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Thai authorities hand over 44 trafficked victims back to Myanmar

Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Forty-four Myanmar nationals, half of them women, who were sold into forced labour in Thailand have been returned to Myanmar, according to Thai officials.

The 44 victims, many of them dragging their baggage and belongings behind them, were formally handed over by Thai authorities to their Myanmar counterparts on Tuesday morning.

After scrutinising the citizenship verification of the trafficked victims, Thai officials led by Police Captain Vutthichai Teekayu sent the 44 survivors of the human trafficking to the Myanmar government at a temporary shelter opened in Ward-4, Myawady Town, Myawady District, Kayin State.

The Myawady District Social Welfare Department received

the survivors, 22 of them young females, who were previously accommodated at the Thailand's social welfare houses, said U Myint Zaw, deputy director of the department.

The department will allow them to return to their homes after completing an investigation process to be done at the Youth Training Center in Mawlamyine Township over the next three days, U Myint Zaw said.

The department will provide the survivors with transportation expenses and other support.

Present at the hand-over ceremony were officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Task Force against Trafficking in Persons (Myawady), the Maternal and Child Welfare Association and the Women's Affairs Organisation.



Forty-four Myanmar national sold into forced labour in Thailand have returned home. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)



Asian Development Bank will help Myanmar with its transport infrastructure, which is critical to the country's development and will improve people's access to markets and basic services. Photo: Phoe Khwar

ADB to support Myanmar to develop transport projects through PPPs

THE Asian Development Bank will provide strategic and transaction advisory services to support the Myanmar government's bid to identify and develop transport projects through public-private partnerships (PPPs), according to a press release issued by the ADB.

The advisory services agreement was signed by U Win Khant, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and Winfried Wicklein, ADB's Country Director for Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

The ADB and the Myanmar government have agreed to partner up in promoting PPPs in the transport sector. "ADB has been playing a very active role in supporting Myanmar with policy advice on

20 million people — half of the rural population — do not have access to all-weather roads. Weak inland waterways and high transport costs are causes of poverty

PPPs, and improving Myanmar's transport infrastructure is critical to achieving inclusive growth in Myanmar," said Mr. Kaga, Head of ADB's office of Public-Private Partnership.

"PPP is an important instrument to deliver infrastructure, and the ADB is looking forward to assisting the government in developing priority transport projects that

could be structured on a PPP basis to mobilize private capital flows."

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung said, "A number of our priority transport investments will deliver better results if undertaken in partnership with the private sector. "The improvement of transport infrastructure is a top priority for the government, as this is critical to improve people's access to markets as well as to basic services such as health and education."

As MOTC's mandated strategic and transaction advisor, the ADB will help in screening and prioritising projects, undertaking due diligence, and structuring work with a view to placing these projects in the market for private sector investment.

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw celebrate 1st anniversary

THE ceremony marking the 1st anniversary of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw was held at the dining room of the Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw at 11:30 am yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw, U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, U Tun Tun Oo, Chief Justice of the Union, U Myo Nyunt, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union, U Hla Thein, Chairman of the Union Election Commission, Vice Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army), Deputy Speakers of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, Thura U Shwe Mann, Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, Union Ministers, Union Attorney General, Union Auditor General, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Chairmen and Secretaries of Hluttaw Affairs, Daw Su Su Lwin, Pyithu Hluttaw representative of Thongwa Constituency and Hluttaw representatives, representatives from political parties and departmental heads.

In the ceremony, Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw said: "The tenure of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw that reflect the democratic appearance and essence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has reached one year. With effect from the very advent of the tenure



The ceremony of 1st anniversary of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

of the 2nd Hluttaw till now we are taking office, new laws have been drafted, revised, withdrawn if needed and checked, and the balance of administrative and judicial sectors have been performed as much as possible so as to bring about the benefits of the citizens in accord with the current situations. During the one-year period, five new laws have been enacted, eight laws have been amended and six laws have been withdrawn. In the present 4th regular session, arrangements are being made to promulgate the remaining laws to be done. Besides the legislative works, putting forward motions, tabling motions, performing Hluttaw Committees' routines and making check and balance works are being performed in the interest of the State, Region and the

People. Multi-development of Hluttaw representatives and Staff of the Hluttaw Office has been being made in cooperation with professionals from home and abroad with great momentum. With the strengthened capacities of the Hluttaw, democracy will develop, thus Hluttaw representatives need to exert their effort for the emergence of peaceful & developed federal democratic union, which the whole populace of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar greatly hoped for."

U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, said the path to democracy has not always been smooth.

"The successful celebration of the ceremony marking the 1st anniversary of the 2nd Hluttaw is the consequence of supportive

performances by the Chairmen of the previous 1st Hluttaw during their Hluttaw tenure. The second Hluttaw reached the one year period, just starting to step on the way to the transition to democracy. Yet, we did not walk on the road of flowers, just having made it with concerted effort and with difficulty. So Hluttaw representatives need to watch constantly. Only if the capacities of parliamentarians are developed will the Hluttaw be strengthened year after year so that a democratic foundation will be strong in the country. Failing that, the foundation will not be strengthened. Central government, Cabinets of Regions and States, respective organisations are born of Hluttaw step by step. And voters voted in favor of us due to their great de-

sire for democracy. To be dutiful to our voters, parliamentarians are to move on to the destination with strenuous efforts, firm determination and rightful visions. Furthermore, during the one-year period of the tenure of the 2nd Hluttaw, we could manage to lift the image of the Hluttaw by holding the 37th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in Myanmar. This resulted from the combined efforts of Hluttaw Speakers, Deputy Speakers of the Hluttaw and personnel and all staff from Hluttaw at different levels. Under the leadership of the State Counsellor, Union Ministries supported for the success of the assembly. We congratulate them for their effort and put it on record."

Then, Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, U Aye Tha Aung, Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and U T Khun Myat, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw conferred congratulatory certificates to supportive ministries for holding office successfully, followed by a formal luncheon in honour of those present at the ceremony. Then Speakers of Hluttaw and attendants presented cultural troupes with congratulatory flower baskets.

The 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 1st regular session was held from 8 February to 6 June, the 2nd regular session from 25 July to 7 October, and the 3rd regular session from 16 November to 20 December. The 4th regular session began on 30 January.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Flotsam of a motor boat and two people on board seized in Maungtaw Township



Two suspects and seized motor boat are seen in Maungtaw. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE OF INFORMATION COMMITTEE

ONE 18 HP motor boat of 30 ft in length and 10 ft in width, with two men onboard, floating in the Thabyetaw Chaungwa in Maungtaw township was seized at about 6:15 pm on Tuesday night, by the combined force of government troops and police forces.

The two arrested were Innarotdular aged 28, son of Inu Armat residing in the village of Nazi in Sittway and Sheikku aged 18, son of Saura Amein residing in the village of Kanyintan in Maungtaw.

According to their statement, Innarotdular emigrated to Shwe Ma Phyu Chaung village at Teknaf town in Bangladesh 8 years ago and Sheikku 3 years ago, so they are being investigated to take legal action against them, it is learnt.—*Myanmar News Agency*

13 civilians killed, eight missing after violent attacks in November, October 2016

THIRTEEN civilians were killed and eight are missing from 9th October, 2016, to 1st February, 2017, following the violent attacks in northern Rakhine, according to the State Counsellor Office's Information Committee yesterday.

Since the violent attacks on 9th October, the combined security forces comprising the members of the Tatmadaw and

Myanmar Police Force have been conducting area clearance operations in Maungtaw District.

The violent attackers killed civilians and village administrators in attempts to threaten the villagers not to cooperate with authorities and not to disclose truth behind the violent attacks in October and November last year.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Woman found dead in Maungtaw

A BODY of a woman was found at the beach in Maungtaw Township yesterday.

A fisherman from the Kanpoo Village in Alethanyaw Village-tract found the body at the beach near the Layyinkwin

Village in the township and informed the police.

The police from the Alethanyaw Border Outpost sent the body to the Maungtaw Hospital for autopsy.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Ministers request budget approval at the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fourth regular session

MINISTERS requested budget approval for a nationwide housing project on the third day meeting of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's fourth regular session yesterday.

U Win Khine, the Union Minister for Construction, presented the plans for a project that would result in one million apartments in 330 townships by 2030. The apartment buildings would be constructed by the private sector and public sector and to come out systematically to townships in Myanmar as organised urban planning.

He presented the projects, which are included for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, and clarified the balance sheet, which is in the draft law of the budget.

According to the draft of the national project for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the ministry of construction will implement the projects by complying with four policies, three aims and four procedures.

The ministry's estimated revenue is Ks 54.292 billion in regular revenue, Ks 37.590 billion in capital revenue and Ks182.332 billion for debit expenditure, and then the grant total is Ks 274.214 billion.

He also clarified the total expenditure amount for the project is Ks 503.068 billion. The projection of total expenditure are Ks103.289 billion for regular expenditure, Ks 374.779 billion for lump sum expenditure and Ks 25 billion for debt expenditure.

The minister added that the projection of the balance sheet for the project was developed within the framework of the Ministry

of Planning and Finance and was approved by the Ministry of Planning and Finance and Financial Commission after it was checked at a different level. The minister requested these required budgets in the draft to be approved.

Deputy Minister for Ministry of Planning and Finance, U Maung Maung Win, also explained the ministry's policy, aims and procedures and requested the approval for revenue Ks 6905460.439 million and for expenditure Ks 4842870.726 million for the ministry's operation.

U Tin Htut, a member of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, also explained its total expenditure of Ks 27316.154 million for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. He made clear the projection revenue fund for Nay Pyi Taw Development Council is Ks 29,408 million and Ks 11,139.935 million is to be given by the government.

The projects in the draft for the 2017-2018 fiscal year were explained by Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye for Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe for Ministry of Health and Sports, Union Minister Naing Thet Lwin for Ministry of Ethnic Affairs, Union Minister U Ohn Maung for Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, Deputy Chairman of Central Bank of Myanmar U Soe Min.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker asked MPs to report findings concerned with project and balance sheets in the draft for the fiscal year 2017-2018, which need to be submitted no later than February 6.—*Myanmar News Agency*

ADB to support Myanmar . . .

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The improvement of Myanmar's transport infrastructure is critical to improve people's access to markets as well as to basic services such as health and education. Only 40 per cent of the country's road network is paved, and 20 million people — half

of the rural population — have no access to all-weather roads. Weak inland waterways and river ports, high transport costs, and associated limited access to markets and services are among the main causes of poverty and regional inequality, according to a study.—*GNLM*

Workshop on ICCPR held

THE MINISTRY of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Centre for Civil and Political Rights jointly organized a workshop on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on 1st February 2017 at Nay Pyi Taw.

Officials from Union Supreme Court, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of State Counsellor's Office, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of Education, Min-

istry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Ministry of Ethnic Affairs, the Union Attorney-General's Office and representatives from Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and Myanmar National Human Rights Commission participated in the workshop.

During the workshop, Mr. Krister Thelin, former member of UN Human Rights Committee shared his knowledge and experiences with the participants in connection with obligations contained in the Covenant.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Bags of rice from Turkey are delivered to villages yesterday in Maungtaw, Rakhine State. PHOTO: ZAW ZAW

Turkish aid arrives in villages in northern Rakhine State

AID from the government and people of Turkey was delivered to the communities in Maungtaw Township in northern Rakhine, according to local authorities.

The second batch of aid from Turkey that included 375 bags of rice arrived in Maungtaw on Tuesday and was delivered to the Muslim and Buddhist communities in

Maungtaw Township yesterday.

Out of the country's first batch of aid that included 3,990 bags of rice, 3,788 bags have been distributed to the people who were affected the violent attacks in October and November which killed nine police officials, according to U Phyu Hla, Deputy Administrator of

Maungtaw Township.

Six hundred bags of rice donated by the Turkish government and people also arrived Maungtaw on Tuesday.

"All aid is stored in a garage first and delivered to the people the next day, systematically," said U Phyu Hla.—*Min Min zaw (MNA)*

Wife of Japanese PM donates cash, stationery to monasteries, nunneries

A DELEGATION led by Mrs Akie Abe, wife of the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe, currently visiting Myanmar under the programme of the Greater Mekong Initiative, donated cash and stationery to the MyoOo Monastic school yesterday morning at

Ward 51 in North Dagon's Myothit Township, Yangon Region.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's wife and party visited the Myita Yaungchi Nunnery School in South Dagon's Myothit township, Saddhamma Jotikayum Shwe Kyin Monastic school in Thanlyin

township, Dhammadipa Monastic school in Sitagu International Buddhist Academy and Mary Chapman School for the Deaf in Dagon Township, and donated cash and stationery to each of the schools.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Mrs Akie Abe meets children at a Monastic Education School, Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Construction of Sittwe port to be completed soon

THE port at Sittwe, Rakhine State, which is being constructed by the government of India, will be completed very soon, said a diplomat at a meeting held in the Chief Minister's reception hall on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by the Rakhine state Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, state government ministers, the secretary of the regional Rakhine state government, the Indian ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Vikram Misri and members of the Indian consulate.

"The port which was constructed by the Indian government is very important and it will be completed very soon. The Indian government will hand over the port to Myanmar authorities soon. We are ready to open the port. Previously, products to be traded went from

Sittwe to Yangon, from which they were transported to other countries. Now, we can trade directly from Sittwe," said Mr. Vikram Misri, the Indian ambassador to Myanmar.

"The Indian government would like to build a resort for the young Rakhine. So, the Indian government wants Rakhine state government to choose the best place for resort," he added.

"The port is very useful for the state, especially for developing of trading. Also, we are planning to build a resort for the Rakhine people," said Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu.

The project, aimed at accelerating infrastructure and economic development in both India and Myanmar, includes the construction of a deepwater port at the mouth of the Kaladan

River in Sittwe and the dredging of the river to enable cargo vessels to navigate the river from Sittwe to Mizoram in India.

When the project is completed, goods weighing between 3,500 and 4,000 tonnes can be traded in Sittwe and Paletwa and goods weighing 20,000 tonnes can be directly traded in Sittwe and Kolkata. Rakhine State will be able to enjoy the benefits of a better trading system and its people will have better job opportunities, officials said.

The Indian ambassador to Myanmar gave presents to the state chief minister and the ministers of regional government. In return, the state chief minister presented the book titled "Arakan Land-Neglected Land and Her Voiceless People" to Indian ambassador.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Aung Pin Lae Lake Bay Mae stone inscription under renovation

AUNG PIN LAE LAKE Bay Mae stone inscription situated at the corner of Sabai Road and Mandalay-PyinOoLwin Road in Nan Oo Lwin village, Patheingyi township, Mandalay District is under renovation for educational and historical purposes, said Mandalay's Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library.

"The stone inscription reached off the road when Mandalay-Pyin Oo Lwin road was extended in 2014. The stone inscription was damaged and covered with the land.

We asked donors to provide assistance because our department lacks the budget. The renovation is expected to be completed in the first week of February," said U Nyo Myint Tun, director of Mandalay's Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library.

The renovation was started on 25 January with the cleaning of



Photo shows building of Abaya Htana Bay Mae stone inscription near Nan Oo Lwin village. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

the stone and it's environment.

The Aung Pin Lae Lake Bay Mae stone inscription was built in 1221 Myanmar era by King Mindon in Yandarnarbon Royal Golden Palace.

The stone inscription is 3'6"

high, 3' wide and 6" thick. The donor for renovation of Aung Pin Lae Lake stone inscription was made by Sayadaw Pandita, the secretary of Kyaukse township Sangha Neyaka Committee.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Decorative petrified resin stones in high demand

THE prices of decorative petrified resin stones, also known as InnGyin fossil stones have increased because of increasing demand from Chinese citizens in the Mandalay Jade Market, according to gems and jewellery dealers from the market.

"The price of resin stones worth under Ks1.5 million are expected to rise because the demand is expected to rise by over 10 per cent in the jade market during the six months after the Chinese New Year. Chinese citizens keep resin stones as talis-

mans, which are thought to have magic power for bringing good luck. Nowadays, some foreigners are wearing them as jewellery," said Daw Honey Tun, a jewellery dealer.

Most of the resin stones from Myanmar are of good quality, and increasing numbers of foreign gem buyers are purchasing Myanmar resin stones using a prepaid system.

The resin stones are used to make beads, necklaces, lockets, rings, bracelets and animal dolls to be sold in gems markets. These

stones are also being sold at the counters of hotels, motels and inns frequented by foreigners.

The resin stones also known as InnGyin Kyauk can be discovered in Natogyi, Mahlaing, NyaungU, Myingyan, Kyaukpadaung in Mandalay Region, Pakkoku, Yasagyo, Myaing, Aung Lan, Magway in Magway Region, Pyay, Shwe Taung, Thegone in Bago Region, Salingyi, Yinmabin, Kani, Pale, Min Kin, Kyun Hla, Kankbalu, Ayadaw, Monywa, Chaung Oo, Myaung in Sagaing Region.—200

300 Illegal ammonium nitrate bags seized in Moehnyin, one mine deactivated

SECURITY forces seized illegal ammonium nitrate bags worth about K30 million from two trucks in Moehnyin, Kachin State, on Tuesday.

The forces discovered 300 bags in total from the two trucks which were on the way from Mandalay to Hpakan.

Moe Kyaw and Wai Zin

Latt, the drivers of the two trucks, were handed over the Moehnyin Township Police Station the same day.

Similarly, the members of the Tatmadaw deactivated a mine on the road between Moehnyin and Mawhan, Kachin State.— *Myanmar News Agency*

CCTV cameras to be installed on 11 main roads

CLOSED-CIRCUIT television cameras will be installed on 11 main roads in Yangon as soon as possible to help solve the heavy traffic issue, according to an official from the Yangon Region Supervisory Committee.

The cameras will be installed at 154 traffic lights in order to control traffic. Installation of the CCTV cameras is about 50 per cent complete, officials said.

Connections with the control centre will also be finished soon, officials said. The control centre will also monitor

the Yangon Bus Line Service (YBS) by the end of February.

The control centre, located in People's Park and People's Square, will take action against those who break the traffic rules.

Currently, CCTVs are being installed on Pyay Road and at GabaAye Pagoda traffic lights. This modernised system makes it easier to control vehicle congestion.

Myanmar Shwe Yin Company will cooperate with the CRCC company from China to install the cameras.— 200

Crime NEWS

Trailer hits two girls on bicycle

A trailer hit a bicycle on Pantanaw-Min Gayu Road near Letya Village, Pantanaw township, Ayeyawady Region on Tuesday.

The trailer, en route to Daw Wah Village from Patanaw driven by Than Min Latt, 28, from Min Gayu Village, crashed into the bicycle ridden

by Ma Su Sandi Lin, 12, with Ma Tin Tin Khine, 7, on board when the driver lost control of his trailer. The accident injured the two girls, but their condition could not be determined. The reckless driver has been charged under sections 337/279 of the Penal Code.— *Myanmar Police Force*

Man charged for motorbike theft



Suspect motorbike theft Hein Soe Aung alias Moe Gyi. PHOTO: MPF

POLICE arrested a man on suspicion of motorbike theft at the corner of Mingyi Yan Naung road and 49th street, Pyigyidagun township on Tuesday while the police were on routine patrol.

When interrogated, Hein Soe Aung, alias Moe Gyi, 27,

from Sein Pan Ward, Maha Aung Myay Township, admitted that he had stolen the motorbike parked on Kannar Road, Sein Pan Ward 10 days ago.

The local police have taken action against him under section 379 of the Penal Code.— *Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business

Eel cultivation experiment to sell larvae in February

The traditional catching of eels in Myanmar has resulted in a decline in the eel population, so eel hatcheries will be experimenting to locally produce the larvae of eels in Feb 2017, according to eel cultivators.

The eel market will flourish if eels can be locally cultivated, making for a profitable venture considering the high price of eels. Currently, eel farms are being experimentally implemented on five acres of land in Twantay, Yangon Region.

The experimental cultivation of eels was conducted in the past but failed due to the high rate of eel

death. If businessmen are able to solve this problem, eel farming is likely to be successful, said Ko Than Soe, who is engaged in experimental eel farming.

The fisheries department reportedly has a plan to draw up a project to bring the a successful result in local eel cultivation by inviting experts to share their expertise. There is also a plan to go on a study tour to the countries in which eel cultivation has been successful, according to the Myanmar Eel Entrepreneurs Association.

Baby eels are banned from being caught or sold in order to prevent further



Experimental cultivation of eels conducted in the past but failed due to the high rate of eel death. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

decline in the eel population, said Daw Toe Nanda Tin, the chairperson of the Myanmar Eel Entrepreneurs Association.

Those interested from regions and states are invited to take part in this experimental eel farming project.

The larvae of eels will be distributed to the townships outside Yangon, she added.

The drop in eel exports to China resulted from the decline in eel production. Around 12,000 tonnes of eels were exported in 2012, whereas only around 7,000

tonnes of eels were recently exported, it is learnt from the eel association.

The prevailing market price of eels is about Ks9,500 per viss in the domestic market, but the export price was offered at Ks12,000 per viss, accord-

ing to the eels depot.

Eels are traditionally caught in Ayeyawady, Sagaing, Bago, Magwe, Yangon regions and Mon state and the China market is the main buyer of Myanmar's eels.—Myitmakha News Agency

Nearly 600,000 car import permits granted

Companies and individuals have been granted permission to import nearly 600,000 cars as of 30 December 2016 since the relaxation of the vehicle import policy.

The Vehicle Import Supervisory Committee said at the first meeting of 2017 that they approved the import licenses for 579,422 vehicles. Car sale centres, export and import companies, employees and individuals have imported a total of 350,852 vehicles.

Over the last five years, the largest numbers of vehicles were imported in 2012 and 2013. The number of individual car imports increased when the policy of import permit was changed. Under the new policy, every person who is holding a citizenship scrutiny certificate has the right to import the cars.

The number of vehicle imports declined when the vehicle import policy was changed again in 2015 and 2016.—Min Min

US dollar exchange rate over Ks1,360

THE US dollar exchange rate at local banks rose to a high of Ks1,361 on 31st January, while the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) set the exchange rate at Ks1,350.

The dollar price is fluctuating in the global currency market, with the highest index rate of 100.95 points and

the lowest index rate of 99.79 points. The US index rate on 30th January was 100.95, but slipped to 100.24 in the early hours of 31st January. The index rate rose a bit to 100.40 in the evening of 31st Jan.

The unstable dollar price in the global market affected the local dollar exchange rate, with

the highest record rate of Ks1,438 on 16th December and the lowest rate of 1,348 on 16th January.

The CBM increased the exchange rate of the US dollar to Ks1,350 on 31st January whereas the rate was Ks1,345 from 27th to 30th January.

With the global gold price and local exchange

rate of the US dollar trending upward, the domestic gold price reached over Ks873,000 per tical, according to the gold market.

The domestic gold price hit the recorded high of Ks900,200 per tical on 4 October whereas it reached a five-month record low of below Ks840,000 per tical on 24 December.

The local gold price has climbed since 27 December, with a tical price of Ks850,000 on 8 January, Ks860,000 on 10 January, around Ks867,000 on the 28 and 29 January, around Ks871,000 on 30 January and over Ks873,000 on 31 January, according to the local gold and jewellery shops.—Ko Khant

Trade value with ITC hits over Ks 9,908 million

TRADE value with the Individual Trading Card (ITC) reached over Ks9,908million as of 20 January in the current fiscal year, according to the statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

Export value with the ITC was over Ks836million, whereas import

value with ITC hit over Ks9,072million.

Myawady and Kan Pike Tee border trade camps are found to have the largest trade value using the ITC. The border trade values with ITC as of 20 January this year were over Ks604million in Tamu,

over Ks670million in Muse, over Ks4,759million in Myawady, Ks547million in Tachilek, over Ks16million in Lweje, over Ks1,730million in Kan Pike Tee, over Ks294million in Kawthaung, over Ks414million in Reed, over Ks831million in Maw Taung and over

Ks24million in Keng Tung and nearly Ks15million in Maese, it is learnt.

The Trade Department issued 292 cards from 21 Nov 2012 to 31 March 2013, 261 cards in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, 317 cards in 2014-2015, 146 cards in 2015-2016 and 156 cards as

of 20 January, according to an announcement released by the ministry.

A businessman can trade Ks3million a day with an ITC, and the trade department granted trade up to Ks15million a day, which amounted to a five-day-trade-value.—Ko Khant

Myanmar-Thailand trade up by nearly US\$ 160 million

THE trade value at the Myanmar-Thailand border as of 20 January in this fiscal year increased by nearly US\$160million when compared to the same period last year, according to Commerce Ministry statistics.

Myanmar-Thailand border trade value from

1 April to 20 January hit US\$1,025.704million, which was up from US\$865.903million last year. Trade between Myanmar and Thailand flows in and out of these border trade camps: Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthaung, Myeik, Htee Khee, Maw-

taung and Maese.

Out of the seven border trade camps, Kawthaung, Mawtaung and Htee Khee are found to have a smaller trade value than that of last year. The remaining trade camps managed to boost border trade compared to last

year. The trade values as of 20 January this year were US\$58.879mil in Tachilek, US\$708.124mil in Myawady, US\$89.487mil in Kawthaung, US\$155.983mil in Myeik, US\$10.708mil in Htee Khee, US\$2.341mil in Mawtaung and US\$0.

182mil in Maese.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing goods whereas capital goods, raw industrial materials and personal goods are imported into Myanmar.—Mon Mon

Abe to dangle possible infrastructure investment in talks with Trump

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Wednesday he wants to tell US President Donald Trump about how Japan can help in overcoming US infrastructure deficiencies when the two meet next week.

The leaders' meeting in Washington on 10 February comes amid concern about how Japanese firms will be able to maintain or expand their activities in the United States in the face of Trump's "America First" policy drive.

"I want to have a proper talk about how Japan could cooperate in the infrastructure construction that President Trump has identified (as being of importance)," Abe told a House of Representatives Budget Committee.

Trump said in his 20 January inauguration speech that "America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay," and on 24 January signed an executive order to fast-track the approval process for high-priority infrastructure projects.

Abe also expressed a desire Wednesday to explain to Trump the contributions Japanese firms have made to US industry as a whole, and their future potential to raise productivity across US industry, strengthen competitiveness and boost employment.

Responding to a question by a fellow Liberal Democratic Party lawmaker, Abe said he will also appeal to Trump about the importance of the Japan-US security treaty in providing a deterrent

against the nuclear and missile threat from North Korea.

Article 5 of the treaty says that the United States will "act to meet the common danger" if Japan comes under armed attack.

During his election campaign, Trump suggested Japan and other US allies need to contribute more toward the costs of stationing the US military in their countries if they want to retain the protection of the alliance. —Kyodo News



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attends the lower house budget committee in Tokyo on 1 February, 2017. Abe said he will explain at his upcoming meeting with US President Donald Trump on 10 February how Japanese companies have contributed to overall US industry. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Bangladesh arrests four Islamists blamed for cafe attack

DHAKA — Bangladesh security forces on Wednesday arrested four members of an Islamist militant group blamed for an attack on a cafe in Dhaka in 2016 which killed 22 people, most of them foreigners.

The July attack in

Dhaka's diplomatic quarter was claimed by the Islamic State and was the worst militant attack in Bangladesh, which has been hit by a spate of killings of liberals and members of religious minorities in the past few years.

The four arrested, aged 21 and 28, were members of a faction of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militant group, known as New JMB, which has pledged allegiance to Islamic State and which po-

lice believe was involved in organising the cafe attack.

"One of them, was the IT head of the group," Mufti Mahmud Khan, spokesman of the police-led Rapid Action Battalion, which is involved in

counter-terrorism efforts.

They were arrested in a raid on a house on the outskirts of the capital Dhaka, he said, adding that firearms and a huge quantity of explosives were found.

Police have killed

around 50 suspected Islamists in raids since the cafe attack, including the man police said was the attack mastermind, Bangladesh-born Canadian citizen Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury.

—Reuters

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Philippine ministry asks Duterte to clarify military's role in drug war

MANILA — The Philippine defence ministry asked President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday to issue an order for the military to play a role in his war on drugs, including granting troops powers to arrest "scalawag" police.

The ministry asked Duterte to formalise remarks he made in a speech to army generals on Tuesday, when he said he wanted their help in his drugs war, and to detain members of a police force Duterte on Sunday said was "corrupt to the core".

The ministry asked for "an official order regarding this presidential directive to serve as a legal basis for our troops to follow".

"By the same token, the president's verbal directive to arrest 'scalawag cops' should also be covered by a formal order," the ministry said in a statement.

Duterte's police chief instructed the Philippine National Police (PNP) on Monday to suspend their anti-drugs operations after

the killing of a South Korean businessman by rogue drug-squad police. Duterte is infuriated and embarrassed by the incident which he said had "international implications".

Duterte's suggestion that the military should fill the void left by police marks a stunning change of tack by the former city mayor, who had steadfastly supported the police amid allegations from human rights groups and some lawmakers of widespread abuses of power.

The Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency, a body a fraction of the size of the PNP, takes over the lead in fighting drugs and Duterte suggested he may need the military's help.

The rights group Amnesty International said in a report on Wednesday police prosecuting the war on drugs had behaved like the criminal underworld they are supposed to be suppressing, taking payments for killings and delivering bodies to funeral homes.

It said the wave of

drugs-related killings as part of Duterte's campaign appeared to be "systematic, planned and organised" by authorities, and could constitute crimes against humanity. The president's office has yet to comment on the report.

More than 7,600 people have been killed since Duterte launched his war on drugs, more than 2,500 in police operations, with many of the remaining deaths attributed to vigilantes and turf wars.

It is not immediately clear what role the military might play in the anti-drugs campaign.

The volatile president has threatened several times to declare martial law to help the drugs crackdown, and also ruled it out. He has made no suggestion in the past week of invoking military rule.

Duterte's spokesman on Tuesday said the president was fully aware of police corruption when he gave police the lead in the war on drugs, but the scale of the narcotics problem

was so big that he had no other choice.

The Drugs Enforcement Agency said leading the crackdown without the police would be a challenge, but it could handle it.

"We can enlist the help of other agencies and other stakeholders and in fact our director general has been in several meetings with the AFP already," said the agency's spokesman, Derrick Carreon, referring to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"We will be deploying teams in key areas where it would be easier for them to respond. It will be more challenging ... that is why we are engaging other stakeholders."

Senator Leila De Lima, a staunch critic of Duterte, said bringing in the military was a bad idea.

"The solution is to stop the killings, and not call out the AFP to do the killings that the PNP has supposedly ceased to perform," she said in a statement.—Reuters

Former UN chief Ban rules out S Korean presidential bid

SEOUL — Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon announced on Wednesday that he will not run for the South Korean presidency.

“I decided to give up my pure will to have a central role in achieving change in politics and achieving national unity,” the 72-year-old told reporters at a press conference.

Without giving a clear reason, Ban said, “I was deeply disappointed by some of the same old practices and narrow egoistic attitudes (in the political arena).”

He added that he had “lost pure patriotism and ambition by personal slander akin to character assassination and various fake news.”

Ban returned home on 12 January amid widespread speculation he may run for the presidency after heading the United Nations world body for a decade, a position he left last December.

But just days after his home-



Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks during his news conference in Seoul, South Korea on 31 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

coming, the US Justice Department announced that his brother and nephew have been charged in the United States with violat-

ing the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

The case involves a scheme to pay \$2.5 million in bribes to

an official of a Middle East country to facilitate the \$800 million sale of a 72-story commercial building in Hanoi, Vietnam, by a South Korean construction company, it said.

Earlier, a local magazine reported allegations that Ban received \$230,000 from a local businessman while serving as South Korea's foreign minister in the 2000s. Ban has called the report ill-founded and threatened to take legal action against the magazine.

Ban said the various allegations have “seriously scarred the honor of myself, my family and the UN where I served for 10 years.”

He apologized to his supporters, saying he is open to any criticism, and vowed to put his experience to work to ensure a bright future for the country.

Ban, who enjoys widespread popularity in the central Chungcheong region where he

was born, was neck-and-neck with presidential race frontrunner Moon Jae In of the main opposition Democratic Party of Korea in various polls.

President Park Geun Hye, whose five-year single term ends in February 2018, fell into disgrace after being impeached by parliament in December over an abuse-of-power scandal revolving around her and longtime close friend Choi Soon Sil.

The next election, originally set to take place in December this year, will be held earlier if the Constitutional Court approves Park's impeachment, in which case it must be held within 60 days of the court's decision.

The influence-peddling scandal revolves around Park's jailed friend Choi, a private citizen who was indicted on charges of meddling in key state affairs and using her relationship with Park for financial gain. —Kyodo News

India unveils annual budget, pledging more rural spending and tax cuts for individuals

NEW DELHI — India Wednesday unveiled its annual Budget, pledging to boost rural spending and pull more people out of poverty, introducing tax cuts for individuals as well as small and medium-sized industries, and enforcing a curb on political funding.

The Budget came three months after India abolished higher denomination currency notes to curb the menace of black money, a move which caused chaos in the economy, hurting farmers and the poor most, and shortly after the Economic Survey admitted the cash ban had been bad for economy in short term.

Presenting the General Budget in Parliament, along with the Railway Budget for the first time, Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley pegged the fiscal deficit for 2017-18 at 3.2 per cent, and announced allocation of funds to bring more irrigation, roads, power and sanitation

to villages.

India's biggest anti-poverty scheme, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which provides jobs to an estimated 50 million households, also got a boost.

Jaitley announced plans to spend a record 7.09 billion US dollars on the scheme guaranteeing every rural household 100 days of work each year. “Overall rural and farm spending will be increased by 24 per cent as part of the government's plan to double farm incomes over five years,” he added.

The government also spelt out plans to halve income tax rates for people earning between 250,000 rupees to 500,000 rupees (3,700 US dollars to 7,400 US dollars) annually.

“The move should encourage more people to pay tax. The present burden of taxation is mainly on taxpayer and the salaried employees who are showing their income correctly. We also



Farmers sprinkle fertilizers on a paddy field on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, India, on 1 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

proposed to reduce income tax for smaller companies to 25 per cent from 30 per cent,” the Finance Minister said.

In a major reform, the Minister announced scrapping of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, what is seen as a major hurdle for foreign investors.

In an effort to curb illegal

funding to political parties, the Indian government also put a cap on the maximum cash donation that any political party can receive from one person at 2,000 Indian rupees (15 US dollars).

Announcing the Railway Budget, the Finance Minister stressed on passenger safety and announced a slew of measures,

keeping the passengers fare intact for the next fiscal. “Unmanned railway crossings to be eliminated by 2020,” he said.

The Budget has been advanced by a month, which Jaitley said would help government departments start schemes right from the start of the fiscal year. —Xinhua

Indonesian Islamic council to issue fatwa against fake news

JAKARTA — Indonesia's highest Muslim clerical council is to issue an edict, or fatwa, declaring the spreading of fake news un-Islamic, the organisation's chairman said on Wednesday.

Indonesia has one of the world's highest number of Facebook and Twitter users, and the biggest Muslim population, and concern is growing that fake news is fuelling religious and ethnic tension.

“We will issue it as soon as

possible, because the situation is worrying,” said Maaruf Amin, chairman of the Indonesia Ulema Council.

“Hopefully, at least Muslims won't be involved anymore in hoaxes.”

The council is not a government or lawmaking body and its fatwas are not legally binding.

The edict is expected before a hotly contested election on 15 February for governor of the capital, Jakarta, with an ethnic Chi-

nese, Christian incumbent running against two Muslim candidates.

Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, or Ahok as he is known, has been embroiled in a blasphemy trial in which he stands accused of insulting the Koran.

The case arose from an incorrectly subtitled video, which went viral on social media late last year, of comments that Purnama made about his opponents' use of the Islamic holy book in political campaigning.

Hundreds of thousands of Muslims led by a hardline group have twice descended on Jakarta to protest against Purnama and call for his jailing, leading to questions in the world's third largest democracy on the protection of the rights of minorities.

President Joko Widodo has repeatedly urged social media users to refrain from spreading fake news and the government has invited executives from social media giant Facebook for talks this

month to help combat the problem.

The council, with representatives from the country's main moderate and conservative Muslim groups, frequently issues such edicts but they usually have little immediate impact.

The council last year issued a fatwa against clearing land for plantations by burning vegetation, in an effort to prevent smoke pollution that blankets Southeast Asia almost every year. —Reuters

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

A villain tends to resort to wicked ways in time of difficulty

Khin Maung Oo

IT is not a strange thing that the world with different kinds of races has various kinds of beliefs. And, some belong to the same race but they have different likes, so they profess different beliefs. Simultaneously, some from different races like the same thing, thus they hold a similar belief. To sum up, we all are concerned with each other in some way or another and we need not take the words "similarity or difference in race and belief," into consideration. To make it clearer, I want to explain like this. Now, we are living in Myanmar, a country comprising 135 national races. Generally, those from same race marry among themselves, but there are many who are married to those from different races. As another example, I want to point out a family. A man and a

woman from different races meet to form a sweet home, building up a pleasant family. Born of the same parents, siblings may be similar or different in ideas, likes and thinking. Yet, unless there is sibling rivalry among them, they will be happy and peaceful.

For a family, a community or a country to be able to live in peace and happiness, we need to understand each other and to live in unity. Though being born of the same community, attitudes, mindsets and characters differ from each other, depending upon the environments they are brought up in. In other words, those living far from literature and circles of wisdom are likely to become villains in our society. They have been deprived of love and compassion and become morally bankrupt. Once

we hear the word, "villain," we remember the main bad character in a story or play. Villains mean persons who are morally bad or responsible for causing trouble or harm. In fact, we can be likened to parts or organs of the body. For our body and soul to survive, all organs are required to do their individual chores respectively. Failing so, our bodies will collapse. All organs need not find faults with each other. Hands are used for working, eyes for watching and ears for listening. Tongues are used for tasting, but they send food chewed by teeth to other necessary internal organs for sustenance our bodies need. In fact, villains can be said to be infected organs. Our organs need to be healed of particular diseases, if ever. Likewise, villains are infected with diseases of greed, anger and especially

ignorance. Lack of knowledge and wisdom makes them lose morality, and judgment, leading them to do anything without reluctance, provided that they will gain benefits. They forget we all are like parts of the same body, thus they no longer know it will hurt tips of their fingers if they pinch with their own finger nails. If seriously infected organs go uncured, they will harm us to destruction. Likewise, morally corrupted villains should not be permitted to roam around at large as they are extremely dangerous and more dangerous than endemic, pandemic and epidemic diseases. They tend to resort to wicked ways in time of difficulty. Now is the time for us to catch these villains and keep them locked up, for a long, long, time if needed.

TRAINING FOR THE CIVIL SERVICES

BA THAN

THE Global New Light of Myanmar and the Mirror Daily Myanmar newspaper carried the news of the inauguration of the "Civil Services Academy (CSA)" at the Central Institutes of Civil Services of both Upper Myanmar and Lower Myanmar on 2nd January 2017. The opening of the highest national level training institution is the latest modern landmark in the history of training in Myanmar since the achievement of Independence in 1948. The article in Myanmar "The CSA for the Public Servants" carried update information of immense interest to the readers.

All along the prime years of active service spanning 40 years, the author's interest was centred, among others, in training of services personnel. During his service tenure in the PSSTB, he co-authored with U Tun Lwin, Additional Director, and U Tun Hlaing, Deputy Director to undertake in-depth research and study to produce a rare authentic historical document titled, "History of Recruitment of the Public Services" a four volume presentation in Myanmar. Its annals covered more than 100 years, beginning from King Mindon of Konboun Dynasty, through the British Colonial Rule, Burma's Independence in 1948 till 1985, the time of documentation of the research presentation. Individu-

ally the author had also written a Paper, "Training as an integral component of Human Resources Department" which was read in the Seminar organized by the Department of Labour in the capacity of national focal point of UNHRD in Myanmar.

The opening of the Civil Service Academy CSA had re-awakened the author's memories of his involvement in Training during the ongoing years of service in Public Administration. The author wishes to contribute his personal experiences during these crucial years to enlighten the readers of the importance of training for the civil services to enhance the capacity building, development of skills, efficiency, integrity, and competency in administration and governance for now and the future years.

In the context of establishment and administration of the Civil Services, recruitment and training assumed priority in importance. The efficiency of the Civil Services depend upon acquiring qualified and efficient personnel from the open manpower market, to administer various functions of government. That factor can only be performed by proper recruitment process and procedures. After recruitment of qualified personnel, proper training also need to be conducted in tandem to equip them with adequate skills, efficiency and aptitudes to enable them perform their works as-

signed to them in the course of career and professional progressions.

During the year-long research study to compile "Myanmar Recruitment History", the author read at length about the reforms initiated in UK in 1800s. All along those years such selection was riled by spoils system and nepotism. To enable the British Civil service to be free of such corrupt practices, a reform bill was presented to the British Parliament by scholars: Northcote and Trevelyn, as a result of which a Public Service Commission was formed in 1853 to conduct open competitive recruitment based on qualification and merit. The PSC system thenceforth spread outwards to the British Colonies in Asia and Africa. The Colonial Public Service Commissions were granted constitutional status, coverage and sanctity. PSC India became a constitutional body through a series of the Government of India Acts. The British Colonial office also created an elite Civil Service Cadre, named as I.C.S (Indian Civil Service), jeered by the public as "heaven born". Selection from among the top graduates of the colonial universities were screened by the PCS and the selected few were trained in UK, to groom them into high society elite gentry. Then they were posted to where they were native, to administer the high level government positions. With Myan-

mar's Independence in 1948, the Public Service Commission was formed through separate Acts of Parliament to conduct open recruitment from the manpower pool. The formation was subject to change and improvement up to this day. Counting from 1853 when the first Bill was enacted in UK, the PSC has endured 163 years of development rendering quality service to the adopting countries in continuity. All later PSCs formed in the countries of Asia and Africa had adapted to the changes in national character, culture societies and manpower market in carrying out recruiting with success.

In like manner the Myanmar Public Service Commission continued to function its recruitment process as an independent entity. As such it is now almost 70 years of continuing service to the nation.

The second component of interest was centred on the training functions of personnel of the civil services. Once the qualified personnel were recruited through open competition it became the onus of the Training Sector to groom them to become useful qualified, honest and efficient civil servants to perform the duties and responsibilities entrusted to them by their respective ministries, departments and enterprises. There are many components of training, viz: pre-service induction training; and in-service training. In the in-service train-

ing there are many sub-divisions such as on the job training (OJT), training within industries (TWI), and institutionalized training such as training schools, colleges, institutes, academies etc. Then there are two main division viz: Central Training such as the CSAs, technical training, professional training etc and secondly department training.

If the author remembered right, the training schedule of Civil Service Officers (gazetted and non-gazetted) on probation under the Home Ministry were directed by the "L" circular issued by the Home Ministry of the day. After independence and accession to the UN organization as a full-fledged member nation on April 1948, Myanmar became eligible to UN Technical Assistance programmes to upgrade and develop the Public Administration Sector.

A new "Public Administration Department" was set up initially under the Home Ministry in 1956 and subsequently transferred under the office of the Prime Minister, to enable speedy and effective programme planning and implementation. New training programmes were organized, viz: gazette civil officers' training school, clerical training courses, supervisory training courses, organization and methods (O&M) courses conducted with the assistance of UN experts.

To be continued

Democratic Party (Myanmar) presents their policies, philosophy and programs



U Tint Swe of Democratic Party (Myanmar).

VICE Chairman U Tin Swe of the Democratic Party (Myanmar) presented the policies, philosophy and programs on 30 January on Radio and TV.

The complete text of his presentation is as follows:

Respected citizens,

I wish you all Mingalabar from here,

This coming April 1, they will be conducting the By-elections of the Second Hluttaw. The Democratic Party (Myanmar) will contest in 4 vacant seats of the Yangon Region Hluttaw.

Those who believe in multi-party democracy have to go through elections. In this instance, elections are very important. Those who wish to elevate the democratic system need to change the current electoral system. The two systems that are popular in this world are “winner takes all” system and the “proportionate representation”

system. As electoral systems differ, political compatibility and political development are not the same. Democratic standards are also different.

Today there are more than 90 political parties. All the leaders who are founders of political parties have all come in with good philosophies, very astute and sharp outlooks and different qualities. No leader comes with two heads. They also do not come with extra brains.

We can get good solutions only through collective leadership and collective search for problems.

Just by changing the election system, good and different new forces can emerge for the benefit of Myanmar as every political party has different ideologies and people with mature experiences. A new political culture will also emerge.

The position and view of our political party on the Constitu-

tion is that none of the constitutions in the world can foresee the future. Therefore our policy is to use, amend and delete.

The policy of our party is as follows: if we have to choose between our individual and party interest, we will choose the party's interest and the country's interest, give priority to the party's interest. If we have to choose between the national interest and the party's interest, we will choose the national interest. In accordance with this policy, when we study the Constitution, we will put the national interest ahead of party interest and we will use, amend and delete. Even the constitution of the United States which is regarded by many as model has gone through (27) amendments.

Economy: Our economic policy is a policy with four legs. Our leaders who gave us Myanmar's Independence worked with collective leadership during the Second World War, when the flames of civil war were engulfing the country and when law and order was weak. They worked with local entrepreneurs and economic experts by giving them high regard. Because of this, in South East Asia, even countries like Thailand and Singapore looked to us as a model.

There is a saying, “success has a thousand fathers while failure is a lonely orphan”.

As the saying goes, “The strength of the country lies within the country”. We will therefore work in consultation with local entrepreneurs and economic experts and give them encouragement.

As the world's economic power has been shifting from



Party Logo.

West to East, we can regain our position as the top country in Asean if we can position our country strategically on the trade route.

Health and Education: Our policy is to ensure that all citizens who have come of age should get the opportunity to study; to be able to study the subject of your interest; to give priority for the establishment of agricultural and animal husbandry high schools and technical high schools in all 14 States and Divisions; to raise the population growth rate; and to reduce the infant mortality rate.

Social welfare: to set up a fund for those families with four children or more for their health and educational needs. To help senior citizens, those who are helpless and homeless and handicapped people an opportunity to get work.

Workers and Farmers: According to the policy which says “farmers should have ownership of their farmlands”, to make sure that land disputes are given judgements in time before it becomes too late, the government to set the price of agricultural products, and to draw up programs for the purchase of

these products. In addition, to draw up programs for farmers to study and exchange views about regional development.

Our views regarding Peace: We cannot put out the flames of war which has burnt for over 60 years with one stroke. At the Peace Conference (21 Century Panglong), we are sure to succeed if during our negotiations, we are able to give priority to the views of the other side and put our own views in the background. While good luck is on the side of Myanmar, we pray that all concerned parties have good intellectual capacities. During the negotiations, if they put their brains in front instead of their hearts, we believe that the future of Myanmar will shine like the rising sun. In truth, we are all citizens of Myanmar. We should not forget that.

Respected citizens of Myanmar, in conclusion, I wish to say that the political arena which is the Hluttaw, is actually for politicians who are Hluttaw representatives. Therefore, I wish to request Myanmar citizens to look at the party but to choose only the true politicians and vote for them. I conclude my speech with this request. I thank all of you.

Cultural heritage of Yangon to be preserved while implementing Yangon Master Plan

THE historic buildings and cultural heritage of Yangon should be preserved while implementing the master plan of urban development designed by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, said Dr Hiroto Izumi, Special Advisor to Japanese Prime Minister, according to the Myanmar International TV.

JICA had upgraded its Yangon Urban Development and Urban Transport Master plan last year – the plan includes implementing comfortable living environment, efficient transportation system and utilizing inland water network. Under the master plan, 41 major projects in 3 priority projects are set to be carried out by 2020. Reviewing the plan was completed in December last year and was submitted to Yangon Region Chief Minister, the Japanese Special Advisor to Prime Min-

ister said. According to the State Counsellor's suggestion, water transportation system is included in the Master plan.

Japan will assist in implementing the master plan soon after it's approved by the Myanmar government, Special Advisor added.

Meanwhile, Japan also has plans to assist in the country's priority development sectors, the Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar said.

Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi said: we also have plans to assist in Myanmar's agriculture, education and health sectors as well as in basic infrastructure building especially in electricity field.

The assistance will go depending on the government's current priority sector.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Management committee of 70th Union Day, meets troupes

DR MYO AUNG, chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council and chairman of the management committee of the 70th anniversary of the Union Day greeted the national cultural troupes from States and Regions at the in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Chairman of the management committee of the 70th anniversary of the Union Day made a speech that cultural troupes would have to entertain special guests to be present at the Union Day Ceremony with traditional cultural dances, thus they needed to undergo the training specifically and to bring about the Union Spirit of Myanmar.

The major objective of inviting traditional cultural troupes to the Union Day Celebration is to exchange their respective dances from Regions and States with each other.

It is learnt that the excursion trips to Uppata Santi Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw Buddha Gaya and Water Fountain Garden in Nay



Dr Myo Aung, chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, welcomes cultural troupes from regions and states. PHOTO: MNA

Pyi Taw are included for cultural troupes to observe the development of Nay Pyi Taw. Out of all the traditional cultural troupes invited, 36 from Kachin State, 40 from Kayah State, 41 from Kayin State, 32 from Chin State, 35 from Mon State, 36 from Rakhine State, 37 from Shan State, 37 from Tanintharyi Region and 24

from Mandalay Region—328 in all, arrived, it is learnt.

Dr Myo Aung, chairman of the management committee of the 70th anniversary of the Union Day greeted cordially leaders and members of the troupes, inspecting hostels, dispensary, library and office of the sub-committee.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Trump's defence chief heads to Asia, eyeing China, N Korea threat



US President Donald Trump listens to remarks by Defence Secretary James Mattis (R) after a swearing-in ceremony for Mattis at the Pentagon in Washington, US, on 17 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON/TOKYO — US President Donald Trump's defence secretary is expected to underscore US security commitments to key allies South Korea and Japan on his debut trip to Asia this week as concerns mount over North Korea's missile programme and tensions with China.

The trip is the first for retired Marine General James Mattis since becoming Trump's Pentagon chief and is also the first foreign trip by any of Trump's cabinet secretaries.

Officials say the fact that Mattis is first heading to Asia — as opposed to perhaps visiting troops in Iraq or Afghanistan — is meant to reaffirm ties with two Asian allies hosting nearly 80,000 American troops and the importance of the region overall.

That US reaffirmation could be critical after Trump appeared to question the cost of such US alliances during the election campaign. He also jolted the region by pulling Washington out of an Asia-Pacific trade deal that Japan had championed.

"It's a reassurance message," said one Trump administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"This is for all of the people who were concerned during the campaign that then-candidate, now-president, Trump was skeptical of our alliances and was somehow going to retreat from our traditional leadership role in the region."

Trump himself has spoken with the leaders of both Japan

and South Korea in recent days and will host Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Washington on 10 February.

Mattis leaves the United States on 1 February, heading first to Seoul before continuing to Tokyo on 3 February.

Trump singled out both South Korea and Japan on the campaign trail, suggesting they were benefiting from the US security umbrella without sharing enough of the costs.

In one 2016 television interview, Trump said of the 28,500 US troops deployed to South Korea: "We get practically nothing compared to the cost of this. Why are we doing this?"

Mattis, in his confirmation hearing, appeared to play down those remarks, noting that there was a long history of US presidents and even defence secretaries calling on allies to pay their fair share of defence costs.

But his visit to the region comes amid concerns North Korea may be readying to test a new ballistic missile, in what could be an early challenge for Trump's administration.

Speaking with South Korean Defence Minister Han Min-koo ahead of his trip, Mattis reaffirmed a US commitment to defend the country and "provide extended deterrence using the full range of US capabilities."

Analysts expect Mattis to seek an update on South Korea's early moves to host a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system, which, once in place sometime in 2017,

would defend against North Korea's nuclear and ballistic capabilities.

Still, a South Korean military official played down expectations of any big announcements during the trip, saying Mattis' first visit would likely be "an ice-breaking session" for both countries.

In Tokyo, Mattis is to meet Defence Minister Tomomi Inada, who has repeatedly said Japan is bearing its fair share of the costs for US troops stationed there and has stressed that the alliance is good for both nations.

Japan's defence spending remains around 1 per cent of GDP, far behind China, which is locked in a dispute with Japan over a group of East China Sea islets 220 km (140 miles) northeast of Taiwan known as the Senkakus in Tokyo and the Diaoyus in Beijing.

The trip also comes amid growing concern about China's military moves in the South China Sea. Tension with Beijing escalated last week when Trump's White House vowed to defend "international territories" there.

China responded by saying it had "irrefutable" sovereignty over disputed islands in the strategic waterway.

"What US military people say is that considering the pace of China's military build-up such as anti-ship missiles and fighters, there are worries about Japan's capabilities," said a senior Japanese defence ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia says invite to Israeli, Palestinian leaders to meet in Moscow still open

MOSCOW — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday that an invitation to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to meet in Moscow was still in force.

Lavrov said at a conference in Abu Dhabi that Russia was grateful that the two sides had in principle accepted the invitation.

No date has been given for the meeting, which Russia's Foreign Ministry first announced in September.—Reuters

Russia charges cyber security experts with treason: Interfax

MOSCOW — Russian authorities have charged two former officers in the Federal Security Service and an employee of cyber security firm Kaspersky Lab with committing treason in the interests of the United States, the Interfax news agency reported.

The agency cited Ivan Pavlov, a lawyer who said he was representing one of the three arrested men. Pavlov identified the three as Kaspersky employee Ruslan Stoyanov and as security service officers specialising in cyber security Sergei Mikhailov and Dmitry Dokuchayev.

"Mikhailov, Dokuchayev, and Stoyanov have been charged with state treason in the interests of the United States," Interfax quoted Pavlov as saying.

He declined to say which of the three he was representing.—Reuters

US Aegis destroyer grounds off eastern Japan, causes oil spill

YOKOSUKA, Japan — A US Navy Aegis destroyer has grounded off eastern Japan resulting in an oil spill, a Navy official said on Wednesday.

The incident with the destroyer, named Antietam and deployed at the US Navy's Yokosuka base southwest of Tokyo, took place on Tuesday and resulted in an estimated 4,160 litres of hydraulic oil being spilled, according to the official.

The destroyer suffered damage to its screw but returned to dock with the help of tugboats later Tuesday, the official said, adding the extent of the damage and repair costs are not yet known.

The US Navy said that it will take appropriate measures to minimize effects on the local environment.—Kyodo News

Problem at Dutch air traffic control causing delays at Amsterdam airport — official

AMSTERDAM — A technical problem at the national air traffic control in the Netherlands is causing delays and flight diversions at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, an official said on Wednesday.

"We are not sure yet what the cause is or how long it will take to fix it," said spokesman Paul Weber.

The problem at Schiphol, one of Europe's largest flight hubs with 58 million passengers in 2015, started at about 0715 GMT.

Dozens of arriving and departing flights were delayed, according to the airport's website.—Reuters

Iran confirms new missile test, says did not violate nuclear deal

DUBAI — Iran's defence minister said the Islamic Republic had tested a new missile, confirming earlier reports, Tasnim news agency quoted him as saying on Wednesday.

Hossein Dehghan said the test did not violate the country's deal on its nuclear programme or the United Nations Security Council's resolution.

"The recent test was in line with our plans and we will not allow foreigners to interfere in our defence affairs," he said.

A US official said Iran on Sunday test-launched a medium-range ballistic missile that exploded after travelling 630 miles (1,010 km).—Reuters

German police raid homes and mosques, arrest Tunisian suspected of planning attack

BERLIN — More than 1,100 German police searched 54 homes, business premises and mosques in Frankfurt and other towns in the western state of Hesse in the early hours of Wednesday and arrested a Tunisian man suspected of planning an attack, German authorities said.

The 36-year-old Tunisian is suspected of recruiting for Islamic State in Germany since August 2015 and building up a network of supporters with the aim of carrying out a terrorist attack in Germany, Frankfurt's prosecutor general said in a statement.

It said police had carried out the raids in Frankfurt am Main, Offenbach am Main, Darmstadt, Limburg and Wiesbaden as well as in some other districts. Authorities are investigating 16 suspects aged between 16 and 46, including the arrested man.

The attack plans were at an early stage and there was no concrete attack target yet, the prosecutor general said.

Peter Beuth, interior minister of the state of Hesse, said there had not been any immediate danger: "It was not about preventing an imminent attack — rather security forces in Hesse intervened



German police officers enter Frankfurt's Bilal mosque during early morning raids in the federal state of Hesse and its capital Frankfurt, Germany, on 1 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

early to protect citizens from the threat of harm."

Beuth added that the officers involved in the raids had managed to "destroy an extensive Salafist network". Salafism is an ultra-conservative branch of Sunni Islam.

Prosecutors in Frankfurt are

due to hold a news conference at 1000 local time (0900 GMT).

German police arrested three men in Berlin on Tuesday on suspicion of having close links to Islamic State militants and planning to travel to the Middle East for combat training.

Many Germans feel unnerved after Anis Amri, a failed asylum seeker from Tunisia, killed 12 people when he attacked a Berlin Christmas market in December - the worst of a spate of attacks on civilians in Germany over the past year.—Reuters

African leaders cautiously back strategy to quit global court

ADDIS ABABA — African leaders have backed a "strategy of collective withdrawal" from the International Criminal Court (ICC), but it came with unspecified reservations, an African Union official said on Wednesday after this week's African Union summit.

The official did not give details about the strategy or the reservations, but it highlights broad antipathy towards the court among Africans who feel the ICC unfairly targets them.

A document seen by Reuters before the summit proposed a co-ordinated withdrawal unless the ICC was reformed. It included a call for "regionalisation" of international law, a reference to proposals for an African war crimes court.

Almost a third of the ICC's 124 members are African, and a withdrawal by a large number of them would cripple a court that has yet to fulfil hopes that it would ensure perpetrators of war crimes and genocide never go unpunished.—Reuters

Israeli forces begin operation to evict settlers from illegal outpost

AMONA, (West Bank) — Israeli police moved into an outpost in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday to remove settlers who Israel's Supreme Court ruled have been living illegally on privately owned Palestinian land.

Settlers and dozens of pro-settlement activists who flocked to the Amona outpost to protest against the evacuation burned tyres and piled makeshift barricades at its entrance.

But there was no immediate violence as columns of unarmed police walked towards prefabricated homes where some 330 settlers live.

Several families with small children walked out of the outpost minutes before the operation began. But others said they would stay put and peacefully resist eviction.

"We won't leave our homes on our own. Pull us out, and we'll go," Avihai Bavaron, one of the outpost's leaders, told reporters. "It is a black day for Zionism."

Hours before the police operation, Israel announced plans for 3,000 more settlement homes in the West Bank, the third such declaration in eleven days since US President Donald Trump took office. Trump has signalled he could be more accommodating toward such projects than his predecessor



A protestor throws a stone towards Israeli security forces during an eviction of residents from the Israeli settler outpost of Amona in the occupied West Bank on 1 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Barack Obama.

An announcement a week ago by Israel that it would build some 2,500 more homes in the West Bank, territory captured in a 1967 Middle East war, drew rebukes from the Palestinians and from the EU. It followed approval of more than 560 new homes in East Jerusalem days before.

Palestinians want the West Bank and Gaza Strip for an independent state, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Israeli troops and settlers withdrew from Gaza in 2005. The legal battle over Amona has dragged on for eight years.

Under the latest Supreme Court ruling, it had to be evacuated by 8 February. In 2006 Amona saw a violent partial eviction, with nine shacks torn down by authorities. Police were confronted by thousands of settlers and more than 200 people were injured.

Most countries consider settlements illegal and an obstacle to peace, as they fragment territory. Palestinians seek for a viable state.

Israel disagrees, citing historical and political links to the land — which the Palestinians also assert — as well as security interests.—Reuters

Afghan government controls less than 60 per cent of country — watchdog

KABUL — The Afghan government controls less than 60 per cent of the country, a US watchdog agency reported on Wednesday, after security forces retreated from many strongholds last year.

Afghan soldiers and police, with the aid of thousands of foreign military advisers, are struggling to hold off a resurgent insurgency led by the Taliban, as well as other groups like Islamic State. As of November, the government could only claim to control or influence 57 per cent of Afghanistan's 407 districts, according to US military estimates released by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), in a quarterly report to the US Congress.

That represents a 15 per cent decrease in territory held compared with the same time in 2015, the agency said in a report.

"SIGAR's analysis of the most recent data provided by US forces in Afghanistan suggests that the security situation in Afghanistan has not improved this quarter," it said.

"The numbers of the Afghan security forces are decreasing, while both casualties and the number of districts under insurgent control or influence

are increasing."

More than 10 per cent of districts are under insurgent control or influence, while 33 per cent are contested, according to the report.

Some of the most contested provinces include Uruzgan, with five of six districts under insurgent control or influence, and Helmand, with eight of its 14 districts under insurgent control or influence.

US military officials say much of the loss of territory reflects a change in strategy, with Afghan forces abandoning many checkpoints and bases in order to consolidate and focus on the most threatened areas. Insurgents tried at least eight times to capture provincial capitals, although each assault was eventually beaten off.

According to US military estimates, the number of Afghans living under insurgent control or influence decreased slightly in recent months to about 2.5 million people. But nearly a third of the country, or 9.2 million people, live in areas that are contested, according to SIGAR, leading to some of the highest civilian casualty rates the United Nations has ever recorded in Afghanistan.—Reuters

EU chair labels Trump a 'threat' as Europeans debate US ties

BRUSSELS — Donald Trump has joined Russia, China and radical Islam as a threat to the European Union, EU leaders were told on Tuesday by the man chairing a summit where they will debate relations with the United States.

European Council President Donald Tusk, a conservative former premier of Poland, wrote to EU national leaders to lay out themes for discussion when they meet in Malta on Friday to discuss the future of their Union as Britain prepares to leave.

In vivid language that reflects deep concern in Europe at the new US president's support for Brexit, as well as his ban on refugees and people from several Muslim countries, Tusk called on Europeans to rally



President of the European Council Donald Tusk. PHOTO: REUTERS
against eurosceptic nationalists at home and take "spectacular steps" to deepen the continent's integration.

Saying the EU faced the biggest challenges of its 60-year history, Tusk named an "assertive China", "Russia's aggressive policy" towards its neighbours and "radical

Islam" fuelling anarchy in the Middle East and Africa as key external threats.

These, "as well as worrying declarations by the new American administration, all make our future highly unpredictable," he said.

Laying out issues lead-

ers may address in a 60th anniversary declaration at Rome in March, Tusk said the EU unity built after World War Two and the Cold War was needed "to avoid another historic catastrophe". He also said Americans should not weaken Transatlantic ties fundamental to "global order and peace". "The disintegration of the European Union will not lead to the restoration of some mythical, full sovereignty of its member states, but to their real and factual dependence on the great superpowers: the United States, Russia and China," Tusk wrote to the EU leaders. "Only together can we be fully independent."

Senior officials discussed a possible EU response to Trump at a meet-

ing in Brussels on Monday where some governments stressed that Europeans should not be hasty to alienate a key ally, diplomats said. "We don't want to get fired," one senior EU diplomat said in reference to Trump's reality TV catchphrase. Another said that because the full US administration was not yet in place, Europeans should be cautious: "No government in Europe can respond in a coherent manner to this series of orders and tweets," the diplomat said.

Yet after 11 days in office, Trump and his aides have stirred concern in Europe due to their doubts about NATO and countering Russia in Ukraine, as well as over free trade. The Socialist finance minister of France, a nation long scepti-

cal of US market economics, said on Tuesday Washington seemed set on protectionism that was a "grave risk to the world trade order".

Friday's summit could also expose tensions with British Prime Minister Theresa May, who will attend a morning session on efforts to curb migrants heading for Europe from Libya but will leave before the other 27 discuss post-Brexit reforms.

British and EU officials said they expect May to attend a lunch where all 28 leaders will discuss "international challenges", including Trump. But May's embrace of Trump by way of a visit to Washington last week and push for a post-Brexit UK-US trade deal have irritated London's continental partners.—Reuters

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Dated 2 February 2017

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Nearly 2,000 people float in a line setting a new Guinness world record for the most people floating while holding hands in Lake Epecuen, a salty lake, near Carhue, Argentina, on 29 January, 2017 in this handout supplied by Prensa Municipalo Adolfo Alsina. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bathers float off with a world record in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES — Nearly 2,000 swimmers formed a long snaking line in a salty Argentine lake to set a world record for the

most people floating while holding hands.

The 1,941 people who took up the challenge on Lake Epecuen on Sunday

eclipsed the previous mark of 634 bathers set in Taiwan in 2014.

Lake Epecuen, in the southeast of Buenos Aires

province, contains almost 10 times more salt than the sea, helping participants to float naturally.—Reuters

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Dated 2 February 2017

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Britain's Brexit bill set to clear first legislative hurdle

LONDON — A law allowing Prime Minister Theresa May to trigger Britain's exit from the European Union is expected to clear its first legislative hurdle on Wednesday, paving the way for the government to launch divorce talks by the end of March.

May's government is seeking approval for a new law giving her the right to trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty — the legal process for leaving the bloc — after the Supreme Court ruled last week that she could not take that deci-

sion unilaterally.

The bill could complete the legislative process by 7 March.

May plans to begin exit negotiations with the EU by 31 March, starting two years of talks that will define Britain's economic and political future and test the unity of the EU's 27 remaining members.

Lawmakers are expected to reject an attempt to throw out the bill, proposed by pro-EU Scottish nationalists, and then vote in favour of allowing it to progress to the next, more detailed, leg-

islative stage. The first vote should take place at 1900 GMT. The votes will come after hours of impassioned speeches in parliament that began on Tuesday, which have underlined the lingering sense of shock among the largely pro-European political establishment that 52 per cent of their constituents voted to leave the EU in a referendum last year.

"I greatly fear that generations that either did not vote or are yet to come will not thank us for our great folly," Conservative lawmaker Anna Soubry said in

Tuesday's debate.

Despite presiding over a Conservative Party divided over staying in the EU, May, who campaigned for a 'Remain' vote, has secured almost unanimous support from her lawmakers for the legislation. That means her 16-seat parliamentary majority should be enough to see the bill progress.

The opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has also pledged his party's support for the bill at this stage, although many of his lawmakers have said they will defy him.—Reuters

Philippines communist rebels end ceasefire but still support peace talks

MANILA — The Maoist-led rebel group in the Philippines said on Wednesday it was terminating a unilateral ceasefire it declared five months ago and resuming a protracted guerrilla warfare that has killed tens of thousands of people.

The New People's Army said in a statement that the ceasefire agreed to last August would expire on 10 February, but added the rebels would still support peace talks with the government of President Rodrigo Duterte.

"In our experience and in the experience of other peoples, it is possible to negotiate while fighting until the substantive agreements are forged to address the roots of the armed conflict and lay the basis for a just and lasting peace," the group said.

It said the decision was made because the government failed to comply with its "obligation" to pardon and release all political prisoners and "has treacherously taken advantage" of the ceasefire to encroach on its territory.

Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, said he was "dismayed" with the move, which came after peace negotiators agreed to further discuss a bilateral ceasefire.

But he said he would recommend to Duterte that the government's unilateral ceasefire be maintained to provide an "enabling and conducive environment" to peace talks.

"The road to peace is not easy to traverse. What is important is that we all stay the course," Dureza said.

The communists ac-

cused the military of occupying 500 barrios, or town districts, that are supposedly within their control and that government forces were allegedly engaged in "hostile actions" and other "offensive operations".

Military spokesman Brigadier General Restituto Padilla said the NPA was still involved in extortion, recruitment and attacks on plantations, mines and other businesses.

He cited nine incidents showing rebel violations of their own truce, including abducting a soldier in the south and killing two others in a northern province.

From September to November last year, the military reported zero armed encounters with communist guerrillas but it has observed an increase in rebel attacks in the last two months.—Reuters

Travel firm H I S to be referred to prosecutors for illegal overtime

TOKYO — Labour authorities plan to refer major travel agency H I S Co and those responsible for working hours to prosecutors on suspicion of requiring employees to do an illegal amount of overtime, according to a source familiar with the matter.

The Tokyo Labour Bureau conducted searches of its offices last July as part of a probe into whether the travel agency had violated the labour standards law, H I S said.

The bureau of the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry told the company it discovered overtime work conducted during fiscal 2015 had exceeded the limit set in the labour-management agreement.

It is unclear how many company personnel will be referred to prosecutors.

Japan has started to

increase monitoring of excessive work hours since the overwork-related suicide of a young employee at advertising giant Dentsu Inc prompted the labour authorities to refer the company to prosecutors late last year.

The labour ministry also referred Mitsubishi Electric Corp to prosecutors last month on suspicion of forcing excessive overtime on a male employee.

The travel agency said it rectified the issue of illegally excessive overtime after it introduced measures to shorten business hours.

"We seriously accept the points identified by the labour bureau and continue to do our best to improve labor conditions," H I S said in a statement.—Kyodo News



The building housing the Tokyo headquarters of H I S Co is pictured on the evening of 31 January, 2017. It was reported on 1 February that Japan's labour authorities plan to refer the major travel agency and those responsible for working hours to prosecutors on suspicion of requiring employees to do illegal overtime. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Centrist Macron seen most likely to win French presidency, Fillon not making 2nd round-poll

PARIS — Independent centrist Emmanuel Macron is the candidate most likely to win France's closely contested presidential election this year, according to predictions in an opinion poll published as his conservative rival Francois Fillon battles a scandal.

The poll by Elabe for Les Echos newspaper conducted on 30-31 January showed an increase in voting intentions for both Macron and far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen, with Fillon, the

candidate for The Republicans who was favourite until last week, not making the second round.

Elabe had two voting scenarios that varied according to which other candidates stand.

First round voting intentions for Macron were unchanged or up 1 point to 22-23 per cent depending on the scenario.

Le Pen's first round score was up by 3 points to 26-27 per cent.

Fillon's score fell by 19-20 per cent. The poll

was conducted days after a newspaper report saying his wife was paid taxpayers money for fake work threw his campaign off course.

Those scores would eliminate Fillon from the second round, a contest between the two top scorers in round one.

Elabe predicted Macron would beat Le Pen in that second round on 7 May with 65 per cent of the vote. Should Fillon make the second round, he also would beat Le Pen, but by a lower

margin, at 59 per cent, Elabe said.

The poll, published on Wednesday, is the second one to be conducted since the scandal engulfed Fillon's campaign last week and an official inquiry was opened.

It confirms an impact on the vote for Fillon that was noted by a survey published on Sunday.

On Tuesday, French police searched Fillon's office in parliament and party leaders began to consider a 'Plan B' without him.—Reuters

Anne-Sophie Pic Launches Healthy Eating ChefCuisine In England!

LONDON — ChefCuisine is a new generation of healthy ready-made food, elaborated by Anne-Sophie Pic. The brand introduces a specially designed cooker and a large selection of high-quality ready-made meals.

Anne-Sophie Pic, The World's Best Female Chef 2011 and the only 3 Michelin star-rated woman chef in France, creates with Chef Cuisine a range of 30 meals carefully selecting all the ingredients to ensure a fresh and healthy prepa-

ration. Health is considered as important as taste by Chef Cuisine, which uses only the best ingredients, without food colouring, preservatives or artificial flavours. The selection of meals are designed to contain low salt, no GMO, no palm oil and low added fat.

ChefCuisine also provides an online meal plan; general / gluten free / no meat/ low carbs..., which allows the user to choose personalised menus, with 6 dishes weekly, bi-weekly or monthly delivered to

their doorstep.

It can't be any healthier, it can't be any tastier, it can't be any easier, thanks to the ChefCuisine cooker that is able to cook slowly and softly, using steam cooking in a bain-marie.

The brand distances itself from microwave-reheated, low-quality food by offering a device that identifies and cooks every ingredient precisely as it should be, preserving their fresh taste and nutrients, their texture and composition.

Launching today, ChefCuisine is the perfect choice to have access to balanced premium quality meals at home, saving time on cooking to focus on more important matters, or simply to relax.

The cooker comes in three different colours, vanilla-cream, purple, aubergine or black, with a welcome offer of £129, which includes 1 ChefCuisine cooker, a plating toolkit and 6 daily meals from the Every Day range.—Reuters

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV INDUSTRIAL MAYA VOY. NO (305)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV INDUSTRIAL MAYA VOY. NO (305) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV DYNAMIC OCEAN-03 VOY. NO (-)

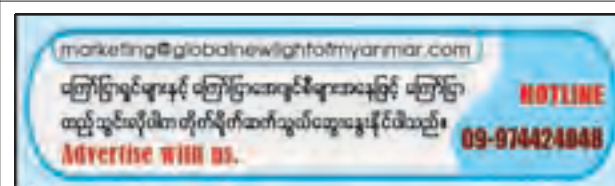
Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNAMIC OCEAN-03 VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-6 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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Peanuts, home of Snoopy and Charlie Brown, up for sale — sources

NEW YORK — US brand management company Iconix Brand Group Inc (ICON.O) is exploring a sale of its majority stake in Peanuts Worldwide LLC, which owns the rights to cartoon strip characters Snoopy and Charlie Brown, according to people familiar with the matter.

The move comes three months after US insurance company MetLife Inc (MET.N) dropped the Peanuts characters it had been using as mascots for more than 30 years — a blow to debt-burdened Iconix.

The characters, which include Lucy, Peppermint Patty and Pigpen, have attracted the interest of Chinese companies as well as other investors keen to snap up US media and licensing assets, the people said this week.

Created by Charles Schulz and licensed in over 100 countries, the characters generate about \$30 million in 12-month earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, the people added. They declined to comment on the expected deal valuation.

Besides Peanuts, Iconix is also looking to sell its Strawberry Shortcake brand, which is based on a character that rose to fame in the 1980s as a doll for young girls, the people said. They asked not to be identified because the matter is confidential.

The New York-based company is working with investment



A float depicting the animated “Peanuts” characters Snoopy and Woodstock proceeds along 6th Ave as spectators watch from buildings during the 89th Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in the Manhattan borough of New York on 26 November, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

bank Guggenheim Partners LLC on an auction process to sell the brands, the people added, cautioning that there was no certainty that any deal would occur.

Iconix, which has a market capitalization of \$553 million, did not respond to a request for comment, while Guggenheim de-

clined to comment.

While MetLife will stop flying blimps featuring Snoopy this year, Peanuts has agreements with brands such as chocolate maker Nestle SA (NESN.S), stationary company Hallmark Cards Inc, and retailer Zara, according to a regulatory filing by Iconix.

In 2015, Twenty-First Century Fox Inc (FOXA.O) released The Peanuts Movie, which was nominated for a Golden Globe award and grossed \$246 million worldwide, according to Box Office Mojo, a website that tracks the revenue that movies generate.

Peanuts’ largest internation-

al market is Japan, where a new Snoopy museum opened last year, according to the Iconix filing. The company renewed a long-standing contract to air the popular Peanuts holiday TV specials on US network ABC in 2014 for five years.

Initially called “Li’l Folks”, the comic strip was renamed “Peanuts” in 1950, when it became syndicated in seven newspapers, according to the Charles M Schulz Museum website. Schulz passed away in 2000.

Iconix, which also owns clothing brand Joe Boxer and outdoor wear brand London Fog, purchased an 80 per cent stake in Peanuts in 2010 from US media company E W Scripps Co (SSP.N) in a deal valued at \$175 million.

The remaining 20 per cent in the company is owned by Charles M Schulz Creative Associates, which is controlled by the Schulz family. Iconix sold another flagship brand, the Sharper Image, last year to its biggest licensee, ThreeSixty Group Inc, for \$100 million. The transaction was used to pay down some of Iconix’s debt, which totaled \$1.29 billion as of the end of September.

Last year, Iconix said it would help develop and produce a new animated series based on Strawberry Shortcake. Iconix acquired the brand about two years ago for \$105 million from greeting cards maker American Greetings Corp.—Reuters

TV’s DeGeneres uses ‘Finding Dory’ to take dig at Trump immigration ban

LOS ANGELES — US talk show host Ellen DeGeneres on Tuesday took a subtle dig at US President Donald Trump’s immigration ban by explaining the plot of her hit animated movie “Finding Dory.”

DeGeneres, who voices the forgetful fish Dory on a mission to find her parents in the United States, noted that “Finding Dory” was screened at the White House on Saturday, the day after Trump signed an executive order banning refugees and travelers from seven majority-Muslim nations from entering the United States.

Speaking to the audience of “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” in a segment aired on Tuesday, she mentioned the protests sparked by Trump’s order. She said she didn’t want to get political so she talked instead about the plot of the 2016 film, which has taken in \$1 billion at the global box office.

In the movie, Dory and her friends arrive in America, where they find themselves stuck behind a large wall keeping Dory from finding her parents.

“They all have to get over the wall and you won’t believe it, but that wall has almost no effect in keeping them out,” DeGeneres said.

Trump has also pledged to build a wall on the US border with

Mexico to keep out undocumented immigrants.

Dory crosses the border but is still separated from her family. Luckily for her, DeGeneres said, other animals are willing to help Dory and bring her into their world.

“Animals that don’t even need her. Animals that don’t have anything in common with her,” DeGeneres said. “They help her, even though they’re completely different colors. Because that’s what you do when you see someone in need, you help them.”

“So that is what I hope everyone watching ‘Finding Dory’ has learned,” she added.

The remarks by DeGeneres were the latest in a series of direct and indirect attacks by celebrities on the president’s immigration ban, which has caused chaos and protests at airports around the world. Actors at the Screen Actors Guild awards ceremony in Los Angeles on Sunday also took aim at the ban in fiery speeches that ranged from personal experiences as immigrants or Muslims to calls for solidarity.—Reuters



Cast member Ellen DeGeneres poses at the premiere of ‘Finding Dory’ at El Capitan theatre in Hollywood, California US on 8 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Just two Hollywood films get GLAAD nominations for LGBT stories

NEW YORK — Just two mainstream movies — “Moonlight” and “Star Trek Beyond” — earned nominations on Tuesday for the annual GLAAD awards recognizing the fair portrayal of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in film, television, music and journalism.

Activist group GLAAD said the two nominations were the lowest since 2003 in its wide-release movie category and reflected the dearth of LGBT-inclusive storylines at Hollywood movie studios.

“At a time when progress is at a critical juncture, it is imperative that Hollywood tell more LGBTQ stories that reflect the community’s rich diversity — and build understanding that brings all communities closer together,” GLAAD President Sarah Kate Ellis said in a statement.

“Moonlight,” which is also nominated for eight Oscars, is the coming of age tale of a young black man struggling with his sexual identity in an impoverished South Miami neighbourhood. Sci-fi adventure “Star Trek Beyond” portrayed USS Enterprise crew member Hikaru Sulu as a gay man to honour the gay activism of actor George Takei who originated the role but played it as a straight man some 50 years ago.

Outside film, GLAAD found plenty to honor on television, including nominations for comedy series “The Real O’Neals,” “Transparent” and “Grace and Frankie,” as well as drama series “The OA,” “Supergirl,” “The Fosters” and soap opera “The Bold and the Beautiful.”

Singers Frank Ocean, Elton John, Sia and Lady Gaga were among those nominated in an expanded music category, while comic book nominations doubled to 10 this year and included “DC Comics Bombshells” and summer camp girls adventure “Lumberjanes.”

The GLAAD media awards were started 28 years ago to honour images and storylines that challenge misconceptions and broaden understanding and acceptance of the LGBT community. The awards will be handed out at ceremonies in Los Angeles on 1 April and in New York on 6 May.—Reuters

Photographer captures deadly battle for land and environment in Thailand

BANGKOK — Photographer Luke Duggleby recalled a meeting four years ago with Thai environmental activist Jintana Kaewkhao, who told him how she faced assassination attempts in her fight to block a coal-fired power plant along the coast in southern Thailand.

Jintana survived, but Charoen Wat-aksorn, who protested alongside her and fought against another coal-fired power plant in a nearby community, was shot dead in June 2004.

The 39-year-old British photographer said the conversation with Jintana was pivotal for him, inspiring him to refocus his lens on the deadly battle for land, environmental and human

rights. “Ever since I met her, my views on everything changed. The type of work I wanted to cover changed,” said Duggleby, a photographer with the New York-based photo agency Redux Pictures, ahead of his exhibition “For those who died trying” that opened on Tuesday in Bangkok.

“I saw the fine line between life and death when taking on a powerful opposition.”

In 2015, Duggleby began photographing framed portraits of human rights activists who have been killed. Some are the very images displayed at their funerals — placed in the locations where they were murdered or last seen: at a bus stop or petrol station, in rubber and

palm oil plantations, and at their homes.

The 35 photos — documenting 37 activists killed over the last 20 years — have been exhibited with support from the rights group Protection International at the United Nations in Geneva and European Parliament in Brussels.

London watchdog Global Witness calls the fight for land and the environment “a new battleground for human rights”, with more than three people a week killed in 2015 while struggling against governments, companies and gangs exploiting land for products like timber, minerals and palm oil.

The activists whose images Duggleby captured

fought to expose illegal concessions for palm oil plantations, protect forests from illegal logging, and protest environmental pollution caused by mines. Duggleby, who has been living in Thailand for a decade, is planning a short documentary on the struggle against a palm oil company and the government for land rights in Klong Sai Pattana, a community in southern Thailand where four activists have been killed.

He also hopes to continue taking photos to add to his photo exhibition.

“You can’t stop a project like this... To stop a project like this would be an injustice to those who were killed later,” he said. —Reuters

Special Condolence

We are overwhelmed with sadness for the bereaved family of U Ko Ni, Advocate, Notary Public, and Writer (Maung Ko Ni-Advocate), who passed away suddenly at 5.10 pm on Sunday, 29th January 2017.

Members of Delegation to Indonesia

Cuban artists paint garments, not canvases for ‘Fashion Art’ show

HAVANA — A fantastical blue bird emerges from leaves in the latest work by Manuel Mendive, considered Cuba’s top living artist. But this isn’t a framed canvas, it’s a painting on a dress, for the exhibit “Fashion Art Havana” that opened on Tuesday.

In creations by other Cuban artists, a ghostly face seems to scream out from a dark cape, a red and blue matryoshka doll is painted onto a dress, while a bubble-shaped frock is covered with wooden spikes.

The show is the latest in the “Fashion Art” series by Spanish designer Manuel Fernandez, who has worked with artists all over the world to create one-off garments at the intersection of both disciplines.

“Art doesn’t have to always be hung on walls, it could also be on floor tiles, earrings, tights or many other places,” Fernandez said in an interview.

Participating artists said at the opening they had high hopes the exhibit would help fashion become viewed in Communist-ruled Cuba as more

than a mere consumerist indulgence.

“Fashion is also art, and this is a concept we need to start understanding here,” said Jorge Perugorria, who painted a graphic black and white design on his dress.

Fernandez said he first designs a garment for an artist, letting their work and personality inspire the form. He leaves the fabric blank though, like a canvas for them to then paint.

Given that he lets the artists paint whatever they wish, he has no idea what his shows will look like until the very last minute — a nail-biting experience.

In the case of “Fashion Art Havana”, which will run in Havana’s sumptuous, neo-baroque Gran Teatro until 11 February, Fernandez said he was struck with how two painters ended up drawing on Russian themes.

This testified to the strong influence the Soviet Union had on Cuba during their Cold War alliance, something you would not find in other Latin American cultures. —Reuters

Belgian entrepreneur invites you to scuba dive to dinner

BRUSSELS — Pulling on their scuba gear and flippers at a swimming pool in Brussels, Nicolas Mouchart and his wife Florence are not just going diving — they’re going out for dinner.

Lowering themselves to the floor of the pool, an especially deep one built to train scuba divers, they swim to one end where their restaurant awaits, five metres (16 feet) below the surface.

“The Pearl” is a two-metre wide white sphere tethered close to the pool’s floor. The diners jettison their weighted belts before swimming underneath and up into the pod that looks like a cross between a lunar landing craft and a giant spaceman’s helmet.

Food is served by expert scuba divers who deliver foie gras, lobster salad and champagne in waterproof cases before leaving the diners peering out of the port-



Belgians Florence Lutje Spelberg and Nicolas Mouchart drink champagne while sitting inside “The Pearl”, a spheric dining room placed 5 metres underwater in the NEMO33 diving centre in Brussels. PHOTO: REUTERS

holes, enjoying the strange tranquillity of eating in an air pocket, completely submerged.

“We are launching a new era of restaurants,” said John Beernaerts, who founded the NEMO33 pool in the Belgian capital a decade ago. The restau-

rant, where an underwater meal costs 99 euros (\$106) per person, took more than a year to build and multiple attempts were needed to perfect the design, mechanics and food delivery system.

“It was a wonderful experience,” said Mouchart,

41, his hair still wet after the return swim through the warm — 33 degrees Celsius (91 Fahrenheit) — water to the pool side. “It was the first time in our life that we ate underwater, which was really fun. It’s a unique dinner and we will remember this all our life.”—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

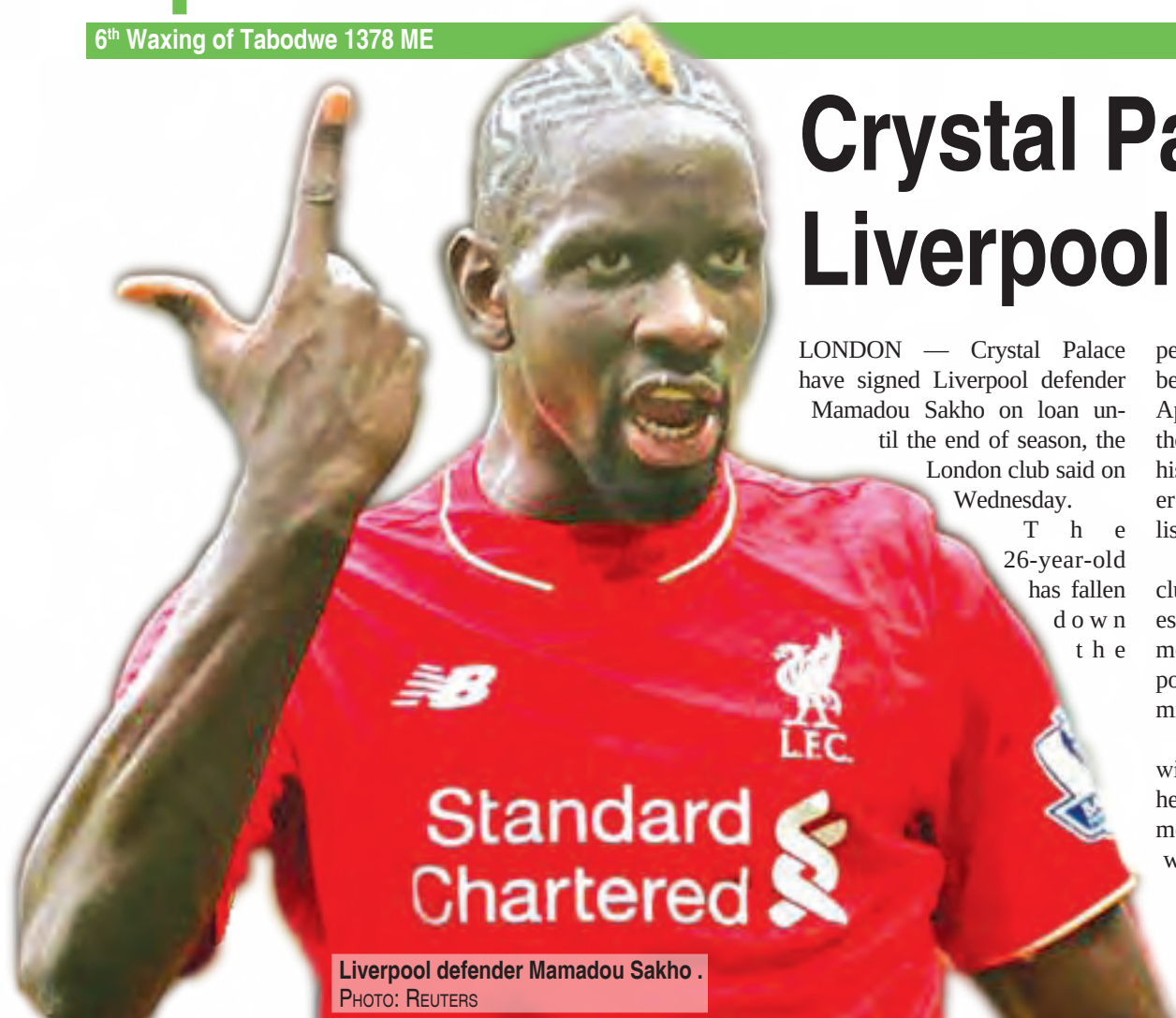
(2-2-2017 07:00am ~ 3-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	Memorable Yaw Region
07:45	Am	village Belle
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	Discovering Tribes “Rvwang (Part-2)”
08:55	Am	Dengue Fever
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	The Art of Making Glaze Ware
09:44	Am	Art Students: Their Dream
09:49	Am	Creative Collage Artist Zaw Yan Naing
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	A Historic Town: 9 Pagodas
10:39	Am	Paper Products... Plain but Pretty

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Wednesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
Prime Time		
07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	A Trip To The City of Rakkhita, Rakhine
07:47	Pm	Great Minds Of Myanmar — U Kyaw Win (Anthropologist)
07:54	Pm	Now in Yangon
08:03	Pm	News
08:27	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP- 4) Tumbling Doll, Pyit Tine Htaung
08:40	Pm	SHWE SETTAW (Minbu)
(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Wednesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)		



Mariela Castro, sexologist, National Assembly member and daughter of Cuba’s President Raul Castro looks at a painting on a dress by Cuban artist Jorge Perugorria during the ‘Fashion Art Havana’ exhibition in Havana, Cuba, on 31 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



Liverpool defender Mamadou Sakho .
PHOTO: REUTERS

Crystal Palace take Liverpool's Sakho on loan

LONDON — Crystal Palace have signed Liverpool defender Mamadou Sakho on loan until the end of season, the London club said on Wednesday.

The 26-year-old has fallen down the

pecking order at Liverpool since being suspended by UEFA last April for failing a drugs test, although the case was dropped after his lawyers argued that a fat-burner he used was not on the banned list.

Several Premier League clubs had reportedly shown interest in the player over the last six months but were put off by Liverpool's 20 million pounds (\$25.16 million) valuation.

Sakho said in an interview with Palace's official website that he was happy to complete the move after a long day and that he was excited about the challenge.

"Right now it's a new page for me," he said. "When I have a new shirt I always give my best.

"The most important

thing for me is we need to try to win a lot of games and I know we have a good squad, I have a few friends playing here."

He added that while he had not played for the first team for a long time he had been training with Liverpool's second team and doing extra work with a fitness coach to keep in shape.

Sakho is the second player to join relegation-threatened Palace on the final day of the transfer window after Serbian international midfielder Luka Milivojevic moved from Greek side Olympiakos Piraeus for an undisclosed fee.

Palace's hopes of staying up were boosted by a 2-0 win at Bournemouth on Tuesday, though they remain in the relegation zone, two points from safety.—Reuters

Chelsea held by Liverpool but rivals fail to profit

LONDON — Diego Costa's missed second-half penalty cost Premier League leaders Chelsea a victory at Liverpool on Tuesday but a 1-1 draw did little damage to their title prospects as closest rivals Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur dropped points.

Spain striker Costa was denied by Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet, who made amends for being caught off guard by a superb David Luiz free kick midway through the first half.

Georginio Wijnaldum's close-range header levelled the scores in the 57th minute as Liverpool avoided a fourth consecutive home defeat in all competitions, although Jurgen Klopp's side remain 10 points adrift in fourth place. "It's important to draw against a really good team and now we must focus on playing Arsenal next week," Chelsea manager Antonio Conte said ahead of Saturday's game at Stamford Bridge.

Arsenal, who began the day second, must recover quickly from a shock 2-1 home loss to Watford who managed a first league win in eight games and celebrated their first top-flight victory over the Gunners since 1988.

Watford scored twice in-

side the first 13 minutes through Younes Kaboul and Troy Deeney and hung on for the victory after Alex Iwobi pulled one back near the hour mark.

"It was obvious we lost duels and were not sharp enough. It looked more mentally that we were not ready for the challenges," said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, who was serving a touch-

line ban and had to watch gloomily from the stands. Arsenal are nine points behind Chelsea, who have 56, along with Tottenham Hotspur who moved above their north London rivals on goal difference after a lacklustre 0-0 draw at basement club Sunderland. Spurs also lost defender Danny Rose to injury.

Champions Leicester City's relegation worries are becom-

ing acute after Claudio Ranieri's side went down 1-0 at Burnley for whom Sam Vokes grabbed a late winner. Leicester's third consecutive league defeat left them two points off the relegation zone in 16th place with the battle for survival hotting up after wins for Swansea City and Crystal Palace and Sunderland's battling point at home to Spurs.—Reuters



Chelsea's Diego Costa has his penalty saved by Liverpool's Simon Mignolet at Anfield on 31 January, 2017.
PHOTO: REUTERS

Middlesbrough sign Algeria midfielder Guedioura

LONDON — Middlesbrough have signed Algeria midfielder Adlene Guedioura from fellow Premier League side Watford on a 2-1/2 year deal for an undisclosed fee, the North East club said on Tuesday.

The 31-year-old has made

over 170 appearances since arriving in England in 2010, playing for Wolverhampton Wanderers, Nottingham Forest and Crystal Palace as well as the Hornets.

Boro manager Aitor Karanka had criticised the club's lack

of activity in the January transfer window and said they were being left behind their rivals in the battle to avoid relegation.

Middlesbrough, who are two points and three places above the drop zone, drew 1-1 at home to West Bromwich Albion on Tues-

day, failing to end their winless league run since mid-December.

The club have already signed Rudy Gesteira from second-tier Aston Villa and Patrick Bamford from Chelsea this month, but neither forward has played much this season.—Reuters

Man City sign Venezuelan teenager Herrera

LONDON — Venezuelan midfielder Yangel Herrera has become the latest South American teenager to sign for Premier League side Manchester City, his club said on Tuesday.

"IT'S OFFICIAL! Yangel Herrera has been transferred to England's Manchester City," Atletico Venezuela said on Twitter.

The Caracas club said Herrera, who turned 19 on 7 January, was currently playing with Venezuela's Under-20 side in the South American championship but would be available for his new side when the tournament ends on 11 February.

Herrera made his debut as a defensive midfielder for Atletico Venezuela exactly a year ago but showed enough promise in his early appearances to win a first full cap as a late substitute against Brazil in October's World Cup qualifier.

He becomes the third South American teenager signed by City this season, following the additions of Brazil's Gabriel Jesus and Colombia's Marlos Moreno.

Moreno was immediately loaned to Deportivo La Coruna and Herrera could also be sent out to another club for a loan spell.—Reuters