project “promises to vividly capture the most unique and impactful event in modern American politics.”— Reuters
Turkey hopes discounts, fuel subsidies can reverse 30 per cent tourism plunge

BERLIN — Turkey expressed hopes on Friday for a revival of its tourism industry after security concerns caused a 30 per cent drop in foreign visitors and revenues last year.

“We are seeing some very positive signals. That gives us hope,” Turkish Culture and Tourism Minister Nabi Avcı said at ITB Berlin, the world’s biggest tourism fair, on Thursday.

The number of foreign visitors to Turkey fell to 25.4 million in 2016, the lowest in nine years, after a spate of bombings and a failed coup discouraged tourists.

Bookings from Germany, the source of around 15 per cent of Turkey’s tourists, are also suffering as security worries are exacerbated by rising tensions over Turkish political rallies in Germany and the detention of a Turkish-German journalist in Istanbul.

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu unexpectedly stopped by ITB on Wednesday and lobbied for German tourists to return.

“There is no reason for our German friends to be afraid to come to Turkey. Turkey is as safe as Germany,” he said.

Hotels in Turkey on average filled only 53 per cent of rooms last year, and many have slashed prices.

Paloma World Resort & Spa, a 620-bed hotel near the seaside town of Side, is offering rooms at a discount of 35-40 per cent, after a 50 per cent price cut last year, owner Mehmet Surucuoglu told Reuters at ITB.

So far, though, only 25 per cent of its rooms have been booked for the summer season.

“It is better to have some people coming at lower prices than to have an empty hotel,” said Surucuoglu, who relies on Germany for 90 per cent of its guests.

The government is trying to prop up the travel sector — which contributes about $30 billion to the economy in a usual year — by expanding fuel subsidies for airlines and helping hotels obtain loans, Avcı, the tourism minister, said.

Fuel subsidies of $6,000 per flight carrying up to 200 passengers are now available for scheduled flights as well as charter carriers, and the number of eligible airports has been increased to 14 from 5, he said.

Still, Thomas Cook’s Condor has cut capacity to Turkey by 10 per cent this summer, after a 30 per cent drop in passenger numbers last year, Chief Executive Ralf Teckentrup told Reuters at ITB.

Kayihan Suer, sales manager at Peninsula Tours, said his company had managed to keep occupancy rates over 80 per cent in eight of its 12 hotels by bringing in guests from different countries, making it less reliant on any one market.

“We’ve been doing it for 15 years, we’ve made mistakes and learned our lessons. Now we have over 20 different nationalities in our hotels,” he said, adding that there was strong interest from Romanian and Bulgarian tour operators.

Ibrahim Sak, who manages the Venosa hotel near Bodrum, said the proportion of Turkish guests had risen since last year and was now at 40 per cent, helped along by discounts for early bookings.—Reuters

Turkey hopes discounts, fuel subsidies can reverse 30 per cent tourism plunge

Tourists enter the Byzantine-era monument of Hagia Sophia as they pass by an armoured police vehicle in the Old City of Istanbul, Turkey, on 13 July 2016. Photo: Reuters

NEW YORK — Doctors often tell parents of young children to limit television time because it can interfere with learning and language development. Now, a US study suggests TV’s impact on school readiness might be worse for poor kids than for more affluent children.

Researchers examined test results for 807 kids between 5 and 6 years old assessed at the start of kindergarten for basic skills like counting, letter recognition and sorting blocks by pattern and shape. They also looked at parent surveys about how much time each day kids spent watching traditional television sets or other screens.

For kids at the highest income levels, there wasn’t any connection between the amount of TV children watched and how well they did on the tests. More television time was tied to just a modest drop in test results for students from average income households — about $74,000 a year for a family of four.

Children at or near the poverty line, about $21,200 a year for a family of four, had a pronounced drop in test scores when they watched a lot of TV each day.

“Watching too much TV — here more than 2 hours per day — was negatively associated with the development of mathematical abilities and executive function — skills engaged in the pursuit of goals, including inhibition, attention, working memory, and cognitive flexibility,” said lead study author Andrew Ribner, a psychology and education researcher at New York University.

“We find some evidence that the negative association of television viewing with math ability is at least partially through executive function, which others have shown is strongly related to math ability throughout the academic life span,” Ribner said.

added by email, Last year, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that preschoolers watch no more than an hour of TV a day; down from two hours in 2001 guidelines. Parents should watch with kids and show them only “high quality” programming like Sesame Workshop and PBS, the AAP recommends.

It’s possible that some of the differences in how much television time influences school readiness for rich versus poor kids in the study might be explained by the type of content children watch, Ribner said.

—Reuters

TV may take biggest toll on school readiness for poor kids

Colossus probably depicting Ramses II found in Egypt

CAIRO — Archaeologists from Egypt and Germany have found a massive eight-meter statue submerged in ground water in a Cairo slum that they say probably depicts revered Pharaoh Ramses II, who ruled Egypt more than 3,000 years ago.

The discovery, hailed by the Antiques Ministry as one of the most important ever, was made near the ruins of Ramses II’s temple in the ancient city of Heliopolis, located in the eastern part of modern-day Cairo.

“Last Tuesday they called me to announce the big discovery of a colossus of a king, most probably Ramses II, made out of quartzite,” Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Anani told Reuters on Thursday at the site of the statue’s unveiling.

The most powerful and celebrated ruler of ancient Egypt, the pharaoh also known as Ramses the Great was the third of the Nineteenth Dynasty of Egypt and ruled from 1279 to 1213 BCE.

He led several military expeditions and expanded the Egyptian Empire to stretch from Syria in the east to Nubia in the south. His successors called him the “Great Ancestor”.

“We found the bust of the statue and the lower part of the head and now we removed the head and we found the crown and the right ear and a fragment of the right eye,” Anani said.

On Thursday, archaeologists, officials, local residents, and members of the news media looked on as a massive forklift pulled the statue’s head out of the water.

The joint Egyptian-German expedition also found the upper part of a life-sized limestone statue of Ramses II’s grandson, that is 80 centimetres long. The sun temple in Heliopolis was founded by Ramses II, lending weight to the likelihood the statue is of him, archaeologists say.

It was one of the largest temples in Egypt, almost double the size of Luxor’s Karnak, but was destroyed by early-Roman times. Many of its obelisks were moved to Alexandria or to Europe and stones from the site were looted and used for building as Cairo developed.

Experts will now attempt to reconstruct the remaining pieces of both statues before restoring them. If they are successful and the colossus is proven to depict Ramses II, it will be moved to the entrance of the Grand Egyptian Museum, set to open in 2018.—Reuters

Turkey hopes discounts, fuel subsidies can reverse 30 per cent tourism plunge

Tourists enter the Byzantine-era monument of Hagia Sophia as they pass by an armoured police vehicle in the Old City of Istanbul, Turkey, on 13 July 2016. Photo: Reuters
United earn draw at Rostov, Lyon beat Roma 4-2

ZURICH — Europa League fa- vourites Manchester United se- cured a 1-1 draw on a threadbare pitch at Rostov, while Olym- pique Lyonnais beat AS Roma 4-2 helped by a fine individual goal from Nabil Fekir in their last 16, first-leg tie on Thursday.

Racing Genk won 5-2 at Gent in an all-Belgian clash and German rivals Schalke 04 and Borussia Monchengladbach drew 1-1 in a meeting of former UEFA Cup winners.

United’s Henrikh Mkhitary- yan gave the Premier League team a 35th minute lead in Rus- sia, turning the ball in from close range after some nifty footwork by Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

But Rostov, who beat Bayern Munich on the same ground in November on their way to a third-place finish in their Cham- pions League group, levelled eight minutes after the restart.

Alexander Bukharov vol- leyed past Sergio Romero for a superbly-taken goal after chest- leyed past Sergio Romero for an eighth-minute lead thanks to Mouctar Diakhaby, levelled two minutes after the break through Corentin Tolisso helped by Al- manager Jose Mourinho and dust was getting into the players’ to- wards the end of the game.

“It was impossible to play better, impossible to play a pass- ing game,” said Mourinhio.

“I remember as a kid some matches like this in Portugal - non-league and amateur pitches. To see my players coping with it and the humidity to fight for every ball is a good feeling for me.”

Mohamed Salah and Feder- ico Fazio gave Roma a 2-1 half- time lead at Lyon but the hosts hit back in style after the break.

Lyon, who had taken an eighth-minute lead thanks to Mouctar Diakhaby, levelled two minutes after the break through Corentin Tolisso helped by Al- exandre Lacazette’s clever re- verse pass.

Fekir put the hosts ahead in the 74th, three minutes after coming on, when he skipped past three defenders in the pen- sion area, moved the ball to his left foot and curled a shot past Roma’s Brazilian goalkeeper Al- fisson.

Lacazette completed the scoring with an emphatic volley in added time.

Gladbach’s Jonas Hofmann gave them a 15th minute lead at Schalke, latching on to a sublime through ball by Lars Stindl to beat Ralf Fährmann from close range, before Guido Burgstiller replied 10 minutes later for the Royal Blues.

Mbwana Samatta led the charge for Genk, scoring two of their five goals at Gent. Jeremy Perbet missed a penalty for the hosts at 4-2 down before they had Anderson Esiti sent off late on.

Olympiakos Piraeus’ ex-Argentine midfielder Esteban Cambiasso gave them a first-half lead over Resitas but Vincent Aboubakar replied to earn the Turkish side a 1-1 draw in Ath- ens.

Claudio Beauvue’s 90th minute goal gave Celta Vigo a 2-1 win at home to Russia’s Krasnodar, FC Copenhagen’s Andreas Cornelius headed in on the hour to secure a 2-1 home victory against former European champions Ajax Amsterdam and Anderlecht won 1-0 at APOEL.

Nicaragua with a first-half goal from Nicolle Stanciu.—Reuters

US must allow access if it bids for 2026 soccer World Cup: FIFA

LONDON — The United States would have to grant entry to players, officials and fans from any country that qualified if it won the right to host the 2026 World Cup finals, soccer body FIFA said on Thursday.

Responding to a question about President Donald Trump’s order banning citizens from six Muslim-majority nations from traveling to the United States, FIFA boss Gianni Infantino said any nation bidding for the tournament would have clear rules.

“We are now in the pro- cess of defining the bid require- ments,” he said.

“In the world there are cer- tainly many countries with travel bans, visa requirements and so on and so forth.

“What is obvious is that when it comes to the World Cup, like the Olympic Games … any team, including the supporters and the Caribbean, is mulling a three-way joint bid for the 2026 World Cup between the United States, Mexico and Canada.

FIFA has ruled out a bid from Europe or Asia, leaving the CONCACAF region as frontrun- ner for a tournament set to expand to 48 nations from 32.

The United States last host- ed the World Cup in 1994 and Mexico in 1986.

Los Angeles is also bidding against Paris for the 2024 Sum- mer Olympics with a vote on that due in September.

Victor Montagliani, the CONCACAF president, said last month that a wall planned by Trump along the US-Mexico border would not present an ob- stacle to co-hosting the event.

Regional soccer officials have, however, been tight-lipped about the executive order.

The head of European soc- cer body UEFA warned last month that restrictions could damage any US bid.

“It will be part of the eval- uation, and I am sure it will not help the United States to get the World Cup,” UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin told the New York Times.

“If players cannot come because of political decisions, or populist decisions, then the World Cup cannot be played there.”

Iran, one of the six coun- tries named, have played in three World Cups including the 2014 finals in Brazil while Syria beat China last October in a qualifier.

“The requirements will be clear. Then each country can make up their minds whether they want to bid or not,” said In- fantino.

“It’s nothing to do with the US or not the US, it’s a gen- eral sporting criteria.”—Reuters

París — Police have launched an investigation after Paris St Germain’s players were confront- ed by angry supporters upon their return to the French capital on Wednesday following their 6-1 Champions League defeat in Bar- celona, the Ligue 1 club has said.

The French champions went into the Round of 16 second leg tie with a 4-0 advantage from the first leg but the Spanish champi- ons scored three goals in the last seven minutes to stage an incred- ible comeback and win 6-5 on aggregate. Upon their return to Paris, the club alleges the travel- ing party were verbally abused and several vehicles damaged at Bourget Airport, while club staff, players and their families had to be escorted from the scene.

“On Wednesday night... the Paris St Germain players were confronted and threatened by several individuals at Bourget Airport,” PSG said on its website (www.psg.fr/en). The club added that the crowd was “physically threatening the players and their families”. “A police investiga- tion is underway to establish ex- actly what happened... The Club strongly condemns the actions and behaviour of the individuals in question.”—Reuters

PSG players confronted by angry fans at airport

Hart believes he is ‘surplus to requirements’ at Man City

TURIN, (Italy) — Joe Hart is not expecting a return to the Premier League after his loan spell at To- rino with the England goalkeeper believing he is “surplus to require- ments” at parent club Manchester City.

Hart, who joined the Italian side on a season-long loan after re- alising he would not be first choice under new City boss Pep Guardio- la, feels it is far more important to play for a club that wants him to be their goalkeeper.

“T’d say I’m pretty much sur- plus down south, I’m not part of any parent club at the moment and I don’t see that changing,” the 29-year-old told the BBC. “I love the Premier League... I know it really well but I wouldn’t say it was top of my wish- list.”

Guardiola signed Claudio Bravo from Barcelona at the start of the season with Willy Caballero already on the books. Hart said he respected the manager’s decision to replace him.

“He didn’t do it to ruin my life, he did it because he thought that was what was right for him to win as a manager,” Hart added.

“To get results he needed to have a team he felt comfortable with and a team he wanted.—Reuters