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President, First Lady and State Counsellor attend consecration ceremony of Taungsuya 'Wa' Zedi



A congregation led by President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receive the Nine Precepts from Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadaja Bhaddanta Vimala Bhuddi of Pynmana Mingalar Zeyone Pali Takkatho monastery yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A CONSECRATION and golden umbrella hoisting ceremony of Taungsuya 'Wa' Zedi Naungdaw Pagoda was held on the platform of the pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw Zabuthiri Township yesterday morning. The ceremony was attended by President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Sanghas led by Pynmana Mingalar Zeyone Pali Takkatho monastery patron Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadaja Bhaddanta Vimala Bhuddi graced the event while Vice President U Myint Swe

and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr. Shwe Hlwan, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and wife Daw Yin May, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and wife Dr. Sein Sein Thein, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and wife, Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for Office of the Union Government U Min Thu and wife, Yangon Region Chief

Minister U Phyo Min Thein and wife, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Kyi Min, Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General and officials were also in attendance.

Before the ceremony commenced, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi paid homage to the Buddha image in the temporary pandal with 'soon,' water, flower and oil lamps. Next, invited guests chanted "Namotasa" three times to start the consecration and golden umbrella hoisting ceremony. The congregation took the Nine Precepts from the

Nay Pyi Taw Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Tatkon Shwe Inn Yeiktha Pariyatti Sathintaik Sayadaw Agga Maha Ganda Vasaka Pandita Bhaddanta Pyinnya Thami and offered paritta water, thread and sand to the Sayadaws and sanghas.

After listening to the chanting of parittas by the Sayadaws and sanghas, the invited guests and devotees sprinkled paritta water and sand and tied the paritta thread around the pagoda.

Next, President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice President U Myint

Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than's wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and wife Dr. Sein Sein Thein, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and wife, Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe from the Office of the State Counsellor, Union Minister for Office of the Union Government U Min Thu and wife, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and wife offered the pagoda's diamond bud,

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Sanghas from 12 countries, people conduct New Year Eve prayer ceremony in Bangkok

A New Year Eve prayer ceremony participated by Sanghas and Buddhists from 12 countries started on 11 p.m. 31 December in Sanam Luang, Bangkok, Thailand.

The prayer ceremony was attended by 16 Sayadaws from Myanmar, led by State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa, Tipitaka Sayadaws, State/Region Sangha Nayaka Sayadaws totaling 31 Sanghas

and 26 laypersons led by Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko along with Sayadaws from 12 countries, Thailand minister for culture and officials.

The New Year's Eve Chanting & Meditation for Happiness in 2019 was held in Sanam Luang Pavilion, Thailand by Sanghas and Buddhists from 12 countries.—MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)



New Year's Eve Prayer ceremony held by Sanghas and buddhists in Bangkok, Thailand on 31 December 2018.
PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister for Education takes part in rubbish collection in Yangon

RUBBISH collection organized by Rector, Pro Rectors, faculty members of the University of Yangon and students was launched yesterday morning at the zero milepost of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in Yangon.

Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi said that he was much obliged to you for participating in the rubbish collection together with other participants. He added that we could keep our environment clean by doing regular rubbish pick-up. Moreover they could be recorded as prestigious students and citizens for our country who served the welfare and interests of the country through cooperation.

Union Minister for Educa-

tion Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Director-General of the Department of Higher Education Dr. Thein Win, Rector of the University of Yangon Dr. Pho Kaung, Pro Rectors, teachers from private schools, students from Yangon University and Yangon University of Economics took part in the rubbish collection by dividing into four groups at the zero milepost of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in Yangon.— MNA ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko ung)

Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi collecting rubbish together with participants on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in Yangon.

PHOTO: MNA



UCSB Chairman attends 54th anniversary of CICS, ceremony for paper reading (Lower Myanmar)



54th anniversary of Central Institute of Civil Service (CICS) and paper reading session held in Yangon.

PHOTO: MNA

THE 54th anniversary of Central Institute of Civil Service (CICS) in Lower Myanmar was held at the Yadana Theinga Hall of the Central Institute of Civil Service

(Lower Myanmar) in Yangon yesterday morning.

Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board Dr. Win Thein, Permanent Secretary, faculty

members of the universities, external academicians, invited guests, rector of the CICS (Upper Myanmar), government officials and civil servants were

attended the paper reading session.

At the paper reading session, Myanmar Maritime University Rector (Rtd.) Dr. Charlie Than read the paper titled, "Quality Assurance and Public Service Institutions", Yangon University of Foreign Languages Pro Rector Dr. Yin Myo Thu read the paper titled, "Primary of Universal Norms over Particular Norms in International Relations", Professor and Head of Psychology Department of the Yangon University Dr. Nilar Kyu read the paper titled, "Domestic Violence in Myanmar", Professor and Head of Philosophy Department of the University of Yangon Dr. Lei Lei Win read the paper titled, "The Role of Myanmar Poems in Environmental Aesthetic", Head of the CICS (Lower Myanmar) and Pro Rector (Teaching) Dr. Nant Khin Thin Su read the paper titled,

"An Analysis of the capacity development of faculty members from CICS (Lower Myanmar)", Head of Administration and Finance Department U Tin Shwe read the paper titled, "Administrative Reforms", Public Administration Department Associate Professor U Than Myint Htay read the paper titled, "Old Public Administration to New Public Management", and Associate Professor of the Department of Economics Daw Min Min San read the paper titled, "Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018-2030) and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Myanmar".

The paper reading session was being taken place with the aim of enhancing teaching qualities and techniques of the lecturers, and which will be held until 3rd January. — MNA ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

“ ‘Race’ is a collective noun applied to those who have lived through good times as well as bad together for long years, and who have accepted that they have a common destiny. It is a name given to a group of people who believe in their distinct, common identity. Although due consideration should be given to race, religion and language, a true patriotic spirit depends on a traditional desire to live together through weal or woe.”

(Excerpt from the speech given by General Aung San on the middle terrace of the Shwedagon Pagoda on 20th August, 1946)



Myanmar traditional Htamane festival in Tabodwe month. PHOTO: HTAY LWIN (AMARAPURA)

President, First Lady and State Counsellor attend consecration...



President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho offer pagoda's diamond bud to Sayadaw at the consecration ceremony of Taungsuya 'Wa' Zedi yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sprinkles scented water on the religious objects to be hoisted atop Taungsuya 'Wa' Zedi at the consecration ceremony pagoda. PHOTO: MNA

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vane and offerings to the Sayadaws and sanghas and then listened to the sermon given by Pyinmana Mingalar Zeyone Pali Takkatho monastery Sayadaw and shared merits.

Afterwards President U Win Myint, First Lady

Daw Cho Cho, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and officials carried the diamond bud, vane, parts of golden umbrellas and golden bells in a clockwise direction around the pagoda.

Pyinmana Mingalar Zeyone Pali Takkatho

monastery patron Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadaja Bhaddanta Vimala Bhuddi, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay and invit-

ed guests put the golden umbrella parts, vane and diamond bud onto the ceremonial chariot and at the designated auspicious time hoisted it all on top of the pagoda in accordance with tradition. Other parts of the pagoda were also hoisted on top of the pagoda.

Later, a consecration ceremony of the pagoda was held by sanghas led by Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadaza Bhaddanta Vimala Bhuddi. After this, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presi-

dent U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr. Shwe Hlwan and the congregation offered 'soon' (a day meal) to Sayadaws and sanghas.

— MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



President U Win Myint and officials recite religious verses after the fixed the Diamond Bud atop Taungsuya 'Wa' Zedi yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay convey religious objects at the consecration ceremony of Taungsuya 'Wa' Zedi yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

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

Visitors flock to Inle Lake for New Year holidays

DURING the New Year holidays, a large number of local visitors and tourists visited the Inle Lake in Nyaungshwe Township.

Some tourists drove to Inle Lake through the Maing Thauk Bridge, some entered the lake through the Nampan market, while others arrived at the lake from the Khaung Daing nature hot spring.

While some locals vacationed on the lake with their friends, families, and colleagues, some visitors opted for inbound tours arranged by travel companies. The higher number of visitors this year led to difficulty in renting of motor boats.

Tourist attractions at Inle Lake include the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the Alodaw Pauk



Inle Lake attracts numbers of visitors during New Year holidays. **PHOTO: SAI AEBE (NYAUNGSHWE)**

Pagoda in Nampan Village, workshops of silversmiths and traditional handlooms,

the Shwe Indein Pagoda, the Maing Thauk Bridge, and the Khaung Daing hot spring. —

Sai Aebe (Nyaungshwe) ■
(Translated by
Ei Myat Mon)

Two men arrested in robbery of Taiwanese man in Thingangyun



Thant Zin Oo, Thae Maung Zaw. **PHOTO: MPF**

POLICE has arrested two men yesterday after a Taiwanese man was robbed at his home in Thingangyun Township on

29 December, 2018.

It happened about 11:10 am at the Taiwanese man's home.

According to police, Thant Zin Oo, 26, a friend of the victim, phoned the victim asking if he was at his home about 9 am on 29 December, 2018, while he was at the airport.

When the victim arrived back home at 10:50 am, he phoned the suspect, and 20 minutes later, Thant Zin Oo and another suspect arrived his home.

The two suspects tied his hands and foots of the victim with wires, covered his mouth with a shawl, took him into a back room and beat him, demanding cash.

The two men took away K2million and one Huawei mobile phone.

The victim opened a case in Thingangyun Myoma Police Station.

Police force conducted an investigation and found out that Thae Maung Zaw @ Thae Maung Htwe @ A Nge Kaung, 24-year old suspect, was staying with his relatives in Panekan Village in Kayan Township. He was arrested at the village on the evening of 31 December 2018. Thant Zin Oo @ Kadone was arrested by the police next day while he was hiding in a motel in Bayintnaung market.

Action is being taken against the two suspects according to the law and the robbed money and phone was also seized. —MNA

Couple arrested on drug charges in Natogyi

ACTING on a tip-off, police arrested a married couple in Ward-2, Natogyi Township, Myingyan District, Mandalay Region, on charges of drug dealing early on yesterday morning.

According to the police, 19-year-old Zaw Ye Htut and his wife, Win Theingi, were arrested at 1:45 am on 1 January, while they were travelling to the area where they sold drugs. The police found 105 yaba tablets from them. Zaw Ye Htut had hid-

den some drugs inside his clothes and the rest were found in his bedroom.

The couple has been charged with drug dealing, in violation of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

The police are continuing their investigation to nab those connected with the drug trafficking case.—
Than Aung Zaw ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Fire destroy 17 houses in Mandalay

A FIRE broke out at a houses in Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay Region on Monday evening after a mosquito coil was left unattended near a mattress, said police. The blaze gutted 17 neighbouring houses, but there were no casualties.

Around 6:17 pm on 31 December, a bedroom at Daw Nge's home between 57th x 58th streets and Khata and Than streets, Kanthaya Ward, caught fire after a mosquito coil was left unattended. The blaze spread quickly to 17 neighbouring homes, with total damage estimated at K6.9 million.

The fire brigade was called in at 6:20 pm. About 200 firefighters used 35 fire engines and 40,000 gallons of water and brought the fire under control by 6:40 pm.

The fire damaged furniture worth K1.7 million and left 48 residents, 22 women and 26 men, homeless. The residents have taken shelter at a Buddhist monastery. The township police have filed a case of negligence against Daw Nge under Section 285 of the Penal Code.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)■

(Translated by
Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Companies will have to pay for re-registration after deadline: DICA

By Nyein Nyein

COMPANIES which fail to re-register on the online registry system, MyCO, by 31 January will have to pay a fee to get their names restored to the list, said the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Starting 1 August, all new and existing companies in Myanmar are required to register or re-register themselves either on the Myanmar Companies Online (MyCO) system or at the offices

of the DICA.

According to a notification from DICA, companies which fail to re-register within the set period will be struck off the list.

"Companies will be notified and if they do not respond, they will be struck off the list. Thereafter, those who want to restore their corporate status will have to shell out a fee," said U Than Aung Kyaw, the Deputy Director-general of the DICA.

As per Chapter III of the notification (66/2018) issued by the Ministry of Planning and

Finance on 23 July 2018, if an existing company fails to re-register on the electronic registry system within the deadline, the registrar may strike its name off the register and publish a notice in the Gazette. Once the notice is published, the company will be dissolved, while the liability of the directors and the members of the company shall continue to be enforced.

Under Section (d) of Chapter III, a registrar may restore an existing company or corporate body which has failed to re-regis-

ter, if it provides sufficient cause before its name is struck off the register. Such companies will be restored after they shell out a fee, which will be prescribed by the Union Minister.

At present, over 41,000 companies, including new companies, have registered and re-registered on MyCO. "Over 60,000 companies were previously registered in Myanmar, according to data with the DICA. We have given enough time to companies to re-register on MyCO," said U Than Aung Kyaw.

"Some businesspersons previously owned several companies, but now they wanted to downsize the number of their companies and, thus to keep only operational companies and becoming to re-register," he said.

The Myanmar Companies Law 2017 makes no distinction between local and foreign companies. "As a result, the form of investment can be classified only after companies file their annual returns," said U Myo Min, the Director of the DICA. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



A worker assembles a Ford in a factory in East Dagon Myothit, Yangon. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Manufacturing sector sees FDIs of \$100 mln in Oct-Nov

THE manufacturing sector attracted foreign direct investments of US\$100 million through 20 projects in the October-November period, according to data provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The manufacturing sector accounts for over 80 per cent of the total investments in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

The total FDI inflows in Myanmar for the October-November period stood at \$465.9 million, including funds for expansion of capital. The Myanmar Investment Commission

(MIC) and state and regional investment committees permitted 34 enterprises to invest in the country.

Among other sectors, the agriculture sector attracted three foreign investment projects with a capital of \$10.62 million. The livestock and fisheries sector saw three foreign investment projects worth \$19.56 million. In the transport and communication sector, one project brought in an investment of \$171.79 million. The hotels and tourism sector attracted one foreign project worth \$4.37 million. FDIs worth over \$149.29 million were pumped into other services.

The MIC had set a \$3-billion target for FDIs in the interim budget period from April to September. However, only \$1.76 billion in FDIs flowed into the country during that period.

The MIC is targeting FDIs of \$5.8 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, said U Than Aung Kyaw, the Deputy Director General of the DICA.

Singapore currently ranks as the largest investor in the country, followed by China and Thailand. Myanmar's total FDI was registered at \$5.7 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, \$6.6 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, and \$9.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY.—GNLM ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar-Viet Nam trade increases 3% in October

MYANMAR'S bilateral trade with Viet Nam topped US\$57.5 million in October, an increase of almost \$1.8 million, or 3.2 per cent, compared with the same period in the previous fiscal year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Compared with October 2017, exports rose by over \$6.7 million, while imports declined by \$4.8 million.

The bilateral trade between the countries stood at \$55.7 million in October 2017, with imports of \$50.48 million and exports worth \$5.24 million.

Myanmar is making efforts to boost bilateral trade and investment with Viet Nam. It primarily exports minerals, and agricultural, forest, and marine products to Viet Nam and imports food, auto parts, computer and related accessories, construction materials, steel, plastics, pharmaceuticals, and other chemical products.

During the 2018 mini-budget period, the bilateral trade between the countries totalled \$426 million, an increase of \$48.7 million from

the corresponding period of the previous year.

According to the Commerce Ministry, Myanmar-Viet Nam trade exceeded \$710 million in the 2017-2018 FY, the highest figure in seven years since the 2011-2012 FY.

According to data from the ministry, trade between the two ASEAN member states totalled \$494 million in the 2016-2017FY, \$346 million in the 2015-2016FY, \$321 million in the 2014-2015FY, \$281 million in the 2013-2014FY, \$155 million in the 2012-2013FY, and \$143 million in the 2011-2012FY.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Viet Nam made new investments of nearly \$10.5 million in Myanmar in the current fiscal year. Its investments in Myanmar during the mini-budget period exceeded \$50 million from three projects. Viet Nam's investments in the country totalled \$20.8 million in the 2017-2018 FY.—Swe Nyein ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

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Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye supports home for the aged, youngsters in Kawthoung

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye provided cash supports totaling K310,000 and blankets to elderlies in Kawthoung Home for The Aged as well as a separate cash support to a 104 years old woman yesterday morning.

Next the Union Minister went to Shwe Taung Oo Welfare Home in Maliwon Village and provided cash supports, nutrient powder and toys for

youngsters and children.

The Welfare Home is caring for 295 parentless children and youngster as young as month old and the Union Minister discussed with Welfare Home Sayadaw Bhaddanta Eidathaya on providing systematic childcare with full rights for the children through cooperating with the government and other civil society organisations. — MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye provides cash assistance to 104 years old woman in Kawthoung yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Rakhine State Chief Minister convoy attacked with remote controlled mines

A convoy carrying Rakhine State Chief Minister was attacked with remote controlled mines on Yangon-Sittway road yesterday afternoon but no one

was hurt.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and party conducted regional development field works and was return-

ing to Sittway from Kyaukpyu Township. At about 4:30 p.m. the convoy reached the approach pavement of bridge 1/106 between Nankya and Paungtote

villages near Mrauk-U on the Yangon-Minbu-An-Sittway road when three remotely controlled improvised explosive devices (IEDs) went off simultaneously.

No one was hurt from the explosion but a windshield of a car and a side glass of another car were shattered.— MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Three remote mines attack occurred near Mrauk-U on Yangon-Minbu-An-Sittway road yesterday, targeting of the Rakhine State Chief Minister's convoy. **PHOTO: MNA**

Meiktila hiking team to scale Mt. Phonekan Razi in Putao

A HIKING and mountaineering team from Meiktila is planning to climb the 11,920-foot snow-capped Mount Phonekan Razi in Putao after scaling the East-

and-west-side-viewing Mountain in Ywangan Township and the Mae Nae mountain in Hopong Township.

The team will climb the

East-and-west-side-viewing mountain, measuring 7,752-feet in height, on 5 January. They will head to the 8,000-foot Lwemile Mountain in the Mae Nae mountain region of Hopong Township in February.

The two trips will be sponsored by the United Pharma Company. The trip to Mount Phonekan Razi will also be sponsored. The team will suspend hikes during the summer.

In keeping with their slogans, 'love natural environment' and 'don't throw any litter', the team's members have been bringing back their trash from each hiking trip.

They have also restricted intake of alcohol and barred drugs. Those who violate the restrictions face permanent dismissal. Doctors on the team are also providing free medical treatment to locals along the hiking trail. The team is also donating money and necessities to locals.

The Meiktila hiking and mountaineering team has over 1,000 members. About 160 members take part in each trip. In 2018, the team hiked Mount Popa, Mount Hasin, Mount Myinmahti, Mount Pyatkayay, and Mount Sein Kanaut Mya Kanaut.—Chan Tha (Meiktila) ■

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Mountaineering team from Meiktila is planning to climb the Mount Phonekanrazi in Putao. **PHOTO: CHAN THA (MEIKTILA)**

Drugs seized in Maungtaw

AUTHORITIES conducted a search at a house in Maungtaw Town on 1 January and seized drugs worth K 19,400,000.

Police found 9,700 Yaba tablets, weighing 970 grams, hidden under the floor of a house belonging to Mohamar Reehar, also known as Lay Shue and Zaw Zaw and charged him under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— That Lwin Soe (IPRD)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Three-day New Year Dhamma ceremony begins in Yangon

NEW YEAR Dhamma ceremony organized by the Yangon Region Government kicked off yesterday at the People's Park, attracting over 120,000 people.

At the first day of the ceremony, Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa delivered a sermon titled "What we should donate".

In the three-day Dhamma ceremony, Rector Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Nandamalar Bhivamsa will deliver a sermon on 2nd January and Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Nannisara on 3rd January.

Among the congregation were Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and wife, Speaker of Yangon Region



Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa delivers a sermon to Buddhist devotees at the New Year Dhamma Ceremony in Yangon. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**

Hluttaw U Tin Maung Tun, Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint, members of the Yangon Region Cabinet and MPs.

"After taking office, Yangon

Region Government decided to hold New Year Dhamma ceremonies for the people so that they can live in accordance with the teachings of the Sayadaws,"

said U Shein Win, Chairman of the committee for holding the Dhamma ceremony.

Yangon Region Government has provided free ferry services

to the people from townships in the region.

About 160,000 people gathered at the ceremony every night last year. —Ye Khaung, Zaw Gyi

Visitors throng to renown places in Hpa-an during New Year holidays



People visit Bayin Nyi Naung Cave during New Year holidays in Hpa-an, Kayin State.

PHOTO: SAW MYO MIN THEIN (IPRD)

DURING the four days New Year holiday visitors and pilgrims are thronging to well-known places in Hpa-an like Bayin Nyi Naung (Twin King Brothers) Cave, Kawgun Cave, Yathaypyan (flying hermit) Cave, Bat Cave, Sadan Cave and Shwe Yi Myaw Pagoda.

Of those visitors Ma Nwe Ni Oo from Myanmar Economic Corporation No. 3 Steel Factory, Yangon said that on Saturday and Sunday she generated side income by teaching tuition. Her holiday journey starts on the evening of 30th. She stay at Kyaiktiyo (Golden Rock) Pagoda for a day and travel to Hpa-an. In Hpa-an she visited Kawgun Cave, Bayin Nyi Naung Cave, Yathaypyan Cave and the will go on to Zwegabin resort at the foot of the Mount Zwegabin. "One unique thing is riding a boat in-

side the Yathaypyan Cave. It was an experience beyond word can describe," said Ma Nwe Ni Oo.

"To be on a trip at the start of the year is a big relief after being stressed in the work. By doing this trip I think I can do more when I'm back at work," added Ma Nwe Ni Oo.

Due to good road networks Hpa-an to Yangon 275 km can be completed in 5 hours and 25 minutes. To Nay Pyi Taw is 475 km that can be completed in 7 hours and 7 minutes. Mandalay is 733 km, a 10 hours 5 minutes journey while Patheingyi, Bago and Mawlamyine are 464 km, 208 km and 56 km that are 9 hours 27 minutes, 3 hours 51 minutes and an hour and 15 minutes trip respectively. As such local and foreign visitors came to observe the culture and traditions of ethnic Kayin

nationals while Kayin dresses, utensils and souvenirs are easily available everywhere.

Similarly, Daw Kyawt Yin Oo from Ahlon Township Court was on a pilgrimage tour with her family along Yangon-Myawady route. "I felt light and free of stress from work during this four-day tour," said she.

A farmer and a lottery ticket seller from Bilin said, "I'm on a pilgrimage to pagodas and religious sites in Hpa-an. I saw a lot of people and cars. I'm very happy and contented. I also gain merits."

Local and foreign visitors are visiting well-known place in Hpa-an and there are more visitors during long holidays said a monk residing in Bayin Nyi Naung Cave. —Saw Myo Min Thein (IPRD)■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

KKO (breakaway) faction attacks Tatmadaw administrative column

A TATMADAW column conducting administrative works in Maethawaw area about 5,000 meters northwest of Shan Ywathit village in Kayin State came under attack by about 3 armed personnel in camouflage uniform from KKO (breakaway) faction yesterday afternoon. After shots were exchanged the attackers withdrew towards the north.

After the fighting, the Tat-

madaw troops discovered one M-16 assault rifle and accessories hidden in a tent at a small hill about 500 meters from where the incidence occurred. The banana leaves-roofed tent was used by the attackers as a temporary base, according to news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. —MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Over 1 kilo of Heroin confiscated in Kutkai Township, Shan State

A LOCAL anti-drug squad confiscated heroin weighing 1.936 kilo from a car in a search in Muse on 31 December.

The combined team comprising of members of Anti-Drug Squad-22 and local police found a car on Kutkai-Kawngka road.

While the authorities signaled a vehicle TOYOTA Mark II to stop for inspection on Kutkai-Kawngka road in No. 8

ward, Kuatkai Town at 4:15 am on 31 December, the car driver stopped the car and ran away.

The police discovered 1.936 kilo of heroin filled in 176 soap boxes.

Police have filed charges against the driver under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — GNLM ■

(Translated by JT)

Border guard police attacked in Buthidaung

A troops of border police was attacked by unidentified armed group in Buthidaung yesterday. The attack left one police critically injured.

The police was under attack while they were camping at a monastery in Saytaung Village temporarily in the township while they were carried out for the rule of law.

They were attacked by a force of about 30 men with small and heavy arms. The attack last about about ten minutes.

No villagers were hurt in the fighting due to the systematic command and control of the police force, according to news released by the Police Force. — MNA ■

(Translated by Myat Thandar)

Shaping our own destiny

MYANMAR regained her independence and sovereignty on the 4th of January, 1948. This year will mark the 71st anniversary of our independence.

Our people lived in grandeur for millennia before the country was colonized late in the 19th century, when colonialism had the world under its grip.

The people of Myanmar fought hard against colonial rule and took great risks to regain independence. Independence Day serves as a reminder of our struggle and highlights the need for preserving our independence.

No discussion on freedom can be complete without exploring the role of Bogoyoke Aung San, the architect of Myanmar's independence. His observations on Myanmar's future have proved to be farsighted.

Bogoyoke Aung San believed one must work hard for independence and that freedom cannot be achieved by relying on others. One is a master of one's own destiny.

To end British rule, Myanmar sought help from and fell under the control of fascists. The people fought hard against the fascists and the colonialists before taking the political route to push for their demand for independence from the British.

Thus, in the fight for freedom, the people of Myanmar ended up shaping their own destiny under the leadership of Bogoyoke Aung San.

Just before the country was granted independence, he told the people that they would have to make strenuous efforts for 20 years for rehabilitation and they would have to work hard to catch up with other countries in a 10-20 year span.

After independence, Myanmar managed to rub shoulders with other countries as it shaped her own destiny. But, later, due to lack of unity and a downturn in the economy, a sense of inferiority began to manifest in the country.

Today, Myanmar is shaping her destiny once again to build a federal democratic nation which guarantees equal rights to all people. The country is working to transition into a democracy, where all citizens enjoy freedom, equality, and justice.

To achieve success in this endeavor, the people of Myanmar must work together for socio-economic development. They must also ensure people of all nationalities feel secure in the country and that everyone's basic needs are met. The destiny of our country indeed depends on our people.

The Architect of Sovereignty, and Myanmar's First Independence Day

An Interview with veteran journalist Hanthawaddy U Ohn Kyaing
Written by Ye Gaung Nyunt and Nandar Win
PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG



Hanthawaddy U Ohn Kyaing.

Question: Please tell us about Bogoyoke Aung San and his wisdom as seen by a veteran journalist.

Answer: Without Bogoyoke Aung San, the country would not have had to gain independence, and may remain in servitude. He was born in this country to liberate the nation. Even in all simple living and way of life, he was selfless. What he wanted was just for the country, and I knew that because I was with him very closely for many years.

At that time, I was twenty years and Bogoyoke Aung San was twenty seven, a gap of seven years. He was a straightforward and candid speaker, but very soft and gentle communications in relationship and in personal dealing. Despite, I was very junior to him; he talked to me in esteemed manner, and that was why we loved him and respect him.

Everything is working for Independence

Always worked in openness, he has no secret agenda at all, telling us the work schedules. For us, it was convenient and smooth in writing news for the papers accurately, and all the information was instrumental for the independence.

Shooting and killing case that occurred at Htantabin Township of Insein District was very much shocking and that most brutal incident committed by the lackeys of the colonialists. In the bizarre

shooting, many farmers of the People's Yebaw Organization were killed and many sustained injuries.

Bogoyoke Aung San personally graced the funeral ceremony in Htantabin, where thousands of people from Yangon, Kyimyindine, Kamayut and Insein joined together. The tragic event might have happened in March of 1946 and the funeral ceremony was joined by the peasants and farmers from Hmawbi, Shwe Hlay Gyi, Einclon Kyun, Bawlei Kyun, and that the traditional and religious rites were carried out at Mya Thein Tan Monastery of Htantabin Township.

A stage was set for Bogoyoke to deliver a speech, where the audience was full. A very small boat of six seats was arranged for Bogoyoke Aung San in crossing the river, where I and Thandawsint Newspaper reporter Ko Aye Myint were allowed to join by Bogoyoke himself. In post-Independence era, Ko Aye Myint joined the Myanmar movie world in the name of Pyidaungsu Kyaw Naing.

There Bogoyoke delivered a historical speech; and unfortunately, this episode was not seen in documents and memoirs. He said that we would not achieve independence through begging, instead, we need to fight back for liberty, and therefore, prepare to mobilize the arms and ammunition. Ko Aye Myint and I covered the news and shared with other newspapers. At that time, there were many newspapers in Yangon.

Two days later, the British Governor invited Bogoyoke Aung San and offered the post of Deputy Chairman of Burma's Executive Council, which Bogoyoke accepted and became a member in the government. He was appointed deputy chairman of Burma's Executive Council in late 1946, a position which still remained subject to the British governor's veto.

Discussions about the future

In the early part of 1947, Bogoyoke Aung San received an invitation letter from England for discussions on the future of Myanmar, and subsequently, he left for England on 9 January 1947. At that time, he had no warm outfits for cold weather, and Mr Jawaharlal Nehru from India provided warm clothes. On 27 January 1947,



Bogoyoke Aung San signed Aung San - Atlee agreement with the British Prime Minister Clement Atlee that envisioned Myanmar becoming independent within one year. With that agreement, Myanmar regained independence.

Looking back to the time immediately after independence, Myanmar was better placed than Thailand and Singapore to lead South East Asia. But, the splitting up of the AFPFL, followed by the military regime, hurt development, and its impact can still be felt, even today.

Bogoyoke worked in detailed plan for the independence, and called a Hluttaw to draft a constitution, and subsequently held election, where AFPFL won in the polls.

I would like to say something about the polling. Bogoyoke Aung San asked his team to put up his portrait on the ballot box with white star on red paper. He also sought votes from the public and promised in getting independence at the earliest, and advised not to vote for opportunists. The AFPFL won votes in majority, and the communist party stood second, and three and four independent candidates were seen in the winning list. Next, the constitution was drafted.

The preliminary preparatory

meeting of AFPFL was held in Jubilee Hall of Yangon and (111) members' team for drafting constitution was formed, and the committee drafted the constitution. It could be simply said that Bogoyoke Aung San had perfectly

meeting of AFPFL was held in Jubilee Hall of Yangon and (111) members' team for drafting constitution was formed, and the committee drafted the constitution. It could be simply said that Bogoyoke Aung San had perfectly

Taste of independence

The nation would develop only when we achieved these conditions, and that the taste of independence could be enjoyed when



the noises of gunfire are stopped, and the rule of law prevails without dacoits and pick pockets.

I am of the view that the government is endeavoring to achieve these tasks. However, to arrive at the destination entirely depends on us, and if we are not united and going in wrong steps, then we would not be able to build the nation.

For (63) years from 1885 to 1948, we had to fight for independence. We saw our country in disarray and mess before 1885, and the people were going on the path of disunity.

When King Thibaw Min was exiled from the country all the nationalities started to unite and then the Shan, Kayin, Kachin and other ethnic nationalities came together and fought against the British colonialists, sacrificing thousands of lives. Sadly, Bogoyoke and national leaders were assassinated on 19 July 1947, and later we regained our lost independence.

We were under servitude for more than (120) years, and that we were totally humiliated as the British officers called us in childish terms such as "Maung Min" and put the derogatory word such as "Nga" preceding our name such as "Nga Ohn Kyaing".

Moreover, we had to respond with the term "My Lord" and we had to appear before them in barefoot as we had been prohibited to wear foot gear when entering the office rooms. At the time of all depression, desolation and disaster of the Myanmar people, Bogoyoke Aung San was born in our country to be a patriot and sacrificed for the people and the country.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)

71st Anniversary Independence Day National Objectives

1. All National Ethnic Races to defend and protect with "collective strength" to ensure Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of the Unity of National Ethnic Races and Perpetuation of National Sovereignty.
2. For the emergence of a Democratic Federal Union, to strive towards creating a suitable Constitution for the State in accordance with democratic standards.
3. To effectively combat and protect against the use of drugs and narcotic substances which can harm and erode the health and character of all citizens.
4. To continuously strive with determined effort for the balanced and equitable development of all states and regions.
5. To assist from all fronts the Union Government's efforts for private sector development and the emergence of a fully-developed market economy.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued on Tuesday 1 January 2019)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, rain has been isolated in Eastern Shan State, weather has been generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Magway and Ayeyawady regions, Chin and Kayin states and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states. Night temperatures were (2°C) below January average temperatures in Sagaing Region and Kachin State, (2°C) above January average temperatures in Bago Region and Kayah State, (4°C) above January average temperatures in Eastern Shan, Kayin and Mon states and about January average temperatures in the remaining regions and states. The significant night temperatures were (-1°C) in Haka, (2°C) in Putao, (3°C) in Heho, (4°C) each in Tiddim, Ramthlo and Pyin Oo Lwin, (5°C) each in Hsipaw, Nawng-hkio, Pinlaung, Tongzan and Mogok. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded was Mongyan (0.16) inch.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the North Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

SPECIAL FEATURES: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, the Tropical Storm (Pabuk) over the South China Sea. It is centred at about (340) miles Southeast of Ho Chi Minh (Viet Nam) and moving South-Southwest wards.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 2 January 2019: Rain will be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Shan State, Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-5) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of continuation of rain in Shan State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 January 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 January 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2 January 2019: Generally fair weather.

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Democrat Warren enters 2020 White House race

WASHINGTON (United States) — Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren — an outspoken critic of Wall Street and nemesis of Donald Trump — entered the 2020 race for the White House on Monday.

The 69-year-old progressive announced she was launching an exploratory committee for president, becoming the first major candidate in what is set to be an extraordinarily crowded Democratic primary, united by a singular focus on unseating the Republican Trump.

The move will help Warren raise funds and hire more staff early in the campaign cycle — an effort in which she already leads most other potential Democratic candidates.

Her announcement came 13 months before the Iowa caucuses that launch what is expected to be a boisterous primary season. “America’s middle class is under attack,” said a video message from Warren, who has represented Massachusetts in the Senate since 2013, crafting a reputation as an economic populist. “Corruption is poisoning our democracy,” she said.

“Politicians look the other way while big insurance companies deny patients life-saving coverage, while big banks rip off consumers and while big oil companies destroy this planet.” That, she said, is why she is launching



US Senator Elizabeth Warren is a fierce critic of President Donald Trump, and is now likely running to unseat him in 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

her exploratory committee.

Going on the 'offense'

A former public-school teacher and then Harvard law professor, Warren has been a vocal advocate of consumer and workers' rights. But Americans may know her best for her frequent sparring with Trump — which has had mixed results.

Warren's searing criticisms of Trump's trade policies, erosion of consumer protections, and openness to authoritarian regimes — not to mention her

call in September for Congress to use a constitutional maneuver to remove him from office — have drawn his attention, and his disdain.

Reacting to her latest move, Trump said he was unsure whether Warren could replace him at the White House.

“You’d have to ask her psychiatrist,” he quipped in an interview with Fox News.

“We’ll see how she does. I wish her well, I hope she does well, I’d love to run against her.”

At his election-style rallies,

Trump took to mocking her claim to have some Native American heritage by dubbing her “Pocahontas,” a derisive reference to the 17th century Native American who lived in what is now Virginia.

When Trump offered to donate \$1 million to Warren's favorite charity if she took a test proving “you’re an Indian,” she eventually did so, hoping to put an end to his ridicule.

Instead, he seemed to relish the fact that the test showed her with only a sliver of Native American heritage.

‘Nevertheless, she persisted’

But another encounter with a powerful male politician gave Warren a place in political folklore. After she clashed in 2017 on the Senate floor with top Republican Mitch McConnell over the nomination of Jeff Sessions as attorney general and refused to back down, his phrase “Nevertheless, she persisted” was quickly adopted by feminists — and turned into T-shirts and bumper stickers. As talk of a possible presidential run grew, Warren has worked to build her foreign policy credentials, taking a seat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. She favors cuts in military spending and a troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. Her domestic policies are reliably liberal: She is staunchly pro-choice on abortion, supports gun control and has urged Democrats to go on “offense” to expand health care coverage for Americans. But her bread-and-butter issue has been the defense of ordinary Americans against abuses by those with wealth and power. She sharply criticized Wall Street after the 2007 financial crisis and helped establish the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

“How did we get here? Billionaires and big corporations decided they wanted more of the pie, and they enlisted politicians to cut them a fatter slice,” she said in her video. — AFP ■

Britain sends ships to tackle migrant crossing surge

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Britain announced Monday it will deploy two border patrol ships in the Channel in response to a surge in migrants crossing from France in dinghies.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid, the interior minister, said the Border Force ships would balance protecting human life with protecting Britain's borders.

In December, around 230 people tried to make the 21-mile (33-kilometre) journey from France to Britain, Javid said.

The attempts, chiefly by Iranian nationals, to cross one of the world's busiest shipping lanes have been made in dinghies and other small craft.

Javid — the bookmakers' favourite to become the next leader of the governing Conservative

Party — cut short his Christmas family holiday in South Africa to take personal control of the situation. He said he was redeploying two Border Force cutters from the Mediterranean to the Channel, to join one cutter already on the scene and two other coastal patrol vessels.

“It’s both about protecting human life but also about protecting our borders,” Javid said after meeting senior officials from the Border Force and the National Crime Agency.

“I want to make sure that we are doing all we can to protect people. “This is one of the most treacherous stretches of water that there is, 21 miles with people taking grave risk, really putting their lives into their own hands.” — AFP ■



British interior minister Sajid Javid said two Border Force ships deployed in the Channel would balance protecting human life with protecting Britain's borders. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tense DR Congo counts vote in presidential poll

KINSHASA (DR Congo) — A marathon vote count got underway on Monday in DR Congo, central Africa's unstable giant, for presidential elections scarred by political turmoil and haunted by memories of violence.

A day after a relatively peaceful vote, election officials began the task of counting and collating ballots in a climate of deep suspicion about fraud.

The first verbal shots were fired over alleged interference and the opposition accused the authorities of cutting off the internet to thwart activism.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has never had a peaceful transition of power since independence from Belgium in 1960, and bloodshed marred previous elections in 2006 and 2011.

Worries of a new spiral into violence deepened two years ago after President Joseph Kabila, in power since 2001, refused to quit when his two-term limit expired.

But Sunday's vote — delayed three times since 2016 — was “relatively calm,” the influential Catholic church's national conference of bishops declared.

In the worst incident, four people were killed late Sunday when violence erupted at a polling station in the Walungu area of South Kivu province.

An electoral official was accused of trying to rig the vote in favour of Kabila's preferred successor, said opposition figure Vital Kamerhe.

The official was killed along with a policeman and two civilians, Kamerhe said. — AFP ■

Xi, Trump vow cooperation on diplomatic anniversary: state media

BEIJING(China) — The presidents of China and the US have exchanged messages vowing to boost cooperation despite a bruising trade war on the 40th anniversary of the countries' diplomatic relations, Chinese state media reported.

Tensions between Beijing and Washington soared in 2018 over trade disputes, although US President Donald Trump has frozen the latest planned tariff hike and on Saturday reported "big progress" after a call with his counterpart Xi Jinping.

In the messages sent Tuesday, Xi underlined the importance of working with the US "to advance China-US relations featuring coordination, cooperation and stability", state news agency Xinhua reported.

According to Xinhua, Trump praised the last four decades of diplomacy between China and the US, hailing his "solid friendship" with the Chinese leader.

Washington and Beijing imposed tit-for-tat tariffs on more than \$300 billion worth of goods in total two-way trade last year, locking them in a conflict that has begun to eat into profits and contributed to stock market plunges.

Trump initiated the trade war because of complaints over unfair Chinese trade practices — concerns shared by the European Union, Japan and others.

Since the two leaders agreed on a truce on the sidelines of the G20 summit meeting in Buenos Aires, however, there have been small signs of progress — and an absence of new threats from



Tensions between Beijing and Washington soared in 2018 over trade disputes. **PHOTO: AFP**

Trump. China and the US established diplomatic relations on 1 January, 1979, with Washington pledging to maintain only non-official ties with Chinese Taipei.

In the same year, late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, often credited with China's "Reform and Opening" policy which led to its economic transformation, met US president Jimmy Carter in the United States.

Ties have improved dra-

matically from their Cold War nadir, though the two countries have since weathered ups and downs over a number of issues including Chinese Taipei, human rights, and trade.

In December, China's major state-owned grain stockpiler said it had resumed buying US soybeans, and Beijing announced it would suspend extra tariffs on US-made cars and auto parts starting 1 January. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US military apologizes for tweet about dropping bombs

WASHINGTON (United States) — US Strategic Command apologized Monday for a joke in "bad taste" after tweeting it was ready to drop something "much bigger" than the traditional Times Square crystal ball at New Year.

In a message posted, and later deleted, on Twitter, the military force that controls the US nuclear arsenal released a video in which B-2 bombers drop bombs, with the message: "If ever needed, we are #ready to drop something much, much bigger." — AFP ■

Thai man guns down six family members, including kids at New Year party

BANGKOK (Thailand) — A Thai man who felt slighted by his in-laws shot dead six family members including his two young children at a New Year's Eve party before turning the gun on himself, police said Tuesday.

The mass shooting took place 10 minutes after midnight as Suchee Sornsung joined his wife's family to ring in the New Year in the southern province of Chumphon. Suchee was "heavily" drunk when he pulled out his pistol at the table in the beauty parlour where the party was being hosted in Phato district, police said. — AFP ■

Brazil's new far-right leader puts crime in his sights

BRASÍLIA (Brazil) — Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's new president, persuaded voters in Latin America's biggest country to elevate him to leader on extreme-right vows to restore security that eclipsed his record of racism, misogyny and homophobia.

The 63-year-old former paratrooper and veteran lawmaker is openly nostalgic for the 1964-1985 military dictatorship that imposed calm in the streets.

But he denies being a threat to democracy, saying he will be a "slave to the constitution" who will govern "with authority but not authoritarianism." — AFP ■

UK counter-terror police probe Manchester knife attack

MANCHESTER(United Kingdom) — British counter-terrorism police were investigating a multiple stabbing in which the suspect reportedly shouted "Allah" at a Manchester railway station on New Year's Eve, officials said Tuesday.

A man and a woman, both in their 50s, and a police officer were being treated for knife injuries following the stabbings on Monday evening at Manchester Victoria station in the northwestern English city. Witness Sam Clack, 38, a BBC radio producer, said he heard the suspect shouting "Allah" before and during the attack.

He quoted the suspect as saying: "As long as you keep bombing other countries, this sort of shit is going to keep happening."

The male suspect has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) said in a statement.

The woman suffered injuries to her face and abdomen and the man was wounded in the abdomen, while a British Transport Police officer sustained a stab wound to the shoulder. Their injuries were described as serious but not life-threatening. The two members of the public were taken to hospital. The incident happened at around 8:50pm (2050 GMT), when many revellers in the city would have been enjoying New Year's Eve celebrations.

'Blood-curdling scream'

Clack said: "I just heard this most blood-curdling scream and

looked down the platform.

"He came towards me. I looked down and saw he had a kitchen knife with a black handle with a good 12 inch (30-centimetre) blade.

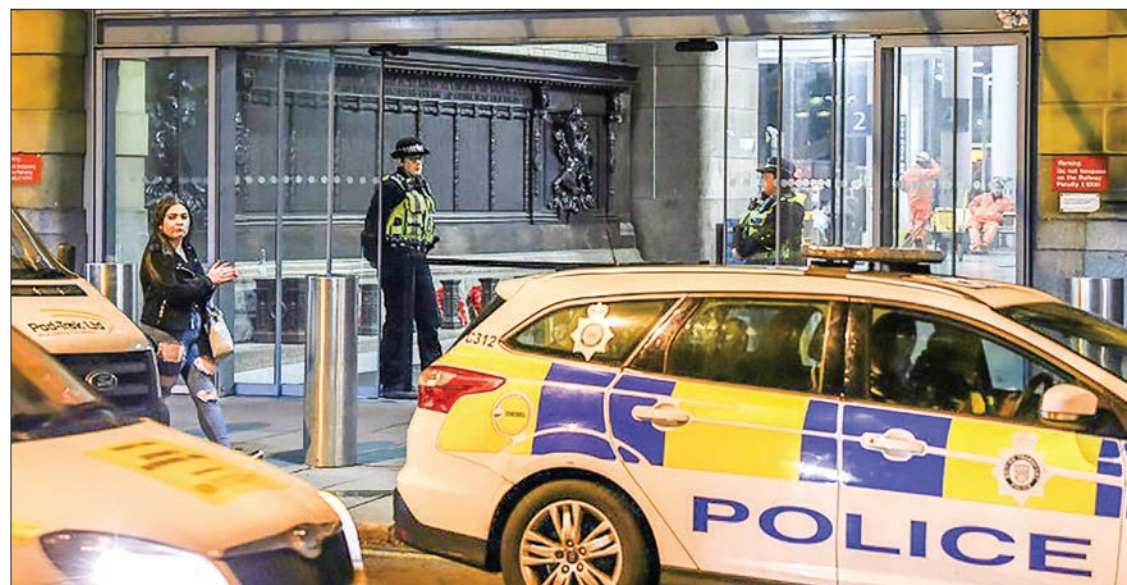
"It was just fear, pure fear."

Clack said police officers used a stun gun and pepper spray before, "six or seven" officers jumped on the man.

Clack said he heard the alleged knifeman shouting "Allah" during the attack.

He added: "He shouted it before, he shouted it during it — 'Allah'."

A witness who gave her name as Rebekka told the *Daily Mirror* newspaper: "I heard the most blood-curdling scream



Police officers stand near a cordon at Manchester Victoria Station following a stabbing. **PHOTO: AFP**

Kim warns N Korea could consider change of tack

SEOUL (South Korea) — Nuclear-armed North Korea wants good relations with the US but could consider a change of approach if Washington maintains its sanctions, leader Kim Jong Un warned in his New Year speech Tuesday after 12 months of diplomatic rapprochement.

At a summit with US President Donald Trump in Singapore in June the two signed a vaguely worded pledge on denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

But progress has since stalled with Pyongyang and Washington arguing over what that means.

“If the US fails to carry out its promise to the world... and remains unchanged in its sanctions and pressure upon the DPRK,” Kim said Tuesday, “we might be compelled to explore a new path for defending the sovereignty of our country and supreme interests of our state”.

He was willing to meet Trump again at any time, he added, “to produce results welcomed by the international community”. The North is demanding sanctions relief — it is subject to multiple measures over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes — and has condemned US insistence on its nuclear disarmament as “gangster-like”.

Washington is pushing to maintain the measures against the North until its “final, fully verified denuclearisation”.

Kim’s speech “expressed his frustration with the lack of progress in negotiations so far”, said former South Korean vice unification minister Kim Hyung-seok.



Kim Jong Un said North Korea wants good relations with the US but could consider a change of approach if Washington maintains its sanctions. PHOTO: AFP

The North Korean leader “obviously had certain expectations that the US would take certain steps — however rudimentary they are — after the North blew up a nuclear test site and took other steps. But none of them materialised.

“He is faced with this urgent task to improve his ‘socialist economy’ which is impossible to achieve without lifting of the sanctions.”

In marked contrast with 1 January, 2018, when he ordered mass production of nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles, Kim said the North had “declared that we would no longer produce, test, use or spread our nuclear arsenal”, calling for the US to take “corresponding measures”.

The production pledge was a “significant evolution in leader-

ship intent, if true”, Ankit Panda of the Federation of American Scientists said on Twitter, but credibility was an issue.

“All this might offer is a temporary cap on warhead production as long as talks are on with the US — to be withdrawn when sanctions relief doesn’t arrive,” he added. The line was not included in the first English-language summary of the speech by the North’s official KCNA news agency.

Year of rapprochement

Kim spoke sitting in a dark leather armchair, in a large office lined with packed bookshelves and paintings of his predecessors, father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung.

As he began speaking — in a deep, gravelly voice and wearing

a dark suit and blue tie — a clock behind him read at moments after 12. But at times during the address it was blurred out and towards the end of the half-hour broadcast it was close to 1, suggesting the speech was recorded in several takes.

The leader’s New Year speech is a key moment in the North Korean political calendar, reviewing the past and setting out goals for the future.

The 2018 address was a crucial catalyst for the developments that followed.

It came after a year of high tensions when the North made rapid progress with its weapons development, carrying out its sixth nuclear test — by far its most powerful to date — and launching rockets capable of reaching the entire US mainland.

The two leaders had traded personal insults — Trump mocked Kim as “Little Rocket Man”, who in turn called him a “mentally deranged US dotard” — and threats of war as fears of conflict rose. In last year’s speech Kim warned “the nuclear button is on my office desk all the time”, but also offered to send a team to the forthcoming Winter Olympics in the South.

That opened the way for the South’s dovish President Moon Jae-In to play the role of peace broker. Seoul and Washington are in a security alliance and the US stations 28,500 troops in the South to protect it against its neighbour.

A rapid sequence of developments followed, with athletes and a senior delegation led by Kim’s powerful sister going to the Pyeongchang Games in February, before Kim met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing ahead of the Singapore summit with Trump.

Kim also met with Moon three times in 2018 — twice at the border truce village of Panmunjom and once in the North’s capital — and at the weekend vowed to meet Moon “frequently” this year.

Seoul and Pyongyang have pursued several reconciliation initiatives in recent months, including projects to upgrade the North’s outdated rail infrastructure and reconnect it with the South. Much of Kim’s speech Tuesday focused on North Korea’s moribund economy, saying that improving people’s lives was his top priority and tackling energy shortages was an urgent task. —AFP ■

Rescuers search for survivors in deadly Indonesian landslide

JAKARTA (Indonesia) — Rescuers are searching for survivors after a landslide triggered by heavy rain left at least five people dead and dozens missing in western Indonesia, an official said Tuesday.

The landslide occurred shortly before sunset on Monday in West Java province. Search and rescue teams have found five people dead and are scouring the area for at least 38 missing people according to the national disaster agency. Pouring rain, electricity cuts and rough roads are preventing heavy machinery from accessing the area in Sukabumi regency, disaster agency spokes-

man Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said.

“Relief efforts have also been hampered by a lot of people who want to get to the disaster,” he said. “The roads are narrow which has caused rescue teams, logistics and ambulances to be stuck in traffic jams.”

The search operation was halted overnight but continued Tuesday morning.

Three people have been injured in the disaster and 61 others evacuated from the area, Nugroho said. Landslides are common in Indonesia, a vast tropical archipelago prone to natural disasters and torrential downpours. —AFP ■

85 FARC members killed in Colombia since peace accord: UN

BOGOTA (Colombia) — Since Colombia signed a peace deal with left-wing FARC rebels two years ago, 85 members of the former guerrilla movement have been murdered, the United Nations said on Monday.

Between 26 September and 26 December this year alone, “14 ex-members of FARC were murdered,” said UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres in his quarterly report on the global body’s mission to Colombia.

According to the state’s special investigation unit, quoted by the UN, those responsible for

the killings “are illegal armed groups and criminal organizations.”

Most of those cases have been linked to the Gulf Clan drug-trafficking group that emerged out of disarmed right-wing paramilitaries in 2006, as well as FARC dissidents, the ELN guerrilla group and remnants of the now disbanded EPL Marxist rebels. FARC is the Spanish acronym for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia; ELN is the National Liberation Army; and EPL is the People’s Liberation Army.

Guterres ‘hugely concerned’

The UN called on right-wing President Ivan Duque, a vocal critic of the peace accord signed by his predecessor Juan Manuel Santos, to “reinforce the security plans and strategies for ex-combatants.”

In the report, Guterres said he was “hugely” concerned about the number of murders of social leaders and human rights defenders, saying the UN had verified 163 of 454 reported cases since the peace accord was signed. —AFP ■

Climate change takes toll on French oyster farmers

CANCALE (France) — Gulping down oysters has long been a favourite New Year's Eve ritual for the French, but as winters get warmer and summers get drier many growers worry there will soon be fewer of the prized mollusks to go around.

"Twenty years ago, we'd be shivering in the warehouse while preparing the holiday orders. Today it's 15 degrees (60° Fahrenheit)," says Brittany oysterman Mathieu Le Moal, his sleeves rolled up in front of a tractor carrying dozens of bulging oyster sacks.

"We don't have seasons anymore — but oysters need all four," Le Moal adds. "They need the winter, it's when they can rest, use less energy."

Inside a wooden hangar redolent of salt and the sea, around a dozen of his workers are sorting, weighing and packing oysters into crates in the Brittany port of Cancale.

Le Moal and other farmers along this stretch of France's Emerald Coast say the long drought which struck swathes of the country this summer took a heavy toll, leading to smaller harvests, and smaller shellfish.

Without summer rains that wash crucial minerals into the oyster beds, "there's no plankton, the main food for oysters,

so they don't grow," explained fellow oysterman Bertrand Racinne, weaving his way between baskets and stacked crates.

"In the end, we have oysters but not enough of the big ones," said Racinne, who like most growers sells more than half his yearly production in December.

Cold weather normally encourages a needed rest for oysters to mature, said Yoann Thomas of France's IRD research institute.

But this winter has so far been unusually warm and, paradoxically, too rainy.

Rains may bring minerals that favour plankton growth — but they also mean the mollusks spend too much energy eating.

This year's harvest are likely to start the spring "fragile and vulnerable", warned Racinne.

"We've found that periods of extreme mortality (more than 25 per cent of oysters) come several months after mild and rainy winters," Thomas said.

Germes thrive

"Ten grams fewer for each one, that makes a difference in sales," said Philippe Le Gal, president of the CNC national shellfish producers' association.

In 2017 the roughly

4,500 oyster growers in France sold 100,000 tons, at an average price of 5,000 euros (\$5,700) per ton.

"Oyster farmers will see volumes down by 20 to 30 per cent this year," Le Gal said. "Climate warming is starting to have an impact."

Warmer water temperatures are also a risk because they facilitate the spread of viruses that are especially harmful to oyster larvae, or spat, and young oysters.

Scientists point in particular to a Herpes virus, OsHV-1, that has been present in French oyster waters since 1991 but has become more aggressive recently, for reasons still unknown.

Since 2008, up to 75 per cent of young oysters have been lost in some years, said Fabrice Pernet at the Ifremer ocean research institute in Brest.

"Oyster farmers had found a solution by putting ten times the amount of spat in the water in autumn, when the virus is not active," Pernet said.

But warmer waters would reduce this window of opportunity, he said, and new pathogens could arrive if carried north by fish and other sea life fleeing rising temperatures further south.

Adding to the challenges, rising ocean acidity requires oysters



Cold weather normally encourages a needed rest for oysters to mature, experts say, but this winter has so far been unusually warm and, paradoxically, too rainy. PHOTO: AFP

to spend more energy in building their shells, Pernet said.

'Still magnificent'

Erratic and extreme weather conditions are likely to become more frequent unless aggressive steps are taken to limit climate change caused by human activities, scientists warn.

"By 2035 the abnormally high mortality episodes that currently occur every ten years risk happening every two years," Pernet said.

Not every oyster farmer is convinced, however,

saying the bigger risks are pollution, oyster beds that are becoming too densely packed and the increased use of genetically modified species.

"Mortality rates change every year, depending on the region... but nobody can really explain why," said Alexandre Prod'homme, another grower in Cancale.

But if warming and weather patterns become increasingly volatile, French farmers might have to start changing their growing seasons or move their beds north or further out to sea, Pernet

said.

"Oysters aren't going to disappear... but they're probably going to have to migrate," he predicted.

For now, most growers say they're going to wait and see.

"We're not sure about anything regarding the impact of global warming, we're waiting for more scientific research," said Daniel Coirier, president of the shellfish association for the Poitou-Charentes region.

"But even if they're not as big, our oysters are still magnificent, and top quality!" —AFP ■

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT OF BRIDGE Invitation for Prequalification

Date: 7th January 2019

Loan Agreement No.: MY-P15

IFP No: MYA/MOC/EWEC/PACKAGE2/PQ

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency toward the cost of the East-West Economic Corridor Improvement Project. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this Loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract resulting from the bidding for which this prequalification is conducted.
2. The Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction, Myanmar intends to prequalify contractors and/or firms for **Package-2, Construction of Gyaing Zathapyin & Atran Bridges**.
3. It is expected that Invitation for Bids will be made in the **end of March 2019**.
4. Prequalification will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Applicants from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.
5. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the office of Director General, Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction from **10:00 hrs. to 14:00 hrs. on working days till 21st January 2019**.
6. A complete set of the Prequalification Documents may be purchased by interested Applicant(s) on the submission of a written Application to the address above and upon payment of a nonrefundable **fee of 500 USD**.
7. Applications for prequalification should be **submitted** in sealed envelopes, delivered to the address above by **21st February 2019**, and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for East West Economic Corridor Improvement Project (EWEC) for Package-2, Construction of Gyaing Zathapyin and Atran Bridges.

U Shwe Lay
Director General
Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction
Building No.11, Nay Pyi Taw, MYANMAR
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Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 4th (Friday) January 2019, "Independence Day" being public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

Mourners pay tribute to Israeli writer, peace advocate Oz

TEL AVIV (Israel) — Mourners paid tribute on Monday to Amos Oz, the revered Israeli writer and peace advocate who died aged 79, at a memorial ahead of his burial later in the day.

Hundreds of people lined up at a small theatre in central Tel Aviv, where Oz's closed casket lay on the stage ahead of eulogies from speakers including Israeli President Reuven Rivlin.

Family members, politicians and average Israelis touched by Oz's works and deeds slowly filed past the black coffin ahead of the ceremony. YonaKranz, 74, from the central city Givatayim, vividly remembered the first time he saw Oz decades ago, when the author visited his kibbutz to talk about

his first book. Kranz said he came to say farewell to Oz, who died on Friday, because he "epitomised a myth of an Israel that might have existed and might have not, but I loved that myth".

"If there is such a thing as a real Zionist, I think he was one," Kranz said of Oz. Following the memorial in Tel Aviv, Oz's burial was set to take place at the Hulda kibbutz in central Israel at 3:00 pm (1300 GMT).

Oz was a celebrated novelist whose stirring memoir "A Tale of Love and Darkness" became a worldwide bestseller that was adapted into a film by Hollywood actress Natalie Portman.

His death led to an outpouring of tributes within Israel and

from abroad.

While his writing is widely acclaimed, he was perhaps equally known as one of the earliest and most forceful critics of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory captured in the Six-Day War of 1967. In recent years, Oz spoke out against the policies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, shunning official Israeli functions abroad in protest at what he has called the "growing extremism" of his government.

Netanyahu, currently visiting Brazil, paid brief tribute to Oz on Friday, calling him "one of our literary giants". "We will always remember his contribution to Hebrew literature and the Hebrew language," he said. —AFP ■



Mourners pay tribute to Israeli writer Amos Oz during a memorial service in Tel Aviv on 31 December 2018. PHOTO: AFP



A reveler smiles under the rain as people gather for the New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square in New York. PHOTO: AFP

Big Apple joins in ringing in New Year after rough 2018

NEW YORK — New York City's crystal ball dropped as rain-soaked throngs in Times Square cheered and smooched in celebration, joining revelers around the world in welcoming the New Year on Tuesday and saying goodbye to a tumultuous 2018.

For many, the sparkling sphere's time-honored descent came after hours spent in cold, wet weather — a wait made easier by performances from entertainers such as Christina Aguilera, Sting and Snoop Dogg.

Just before the ball fell, Bebe Rexha sang John Lennon's "Imagine," and in the first moments of 2109 many in the square sang along to Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York," boomed from loudspeakers.

"It was like a true state of pure bliss and unity and love, and it felt like there was no hate in the world," Brie Dunn, 22, told ABC News as fireworks exploded overhead.

"That's what I hope for in 2019 and all the years to come."

The festivities in New York and elsewhere on the US east coast were the latest stop in a celebratory wave that swept west across the globe from Asia to Europe before reaching America.

In Rio de Janeiro, the Christ the Redeemer statue briefly came to colorful life through light projections while pyrotechnics lit up more than two million white-clad Brazilians dancing to free concerts on Copacabana Beach below.

The global partying kicked off on Sydney's waterfront with the Australian city's biggest-ever fireworks display, thrilling 1.5 million people. Signage beamed onto a bridge pylon got the year wrong — it said happy 2018 — but city officials laughed off the gaffe.

The fun then moved on to Hong Kong, where hundreds of thousands packed streets along Victoria Harbour for a spectacular 10-minute show that illuminated the night. —AFP ■

Iran TV boss fired over Jackie Chan sex scene

TEHRAN (Iran) — A regional boss of Iran's state broadcaster IRIB has been fired after inadvertently letting a Jackie Chan sex scene slip through its tight censorship rules, local media reported on Monday.

Viewers on Iran's Kish Island were shocked when their local TV station showed the martial arts star having sex with a prostitute in one of his films.

That is far beyond the usual limits in Iran, where men and women are not even allowed to shake hands on screen.

There was a quick response after a viewer posted the clip online.

"Clips of immoral scenes of a film featuring Jackie Chan have been circulating on social media which was apparently shown by Kish IRIB," the semi-official ISNA news agency reported.

"These scenes which are in total contradiction with the principles of IRIB has ultimately led to the dismissal and reprimand of some of the employees of IRIB in Kish," it said, adding this included IRIB's director-general for Kish.

There were angry responses from some Iranians pointing out that no one had been fired over a fatal bus crash that killed 10 students at Tehran's Azad University last week.

"Buses turn over, planes crash, ships sink... no one is dismissed... A few seconds of Jackie Chan making love on IRIB and immediately all staff in that section are sacked," wrote one Twitter user.

IRIBTV presenter Reza Rashidpoor joked on his morning talk show that the controversy could have been avoided if IRIB had included a caption saying Chan was married to the actress playing the prostitute.

He was referring to a programme last week in which IRIB added a caption to say a couple holding hands on screen were married in real life. —AFP ■



Hong Kong actor Jackie Chan looks on during the start of the FIA world Endurance Championship race in Shanghai on 5 November 2017. PHOTO: AFP

Unmuting large silent genes let bacteria produce new molecules: study

CHICAGO — By enticing away the repressors dampening unexpressed silent genes in *Streptomyces* bacteria, researchers at the University of Illinois (UI) have unlocked several large gene clusters for new natural products.

The researchers previously demonstrated a technique to activate small silent gene clusters using CRISPR technology. However, large silent gene clusters have remained difficult to unmute.

To unlock the large gene clusters of greatest interest, UI researchers created clones of the DNA fragments they wanted to express and injected them into the bacteria in hopes of luring away the repressor molecules that were preventing gene expression. They called these clones transcription factor decoys.

To prove that the molecules they coded for were being expressed, researchers tested the decoy method first on two known gene clusters that syn-

thesize natural products. Next, they created decoys for eight silent gene clusters that had been previously unexplored. In bacteria injected with the decoys, the targeted silent genes were expressed and the researchers harvested new products.

“We saw that the method works well for these large clusters that are hard to target by other methods,” said study leader and chemical and biomolecular engineering professor Huimin Zhao.

“It also has the advantage that it does not disturb the genome; it’s just pulling away the repressors. Then the genes are expressed naturally from the native DNA.”

In the search for drug candidates, each product needs to be isolated and then studied to determine what it does.

Of the eight new molecules produced, the researchers purified and determined the structure of two molecules, and described one in detail in the study: a novel type of oxazole,

a class of molecules often used in drugs.

The researchers plan next to characterize the rest of the eight compounds and run various assays to find out whether they have any anti-microbial, anti-fungal, anti-cancer or other biological activities.

As many antibiotics, anti-cancer agents and other drugs have been derived from genes readily expressed in *Streptomyces*, the researchers hope that unsilencing genes that have not previously been expressed in the lab will yield additional candidates in the search for new antimicrobial drugs.

In the next step, the researchers plan to apply the decoy technique to explore more silent biosynthetic gene clusters of interest in *Streptomyces* and in other bacteria and fungi to find more undiscovered natural products.

The study has been published in the journal *Nature Chemical Biology*.—Xinhua ■



NASA spacecraft OSIRIS-REx is the first-ever US mission designed to visit an asteroid and return a sample of its dust back to Earth.

PHOTO: AFP

In first, NASA spaceship begins orbit of asteroid

TAMPA (United States) — A NASA spacecraft set a new milestone Monday in cosmic exploration by entering orbit around an asteroid, Benu, the smallest object ever to be circled by a human-made spaceship.

The spacecraft, called OSIRIS-REx, is the first-ever US mission designed to visit an asteroid and return a sample of its dust back to Earth.

The \$800 million unmanned spaceship launched two years ago from Cape Canaveral, Florida and arrived 3 December at its destination, some 70 million miles (110 million kilometers) away.

On Monday, after closely studying the asteroid for several weeks, the spaceship fired its thrusters to bring it into orbit around Benu at 2:43 pm (1943 GMT). The asteroid measures about 1,600 feet (500 meters) in diameter.

“Entering orbit around Benu is an amazing accomplishment that our team has been planning for years,” said Dante Lauretta, OSIRIS-REx principal investigator at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

NASA said the orbit marks “a leap for humankind” because no spacecraft has ever “circled so close to such a small space object — one with barely enough gravity to keep a vehicle in a stable orbit.”

The spacecraft is orbiting Benu about a mile from its center. The European Space Agency’s Rosetta spacecraft orbited a comet in May 2016, but at a further distance of about four miles from the center of the

comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. Benu has a gravity force only five-millionths as strong as Earth’s, NASA said.

Each orbit by OSIRIS-REx will take 62 hours.

The plan is for OSIRIS-REx to orbit Benu through mid-February, using a suite of five scientific instruments to map the asteroid in high resolution to help scientists decide precisely where to sample from.

Then, in 2020, it will reach out with its robotic arm and touch the asteroid in a maneuver Rich Kuhns, OSIRIS-REx program manager with Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Denver, described as a “gentle high-five.”

Using a circular device much like a car’s air filter, and a reverse vacuum to stir up and collect dust, the device aims to grab about two ounces (60 grams) of material from the asteroid’s surface, and return it to Earth in 2023.

A fragment of the early solar system, Benu is also considered potentially dangerous. It poses a slight risk — a one in 2,700 chance — of colliding with Earth in 2135.

The carbon-rich asteroid was chosen from some 500,000 asteroids in the solar system because it orbits close to Earth’s path around the Sun, is the right size for scientific study, and is one of the oldest asteroids known to NASA.

Scientists hope it will reveal more about the early formation of the solar system, as well as how to find precious resources like metals and water in asteroids.—AFP ■

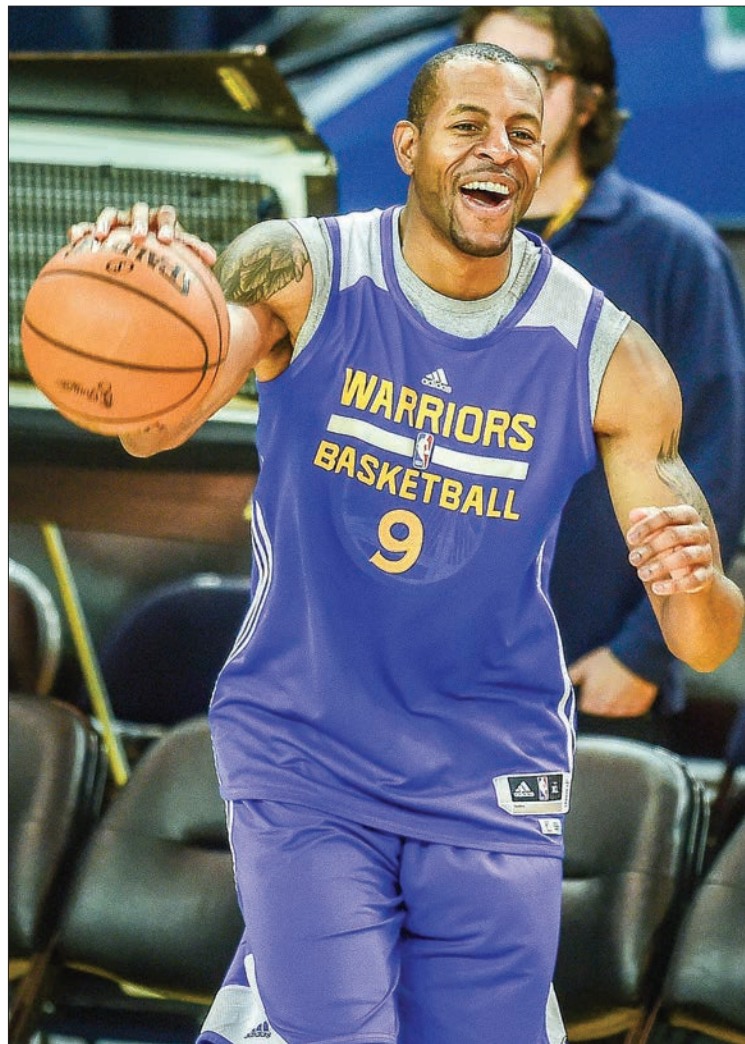
IN Picture

The science of today is the technology of tomorrow: Edward Teller



This handout photo released by NASA shows New Horizons principal investigator Alan Stern (C) of the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI), Boulder, CO, celebrating with school children at the exact moment that the New Horizons spacecraft made the closest approach of Kuiper Belt object Ultima Thule, Tuesday, 1st January 2019 at Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) in Laurel, Maryland. A NASA spacecraft on Tuesday, 1st January 2019, flew past the most distant world ever studied by humankind, Ultima Thule, a frozen relic of the early solar system that could reveal how planets formed. PHOTO: AFP

Warriors Iguodala fined \$25K for throwing ball into stands



Golden State forward/guard Andre Iguodala has been fined \$25,000 by the NBA for throwing a ball into the stands during a game in Portland. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW YORK (United States) — Golden State swingman Andre Iguodala has been fined \$25,000 for “recklessly” throwing a ball into the stands during a game on Saturday, NBA executive vice president of basketball operations Kiki VanDeWeghe said Monday.

Iguodala received a technical foul and was ejected from the game after the incident, which occurred after time expired in the second quarter of the Warriors 115-105 victory over the Trail Blazers in Portland.

Iguodala, unable to corral a loose ball before the halftime buzzer, then heaved it from half court over the basket and into the crowd. He was issued the technical foul and tossed from the game for a “hostile act”. Warriors coach Steve Kerr wasn’t surprised that Iguodala was ejected. “If you throw something into the stands — a mouthpiece, a ball or whatever — you get ejected,” Kerr said. “I guess the distinction the officials had to make was, was that a shot? Was he just throwing the ball toward the hoop at the end of the half? Was it out of frustration? And they deemed it was out of frustration.”—AFP ■



Marvin Lewis, seen here at a 16 December NFL game against Oakland, is out after 16 seasons as coach of the Cincinnati Bengals. **PHOTO: AFP**

Bengals’ Lewis among coaches sacked on NFL ‘Black Monday’

LOS ANGELES (United States) — Disappointed NFL clubs have wasted no time in ringing the changes for the new year, with four teams parting ways with their coaches on Monday.

The Cincinnati Bengals said the departure of head coach Marvin Lewis was a “mutual” decision.

Lewis, who spent 16 seasons in Cincinnati and earned NFL Coach of the Year honors in 2008, was the second-longest tenured coach in the league behind the New England Patriots’ Bill Belichick.

“I want to thank the Bengals’ organization, the fans and the city of Cincinnati for their support,” the 60-year-old Lewis said. “I regret I haven’t been able to provide them with the No. 1 goal of being world champions.”

The Bengals started the season an encouraging 4-1. But defensive struggles saw defensive coordinator Teryl Austin sacked and a slew of injuries further damaged the team, which finished 6-10 and last in the AFC North division.

The Arizona Cardinals, who finished 3-13 and last in the NFC West, sacked Steve Wilks on Monday after one season as head coach.

Wilks was hired on 22 January, 2018 to replace the retiring Bruce Arians and in his lone season Wilks presided over the Cardinals’ worst season in 18 years.

They’ll have the consolation of selecting first in the 2019 NFL Draft.

Wilks, 49, becomes the first

one-and-done coach since Chip Kelly was fired by the San Francisco 49ers in 2016.

Denver fired Vance Joseph a day after the Broncos wrapped up their second straight losing season under the coach’s guidance.

It was the first time the Broncos have finished back-to-back seasons with a losing record since 1971-1972.

Adam Gase is out as head coach of the Miami Dolphins, who also announced that executive vice president of football operations Mike Tannenbaum will no longer continue in that role.

General manager Chris Grier has been promoted to run the team’s football operations.

Two teams didn’t wait until Monday, with the New York Jets announcing the departure of Todd Bowles after four years just hours after a season-ending 38-3 loss to New England on Sunday.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers sacked coach Dirk Koetter on Sunday, shortly after their 5-11 season ended with 34-32 loss to the Atlanta Falcons.

The Green Bay Packers, whose season ended with an embarrassing 31-0 loss to the Detroit Lions in which star quarterback Aaron Rodgers suffered a concussion, had already fired coach Mike McCarthy after a week-13 loss to the Cardinals, and the Cleveland Browns had dismissed Hue Jackson after a loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers midway through the season. —AFP ■

Foles to start for Eagles in playoff opener against Bears

WASHINGTON (United States) — Nick Foles will start at quarterback for the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles in their NFL playoff opener against Chicago, despite being injured in the regular-season finale on Sunday.

Eagles head coach Doug Pederson said Monday that Foles would start, saying the veteran signal-caller was “feeling good” and diagnostic tests were “clear” after Foles took a heavy hit to the chest when he was sacked late in a victory that helped the Eagles secure a playoff berth at the 11th hour. “We’ll take care of him and make sure he’s ready for Sunday,” Pederson said of Foles.

The coach had no update on quarterback Carson Wentz, the team’s No. 1 quarterback who has been sidelined by a stress fracture in a vertebra.

Should the Eagles get

past the Bears to set up a second-round meeting with NFC top seeds New Orleans, Pederson said, “I’ll evaluate (the QB situation) next Monday.” Foles stepped in for Wentz for three key games to end the regular season. He is 4-1 in five starts in this campaign.

Although he’s not the Ea-

gles’ top quarterback, and isn’t expected to be with them next season, he has plenty of big-game experience.

He took over as starter when Wentz was injured last season and led the Eagles to the Super Bowl crown — earning Super Bowl Most Valuable Player honors.—AFP ■



Nick Foles, who was left with sore ribs after the Philadelphia Eagles’ win over the Washington Redskins in their NFL regular-season finale, will start the team’s playoff opener against the Chicago Bears. **PHOTO: AFP**