Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects development, road works in Chin State

Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspected the progress of infrastructure projects, including those for regional development and road transport, in Chin State yesterday.

First, the Vice President inspected the construction of a building for Midwifery Training School in Haka, Chin State. Accompanying the Vice President were Chin State Chief Minister U Salai Lian Luai and Director-General Dr. Thar Htun Kyaw, who briefed him about the progress of the project to him. Next, the Vice President visited the site for a cyclone shelter. Deputy ministers U Kyaw Lin and U Soe Aung explained the construction process to U Henry Van Thio. The cyclone shelter also functions as a multipurpose hall and measures 170 feet by 150 feet. The Vice President inspected the expansion sites for Haka College and Haka Technological University and spoke about how to apply for the annual national budget. The Vice President and his entourage then travelled to Htantalan Township and were welcomed with traditional dances performances by local residents.

SEE PAGE 3
Gov’t aid for trapped civilians in Kachin State

PEOPLE who were rescued early this week from conflict zones in Kachin State were sent back home, with assistance from the ministry of social welfare, relief and resettlement.

Some 3,300 people who were trapped after fleeing armed conflicts in Kachin State were rescued and brought to safety early this week by governmental departments, the Tatmadaw and non-governmental organisations.

Nine people from Wakeama, Khin Oo and Toungoo townships returned on 31 January and seven from Depeyin, Natmauk and MraukU went back home on 2 February, while 31 people from Paletwa, Ayartaw, Mogok, Depayin, Hopin, TadaU, Myaypon, Phruso and Wontho townships returned on 3 February. Some 43 people from Myitkyina, Mandalay, Shwebo, Mogok and Paletwa returned home on 4 February by train.

Officials from the disaster management department and Kachin State Administration Department provided cash assistance, food and utensils to the people who returned home by the Myitkyina-Mandalay Express train.

The ministry of social welfare, relief and resettlement will provide further assistance to the people, in cooperation with the respective ministries and regions and states governments.

—Myanmar News Agency

Anti-Corruption Commission prosecutes Tamu District Deputy Commissioner

THE anti-corruption commission has filed a case against former Tamu District Commissioner U Thein Zaw Oo for his involvement in malpractices, such as misusing taxes and selling plots illegally in the Sagaing Region.

The Anti-Corruption Commission received a complaint against U Thein Zaw Oo, currently Kayin State’s Papun District Deputy Administrator.

In response to the complaint, the Anti-Corruption Commission investigated the case and found that U Thein Zaw Oo had misused Ks33.349 million, received in taxes for mineral extraction, and sold 20 plots in the Sandaku Ward to 10 people, including U Kyaw San Win (a) Aung Bu.

The former Tamu District Deputy Commissioner is being prosecuted under section 56 of the Anti-Corruption Law, 2013, at the Tamu police station and will be brought to the Sagaing Region High Court, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission. - Myanmar News Agency

Relocated building for National Library (Yangon) to receive major renovation

GOVERNMENT approved to relocate the National Library (Yangon) to the building situated at No.604/608, Merchant Street, Pabedan Township.

A coordination meeting, relating major renovation of the building was held yesterday at the hall of this building.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko delivered the opening speech. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Myanmar Library Association and Yangon Heritage Trust submitted a report to relocate the National Library (Yangon) to the President Office and got approval by the President Office to relocate the library. Then, the Union Minister and party instructed to renovate the building. Therefore, the relocated library will serve new system and modern technologies.

The big renovation process of the relocated library has started in August 2017 by the Ministry of Construction, aiming to be opened by the end of 2018-2019 Fiscal Year. Union Minister expressed his heartfelt thanks to the respective officials serving the renovations. Then, Director-General of Department of Historical Research and National Library U Aung Myint inspected the working process of the Library and Director-General of the Ministry of Construction, U Thein Zaw explained the conditions of the construction.

After that, attendees stated and discussed the respective sectors of the working process.

The meeting was concluded by the Union Minister and then he inspected the working process. - Myanmar News Agency
Vice president U Henry Van Thio inspects development, road works in Chin State

FROM PAGE 1

The Vice President then inspected the Haka-Sarsi-Chauk highway, which is under construction, and along with his entourage talked to local residents of Htantalan Village.

They then inspected the Bwenu Bridge, which is being constructed near the India-Myanmar border. U Henry Van Thio also inspected the reclamation of more than 10 acres for highland cultivation, some 73 acres for a garden in Thikhi Village and another 60 acres in Zarbwelwin Village in Htantalan Township.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has a plan to reclaim more than 550 acres in the township and so far, more than 370 acres have been reclaimed. They were then entertained with traditional dance performances by local residents.

—Myanmar News Agency □

Myanmar Entrepreneurs Carnival-MEC 2018 held in Mandalay

A new ward was extended in the 16-bed cottage hospital in the Kin village, Kani Township in Sagaing Region, and the ceremony marking the transfer of the building was held today.

The cottage hospital, which was opened in January 2015, should provide health care service for local people from 32 villages in Kani and Min Kin Townships more than ever.

Donors contributed with funds in the ceremony, and regional chief minister Dr Myint Naing and officials awarded to them certificates of recognition for their contributions.

—Than Htay Aung (Kani) □

Rakhine State ministers inspect readiness for repatriation

RAKHINE State ministers and departmental officials inspected the readiness of Nga Khu Ya and Taung Pyo Let Wae reception centres, and offered words of encouragement to the staff there.

Rakhine State Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation U Aung Kyaw Zan; Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Mining U Kyaw Lwin; and a delegation first met the staff working at Nga Khu Ya camp, who were looking after the arrangements for providing food, water and electricity to the repartees.

They also inspected the construction of a 15-tonne rice mill and a 12-tonne rice drying machine being built by Phoe Kan Khaung Construction Co., Ltd in Kyein Chaung Village in Maungtaw District.

Next, the party went to the Taung Pyo Let Wae camp and inspected the temporary building where commanding officers of Myanmar and Bangladesh will hold a flag meeting and discuss the readiness of the repatriation process. They also inspected the two countries’ friendship bridge.

Lastly, the party met the staff working there and enquired about the availability of food, water and electricity. —Aung Ye Thwin Ko Min □
Japan-based cruise ship sails to Myanmar

UNDER the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and AKM Tour Co Ltd, Japan-based cruise liner Pacific Venus Cruise arrived at Yangon’s Thilawa Port Terminal on Saturday.

The ship carried 332 passengers and 193 crew members. While they are docked in Myanmar, the foreign visitors will visit significant destinations around Yangon and Bagan-nyaung-gu in Mandalay between 3 and 5 February. The cruise liner will leave Yangon for Penang, Malaysia, on 5 February.

Security services have been provided to the international visitors by the tourist police.

Tourists continue to visit the country via air, sea and cross-borders. Foreigners also enjoy travelling to Myanmar’s rivers, such as Ayeyawady and Chindwin, on national cruise ships.

The ministry’s official statistics show that international tourist arrivals into the country via air, sea and cross-border gates exceeded 1.22 million between April and November 2017, of which some 1.17 entered Myanmar by air, recording an 8 per cent increase, compared with the last fiscal year (FY). According to the ministry, international tourist arrivals through all points of entry have increased by 20 per cent this FY, as against the same period last year.—Phyo Ko Lynn (Nyaungwaing)

Fishermen find unidentified bird in Hainggyikyun Township

VILLAGERS from Kyar Kya Ward-2 in the Kangyaing village tract found an unidentified large bird in Hainggyikyun Township, Ayeyawady Region, on Saturday afternoon.

The bird was first spotted by two fishermen who were out fishing at sea. They found the large bird flying between Thameehla Island, also known as Thameehla Island, and Mawthandawin promontory. It reportedly fell down, as it was not able to fly because of its wet wings.

The unidentified bird was rescued by the fishermen and is being kept within the compound of U Win Naung, a resident in Kyar Kya Ward-2. Ko Zaw Zaw, one of the two fishermen, said: “We will release the rescued bird back into the wild after it recovers fully from physical fatigue.”—Kyaw Thu Hein (Hainggyikyun)

Photo: Kyaw Thu Hein (Hainggyikyun)

Kitchen fire destroys neighbouring homes

A kitchen fire broke out early Sunday morning on Yazathingyan Street, Kyaungtitha Ward, Dala Township, Yangon, severely damaging six houses, according to the township police.

The blaze caused losses worth at least Ks2.9 million, but no persons or animals were hurt in the incident. The fire occurred at around 12.30am in a home owned by Daw Khin Htay Nwe. The occupant was not home during the incident.

However, the fire engulfed neighbouring homes, displacing their occupants, who are staying in temporary shelters.

The township Fire Services Department pressed into service five fire engines and more than 100 firefighters, who controlled the level-1 fire within 30 minutes.

The source of the fire is still being investigated. Charges have been filed against the home owner for violating Section 285 of the Penal Code, which defines fire-related negligence and recklessness.—Naing Lin Kyaw (Dala)
Agricultural exports up by $1.78 million

THE export of agricultural products in the current fiscal year (FY) increased by US$178 million, compared with the same period last FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The export of agricultural products last FY reached $2.281 billion, but the export of the same products this FY, from last April through this January, increased to $2.459 billion, the vast majority being exported by the private sector.

Of the seven export categories, the trade value of only the forestry sector decreased. The overall exports were estimated at $11.425 billion, an increase of $1.931 billion against last year.

According to official figures, the country exported animal products worth $31.609 million, marine products worth more than $553 million and mineral products worth more than $1.206 billion.

The export value of manufactured goods was estimated at $5.14 billion, of forest products at $181 million and of miscellaneous at $1.852 billion.

As part of its plan to promote the country’s economy, the government is putting forth sustained efforts to raise the exports in each sector.

Myanmar conducts trade with ASEAN member states, East Asian countries, some European nations and African states, mainly through sea routes.—Swe Nyein

Myanmar registers trade deficit of over $3.7 billion in current FY

DESPITE an increase in the value of external exports this fiscal year, the country’s trade deficit reached US$3.7 billion in the current fiscal year (FY), according to the latest figures of the commerce ministry.

Between last April and this January, the country imported some $15.126 billion worth of capital goods, consumer products and intermediate goods, whereas its overall exports to overseas traders reached $11.425 billion.

The current trade value includes more than $19.971 billion from non-border trade and more than $6.579 billion from border trade.

The value of external trade between Myanmar and its international trade partners, as of 26 January, exceeded $26.5 billion, while the country has racked up a trade deficit of more than $3.7 billion, which is $111.267 million more than the value of its trade deficit in the same period last year.

This time last year, the country earned some $9.494 billion from the export sector and $13.083 billion from the import sector, which resulted in a trade deficit of more than $3.589 billion.

The country suffered a trade deficit of more than $3.5 billion in the last FY.

According to the ministry’s statistics, the country had a trade deficit of more than $91 million in the 2012-2013 FY.

The trade deficit increased to $2.5 billion in the 2013-2014 FY. It continued to rise to $4.1 billion in the 2014-2015 FY and $5.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY. —Shwe Khine

Market competition triggers fall in prices of edible bird’s nests

THE prices of edible bird’s nests continued to fall in the domestic market, likely attributable to an increase in competition among producers, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Despite a decrease in prices, the demand for edible bird’s nests has increased in the market in recent months. Sellers in the Taninthayi Region said the decline in prices was linked to high production.

Edible bird’s nests are produced mainly in Myeik, a town in the Taninthayi Region.

Daw Cho, owner of a souvenir shop in Kanphya Ward in Myeik Town, said: “The prices of edible bird’s nests are decreasing significantly in the market because of mass production. The market is active due to an increase in the number of visitors to the town.”

Edible bird’s nests are animal products harvested for human consumption and are included in the list of expensive marketable products due to their health benefits.

Depending on their grading, a viss (3.6 pounds) of finished edible bird’s nests is sold for Ks3.8 million, while a viss of raw materials was worth Ks3.3 million in the local market in the last few months.

Currently, the finished edible bird’s nest is sold for Ks3.5 million per viss, whereas a viss of raw materials is worth Ks2.7 million.—GNLM

THE prices of edible bird’s nests continued to fall in the domestic market, likely attributable to an increase in competition among producers, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Despite a decrease in prices, the demand for edible bird’s nests has increased in the market in recent months. Sellers in the Taninthayi Region said the decline in prices was linked to high production.

Edible bird’s nests are produced mainly in Myeik, a town in the Taninthayi Region.

Daw Cho, owner of a souvenir shop in Kanphya Ward in Myeik Town, said: “The prices of edible bird’s nests are decreasing significantly in the market because of mass production. The market is active due to an increase in the number of visitors to the town.”

Edible bird’s nests are animal products harvested for human consumption and are included in the list of expensive marketable products due to their health benefits.

Depending on their grading, a viss (3.6 pounds) of finished edible bird’s nests is sold for Ks3.8 million, while a viss of raw materials was worth Ks3.3 million in the local market in the last few months.

Currently, the finished edible bird’s nest is sold for Ks3.5 million per viss, whereas a viss of raw materials is worth Ks2.7 million.—GNLM

Market competition triggers fall in prices of edible bird’s nests

THE prices of edible bird’s nests continued to fall in the domestic market, likely attributable to an increase in competition among producers, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Despite a decrease in prices, the demand for edible bird’s nests has increased in the market in recent months. Sellers in the Taninthayi Region said the decline in prices was linked to high production.

Edible bird’s nests are produced mainly in Myeik, a town in the Taninthayi Region.

Daw Cho, owner of a souvenir shop in Kanphya Ward in Myeik Town, said: “The prices of edible bird’s nests are decreasing significantly in the market because of mass production. The market is active due to an increase in the number of visitors to the town.”

Edible bird’s nests are animal products harvested for human consumption and are included in the list of expensive marketable products due to their health benefits.

Depending on their grading, a viss (3.6 pounds) of finished edible bird’s nests is sold for Ks3.8 million, while a viss of raw materials was worth Ks3.3 million in the local market in the last few months.

Currently, the finished edible bird’s nest is sold for Ks3.5 million per viss, whereas a viss of raw materials is worth Ks2.7 million.—GNLM

Market competition triggers fall in prices of edible bird’s nests

THE prices of edible bird’s nests continued to fall in the domestic market, likely attributable to an increase in competition among producers, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Despite a decrease in prices, the demand for edible bird’s nests has increased in the market in recent months. Sellers in the Taninthayi Region said the decline in prices was linked to high production.

Edible bird’s nests are produced mainly in Myeik, a town in the Taninthayi Region.

Daw Cho, owner of a souvenir shop in Kanphya Ward in Myeik Town, said: “The prices of edible bird’s nests are decreasing significantly in the market because of mass production. The market is active due to an increase in the number of visitors to the town.”

Edible bird’s nests are animal products harvested for human consumption and are included in the list of expensive marketable products due to their health benefits.

Depending on their grading, a viss (3.6 pounds) of finished edible bird’s nests is sold for Ks3.8 million, while a viss of raw materials was worth Ks3.3 million in the local market in the last few months.

Currently, the finished edible bird’s nest is sold for Ks3.5 million per viss, whereas a viss of raw materials is worth Ks2.7 million.—GNLM
Abe to ask US, S Korea not to scale down joint military drill

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe meets the press at his office in Tokyo on 2 February, 2018 after holding phone talks with US President Donald Trump.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will ask the United States and South Korea to conduct a planned joint military drill after the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics without scaling it down so as to keep pressuring North Korea to give up its nuclear and missile development, a Japanese government source said on Saturday.

The matter will be discussed when US Vice President Mike Pence meets with Abe in Tokyo before heading to the opening ceremony of the Olympics, and they are expected to agree on the need to conduct the drill as normal, the source said.

Abe and Pence will convey their shared view to South Korean President Moon Jae In when they hold talks in Pyeongchang, according to the source.

The United States and South Korea have agreed to delay annual joint military exercises until after the 9 to 25 February games and the 9 to 18 March Winter Paralympics in South Korea.

North Korea, which plans to send athletes, cheerleaders and officials to the Olympics, has opposed the drills, describing them as preparations for invasion.

Signs of easing tensions have emerged on the peninsula since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un struck a conciliatory note on relations with South Korea in his New Year’s address amid tensions over Pyongyang’s continued development of nuclear and ballistic weapons.

Abe has been calling on the international community to maximize pressure on Pyongyang and reject dialogues unless the reclusive state ends provocations and shows actions toward denuclearization. —Kyodo News

Property sales in Viet Nam’s two major cities up in January

PHNOM PENH — Floodwater released by a recently opened Chinese hydroelectric dam in Cambodia has completely submerged a village, the campaign group International Rivers said on Friday.

Hundreds of families from five villages in the northern province of Stung Treng had moved several months ago to designated project resettlement sites, before the floodwater from the dam submerged the area, the group said.

In Srekor village, site of the submerged area, 10 families relocated to a resettlement village, while 63 stayed behind, moving to forested higher ground from where they saw the waters rise steadily since December to reach the roofs of their homes.

“The thriving community of Srekor has become a silent waterworld,” International Rivers said, adding that the village’s farms, temple, ancestral graves and fishing grounds had been destroyed.

The 400-megawatt Lower Sesan 2 Dam, a joint venture between China’s Hydroelec International Energy Company and Cambodia’s Royal Group, finally began operation in November.

About 75 metres high and 8 km (5 miles) long, the dam has taken years to build. Part of China’s hydropower ambitions in the Mekong region it is aimed at generating electricity for Cambodia.

Representatives of the joint consortium could not be reached on Friday for comment.

Environmental rights groups have repeatedly warned the project would have a costly impact on the Mekong River’s fisheries and biodiversity.

Prime Minister Hun Sen has labeled those who have raised concerns about the project “radical”, saying that Cambodia needs to keep up with rising energy demand.

International Rivers said floodwater levels had risen up to 7 metres since the dam began operation.

Villagers in Srekor described the destruction wrought by the released floodwater.

“Vegetation such as coconuts, mango, jackfruit and pineapple trees are all gone,” villager Sarun Sokhom, 61, told Reuters, adding that approximately 54 homes were submerged.

Another villager, Sut Thoeun, 41, said the water began to rise quickly during the rainy season in December.

Both villagers said that authorities had not provided help to people who had chosen to stay behind.

Stung Treng provincial authority spokesman Men Kong said the floods were expected and that villagers could still approach authorities about resettlement and compensation. —Reuters

Sri Lanka police arrest two over alleged bond scam

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan police said on Sunday they had arrested two officials from primary dealer Perpetual Treasuries Ltd, which was named in a report as being involved in an alleged government bond scam in 2015.

Police arrested Arjun Aloysius, owner of Perpetual Treasuries which more than half the bonds in a 2015 auction were sold to, and Perpetual CEO Kasun Palisena. Aloysius is the son-in-law of Arjuna Mahendran, who was central bank governor at the time of the auction in question.

The arrests came a month after President Maithripala Sirisena said a panel had recommended legal action against the finance minister and central bank governor of the time, and the owner and officials of Perpetual Treasuries.

Sirisena said the presidential commission of inquiry had concluded that Perpetual Treasuries had profited through illegal means.

Mahendran, Aloysius, and Perpetual Treasuries have denied any wrongdoing.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said they had arrested Aloysius and Palisena on Sunday “as part of ongoing investigations on the bond issue”.

“The CID has reported the facts to the magistrate court and made the arrest. The two will be produced before the magistrate.” Opposition lawmakers have alleged the bond auction cost the state more than $1 billion because of rising borrowing costs but Palisena, in a letter to parliamentarians last week, said state institutions had not lost out in the bond sale.

—Reuters

Floodwater released by Chinese dam in Cambodia submerges village

PHNOM PENH — Floodwater released by a recently opened Chinese hydroelectric dam in Cambodia has completely submerged a village, the campaign group International Rivers said on Friday.

Hundreds of families from five villages in the northern province of Stung Treng had moved several months ago to designated project resettlement sites, before the floodwater from the dam submerged the area, the group said.

In Srekor village, site of the submerged area, 10 families relocated to a resettlement village, while 63 stayed behind, moving to forested higher ground from where they saw the waters rise steadily since December to reach the roofs of their homes.

“The thriving community of Srekor has become a silent waterworld,” International Rivers said, adding that the village’s farms, temple, ancestral graves and fishing grounds had been destroyed.

The 400-megawatt Lower Sesan 2 Dam, a joint venture between China’s Hydrolancang International Energy Company and Cambodia’s Royal Group, finally began operation in November.

About 75 metres high and 8 km (5 miles) long, the dam has taken years to build. Part of China’s hydropower ambitions in the Mekong region it is aimed at generating electricity for Cambodia.

Representatives of the joint consortium could not be reached on Friday for comment.

Environmental rights groups have repeatedly warned the project would have a costly impact on the Mekong River’s fisheries and biodiversity.

Prime Minister Hun Sen has labeled those who have raised concerns about the project “radical”, saying that Cambodia needs to keep up with rising energy demand.

International Rivers said floodwater levels had risen up to 7 metres since the dam began operation.

Villagers in Srekor described the destruction wrought by the released floodwater.

“Vegetation such as coconuts, mango, jackfruit and pineapple trees are all gone,” villager Sarun Sokhom, 61, told Reuters, adding that approximately 54 homes were submerged.

Another villager, Sut Thoeun, 41, said the water began to rise quickly during the rainy season in December.

Both villagers said that authorities had not provided help to people who had chosen to stay behind.

Stung Treng provincial authority spokesman Men Kong said the floods were expected and that villagers could still approach authorities about resettlement and compensation. —Reuters

Property sales in Viet Nam’s two major cities up in January

HO CHI MINH CITY — More sales were recorded in Viet Nam’s domestic property market in January as compared to figures in December 2017, Viet Nam News Agency reported on Sunday.

According to the Vietnamese Construction Ministry’s Housing and Property Market Management Department, the capital city of Hanoi reported 1,659 transactions, an increase of 13.8 per cent than December, and the southern metropolis Ho Chi Minh City recorded 1,900 deals, a rise of 8.6 per cent over December’s figure.

According to the department, customers preferred to purchase apartments with one or two bedrooms with a price of about 1 billion Viet Nam dong (44,012 US dollars), but the supply was low.

The department said that by 28 January, the value of the property inventory stood at 25 trillion Viet Nam dong (1.1 billion US dollars), a drop of 19 per cent from the previous month.

The department also issued a report on the development of resort property, the hot spot on the property market. —Xinhua

Sri Lanka police arrest two over alleged bond scam

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan police said on Sunday they had arrested two officials from primary dealer Perpetual Treasuries Ltd, which was named in a report as being involved in an alleged government bond scam in 2015.

Police arrested Arjun Aloysius, owner of Perpetual Treasuries which more than half the bonds in a 2015 auction were sold to, and Perpetual CEO Kasun Palisena. Aloysius is the son-in-law of Arjuna Mahendran, who was central bank governor at the time of the auction in question.

The arrests came a month after President Maithripala Sirisena said a panel had recommended legal action against the finance minister and central bank governor of the time, and the owner and officials of Perpetual Treasuries.

Sirisena said the presidential commission of inquiry had concluded that Perpetual Treasuries had profited through illegal means.

Mahendran, Aloysius, and Perpetual Treasuries have denied any wrongdoing.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said they had arrested Aloysius and Palisena on Sunday “as part of ongoing investigations on the bond issue”.

“The CID has reported the facts to the magistrate court and made the arrest. The two will be produced before the magistrate.” Opposition lawmakers have alleged the bond auction cost the state more than $1 billion because of rising borrowing costs but Palisena, in a letter to parliamentarians last week, said state institutions had not lost out in the bond sale.

—Reuters
China accuses US of ‘Cold War mentality’ with new nuclear policy

BEIJING — China urged the United States to drop its “Cold War mentality” and not misread its military build-up, after Washington published a document on Friday outlining plans to expand its nuclear capabilities to deter others.

“Peace and development are irreversible global trends. The United States, the country that owns the world’s largest nuclear arsenal, should take the initiative to follow the trend instead of going against it,” said China’s Ministry of Defence in a statement on Sunday.

The review of US nuclear policy has already riled Russia, which viewed the document as confrontational, and raised fears that it could increase the risk of miscalculation between the two countries. The US military has put countering China and Russia, dubbed “revisionist powers”, at the centre of a new national defence strategy unveiled earlier this month. By expanding its own low-yield nuclear capability, the US would deter Russia from using nuclear weapons, say American officials.

China accused the United States of “presumptuous speculation” about China’s intentions, and said it has always adopted a restrained attitude towards the development of nuclear weapons and kept its nuclear forces to a minimum.

“We hope that the United States will abandon its Cold War mentality, earnestly assume its special disarmament responsibilities, correctly understand China’s strategic intentions and objectively view China’s national defence and military build-up...” the ministry said in the statement posted on its website.

It called on the US to work together with China and for their armies to become a stabilizing factor in Sino-US relations and in the region. —Reuters

Sri Lanka eyeing longer talks with China on free trade agreement

BEIJING — Sri Lanka wants a longer-time period to negotiate a free trade agreement with China as it is concerned about the economic impact of a rushed deal on their small country, the Sri Lankan ambassador said on Sunday.

There has been rising concern in the small island nation about Chinese investment, a key part of Beijing’s Belt and Road initiative to create a modern-day Silk Road across Asia.

Hundreds of Sri Lankans clashed with police at the opening last year of a Chinese-invested industrial zone in the south, saying they would not be moved from their land. It was the first time opposition to Chinese investments in Sri Lanka had turned violent.

Speaking on the sidelines of an independence day reception at the Sri Lankan embassy in Beijing, ambassador Karmasena Kodituwakku said a free trade agreement with China could not be rushed. “We’d like to have the process a little longer. China would like to have it faster,” Kodituwakku told Reuters.

“But we have to balance it.” Sri Lanka last month signed a free trade agreement with Singapore, but Singapore’s economy is not as complex as China’s, Kodituwakku said. “Chinese imports are very important to Sri Lanka, but opening up the whole thing in a short time may make some problems for local companies. Therefore we have to balance it.”

Sri Lanka has also been trying to get investment for a little utilised airport on its southern tip, in Mattala, built at a cost of $253 million by China, which also provided $230 million of funding.

“No doubt it was a white elephant. It is still a white elephant,” Kodituwakku said. India had been in advanced talks with Sri Lanka to operate the airport, but the ambassador said no deal had been reached. “We have to turn it into a viable economic venture. In fact we gave the option to Chinese companies. I know Chinese companies have shown an interest, but according to our studies they were not having a viable economic plan and that’s why they had to give the option to India,” he said.—Reuters

German spy chief alleges North Korea uses Berlin embassy for procurement

BERLIN — North Korea has been using its embassy in Berlin to procure parts for its missile programme, the head of Germany’s BfV domestic intelligence agency told a German broadcaster.

No one at the North Korean embassy in Berlin was immediately available to comment on the allegation. In a programme to be aired on NDR television on Monday, BfV head Hans-Georg Maassen said: “We determined that procurement activities have been carried out from there that are, in our view, done with a view to the missile programme and sometimes also for the nuclear programme.”

He said it was often so-called dual use goods, which can be used for both civil and military purposes.

Comments released by NDR ahead of the broadcast showed Maassen said German authorities prevented such activities when they found them but he added: “We can’t guarantee that we can detect and prevent this in all cases.”

He said it was necessary to presume that parts for North Korea’s launch programme “were acquired via other markets or underground buyers had acquired them in Germany”.

North Korea has defied years of multilateral and bilateral sanctions with a weapons programme aimed at developing nuclear-tipped missiles capable of hitting the United States. —Reuters

PHOTO: REUTERS

US and China’s flags flutter in front of a portrait of late Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong at the Tiananmen gate ahead of the visit by US President Donald Trump to Beijing, China on 8 November, 2017.
The credibility of the media is lost when they fail to meet the requirements of an impartial and accurate reporting. Journalism is one of the special professions that must be consulted in a democracy. However, there have been pointed fingers at Myanmar following inaccurate reports in the Associated Press (AP) about mass graves in Rakhine on 1 February.

Journalist Hannah Beech also wrote an article about the situation that raises questions about the accuracy of a large number of people from Myanmar from the border areas of Bangladesh. Hannah Beech said she had seen the displaced people quoted in foreign news media telling stories that she knew were not true.

“...To compete for relief supplies distributed by aid groups, refugees learn to deploy women with inlets in their arms. Crying babies are the best way to express the front of the line. Such strategies are a natural survival tactic. Who wouldn’t do the same to feed a family?” she asked in her article.

AP reported that at least five previously unreported mass graves were discovered in Myanmar, with body parts buried, making them unrecognizable. A day after the AP report on mass graves in the Muslim state, authorities, including police, doctors, and local residents, disputed the AP report.

Myanmar has officially acknowledged that bodies are buried in mass graves, and a case was filed at the Nyaungchaung police station under Section 50 (1) of the Anti-Terrorism Law. Bodies were buried, and a case was filed at the Nyaungchaung police station.

The bodies were found, along with eight machetes and homemade arms, at a police outpost.

28 August, 2017, following attacks by the ARSA terrorists on police outposts. The ARSA terrorists were attacked by a combined group of Arakan Rohingya Muslims, and the villagers also said they had not heard of such reports in the Associated Press (AP) about mass graves in Rakhine.

“...According to the inspection team, the bodies of terrorists were attacked by a combined group of Arakan Rohingya Muslims, and the villagers also said they had not heard of such reports in the Associated Press (AP) about mass graves in Rakhine.”

Credibility is lost when media is unprofessional.

Aung Myint Soe (Ye Bo Kyi)

Alaung Phaya: King Alaung Phaya successfully united Upper and Lower Myanmar. He was known as the best leader for guerrilla warfare.

In the 13th century, Myanmar was annexed by the British Empire after three attempts were made to throw off the yoke of colonialism almost everywhere in Myanmar. In 1948, the British Empire was divided into two parts, Upper and Lower Myanmar. The country took five years to complete. However, Myanmar abandoned the idea to rule the country under the colonial education laws.

They choose to educate the Burmese people to lead their own affairs. The British government also realized that the Myanmar people had lost their face as the business of the British government.

A national movement that emerged during the 20th century was to defend Buddhism from the effects of British colonial rule. A group of educated young people formed the Burma Buddhist Association (VYBA) in 1898.

It is evident that the essence of Union Day can awakken the Union Spirit and this auspicious day can foster the establishment of a federal democratic union.

“The Global Lord Buddha always stressed on upon optimal use of resources for the benefit of mankind and society. And I believe that young minds of Myanmar have been using various resources in appropriate manner and leaving no stones unturned which will help them to contribute in the development of great nation, Myanmar to make it all endeavors to change in Myanmar.”

“...To compete for relief supplies distributed by aid groups, refugees learn to deploy women with inlets in their arms. Crying babies are the best way to express the front of the line. Such strategies are a natural survival tactic. Who wouldn’t do the same to feed a family?”

It has been postulated that the Primate fossils found in the Anyah area are approximately 20,000 miles, and from south to north of the Anyah area.

The Anyathian Culture is that one which has lived in the Anyathian area. It has been postulated that the Anyathian people, who lived in the Anyathian area, probably lived from the first to the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. And the Anyathian people were a part of the Anyathian area.

So, the Anyathian Culture is that one of the most important parts, parts which are situated in the Anyathian area.

One remarkable thing about the Anyathian Culture is that they had chosen to live in a rain forest. From the first to the end of the 3rd millennium BCE.

One remarkable thing about the Anyathian Culture is that they had chosen to live in a rain forest. From the first to the end of the 3rd millennium BCE.

“...Being a sovereign country, there are 136 eth- nic races who live in their respective regions through weal and woe.”

Being a sovereign country, there are 136 ethnic races who live in their respective regions through weal and woe.

Dr G R Sinha
Myanmar Institute of In- formation Technology
Adjunct Professor, IIT Bangalore

Union Day can awakken the Union Spirit

In the Colonial Period

The word “Union Day” was used among the Burmese people around the country. This word is used to describe the unity of the Burmese people.

Dr G R Sinha
Myanmar Institute of Information Technology
Adjunct Professor, IIT Bangalore

Union Day can awakken the Union Spirit

In the Colonial Period

The word “Union Day” was used among the Burmese people around the country. This word is used to describe the unity of the Burmese people.

Dr G R Sinha
Myanmar Institute of Information Technology
Adjunct Professor, IIT Bangalore

Union Day can awakken the Union Spirit

In the Colonial Period

The word “Union Day” was used among the Burmese people around the country. This word is used to describe the unity of the Burmese people.

Dr G R Sinha
Myanmar Institute of Information Technology
Adjunct Professor, IIT Bangalore

Union Day can awakken the Union Spirit

In the Colonial Period

The word “Union Day” was used among the Burmese people around the country. This word is used to describe the unity of the Burmese people.
Merkel — German coalition talks to be tough, unclear when they’ll end

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel said her conservatives faced tough negotiations with the Social Democrats (SPD) on Sunday as they seek to form a coalition government and it was unclear when the two blocs would be able to wrap up the talks.

More than four months after a national election, Europe’s largest economy remains in political limbo without a new government. The two camps want to agree by the end of Sunday to renew the “grand coalition” that has governed since 2013 but some politicians say talks could run into Monday or Tuesday.

“It’s not yet possible to say how long it will last — we did good groundwork yesterday but there are still important issues that need to be resolved,” Merkel said before heading into negotiations.

The parties reached agreements on energy and agriculture on Saturday but continued to haggle over healthcare.

Merkel, who is betting on the SPD to secure her fourth term in office, added: “I’m going into talks with goodwill today, but I also expect that we’ll face difficult negotiations.”

SPD leader Martin Schulz said the opposing sides had come closer on many issues in recent days but remained at odds over rents, his party’s demand to abolish fixed-term contracts for workers and its call to replace Germany’s dual public-private healthcare system with one insurance system for all. Healthcare and labour market policy are crucial for the SPD, whose 443,000 members — many of whom oppose forming another awkward partnership with Merkel after their party suffered its worst postwar result in September’s election — will get the chance to veto any final coalition deal.

“We’ll have to negotiate very, very intensively on these issues today and I think agreements are possible but they still haven’t been reached,” Schulz said.

The conservatives have rejected SPD calls for sweeping reform of health insurance and talks are now expected to focus on improving public healthcare, such as by changing billing rules for doctors, who earn more by treating private patients.

Merkel’s bloc does not want to ban fixed-term contracts like the SPD but has offered to prevent the repeated renewal of such contracts as a compromise.

Schulz said he wanted talks to progress swiftly but that the parties should not put themselves under huge time pressure as this would not be helpful in the final phase of negotiations.

“Ultimately it’s necessary to take the time you need to create a stable foundation for a stable government,” he said, adding that Sunday’s talks could run into the night.

SPD negotiator Manuela Schwesig urged all negotiating parties to all make concessions, saying it was difficult to explain to ordinary Germans why they were still waiting for a new government months after the 24 September national election.

Conscious that the SPD needs to sell the prospect of another grand coalition to grassroots members by ensuring any coalition deal bears the hallmarks of SPD policy, Schwesig said: “We’ve promised our members that we’ll negotiate until the other side squeals and we’ll do that.” — Reuters

At least 2 dead, 50 injured in South Carolina train wreck

CHARLOTTE — An Amtrak train traveling in South Carolina collided with a CSX freight train on Sunday, killing two people and injuring at least 50, CNN and other media reported.

The train with 139 passengers and eight crew members was traveling between New York and Miami when it hit the other train and derailed near Columbia, South Carolina, Amtrak officials told local media.

The collision happened about 2:30 AM (0730 GMT), according to local media. — Reuters
It’s when, not if — Singapore worries, and prepares, for militant attack

SINGAPORE — Armed officers patrol a train station where television screens and giant posters warn of the threat from militants. Nearby, fake gunmen storm a shopping mall in one of many recent terror attack simulations.

But this is not some war-ravaged country. It is one of the safest in the world, Singapore. The wealthy island-state has a near-perfect record of keeping its shores free from terror, but as it prepares to host defence ministers from around Southeast Asia this week, it appears to have good reason to have prioritised stopping the spread of militancy in the region. The cosmopolitan financial hub, which was second only to Tokyo in The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Safe Cities Index in 2017, says it has been the target of militant plots for years, some stemming from its Muslim-majority neighbours, and that it’s a matter of ‘when’ and not ‘if’ militants will strike. “Singapore continues to face a serious security threat from both homegrown radicalised individuals and foreign terrorists who continue to see Singapore as a prized target,” Singapore’s Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in response to e-mailed questions from Reuters. Singapore authorities say they have been a target of Islamic extremism since the 1990s, but efforts to deter terrorism have stepped up markedly in recent years with more frequent attacks on Western countries and after Islamic State (IS) militants briefly took over a town in the southern Philippines last year. Raising further concerns about the threat to the island, a Singaporean soldier has featured on a number of Islamic State promotional videos, most recently in December where he was filmed executing men alongside other militants. In its inaugural Terrorism Threat Assessment Report released last year, the MHA said Islamic State has demonstrated that Singapore is “very much on its radar” and that the threat to the country remains “the highest in recent years”— claims that are backed up by security experts. “Singapore, being known as safe and secure, makes it such a risk target,” said Dan Bould, Asia director of crisis management at professional services firm Aon and a former captain in the British army.

“If there’s an attack in the Philippines, it may get half an hour in a 24-hour news cycle. An attack in Singapore with all the multicultural individuals operating here, will be within the narrative for a few days at least.”

In early 2017, Aon lifted Singapore in the terrorism and political violence category of its annual risk map from negligible to low risk.—Reuters

DECLARATION IN RESPOND AND CLARIFICATION TO DR. HTUN WYNN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF YADANAR SHWE PIN HSINT CO., LTD AND PUBLIC NOTICE

Under the assignment and instruction of Mr. Chong Dae Seong, Executive Director of SEOGWOO E & C Co., Ltd at No. (483), 9th Floor, New University Avenue Road, Saya San Quarter, Bahan Township, Yangon Region, it is hereby declared as follows: -

It is well known to you and the relevant persons that my client has legally registered the company in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and is managing and operating the project works in good name and reputation.

1. In handling and implementing the project works in Myanmar, your company was trusted and caused to assign and implement with complete legal deed of Agreements and in accordance with the procedures of a business.

2. In implementing (4) Project works, the contract Agreement was executed to be carried out in accordance with the terms and conditions contained therein. In causing to carry out the works, it was mentioned in the Contract Agreement that the works to be met with stipulated standards and specifications and to complete the work in a timely manner.

(a) In respect of ASEAN Eco Brick Factory Project, there are only (6) types of works and not (8) types. Although the actual you proposed balance amount is only Ks 108,531,615/- it has been found that it was mentioned incorrectly as Ks 156,595,788/-.

(b) Although your proposed balance of Rural Development Training Center Project is Ks 75,538,587/- it was found that your newspaper declaration mentioned incorrectly as Ks 88,283,243/-.

(c) Marubeni Project is still in the process of negotiation between my client and your company and mentioning as Ks 81,149,159/- is a matter not yet discussed.

(d) The incorrect mentioning as Ks 34,643,650/- in the newspaper declaration for farmland project (retention 5% for 1 year warranty) is not entitled to be settled since it is still within the warranty time.

(e) In respect of balance amount contained in your newspaper declaration, mentions as total Ks 362,671,837/- is not exactly correct. You are well-known about the fact that among (4) projects, although the works were completed in (3) projects, your company does not undertake, negotiate and settle the payment made temporarily by my client company due to the standards and specifications not coming up to quality standard and not completing in specified time and upon the image of the company and loss and suffer in the works to be carried further.

3. My client likes you to consider again the work records under the Contract Agreement executed between you and my client, since the declaration in Myanma Alinn/The Mirror dated (6-1-2008) and in the Global New Light of Myanmar dated (13-1-2018) made by your permission, is to conceal the truth and declared intentionally.

With due respect and sorrow, my client has been known about the newspaper declarations and believe that you, yourself have already read and known the response and clarification, considered on the whole of the facts contained in the newspaper, by the acknowledge letter send to your company on (12-1-2018) by my client company.

In the said letter, on opportunity is given to you to coordinate and solve the undesirable matters. It seemed that you might not have noticed. You didn’t reply and communicate.

4. My client likes you to reconsider the terms and conditions contained in the Contract Agreement, transaction agreement and account clearances as it has been found roughly that the amount your proposed to the (3) project works above and the amount contained and mentioned in the newspaper, differs as Ks 143,957,985/-. It is hereby responded, clarified and declared to you and all, that for the reputation of my client company, my client will stand up and solve under the terms and conditions of the Contract Agreement, in accordance with work process and work agreement, in order for the truth and justification as responded in my client’s letter dated (12-1-2018) mentioned above, in respect of undesirable matters of your company.

U Htun Aung Kyaw (LL.B, DBL)
Advocate (Sr.7078/02)

Daw Khine The’ Su
LL.M, M.Res, Ph.D (prelim),
Dip in English (SEAMEO CHAT)
Higher Grade Pleader (Sr.44775/14)

No. (33), 1st Floor, Damaseindar Street, Kyaw Wet Thit Quarter, Tamwe Township, Yangon.
Ph: 01-540073, 09-5114708
Russia’s Su-25 fighter jet shot down by militants in Syria — defence ministry

MOSCOW — A Su-25 fighter jet of the Russian Aerospace Force was shot down by militants in Syria on Saturday, the pilot ejected but was killed later by terrorists, the Russian Defence Ministry said.

“The pilot was killed while fighting against terrorists.”

According to preliminary information, the jet was brought down with a portable anti-aircraft missile system, it added.

“The Russian centre for reconciliation of warring sides in Syria along the Turkish side, responsible for the Idlib de-escalation zone, are taking steps to retrieve the Russian pilot’s body,” the ministry said.

Earlier reports said that Syrian government forces were fighting against Jabhat al-Nusra units in the Idlib province. In accordance with an agreement by Russia, Iran and the US that the guarantors of the ceasefire — de-escalation zones were set up in Syria in May 2017. De-escalation zones include the Idlib Province, some parts of its neighboring areas in the Latakia, Hama and Aleppo Provinces north of the city of Homs, Eastern Ghouta, as well as the Daraa and al-Quneitra Provinces in southern Syria.—TASS

Laser technology reveals undiscovered Mayan ruins below Guatemalan jungle

MEXICO CITY — Researchers have used laser scans to reveal that more than 60,000 ruin sites lying for centuries under the jungles of northern Guatemala, a particular unpopulated area were digitally processed using the revolutionary light detection and ranging (LiDAR) technology.

“The LiDAR images make it clear that this entire region was a settlement system whose scale and population density had been grossly underestimated,” National Geographic quoted Ithaca College archaeologist Thomas Garrison as saying.

The new data led to an estimation that a 10 to 15 million population or even more had been living in the area.

Elevated highways, complex irrigation and terracing systems were discovered after over 2,100 square kilometers of Guatemala’s Maya Biosphere Reserve had been scanned.

Other surprising findings included the militarization of the Maya “megapolises,” as laser scans showed defensive walls, ramparts, terraces and fortresses throughout the region.

“LiDAR is revolutionizing archaeology the way the Hubble Space Telescope revolutionized astronomy,” Tulane University archaeologist Francisco Estrada-Belli told National Geographic, “We’ll need 100 years to go through all (the data) and really understand what we’re seeing.”

The survey is part of a three-year project spearheaded by Guatemala’s Foundation for Maya Cultural and Natural Heritage (PACUNAM) under a Portable Anti-Aircraft System (PAC-3) agreement by Russia, Iran and Turkey — the guarantors of the Syrian ceasefire, the ministry said.

According to preliminary information, the jet was brought down with a portable anti-aircraft missile system, it added.
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
New Mandalay Resort City Implementation Management Committee  
For New Mandalay Resort City Project Implementation  

Invitation for Expression of Interest  

New Mandalay Resort City (Yadanarpon Cyber City) has been developed in Mandalay Region near to Pyinoolwin City on Mandalay- Lashio Road. The project area is approximately 10,000 acres and the Concept Plan is prepared to develop the project phase by phase. The conceptual development plan consists of industrial, commercial, residential, logistic, recreation and resort area.

The aim of seeking Expression of interest is to empanel the competent real estate developer firms (local or foreign) for construction, marketing and management of the project. Ministry of Construction will be joint partner of the project and interested firms are requested to apply with credentials, information and company profile addressed to Ministry of Construction, Office 40, Naypyitaw.

Details including prescribed format are available at Department of Urban and Housing Development, Office No 40 Naypyitaw. The last date of submission is on 31.3.2018 at 5 pm. The short listed firms will be decided and announced after scrutiny by the board.

Contact Person -  
U ThetNaing  
Director  
DUHD, Mandalay  
Mandalay Region  
095143850, 0275194  

Daw Moe Thida  
Deputy Director  
DUHD, Office(40)  
NayPyiTaw  
092216638, 067 3407311

U Sein Myint  
Director  
Mandalay Region  
Government Office  
09400685350

Mandalay Region, PyinOoLwin Township, Proposed New Mandalay Resort City Project
LOS ANGELES — Hollywood directors named Guillermo del Toro the best film director of 2017 for “The Shape of Water” on Saturday, placing the Mexican filmmaker and the film in a strong position for the movie world’s top honours, the Oscars, in March.

The Directors Guild of America (DGA), the leading industry group representing film and television directors, chose Jordan Peele as best first-time feature film director for the offbeat horror film “Get Out”, which has four Oscar nominations including best picture and for Peele as best director.

DGA feature film winners have often gone on to claim the best director Oscar and even see their films win best picture.

The Oscar chances for “The Shape of Water” were also boosted last month when the Producers Guild chose it as the year’s best film.

It was del Toro’s first DGA win and his first nomination. “The Shape of Water” scored 13 Oscar nominations last month, the most of any 2017 film and just one shy of the all-time record of 14, including best picture and del Toro as director.

Peele was also nominated by the DGA at its 70th annual honours for best feature film director, as was Greta Gerwig, for “Lady Bird”. Gerwig, also an Oscar nominee, would be only the second woman to win the best director Academy Award. Matthew Heineman was honored as best documentary director for “City of Ghosts”, a British film about rebels banding together to fight ISIS in Syria. The Oscars will be handed out in Hollywood on 4 March to producers, directors, actors and actresses in a star-studded television show viewed around the world and among the most-watched TV programmes in the United States.

In addition to film directors, the DGA also handed out television honors, with women directors taking two of the top awards.

Bennett Miller won for best TV comedy direction for “Veep”, while Reed Morano won for TV drama series for “The Handmaid’s Tale”.

Directors of “Big Little Lies”, “Saturday Night Live” and the 89th annual Academy Awards presentation also won their categories, the latter show going down in infamy when the wrong film was announced for the top award, best picture.

British director Michael Apted, known for the “Up” documentary series which revisits its children every seven years as they progress into middle age and beyond, was honored with a special lifetime achievement award at the gala ceremony hosted by Judd Apatow.

—Reuters

Lady Gaga, citing pain, cancels 10 European shows on ‘Joanne’ tour

LOS ANGELES — Severe pain has forced Lady Gaga to cancel 10 shows on the European leg of her “Joanne” concert tour, the singer and her team said on Saturday, several months after she had postponed those performances in Europe due to her ailment. Lady Gaga, whose hit songs include “Bad Romance” and “Born This Way,” has previously said she suffers from fibromyalgia, a musculoskeletal pain disorder often accompanied by fatigue and cognitive difficulties.

A statement posted on Lady Gaga’s Twitter and Instagram pages did not mention fibromyalgia but said the 31-year-old singer decided to cancel the shows after consulting with her medical team. “Unfortunately, Lady Gaga is suffering from severe pain that has materially impacted her ability to perform live,” the statement said. In an accompanying statement on social media, Lady Gaga said she was devastated to cancel the shows, which included stops in London, Zurich, Stockholm, Paris and Berlin.

“I promise I will be back in your city, but for now, I need to put myself and my well-being first,” she said. Lady Gaga became famous in 2008 as a pop artist, with the hook-laden songs “Just Dance” and “Pokerface.” She quickly gained a reputation for provocative fashion choices, such as the dress made of raw beef that she wore at a 2010 awards show. The “Joanne” tour, named after the singer’s rock-style album released in 2016, was promoted by Live Nation Entertainment Inc. She began the tour on 1 August in Vancouver, Canada, the first of more than 40 shows across North America.—Reuters

Spice Girls reuniting to explore ‘new Opportunities’

LOS ANGELES — Popular band Spice Girls have said they are reuniting and planning to work on “new opportunities together”.

The members of the band — Victoria Beckham, Emma Bunton, Geri Horner, Mel Brown and Melanie Chisholm — recently met at Horner’s Hertfordshire residence, where they were accompanied by former manager Simon Fuller.

Later, in a statement, the group confirmed that they are getting back together.

“We are always overwhelmed at how much interest there is across the whole world for The Spice Girls. The time now feels right to explore some incredible new opportunities together,” the group said in the statement, reported Entertainment Weekly.

It was their single “Wannabe” that propelled the band to fame in 1996. They had also reunited for a world tour in 2007.

Their last performance together was at the closing ceremony for the 2012 London Olympics.

“We have enjoyed a wonderful afternoon catching up and reminiscing about the amazing times we have spent together.

“We all agree that there are many exciting possibilities that will once again embrace the original essence of The Spice Girls, while reinforcing our message of female empowerment for future generations,” the group said.

Beckham posted the photograph of the girl group on Instagram and posted, “Love my girls. So many kisses. Exciting.”—PTI
Armed forces of Myanmar, Thai donate offertories to one thousand Members of the Sangha

THE families of Myanmar Armed Forces (Tatmadaw) and Royal Thai Armed Force offered rice and offertories to one thousand Members of the Sangha at the platform of Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Headed by Abhidhajama Srisuwan, Deputy Commander-in-Chief in Chief Gen. Tarnchaiyan Sriwuwan and wife Mrs. Piraporn Sriwuwan, the ceremony was attended by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Khin Than Nwe and Tatmadaw officers of two countries donated offertories to the Members of the Sangha.

Sri Lanka embassy celebrates Independence Day

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung and wife Daw Khin Than Nwe are welcomed by Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Myanmar Mr. Kuhona Walawwe Nimal Dharmakeerthu Karunaratne at the reception to mark the 70th Independence Day of Sri Lanka at the Sule Shangrila Hotel in Yangon on 4th February, 2018. PHOTO: MNA

Armed forces of Myanmar, Thai donate offertories to one thousand Members of the Sangha

Maha Koviisa, sayadaws and monks from the monasteryin Nay Pyi Taw Council Region attended the ceremony. Command-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Haing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Royal Thai Armed Force Commander in Chief Gen. Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan and wife Mrs. Piraporn Srisuwan, Deputy Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe and Tatmadaw officers of two countries donated offertories to the Members of the Sangha.

Japan's antismoking plan with gaping loophole sparks outcry

TOKYO — Japan's recently unveiled antismoking plan has sparked an outcry from lung cancer patients and other activists as it has a gaping loophole — basically allowing customers at restaurants and bars to carry on lighting up.

The plan released last Tuesday by the health ministry backpedaled from its initial goal of introducing a total indoor smoking ban to prevent passive smoking in public spaces ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games due to strong opposition by the tobacco and restaurant industries.

Japan is among the lowest-ranked countries in terms of tobacco control, with no smoke-free law covering indoor public spaces.

The new measure will protect minors and patients at hospitals from secondhand smoking, but in doing so will cover only four of the eight types of public facilities surveyed by the World Health Organization to measure antismoking steps.

Fifty-five countries including Britain, Canada, Russia and Brazil — recent hosts of Olympics — have already banned indoor smoking at all eight types of public facilities, smoking will be excluded in these places.

A group of lung cancer patients has fiercely protested the latest government plan, saying it is a “reversion” of the global trend to tighten smoking control. In Japan, more than 80 per cent of the population are nonsmokers and an estimated 15,000 people die annually from secondhand smoke, according to the health ministry.

But Tokukii Shobayashi, a senior official of the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry, said the government needs to take “a first step” with the modest plan as a tougher bill would be rejected in parliament by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party supported by the tobacco and restaurant industries.

Some LDP members have urged the ministry to recognize “the right to smoke.”

Shobayashi drafted a bill 17 years ago to urge restaurant managers and other facility operators in Japan to “make efforts” to prevent secondhand smoking. At that time, he was denounced by both the pro-smoking LDP and antismoking bodies calling for stricter regulations.

Following negotiations with the LDP, the health ministry has made compromises and decided under the new plan to permit smoking in restaurants and bars if they set up special rooms for exclusive use by smokers where no food or drink will be served.

The ministry is currently negotiating with the LDP over the scope of restaurants and bars that are to be exempted from the requirement to establish separate smoking areas.

It initially planned to exempt eateries with a floor space of up to 30 square metres, but is now leaning toward expanding the scope to those with a floor space of up to 150 sq metres. In the exempted facilities, smoking will be allowed inside if they hang a sign indicating it is a “smoking space.”

Pro-smoking people say customers who shun tobacco would not enter these places.

However, Kazuo Hasegawa, chairman of the Japan Lung Cancer Alliance, said his group’s survey has revealed many people reluctantly go to such facilities and suffer from passive smoking.

“One good aspect of the #MeToo movement is that it can help build trust and intimacy,” said Friedman, a writer whose books include “Yes Means Yes!”

The movement has exposed men accused of sexual assault and harassment in fields including entertainment, politics and business.

Dozens of prominent men have quit or been fired from high-profile posts, and police have opened investigations into some accusations of sex assault.

The movement is changing dating dynamics in important ways, said Liz Wolfe, managing editor of Young Voices, which distributes opinion pieces written by people younger than 30.

“One good aspect of the #MeToo movement might be an increased emphasis on communication when it comes to sex and romance,” Wolfe said.
West Brom have 12 big games to rescue season, says Brunt

LONDON — West Bromwich Albion still have 12 “big games” to ensure their Premier League survival, midfielder Chris Brunt said after Saturday’s 3-2 home defeat by Southampton.

West Brom have collected 20 points from 26 matches after three wins, 11 draws and 12 defeats and sit bottom of the league table. They are winless in the last three games, losing twice.

“We have got 12 big games left and we need to win as many as we can,” Brunt told the club’s website.

“We have made a bright start to the current season with victories in their first two games before going 20 games without a win. They sacked manager Tony Pulis and replaced him with Alan Pardew in November.

Pardew guided the team to their first win in 21 games beating promoted Brighton and Hove Albion last month but West Brom have continued to struggle for consistency.

“We’ve given ourselves a bit of a mountain to climb now but hopefully we can get a few bodies back this week and get out on the training pitch,” Northern Irishman Brunt added.

“All the lads that have played in their last league game on 10 February.” —Reuters

Moyes refuses to blame off-field incidents for defeat

LONDON — West Ham United manager David Moyes said that recent off-field problems at the club had nothing to do with Saturday’s 3-1 Premier League defeat at Brighton and Hove Albion. The London club sacked director of player recruitment Tony Henry on Friday following allegations of racial discrimination. According to a report in the Daily Mail newspaper, Henry said the club wanted to limit the number of African players in their squad as “they have a bad attitude” and “cause mayhem” when they are not in the team. Asked if the incident had a bearing on the result, Moyes said: “It had no effect whatsoever. “The club have done what they think they have to do and move on, and we have to. It’s always the manager’s job but I don’t think the events would do that.” Henry’s sacking followed defender Arthur Masuaku’s six-match ban for spitting at an opponent during West Ham’s FA Cup defeat at Wigan Athletic last weekend. “Maybe that’s just West Ham, I don’t know,” Moyes added. “In management no day is ever dull. The job brings up some difficult situations and some strange ones.” Defeat at Brighton left West Ham in 12th on 27 points but just three points above the relegation zone in a congested bottom half of the table.

“When I took over we were in the bottom three so to be where we are now I’d have said ‘thanks very much’. We are still in a battle to stay up but it’s the same for other teams.” West Ham host Watford in their next league game on 10 February. —Reuters

Defender Stones in line for Man City return against Leicester

LONDON — Manchester City defender John Stones is in line to return for next weekend’s Premier League clash with Leicester City after missing Saturday’s draw at Burnley with a knee problem, manager Pep Guardiola said.

Stones, who missed last week’s 3-0 win over West Bromwich Albion with illness, was rested for the match at Turf Moor with skipper Vincent Kompany returning from a calf injury and new recruit Aymeric Laporte available as defensive cover. The England international has made 15 league appearances this season apart from featuring nine times in domestic cup competitions and the Champions League. “He (Stones) has a bit of a problem in the knee and I prefer for him to rest, to recover a bit,” Guardiola said. “It is a little bit painful... I decided not to use him, let him recover and come back better against Leicester and Basel.” After the visit of eighth-placed Leicester, City return to Champions League action with a last 16 first leg clash at Swiss side Basel on 13 February. —Reuters

Mindat Football Association to nurture youth footballers

MINDAT, a very beautiful, hilly and cold town in Chin State, located in the West of Myanmar has registered its township football association for the first time recently according to the Myanmar Football Federation. The football association is a very first one in the Chin State, was founded with 15 officials altogether by the supervision of Myanmar Football Federation.

Meeting for the confirmation and formation of this association was also conducted last week. The Mindat Football Association is aimed at promoting not only the township football but for the Chin State, and upgrading the standard of Myanmar football. They will nurture any youths who are interested in football to become professionals. The association is chaired by U LeinHtun and the other 14 officials are former footballers, said an official of the association.—KyawZin Lin

City Stars FC changed its name to Royal Thanlyin FC in MNL League II

CITY Stars FC, a football club of the MPT Myanmar National League II of 2018, has changed its name to Royal Thanlyin FC recently.

City Stars FC is a Myanmar football club, founded in 2015 in the MNL-2 League. The team gained the agreement by officials from Myanmar National League to change its name intoThanlyin FC. The new name for the team will be officially used starting from the MPT Myanmar National League II season.

The MNL-2 is the second-tier football league in Myanmar. The official name is MNL-2 League. The inaugural season has began in 2013.

The MNL-2 was founded in 2013 as part of MFF’s effort to extend competitiveness into the nation’s football standard and the league is played in a league cup format.

The 2015 MNL-2 winner was Southern Myanmar and 1st runner-up was Horizon FC. In 2016 MNL-2 season, four new clubs were included and three clubs will be qualified to MNL-2. —KyawZin Lin