16 people trafficked to Thailand sent back

SOME 16 Myanmar nationals, including 14 men and two women, who were trafficked to Thailand were sent back to Myanmar through an arrangement with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Thailand’s Ministry of Social Development and Human Security on the morning of 28 February 2018 at Myawady temporary reception centre. Furthermore, a trafficked Myanmar man and woman who were returned to Myanmar on 4 August 2014 were paid compensation. The compensation was 600,000 Thai baht for the man and 300,000 baht for the woman, together totalling 900,000 baht.

The transfer of the 16 persons was made in the presence of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Department of Rehabilitation Director General U Win Naing Tun, Sarananpat Anumatrajkit from Thailand’s Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Police General Tamasak Wicharaya of the Royal Thai Police and Police Attache Khemmarin Hasiri, Embassy of Thailand, in Myanmar.

The compensation payments were first accepted by U Win Naing Tun and then immediately handed over directly to the two trafficked persons.

SEE PAGE-3
INTERVIEW

By Mi Mi Phyo
PHOTO: AYE THAN

A visit to Ngaliketha Elephant Camp in Nay Pyi Taw

Starting from the full moon day of Tabaung, people in the country enjoyed four consecutive holidays. While many chose to go on trips overseas or within the country with families and friends, many stayed back in Nay Pyi Taw to visit the local attractions, such as Nay Pyi Taw Buddha Gaya, Uppatasanti Pagoda, Water Fountain Park, Ngalike Resort, Ngaliketha Elephant Camp and the zoo.

Many who visited the Ngaliketha Elephant Camp during the long holiday spoke about their experiences.

Daw Nu Wah Hlaing, Khayay Housing, Nay Pyi Taw
I live in Nay Pyi Taw. My aunts had come over from Yangon, and as they wanted to visit the Ngaliketha Elephant Camp, I accompanied them. I have never been here before but have seen it in a television programme. It was a pleasant feeling to enter the camp through the natural forest lane. My mother and son also came along, and we were ecstatic. People with families should visit this place during the summer holidays with their sons and daughters. I assure them they will enjoy the trip.

Daw Tin Tin Htway, retired teacher, Insein Township
My sister lives in Pobbathiri Township. She heard about the Ngaliketha Elephant Camp on a television programme and told me it was a beautiful place. She asked me to accompany her to the camp, and I went along with my friend. I was a government employee for 30 years. I told my other friends that I would scout the place and let them know about it. My friends feel there are not many places to visit in Nay Pyi Taw.

I have visited the elephant camp and all the pagodas here. Next time, I will bring my friends along.

Daw Khin Aye Myint, Pobbathiri Township
My friends from a rural township had come for a visit, and we visited the camp. We have never been here before. However, once we came here, we really enjoyed the pleasant surroundings and will come along with our other friends again. It is a pleasant place located under the shadow of the mountains and forests. The river bank is like a beach, and it is such a nice place for a holiday. I will encourage others to come here too.

Ma Wah Wah Lwin, public servant
I am originally from Monywa. I work for the Ministry of Transport and Communication in Nay Pyi Taw. Despite the long holiday, I did not go home (to Monywa), because I wanted to visit the Ngaliketha Elephant Camp. This is my first time here, and once I set foot here, I was glad that I came. I took the elephant ride and fed the elephants. There are numerous places to visit in Nay Pyi Taw. I want to invite everyone to come and enjoy this place.

Ma Nu Nu Aung, Taungoo
I intended to go to Hpa-an, but due to some work, I could not make it there. Initially, I didn’t think the Nay Pyi Taw Ngaliketha Elephant Camp would be this pleasant. However, I am glad I made the trip. It was the correct choice. Whenever there are long holidays, I visit some place or the other. Last time, I went to Pyin Oo Lwin. This time, I came to the elephant camp.

U Min Soe, Driver, Nay Pyi Taw south wood extraction region, Ngaliketha Elephant Camp
The entrance fee to the Ngaliketha Elephant Camp is Ks1,000 per person. There is no car-parking fee. Visitors can enjoy an elephant ride here. The elephant ride costs Ks3,000 per person. The ride goes around the forest once. Today is Peasants Day, so there will be many visitors. Most people come with their families. On weekdays, there are few visitors. The camp opens from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. At 6 a.m., the elephants are rounded up (after being allowed to roam freely overnight). The visitors feed the elephants. A small restaurant has also been opened for visitors. The Ngalike Resort Hotel and elephant camp is separated by water. Visitors from the hotel can cross the water body in a speedboat to visit the elephant camp. All are invited to come and visit the Ngaliketha Elephant Camp.
Tourists visit ancient Mrauk-U sites during public holidays

Mrauk-U in Rakhine State is one of the destinations for local and foreign tourists. PHOTO: MRAUK-U DISTRICT IPRD

Numerous pilgrims travelled to the ancient city of Mrauk-U during the public holidays to visit pagodas and view the ancient craftsmanship, monuments and other cultural heritage.

Pilgrims visited historical temples such as the Five Man Pagodas, Ratana Man Aung Pagoda, Sakyaw Man Aung Pagoda, Zina Man Aung Pagoda, Mingula Man Aung Pagoda and Lawka Man Aung Pagoda. They also visited Lakekan Lake, Anumakan Lake, the Shitthaung Pagoda and its 550 Jakata reliefs, the Htukkam Thein temple with its some 140 Buddha statues lined along its corridors and the Archaeological Museum.—District IPRD

Peasant roundtable talk held in Ayeyawady region’s Danubyu Township

A peasant roundtable talk was held in the Ayeyawady region’s Danubyu Township, Zizyunc village tract, Zizyung junction, yesterday morning. The event was attended by Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Hla Moe Aung, Ayeyawady Region Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Tin Aung Win, Bago Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock U Aung Zaw Naing, Htuttaw representatives, peasant representatives elected by the peasants, and more than 15,000 peasants and farmers from states and regions.

Elected peasant representatives were first introduced, after which they discussed their respective topics.

This was followed with a speech by Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu who said that it is the duty of all peasant and farmers, as well as those related to the farming sector, to develop Myanmar’s farming sector. The ministry has drawn up a policy, strategy and work processes for the development of the farming sector and to enact the protection of the farmers’ rights and enhancement of their benefits law to support and help farmers and peasants, said the union minister.

The ministry is striving to uplift the socio-economic situation of peasants with small holdings, as well as farmers and breeders, according to the policy, law, rule and work processes, and the peasants and farmers are urged to cooperate by conducting good agricultural practices.

To overcome the shortage of labour and rising wages in the farming sector, the ministry is pushing towards farm mechanization and has arranged for farmers to get a loan with low interest and a three-year repayment system in six installments. As of the end of December 2017, some 1,320 tractors and 57 combine harvesters were being sold under the system, and training courses were also provided to the farmers to help them operate the machineries.

Training and farmer education works were also being conducted so that the farmers can overcome climate change and produce crops, in accordance with the changing situation.

The union minister concluded by saying that the farming sector will develop only when the entire process of planting, harvesting, processing, packaging and marketing and selling is developed.

The chief minister also discussed matters related to the socio-economic development of peasants and farmers.

A motion on points discussed was submitted, which was then supported and approved by the attendees. After the talk, the union minister, chief minister and event attendees observed the display of farm machineries that would be sold to farmers under an installment system.—Myanmar News Agency

16 people trafficked to Thailand sent back

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The 16 Myanmar nationals were then taken to the Myalmyine youth training school and vocational training school, where travel documents will be issued to those who did not have or had lost their identity cards. They will be interviewed by the Anti-Trafficking Police Force to expose the human trafficker(s), after which they will be sent back to their respective homes. The work of rescuing them and obtaining compensation for them is being jointly conducted by the Department of Rehabilitation, General Administration Department, Anti-Trafficking Police Force, Immigration Department and National Registration Department, with the cooperation of the Women Affairs Federation, International Organisation for Migration, United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund and World Vision.—Myanmar News Agency

Appointment of Japanese Ambassador agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Ichiro MARUYAMA as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Ichiro MARUYAMA was born on 25 September 1953. He graduated from Faculty of Economics from Chou University in March 1978. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in April 1978 and served in various capacities. From 1994 to 2000, he served as First Secretary in Japanese Embassies in Myanmar and the United States of America. He also served as Director of Internationalization Promotion Office of General Affairs Bureau of Kyoto City in 2000.

In 2002, he served as Counsellor in Embassy of Japan in Myanmar. He was the Senior Regional Coordinator of Southwest Asia Division and First Southeast Asia Division, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau and Senior Foreign Policy Coordinator of Policy Coordination Division in Foreign Policy Bureau, in May and August 2006 respectively. He served as Director of Exchange Programs Division and Director of Maritime Security Policy Division of Foreign Policy Bureau in 2008 and 2010 respectively. He has been serving as Minister Counsellor/Deputy Chief of Mission in Embassy of Japan in Myanmar since July 2011.—Myanmar News Agency
Tourists flock to Kawthoung during summer holidays

KAUTHOUNG, a town in the Taninthayi Region of southernmost Myanmar, has become a tourist hotspot following the gradual development of its marine tourism.

Local and foreign visitors are flocking to the town in large numbers during the summer holidays, said a local tour operator.

Kawthoung is an important trading point bordering the Thai border town of Ranong to the east. Most of the terrain in the area is mountainous. Thanks to the state’s new economic policy, investors are eyeing the coastal town with interest, as it has numerous beautiful natural islands for tourism development projects, resulting in an increase in the number of recreation facilities such as resorts and hotels.

The town is expected to flourish in the current economic climate as the town’s smokeless industry ramps up investments.

Tour operators said the arrival of visitors at home and abroad is increasing each month. Most visitors come to the area for eco-tourism, such as fishing, diving, snorkelling on coral reefs and bird-watching, they added.

In anticipation of developing the country’s smokeless industry, community-based tourism projects have been implemented in Kaehin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan and Chin states, as well as in the Yangon, Mandalay and Magway regions, according to the Hotels and Tourism Ministry.

The ministry is currently promoting cross-border trips as a popular trend, said an official.

—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)

Man dies, woman injured in car accident

A man was killed while an elderly woman sustained moderate injuries when the car they were travelling in crashed into a stage building following brake failure in Khin U Town, Sagaing Region, on Thursday morning, according to a police report.

Investigators said the car, driven by Thein Zaw Oo, crashed into a stage building built of bamboo and timber near Anyathihla Pagoda.

The accident killed U Myint Wai, a member of a Myanmar Saing Waing (traditional orchestra), while the 65-year-old woman received moderate injuries on her left arm. The survivor is undergoing medical treatment at the nearest hospital.

The accident occurred on Khin U Road near Bagan, reported the driver under Section 304 of the Penal Code.—Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

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Forest Department grants permission to implement community forestry in Kayhnin Chaung Village

THE Taninthayi Region Forest department has granted permission to villagers to implement community forestry in Kayhnin Chaung Village at Thatyetchaung Township. The community forestry is spread over 508 acres.

The Forest Department provided certificates to 269 households of the Kayhnin Chaung Village on 28 February to implement community forestry. “Community forestry is a developing branch of forestry, whereby the local community plays a significant role in forest management and land-use decision-making with the support of the government,” said U Kyaw Zayar, Director of Tannithayi Region Forest Department.

“Community forestry does not focus only on the individual. We are old now. We have to think about the next generation. We have already received the community forestry certificate and will get involved in forest conservation. We will involve the youngsters too,” said U Saw Pho Thu, a 67-year-old man from Kayhnin Chaung Village.

Community forestry in Kayhnin Chaung Village can help implement region basic tourism, as well as create job opportunities for the local people.—Nyi Tu

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The police have filed charges of reckless driving against the driver under Section 394 (a) of the Penal Code.—Myo Win Tun (Monywa)
Myanmar earns over $700 million from exports of beans, pulses this FY

Myanmar exported some 1.1 million tonnes of beans and pulses to its trading partners between last April and the second week of this February, earning more than $700 million, according to a report in Myawaddy Daily on Friday.

Although the country saw no significant decline in the export volume of beans and pulses, it saw a decline of nearly $500 million in its export value, compared with the same period last fiscal year (FY). The export volume of beans and pulses decreased by more than 10,000 tonnes this year against last FY. At the same time, last FY, the country earned $1.221 billion through the export of the same products. U Toe Aung Myint, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, said that currently, the prices of beans and pulses, especially pigeon peas and mung beans, have fallen in the domestic market after India announced its new import policy on beans and pulses in the second quarter of this FY.

Despite a decrease in the export of pulses to India this FY, the country saw no significant changes in the export of the same products to other countries. — GNLM

Consumer goods imports up over $466 million since last April

According to the ministry’s import figures, as of 16 February, the country earned some $16.212 billion from the import of capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer products.

The country’s imports are always greater than its exports, causing a trade deficit. To reduce the growing trade deficit, the government is seeking the best solutions in collaboration with private businesspersons. — Swe Nyein

Japan-Thai joint venture opens fertilizer plant in Myanmar

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Myanmar-Viet Nam trade tops $538 million in current FY

The bilateral external trade between Myanmar and Viet Nam reached US$538 million as of this December, including $97,302 million in exports and $440 million in imports, according to a monthly statistical report of the Commerce Ministry.

Usually, Myanmar imports car spare parts, computer parts, construction materials, steel, plastics, pharmaceuticals and other chemical products from Viet Nam and exports mineral, agricultural, forest and marine products to the ASEAN member state.

Viet Nam’s trade and investment with Myanmar have substantially increased each year. The total bilateral trade in the last fiscal year (FY) hit a record high of more than $494 million during the six consecutive years.

According to the ministry’s yearly report, bilateral trade with the socialist republic was $346 million in the 2015-2016 FY, $321 million in the 2014-2015 FY, $281 million in the 2013-2014 FY, $155 million in the 2012-2013 FY and $143 million in the 2011-2012 FY.

The ministry’s data shows that trade between Myanmar and other ASEAN member countries in the current FY reached $8.605 billion.

Trade authorities are making continuous efforts to boost exports in the long, medium and short terms, finding new international markets for domestically produced products, said a spokesperson of the ministry. — Shwe Khine

Japan-Thai joint venture opens fertilizer plant in Myanmar

Thailand Central Chemical Public Co., a joint venture between Japanese and Thai firms, has opened a fertilizer processing plant in Myanmar, a major exporter of rice, beans and other agricultural products in the Southeast Asian region.

The plant in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone on the outskirts of Yangon, Myanmar’s commercial capital, consists of a discharging facility of bulk fertilizers, two units of high-speed packing machines, two units of high-speed loading docks and a warehouse. TCCC is a joint venture of Japan’s Sojitz Corp. and Central Glass Co. and Thailand’s Metro Co. and the central government. Ko Tojima, managing director of TCCC’s Myanmar subsidiary, told NNA that the company anticipates a strong opportunity to expand its business in Myanmar, where agriculture is a dominant industry which the UN Food and Agriculture Organization says accounts for about 38 per cent of the nation’s gross domestic product.

“Myanmar is an exporting country of agricultural products like rice and beans. But its consumption of chemical fertilizers is very low compared with other countries,” he said, adding the new factory will boost demand in the Myanmar market.

TCCC has exported fertilizers to Myanmar from Thailand for over a decade before establishing its Myanmar unit in 2016. — Kyodo News

Photo: Supplied
Organic, PGS certificates to be issued in June

The Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP) is planning to issue organic and participatory guarantee systems (PGS) certificates to farmers and entrepreneurs from June 2018, said U Kyaw Thu, secretary of MFVP. “We will issue the organic and PGS certificates to farmers and entrepreneurs from June 2018, and PGS resumes its project in June. We have already finished discussions to form the committee. After these things are set up, we will issue the PGS certificates,” he added.

The organic and PGS certification will be given out with the support of the ADB. Local farmers who have the PGS certificates can sell their organic products in the region easily.

“The advantage of the PGS certificate is that not only the crops but also the soil gets recognition. Farmers will get the certificate for crops and vegetables cultivated on this soil,” he added. Unlike other organic certificates, it is a monitoring system among farmers. Currently, organic crops and vegetables have got market shares to a certain extent. — GNLM

Shan State police seize 74 kg of opium in house search

A local anti-drug force confiscated 74 kilograms of opium from a young man during a house search in Hsi Hseng Township, Southern Shan State.

The search operation was conducted in the house of Maung Myo, 19 years of age in Narsaek Sauk Village, Hsi Hseng Township on 1 March.

The suspected drug smuggler has been charged with the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by the local police department.—Myanmar Digital News

Myanmar’s corn market and its prospect

Myanmar’s corn exports is increasing year after year, but it still has to improve its quality and update its agricultural technology in order to be able to compete with international market because it only export 0.1% of the global corn export volume.

After the 12nd meeting of the China-Myanmar Joint Border Trade Cooperating and Coordinating Committee held in China on December 6 last year, Myanmar corn export volume and corn prices has increased.

Myanmar’s corn exports have increased from 1,188, 438 tons in the fiscal year 2015-2016 to 1,292,179 tons in the fiscal year 2016-2017. In this fiscal year until January 19, the export volume of corn has reached 1,200,650 tons, meaning the export volume has increased to an amount worth more than US$ 58 million compared to the same period last year. Meanwhile, the corn price is also increasing.

Last year, it was priced at 80 Chinese Yuan for a 50 Kg bag. But, this month, it rose up to 102 Yuan at the Myanmar-China border market in Shweli.

The Chinese and Myanmar currency exchange rate also helped corn traders to get more profits because the Chinese Yuan increased in value from Ks. 202 last month to Ks.206 this month. The local corn prices are also increasing but it depends on the region the corn is grown and transportation costs to the region they sell the corn.

The price of corn at Lashio wholesale center was Ks.500 for a viss, but this month the price is Ks. 540. Comparing to last year’s prices, which is just around Ks.300, it rose nearly double. Myanmar’s key export countries this fiscal year are China, Vietnam, Philippine and Malaysia.

Corn is grown in Kayah, Kayin and Northern and Southern Shan States and Mandalay, Sagaing and Ayeyawady Regions.—Myanmar Digital News

Rural people in Mandalay Township get electricity from National Grid

A ceremony to celebrate the launch of electricity was held near the transformer in Kyaukphyu Village, Mandalay Township in Mandalay Region this morning.

First, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Mandalay Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Kyaw Kyaw Min, Mandalay Region Minister for Electricity, Energy and Construction U Zarni Aung, Secretary of Mandalay Region Government U Sai Thaw Win, Pyithu Hluttaw Representative for Mandalay Constituency U Hla Tun Aung and Regional lawmakers U Chit Min Thein and Daw Thida Nyein formally opened the transformer.

Next, Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung cut the ribbon to open the signboard of the transformer.

“The speeches of the chief minister and a local followed. —Aung Htway (Mandalay)
Farmer’s voices heard on Peasants Day

Zaw Gyi
PHOTO-PE ZAW

In honor of Peasants Day about 4,000 farmers and basic employees gathered on a football field in Industrial Zone (2), Hlaing Tharyar Township in the western part of Yangon yesterday.

The football field was where the main celebration for Peasants’ Day took place. Visitors enjoyed the entertainment and also toured the numerous exhibition booths for agricultural tools, fertilizer, insecticide, pesticides, seed galleries, and local produce. We interviewed some of those who attended yesterday’s event, as well as event organisers from the Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar (AFFM).

Salai Kar Let
(Taephyu Village, Taungdwingyi Township)

I got a lot of knowledge about agriculture here. It’s very rewarding and we’re going to use the knowledge from here to turn our shortcomings into our strengths.

U Hla Win
(Kyapan Village, Thaton Township)

I wish there were more commemorative events like this one. We live in a major agricultural country, so events like these allow our voices and lives to be on display for all to see. I think we farmers still lack strong unity, so if there are more events like this one, it will boost our confidence and unite us and that will develop the agricultural sector.

U Htay Lwin
(Theinkone Village Tract, Shan State, Hpa-an Township Kayin State)

I came here to learn what I can to improve the lives of farmers back home. I want to shift to machine-powered farming. Here we can meet different people sharing experiences in the same field of work and we can learn new things here, too.

U Than Swe
(AFFM Chairman)

I am a legal advocate so I’m working to make the agricultural laws better. The government and Htutta want to know in-depth details of the problems farmers are facing, so they organised this event. It’s important for our country to have higher-quality agricultural products.

ASEAN trade ministers mull plan to boost e-commerce in region

SINGAPORE — Trade ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this week discussed Singapore’s proposal to develop a digital economy in the region, especially a framework to promote the use of e-commerce in the region, at their meeting in the city-state.

Singapore, which is the most advanced economy in the region, has said in recent months that it would like to help the 10 ASEAN member countries develop a digital economy during its chairmanship year this year. The proposal was discussed this week at the first meeting of ASEAN trade ministers this year.

“There was very strong interest in developing the potential of the digital economy in ASEAN,” Singapore’s Minister for Trade and Industry Lim Hng Kiang told a news conference Friday after the meeting.

“We clearly recognize that this is the way of the future and we have to be better prepared for it, providing the infrastructure, raising the awareness, raising the confidence and facilitating the business processes, so we are working and preparing the groundwork,” he said.

“We are getting a lot of feedback from the business community. They are also very keen to make sure the groundwork that we lay out for facilitating the digital economy and e-commerce is pro-business and helps them in their cross border transactions,” he added.

The plan is to sign an agreement that provides a framework to collectively encourage e-commerce and the digital economy in the grouping by the end of this year, an official source said.

The proposal received a positive response from ASEAN members.

“There has been good progress,” Malaysian Trade Minister Mustapa Mohamed said in a small group interview this week.

“The excitement is on the digital economy, in e-commerce this year, of course in a way we are preparing for the future, the future about digital, so this meeting here is a lot more futuristic in terms of focus,” he said.

In a statement after the meeting, the Singapore Trade and Industry Ministry said all 10 ASEAN economic ministers “endorsed the economic priorities” that Singapore has proposed for ASEAN this year, which include promoting e-commerce.

At the news conference, Lim said that the 16 East Asian countries including Japan that are negotiating a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership free trade deal are striving to reach a substantial conclusion in their negotiations by this year.

“Our negotiators are telling us that they sense a mood of optimism, renewed vigor and a sense that momentum is building in our favor, so I think what we want to do is try to capture this momentum, make steady progress and try and achieve a significant if not substantial conclusion before the end of this year,” he said as RCEP ministers and officials prepare for a one-day ministerial meeting to be held on Saturday.

—Kyodo News
Endeavours needed for tax reform

T he 2018 Union Tax Bill was based on the 2017 Union Tax Law and was drafted to fit the current economic conditions of the country, according to an official of the Union Attorney General’s Office. It is of vital importance to adopt systematic tax laws which can be developed by the country’s economy into a driving force. Therefore, concerted efforts should be made to create relevant laws late this year, in order to follow the rules and regulations of the country.

In contrast, there are different kinds of taxes and duties - income tax, commercial tax, excise duty, customs duty, State lottery tax, stamp duty, land revenue, embassies tax and so on.

The Profil Tax Law, which was enacted in line with the socialist economic system, was revoked with Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 1 in 2011. The Internal Revenue Department has been collecting four kinds of taxes and duties, namely income tax, commercial tax, stamp duty and State lottery tax, since the 2011-12 fiscal year.

The Union tax law is applied to money and capital transactions of both in and outside the country which were legally obtained. Those who are avoiding tax are obliged to pay a 5 per cent tax for the first six months, and 3 per cent for the next six months so that the government can mean that tax evasion automatically implies money laundering.

But some people evade taxes by choosing a number of ways, including reporting artificially low prices, importing different goods to those on their license application or illegally trans- shipping the goods. The trade tax evasion can be calculated. It is important how to adopt reasonable tax measures, and how to streamline tax payments, which will be helpful for tax law.

The ministry has found many differences discrepancy between documents and goods, including the country of origin, the number or the type, all in a bid to avoid taxes. Sometimes other countries, authorities tax the tax rate when the country’s economy faces a decline. A poor taxation system may lead to more tax evasion. Therefore, effective and sustainable attempts are needed.

In other countries, authorities try to reduce the tax rate when the country’s economy faces a decline. A poor taxation system may lead to more tax evasion. Therefore, effective and sustainable attempts are needed.

The Plan is a blueprint for extensive reforms which will ensure the policy making processes and practices and develop objectives to improve the matching of the need for sustainable development goals.

The programme targeted executive and senior government officials, and was developed in consultation with international experts including Ms. Janelle Saffin, Former Member of New Zealand’s State Services Commission and Senior Lecturer at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. The programme was delivered by a number of international experts including Ms. Janelle Saffin, Former Member of New Zealand’s State Services Commission and Senior Lecturer at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Government Officials explore ways to strengthen Machinery of Government and Policy Development Processes in Myanmar

A professional development programme on Improving the Machinery of Government and Policy Making for Better Service Delivery was conducted from 21 to 23 February in Nay Pyi Taw.

Chemistry and technology and senior government officials, and focused on raising awareness in four key areas: machinery of government, machinery of government functions, machinery of government role in governance, and parliamentary oversight. It was attended by 66 Deputy Directors and General Directors, who had the opportunity to work in groups on topics of the system which fully supported them improve the machinery of Government.

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New York banking regulator seeks Kushner Cos. loan details

NEW YORK—New York state has asked three banks to supply information about their relationships with the real estate business of Jared Kushner, a senior White House advisor and President Donald Trump’s son-in-law, a source said Wednesday.

Maria Vullo, Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services (DFS), sent letters last week to Deutsche Bank, Signature Bank and New York Community Bank asking for details on their financial arrangements as well as loans made to or sought by Kushner Companies, the source told AFP. The lenders were given until 5 March to respond.

The DFS has refused to comment on the matter, as has Deutsche Bank. But Kushner Companies said the inquiries were politically motivated and amounted to harassment.

“We have not received a copy of any letter from the New York State Department of Financial Services,” a spokesman said.

“Our company is a multi-billion enterprise that is extremely financially strong. Prior to our CEO voluntarily resigning to serve our country, we never had any type of inquiries. “These type of inquiries appear to be harassment solely for political reasons.”

Conflicts of interest? - Also on Wednesday, The New York Times reported Kushner Companies received major loans from Apollo Global Management, one of the world’s largest private equity firms, and Citigroup, shortly after Kushner held White House meetings with representatives from the two companies.

The paper quoted Don Fox, the former acting director of the Office of Government Ethics during the Obama administration, as saying the loans raised questions about the appearance of conflicts of interest.

Kushner met Joshua Harris, a founder of Apollo, multiple times over the course of 2017 and even discussed a potential White House position which never materialized, the paper said.

In November 2017, the firm loaned Kushner Companies $184 million – triple the size of its average property loan.

He also met Citigroup’s chief executive in the spring of 2017, Michael L. Corbat, shortly before Kushner Companies received a $325 million loan from the firm, the Times reported.—AFP

Trump stuns by embracing gun control as Florida students return to class

FLORIDA — President Donald Trump has surprised lawmakers by embracing gun control measures that are tougher than usually supported by his party, as students returned to the site of America’s latest horrific school shooting.

“We have to do something about it. We have to act,” Trump said, voicing support for expanded background checks, more secure schools, curbs on the ability of the mentally ill to buy firearms and raising to 21 the age for buying certain guns.

“We can’t wait and play games and nothing gets done,” Trump said at a meeting with lawmakers from both parties.

At one point, he turned to a Republican senator and said: “You’re afraid of the NRA,” referring to the National Rifle Association, the premier and powerful US gun lobby.

“He surprised me,” Democratic Senator Chris Murphy later told AFP. “He committed very forcefully and very clearly to a number of reforms. “Our company is a multi-billion enterprise that is extremely financially strong. Prior to our CEO voluntarily resigning to serve our country, we never had any type of inquiries.

“It’s pretty upsetting,” said the 14-year-old Miller. “But it’s all a little overwhelming.”

Likewise, for Kimberly Miller, the first day back meant confronting the absence of her geography teacher, 15-year-old Scott Beigel.

Beigel was one of three staff killed, along with 14 teenagers, when former student Nikolas Cruz entered the school on Valentine’s Day and opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle.

It’s pretty upsetting,” said the 14-year-old Miller. “But it was also refreshing to talk to everyone because people don’t really understand how it feels, no matter how much they try to understand.”

While there were few open displays of grief, many students looked somber, speaking in hushed tones with their eyes downcast.

Jonathan Abramchaev, 15, said it was “very emotional” to see his school again.

“Seeing all the flowers by the gate, that really hurt me,” he told AFP. “Today we were just discussing and talking out our feelings.”

“What happens when they go?”

Some said they felt reassured – if a little unsettled – by the heavy police presence.

“I’m not scared,” said Stone- man Douglas junior Sean Cum- mings. “I feel like it’s more protected than any other school at this point.”

“But it’s still weird to see everybody here and all these police officers,” said the 16-year-old.

Others – like senior Carly Novell – said they were nervous to return.

“I’m really scared to go in,” said Novell, who like many others wore a maroon T-shirt, the school colors.

Broward County school su- preintendent Robert Runcie said grief counselors were on hand for the day.

“We’re going to provide as much support as we can,” Runcie told CNN. “Students are excited. As a family, they’re going to pull through it.”

A 15-year-old named Alan said the shooting left him fearful – even with his school under close watch by police.

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LONDON— Fresh heavy snowfalls and icy blizzards were expected to lash Europe Thursday as deadly ice blast strands travelers across the continent.

In Paris, where up to 5cm of snow fell andSaint-Jean-de-Luz zoomed down streets of the beach resorts, authorities were also urging motorists who camp out near the coast hoping to stow away on trucks bound for Britain, to look out for elderly relatives and neighbors after a 75-year-old French hostage, Sophie Petronin, who had been abduction in northern Mali in late 2016.

Thick smoke rose from the centre of Ouagadougou as the attacks took place. PHOTO: AFP

Her kidnapping, hitherto unclaimed, was carried out by the “Support Group for Islam and Muslims.”

In the background, Macron’s voice is heard on a loop, saying “I will protect you.” — AFP

Europe braced for fresh blizzards as deadly ice blast strands travelers

A winter weather front from Siberia kept most parts of northern Europe below freezing Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

were to spend Wednesday night on the streets to protest the “denial of dignity” suffered by those without roofs over their heads.

And in the southern port of Calais, authorities were launching emergency plans to shelter migrants who camp out near the coast hoping to stow away on trucks bound for Britain.

Schools were shut across Kosovo, western Bosnia and much of Albania, as well as in parts of Britain, Italy and Portugal.

Temperatures again plunged below -20 Celsius (-4 Fahrenheit) overnight in numerous parts of Europe — even hitting -36C in Glattalp, 1,856 metres (6,000 feet) above sea level in the Swiss mountains.

Ahead of a predicted thaw towards the end of the week, both Belgium and Switzerland marked their coldest nights of the winter so far.

And in the south of France, motorists were stuck on icy roads as further flurries fell overnight.

The Herault area was placed on red alert after a “major” snowfall, while earlier Wednesday residents in Biarritz and Saint-Jean-de-Luz zoomed down streets of the beach resorts on skis. — AFP

Attacks target French embassy, military HQ in Burkina capital

OUGADOUOU — The capital of Burkina Faso came under multiple attacks on Friday which targeted the French embassy, the French cultural centre and the country’s military headquarters, an AFP reporter and witnesses said.

Witnesses said five armed men got out of a car and opened fire on passersby before heading towards the embassy in the centre of the city.

An AFP reporter heard heavy exchanges of gunfire and saw a blazing vehicle, which witnesses said was the car used by the assailants. Police and army units were deployed in the area.

Other witnesses said there was an explosion near the headquarters of the Burkina Armed forces and the French cultural centre, which are located about a kilometre (half a mile) from the site of the first attack.

There was no early information about any casualties.

The French embassy, on Facebook, initially said “attack under way at the French embassy and French Institute. Stay indoors.”

It later said: “Uncertain at this stage which places are targeted” but maintained its advice for people to stay indoors.

In Paris, President Emmanuel Macron’s office said the French leader was “being informed in real time” of the situation.

Deadly insurgency

Burkina Faso is one of a string of fragile countries on the southern rim of the Sahara that are battling jihadist groups.

The insurgency has caused thousands of deaths, prompted tens of thousands to flee their homes and dealt crippling blows to economies that are already among the poorest in the world.

On 13 August last year, two assailants opened fire on a restaurant in Ouagadougou’s main avenue, killing 19 people and wounded 21. The attack remains unclaimed.

On 15 January 2016, 30 people, including six Canadians and five Europeans, were killed in a jihadist attack on a hotel and restaurant in the city centre.

Responsibility was claimed by a group called Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

France, the former colonial power in the Sahel region, has deployed 4,000 troops and is supporting a five-country joint force gathering Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

The United Nations also has a 12,000-strong peacekeeping force in Mali called MINUSMA, which has taken heavy casualties. Four UN peacekeepers were killed by a mine blast on Wednesday in the centre of the country.

In a separate development on Friday, the specialist US website SITE, which monitors jihadist activity, said kidnappers had released a video of a 75-year-old French hostage, Sophie Petronin, who had been abducted in northern Mali in late 2016.

Petronin, who had been running an assistance helping Malian orphans, appears in poor health in the brief video.
Four aid workers killed in Boko Haram attack in Nigeria

KANO, NIGERIA — Four aid workers were killed in a Boko Haram attack in Rann, in northeast Nigeria, the UN said on Friday, killing at least one civilian and injuring nine just days after Afghanistan unveiled plans for Taliban peace talks, the interior ministry said.

Extensive damage to the facades of nearby houses could be seen with debris scattered on pavements as witnesses reported a strong explosion. Security forces rushed to the scene as passers-by helped move the wounded, with witnesses complaining to AFP that ambulances took around half an hour to arrive.

A horse was also badly injured in the blast and could be seen stumbling at the scene —its head, belly and legs burnt. No group immediately claimed the attack, which is the latest to hit Kabul this year. PHOTO: AFP

One killed as Kabul car bomb targets foreign forces

KABUL — A suicide car bomb targeting a foreign forces convoy rocked eastern Kabul Friday, killing at least one civilian and injuring nine just days after Afghanistan unveiled plans for Taliban peace talks, the interior ministry said.

The attack happened “after dark” outside a camp housing some 55,000 people displaced by the conflict and appeared to target the military, said UN spokesman Samantha New- port.

A civilian militia source in Rann, which is some 175 kilometres (110 miles) from the Borno state capital of Maiduguri, and a senior military source gave an identical death toll.

They also said eight soldiers were killed in the attack but there was no immediate official confirmation.

Newport said: “Four aid workers were killed, one aid worker was injured and one aid worker is missing, feared abducted. “Of the aid workers that were killed, two worked for the IOM (International Organization for Migration) in camp management; and one was a medical doctor working as a third party consultant for UNICEF,” the UN children’s agency, she said.

No details were immediate-

ly available for the fourth but Newport said the injured and missing were both women. All those involved were Nigerian, she added.

Boko Haram fighters killed nine people from the Rann internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in September last year as they worked on farms just outside the town.

In January last year, a boched Nigerian air strike intended to hit jihadist fighters killed at least 112 people as aid workers distributed food. Commanders at the time called the bombing a mistake and blamed “the fog of war”.

An air force board of inquiry later blamed “lack of appropriate marking of the area” for the bombardment and an unexpected gathering of people at the location. — AFP

Beijing praises relations with Moscow

BEIJING — Relations with Russia are an example of international cooperation, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying said at a briefing on Friday, commenting on the statements Russian President Vladimir Putin made concerning relations between Moscow and Beijing.

“Relations between China and Russia area an example of mutually beneficial bilateral contacts,” the Chinese diplomat said, adding that China’s authorities welcomed Putin’s statement about bilateral ties and were pleased to see Russia developing successfully.

“We are pleased to see that the situation in Russia has been constantly improving under Putin’s guidance,” Hua Chunying added.

According to her, the development of equal friendly relations between China and Russia, will positively affect global peace and stability.

In his March 1 State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly, Russian President Vladimir Putin pointed to the country’s success in developing a comprehensive strategic partnership with China.

The head of state noted that Russia also had privileged strategic ties with India. At the same time, in Putin’s words, Russia’s relations with many countries were about to gain a new momentum. — Task

24 dead in Azerbaijan drug rehab centre fire

BAKU — Twenty-four people died as a result of a fire which tore through a drug rehabilitation clinic in the Azerbaijani capital Baku early Friday, officials said.

“At 06:10 am a fire happened at the Republican Narcological Centre in Baku,” the General Prosecutor’s Office, the health, interior and emergencies ministries said in a joint statement.

“The bodies of 24 people have been found.”

The blaze tore through a one-storey wooden ward, the statement added. It cited a defect of the power grid as the initial cause of the blaze.

Earlier Friday Azerbaijan’s APA news agency reported that at least 30 people had perished in the blaze. It said the fire broke out in a ward for bed-ridden patients.

Firefighters and rescuers of the country’s emergencies ministry have extinguished the blaze and were investigating the causes. The ex-Soviet Caucasus nation has a history of large-scale casualties as a result of fires in residential buildings and elsewhere.

In May 2015, 15 people — including five minors — were killed by a fire in a multi-storey building in Baku.

In October 1995, 289 people died in a metro fire in Baku, in the world’s deadliest subway disaster that was caused by outdated Soviet equipment. — AFP
Declaration Against Violence

On 21st February 2018, a bomb was set off in downtown Lashio, killing two staff of Yoma Bank while injuring many others. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. In the wake of this atrocious act, we voice in unison our strongest condemnation of this barbaric act of violence, which threatens the peace and tranquility of Myanmar.

- A1 Construction Co., Ltd.
- ABC Convenience Stores
- Access Spectrum Co., Ltd.
- Akhuka
- Apollo Towers Myanmar Ltd.
- AYA Bank
- Beco
- Black Knight Media
- Bridging Capital
- CCI France Myanmar
- CDC Group
- Cisco Myanmar
- City Mart Holding Co., Ltd.
- Coca-Cola Myanmar
- Comin Asia
- Construction and Housing Development Bank
- Embassy of Canada, Yangon
- Embassy of Denmark, Yangon
- Embassy of Israel, Yangon
- Embassy of the United States
- First Private Bank
- First Myanmar Investment Co., Ltd. (FMI)
- FMIDecaux
- Frontier Myanmar
- Global Pharma
- Global Technology Group
- GRAB Myanmar
- Havas Riverorchid Co., Ltd.
- International Finance Corporation (IFC)
- Irrawaddy Green Towers
- JCB
- JJ-PUN
- KBZ Group of Companies
- Legrand
- Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT)
- McKinsey & Company
- METRO AG
- MGR Consulting Co., Ltd.
- MIBS
- MPT
- Myan Shwe Pyi Tractors Ltd.
- Myanmar Apex Bank
- Myanmar Awba Group
- Myanmar Banks Association (MBA)
- Myanmar Payment Union (MPU)
- Myanmar Strategic Holdings Ltd.
- Myanmar V-Pile Group of Companies
- Nexlabs
- NorFund
- Ooredoo
- Oracle Myanmar
- Organico World
- Oway
- Parami Energy Group of Companies
- Phibious Myanmar
- Pixel Directs
- PwC
- RMA Myanmar
- Shwe Printing
- SPA Group of Companies
- The Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels, Limited
- Thih Group
- Tin Htay International
- T-Star
- VMware, Inc.
- Xenon
- Yoma Bank
- Yoma Strategic Holdings
- Zware Group

#unitedagainstviolence
Veil lifts on Martin Margiela, fashion’s invisible man

PARIS — He is the “Greta Garbo of fashion”, a brilliant and reclusive genius who walked away from his own label when he became the most talked-about designer in the world.

Two new Paris exhibitions lift a little of the mystery that surrounds Martin Margiela, arguably the most influential designer of the last 30 years.

The Belgian blew away the sexed-up, money-obsessed extravagance of 1980s fashion by scandalously recutting second-hand clothes for the catwalk.

He turned a butcher’s apron into an evening gown, black leather gloves into a breathtaking corset dress and made a now iconic blouse from several pairs of white socks in his first Paris shows.

More revolutionary still, he turned clothes for the catwalk back into clothes for the street. He removed the pretension that clothes should ever go out of fashion.

They simply could be deconstructed and rethought again and again, he said.

While the big luxury brands were redoing each other in the decadence of their shows, Margiela staged his in an abandoned metro station, a Salvation Army hall, and most notoriously in 1989 on a piece of waste ground in one of Paris’ roughest districts.

Laughing local children pushed in beside critics in the front row and ran after his models down the bumpy “runway”, with some being lifted onto their shoulders.

“I started to cry” Raf Simons, the former Dior designer now leading Ralph Lauren, said that Margiela changed fashion forever that night in 17 seconds, “the bleak fairyland” Margiela had created was “so angelic and alien”, Simons said, that “I started to cry”. PHOTO: AFP

Margiela invented the oversized look in the 2000s, which is still one of fashion’s most dominant looks.

Organizers are looking to rebound after last year’s flubbed announcement of the best picture winner — the trophy was initially given to “La La Land,” when the actual winner was “Moonlight.”

“‘Titanic’ (1997) and “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King” (2003).—AFP

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Stage set for Oscars to mark year eclipsed by #MeToo

HOLLYWOOD — Hollywood’s awards season reaches its glittering climax on Sunday at the Oscars, with fairy tale romance “The Shape of Water” and dark crime comedy “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” neck-and-neck in the race for the major statuettes.

The ceremony caps a difficult few months during which the industry has declared war on the pervasive culture of sexual misconduct brought to light by the downfall of movie mogul and alleged serial sex attacker Harvey Weinstein.

As with the Golden Globes in January, the mood in Tinseltown on Sunday is expected to be celebratory but defiant as the film world’s A-listers speak out against decades of showbiz people called out for predatory behavior since October. Peter Debruge, the chief film critic for Hollywood trade publication Variety, told AFP he expected this year’s celebrations would place front and center an issue acknowledged for a long time as an “open secret” — but never before handled.

“This year, now that the case has blown open, it’s a totally different situation,” he told AFP of the Weinstein scandal, ahead of Sunday’s gala.

“I think we can expect jokes, we can expect political statements, we can expect any of the women who win to take that opportunity to kind of speak their minds.”

The 90th Academy Awards — hosted by late night funnyman Jimmy Kimmel — will be beamed live around the world by ABC from Hollywood’s Dolby Theatre.

With voting among the Academy’s 8,500 members closed since Tuesday, the frenzied and at times smarmy campaigning that perennially marks the awards merry-go-round can no longer impact the results.

Organizers are looking to rebound after last year’s flubbed announcement of the best picture winner — the trophy was initially given to “La La Land,” when the actual winner was “Moonlight.”


With the #MeToo and Time’s Up campaigns against sexual misconduct and gender inequality dominating the 2018 awards circuit, this year’s Oscars is seen as an opportunity for the industry to support female filmmaking.

Greta Gerwig is the fifth woman in Oscars history to be nominated for best director, while Richard Jenkins and Octavia Spencer are in the running for supporting actor and actress.

“The most beautiful thing which I’ve heard... is that the movie has healed someone emotionally or has given someone an emotional ointment for the soul,” Del Toro told AFP at a recent luncheon for Oscar nominees in Beverly Hills.

However, in a wide open race, it is expected to fall far short of the record 11 statuettes achieved by “Ben-Hur” (1959), “Titanic” (1997) and “The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King” (2003). —AFP
David Bowie exhibition comes home to New York

NEW YORK — A globe-trotting, crowd-packing exhibition exploring the many sides of David Bowie opens this weekend in its final venue of New York, also the last home of the late rock legend. “David Bowie is” — the show’s title keeps the answer ambiguous — presents Bowie not only as a rock pioneer but as a skilled actor, fashion icon, LGBT hero, inquisitive visual artist and even as a mime.

The exhibition, which opened five years ago at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, opens Friday at the Brooklyn Museum where it will close on 15 July.

Curators at the Victoria and Albert said that the exhibition has already drawn nearly 1.8 million visitors in the 11 cities where it has been presented including Barcelona, Berlin, Chicago, Melbourne, Paris, Tokyo, Toronto and Sao Paulo.

The trajectory of “David Bowie is” mirrors the path of the artist himself, who was born in London and settled in the early 1950s in New York, where he died in 2016 from a secret battle with cancer.

“When Bowie first visited New York in 1971 in his 20s he described it as a city like I fantasized over since by teens,” Tim Reeve, deputy director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, said at a preview.

“So it is fitting indeed that a place that David Bowie came to know as home should be the final stop on an incredible journey,” he said.

The Brooklyn Museum said it added some 100 objects to the exhibition to reflect Bowie’s time in the United States. They include a clip from his praised Broadway performance in “The Elephant Man,” collaborative drawings with the experimental artist Laurie Anderson and a section on his 1970s soul phase that took him to Philadelphia.

Visitors are guided by interactive headphones that play Bowie’s songs from his 1969 breakthrough “Space Oddity” to his last album “Blackstar,” interspersed with interviews and footage of Bowie.

Highlights include costumes designed for Bowie by Kansai Yamamoto and Freddie Burretti, including the spacey quilted suit that Bowie wore on his landmark 1972 performance on the BBC’s “Top of the Pops.”

The exhibition could become a major money-maker. The Brooklyn Museum is dropping its pay-as-you-wish admission for “David Bowie is,” requiring timed tickets that start at $20. Special tickets go up to $62.50 for a private, guided tour — a package that entertainment guide Time Out New York described as “perfect for, say, a visiting Russian oligarch.”—AFP

Land and fire: Chinese villagers celebrate pagan festival

LONGXIAN — Villagers in northern China wake up before dawn to paint their faces with pinkish make-up, don colourful vests and good weather. Now it is listed as an intangible cultural heritage in China, where local governments are making efforts to make more people participate and enjoy the activity. Government workers typically walk in front of the parade, leading it to new construction sites and shops as the art troupes perform blessing rituals.

But concerned villagers still worry about the fading of the tradition, saying the festival is getting shorter every year and the schedule is becoming increasingly unpredictable. “It’s not as lively as it used to be when I was young,” Chen Liping, a She Huo performer in her 40s, told AFP.

“I hope it can be as boisterous forever, so we can have new performances every year.”—AFP

‘Stolen works’ sentence of Picasso’s electrician overturned

NEW YORK — France’s highest appeal court has overturned the conviction of Pablo Picasso’s former electrician and his wife, who were given suspended sentences for keeping 271 of his works in their garage for four decades.

Pierre and Danielle Le Guennec were given two-year suspended jail sentences in 2015 for possession of stolen goods, in a case that made headlines worldwide. A higher court upheld the verdict in 2016 but the Cour de Cassation, in a ruling seen by AFP Thursday, overturned it. Ruling there was insufficient evidence that “the goods held by the suspects had been stolen” the court ordered a retrial. The couple’s lawyer Antoine Vey hailed the ruling.

“It’s a great decision which reinforces the line that Le Guenneces have always upheld — that there was no theft whatsoever.” The retrial will offer them “a huge opportunity to finally establish the truth”, Vey said. The collection, whose value has not been assessed, includes drawings of women and horses, nine rare Cubist collages from the time Picasso was working with fellow French artist Georges Braque and a work from his famous “blue period”.

At his original trial Le Guennec, who is in his late seventies, claimed that Picasso had presented him with the artworks towards the end of his life to reward him for his loyal service.

But he later changed his account, telling the appeal court that the works were part of a huge trove of art that Picasso’s widow Jacqueline asked him to conceal after the artist’s death in 1973.

Le Guennec said he stored more than a dozen garbage bags of unsigned works which Jacqueline later retrieved, except for one which she left him saying “Keep this, it’s for you.”

The affair came to light when Pierre Le Guennec attempted to get the works authenticated by Picasso’s son Claude Ruiz-Picasso in 2010.

The artist’s heirs promptly filed a complaint against him, triggering an investigation.—AFP

PHOTO:  AFP
Myanmar U-15 footballers picked to compete in Hong Kong tourney

FORTY-SEVEN talented young players were recently chosen to be part of the Myanmar U-15 national team, it was announced at the National Football Academy yesterday, according to a statement from the Myanmar Football Federation.

Football officials had already selected some players for the U-15 team from different States and Regions last month.

The most recent additions to the U-15 team were mainly from the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) and three different football academies including the Tatmadaw Football Academy. The young players are being trained in their respective camps. The aim of assembling players for a Myanmar U-15 national football team is to compete in the Jockey Club International Youth Football Invitational Tournament that will be held in Hong Kong starting from 23 March, said an official from Myanmar Football Federation.

It would be the very first time for a Myanmar youth team to compete in that kind of football tournament, an official added.

The selection of players will continue today.—Kyaw Zin Lin

More woe for Wenger as Man City cruise past Arsenal again

MANCHESTER — Beleaguered Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger called on his players to show they can meet the club’s standards after a second humbling 3-0 defeat at the hands of Manchester City in five days on Thursday. City moved 16 points clear at the top of the Premier League as fresh from claiming their first silverware of the Pep Guardiola era in the League Cup final on Sunday, the visitors scored three times in the opening 33 minutes as Arsenal disintegrated once more in front of a sparse crowd at the Emirates.

Bernardo Silva, David Silva and Leroy Sane were on target to inflict a third straight defeat on Arsenal and leave them 10 points adrift of the Premier League top four in sixth place.

And a night to forget for the Gunners was complete when £56 million ($79 million) club record signing Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang saw his second-half penalty saved by Ederson.

“You go up by stairs and come down by the lift, that is what happens with confidence,” said Wenger. “We have to show we have the level to be at Arsenal football club.” However, the Frenchman again refused to accept it is inevitable that his 22-year stay as boss is coming to a sad end. “I am confident that nothing is permanent in life,” added Wenger. “It is down to how you respond and the focus and effort you show to turn things around.” Sub-zero temperatures and the apathy caused by Arsenal’s display at Wembley on Sunday saw thousands of seats go unoccupied at the Emirates. The lines around the pitch were painted blue ahead of kick-off in case an expected snow shower covered the field.

Unfortunately for the home fans that did brave the cold, that was the only novelty on a night of familiar failings from Wenger’s men, who have now lost seven times in 12 games this year.

“Do you want the fans to be happy when you are 3-0 down? I am surprised you are surprised,” continued Wenger. “It was combination of the weather conditions and the fact we had a big disappointment on Sunday.”—AFP

U Myo Hlaing Win named head coach of Myanmar U-19 team

U Myo Hlaing Win, a former star player for Myanmar, was named a head coach for the Myanmar U-19 national football team on Wednesday, according to a statement from the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) on their website. He was assigned as a head coach of the U-19 Myanmar national football team at the headquarters of the MFF in front of MFF officials. His contract begins immediately, starting from 1st March, and will extend until December 2019. U Myo Hlaing Win acted as a manager for Nay Pyi Taw FC, one of the former Myanmar National League football teams. U Myo Hlaing Win was an Myanmar footballer with international experience. As a forward, he was the top goal scorer at the 1998 Tiger Cup. He was also a member of the silver medal-winning Myanmar team at the 1993 Southeast Asian Games in Singapore. “It is very good to hear that Myo Hlaing Win will be heading the U-19 Myanmar National football team, and we are hoping for a gold medal in every competition that includes Myanmar.” said U Phoe Sein, 75, a Myanmar football fan from Yangon. —Kyaw Zin Lin