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Gov't strategy to combat climate change

VICE President U Myint Swe said yesterday that in order to effectively combat the effects of climate change, a two-step approach involving conservation as well as conservation of natural resources on land and in the sea will be needed.

The Vice President made his comments as part of his opening address at the 1st meeting of central committee for the administration and management of natural resources in coastal areas (national level) held at Ingyin Hall of the forestry department in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

"In launching preventive work against the problem of climate change, it will be necessary not only to build the infrastructure but also to conserve the natural infrastructure — mangrove forests, coastal forests and coral reefs.

Present at the meeting were U Ohn Win, Union Minister, Dr Le Le Maw, Chief Minister of Taninthayi Region Cabinet, U Win Thein, Chief Minister of Bago Region Cabinet, Ministers from Yangon Region, Mon State, Rakhine State and Ayeyarwady Region Cabinets, permanent secretaries who are central committee members, departmental heads, invited guests and responsible officials. SEE PAGE 2 >>

A mangrove forest in Bogale, Ayeyawady Region, whose ecosystem protects a vast range of aquatic life. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Peace Commission, DPN reach agreement on nine points

Ye Khaung Nyunt

THE representatives from the government and United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) who have yet to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) yesterday reached an agreement in principle over nine points proposed by the UNFC.

The move came after the government peace negotiators and Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) formed by UNFC held their 4th meeting on building a federal democratic union for inclusion in reviewing political dialogue framework at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) on Shweli Street in Yangon yesterday.

"We have discussed at least six times and I am pleased to see the observers from international organisations who monitored a press conference organised by the delegates from DPN yesterday," said Dr Tin Myo Win, Chairman of Peace Commission.

"All peace negotiators have the responsibility to create a safe and sound environment for the general public. We need to be magnanimous and to be tolerant in seeking ways to ensure eternal peace. We need mutual trust. I hope we'll achieve a good result in the near future if we discuss all matters in a transparent manner," Leader of DPN Khu Oo Ral said. The proposal and general issues by UNFC were discussed by the members from the Peace Commission and DPN.

Afterward, U Zaw Htay representing the government side and DPN leader Khu Oo Ral held a press briefing and replied to the questions raised by journalists.

Dr Tin Myo Win, U Thein Zaw, U Khin Zaw Oo, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Lt-Gen Min Naung, Dr Aung Tun Thet, U Naing Ngan Lin, U Aung Soe, U Zaw Htay, Dr Min Zaw Oo and U Hla Maung Shwe representing the government side

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Venerable Sayadaws light candles to the Pagoda and open the Tabaung Festival. PHOTO: MNA

The 2,605th Anniversary of Shwedagon Pagoda 's Buddha Pujaniya Festival

THE 2,065th anniversary of Shwedagon Pagoda's Buddha Puzaniya Festival was held yesterday at Shwedagon Pagoda, at which pagoda trustees and religious teams worshipped by conveying 28 Buddha images.

The opening ceremony was hosted in Chanthargyi Hall. The Chairman of the Central Committee, U Maung Maung Soe, delivered an auspicious speech.

At the ceremony, the venerable Sayadaws from prominent monasteries for Buddha's teaching schools preached and made the attendants keep Sabbath for nine precepts before the venerable Sayadaws and laymen light candles to the Pagoda and opened the Tabaung festival. Members of the Pagoda board of trustees donated offertories to all Sayadaws.

Sayadaws and laymen at all four entrances of the Shwedagon Pagoda started worshiping Buddha by reciting the Buddha's doctrines. Later, the monks convened in the central auspicious hall and offered non-stop reciting of the Buddha doctrine to Buddha. The 216-hours-long non-stop reciting worship will last for 10 days, from March 3 to March 12 (the full moon day of Tabaung month) by 120 monks from teaching school the monasteries. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Translation awards announced by Sarpay Beikman and SVA

SARPAY Beikman and the Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) from Japan announced a list of winners of the 2nd translation competition for youths.

Aw Myat May Ko won the first prize. Ma Thet Lel, who uses the pen name Thet Lel, won the second prize and Swe Zin Moe, who uses the pen name Swe Zin Moe won third prize.

Ma May Thet Nwe Oo, who uses the pen name May Thet (Pharmacy) and Ma Chuu Myat Thwe with pen name Chu shared a special prize.

The competition is aimed at improving the translation skill of youths.

Winners have been urged to contact the Administration Section of the Sarpay Beikman at phone number (01-381449) and Translation Section phone number (01-249230).

A presentation ceremony will be held at Sarpay Beikman Hall, No.529/531, Merchant Road, Yangon at about 10am on March 15. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Business Talk between State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Myanmar businesswomen to be broadcast live

BUSINESS Talk, a television show that will feature State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar businesswomen and Activities Week Ceremony of Myanmar Women will be broadcast live on MRTV Channel, Myanmar President Office Facebook Page (https://www.facebook.com/myanmar-presidentoffice.gov.mm) and Myanmar State Counsellor Office Facebook Page (https://facebook.com/state.counsellor) starting at 8am on 6 March. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Yangon government to draw up short and long-term plans to solve electricity demands

Ko Moe

THE Yangon Region Government will draw up a master plan to improve the electricity and energy sector in the region, said Yangon Region Minister for Electricity, Industry and Road Transport Daw Nilar Kyaw.

The regional minister made the remarks during a meeting on improving electricity and energy in Yangon Region held at the head office of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon yesterday.

The master plan suitable for the Yangon Region plans to draw up and short and long-term projects which will be included in the plan with the invitation of experts and international organisations from home and abroad. The regional government is exploring all possible ways to supply sufficient electricity to city dwellers for the summer, she added. Electricity consumption in commercial capital of Yangon constitutes over 50 percent of the country's overall electricity consumption and its electricity demand is expected to increase by 15 per cent per year, it is learnt.

The regional government is cooperating with private companies and Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC), which is responsible for distribution of electricity in the city to ensure sufficient power. The YESC purchased new transformers and replaced the old ones, said Chairman of YESC U Maung Maung Latt. According to the YESC, Yangon residents rely solely on the electricity supplied by Yeywa, Shweli and Paunglaung hydropower plants through 230 KV power transmission systems.

Power demand in commercial city of Yangon is higher than other regions and states, as there are 29 industrial zones and over 6,200 small and medium-scale enterprises in the region.

Government strategy to combat climate change

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U Myint Swe pointed out the extensive natural resources in Myanmar that must be carefully managed and maintained so that future generations can enjoy their benefits.

"Today's meeting is the one held for the first time so as to implement practically on the ground, responsibilities of the central committee formed to lay down policies and mediate the tasks between the Ministries of the Union and Cabinets of the Regions and States, in managing for coastal resources to survive in the long run and to effectively utilise them. Myanmar is a country rich in natural resources, especially waters, land, forests, and coastal resources. Renewable fresh water resources per capita of a Myanmar citizen is two times of that of United States, 15 times of that of People's Republic of China and 10 times of that of India. As for land resources, Myanmar stands as the 25th largest country in order of the world, as regards the possession of growing land. Concerning forest resources, 43 per cent of the land area of the country is covered with forest," he said

The conservation effort for such abundant natural resources must be achieved in harmony with the economic development that is simultaneously occurring in the country, the Vice President said.

"To develop the country, up to the level of keeping abreast of global countries, our country is striving strenuously at present. Meanwhile, we are building the foundations that can bring about the economic development which is in harmony with the environment. Depending upon the abundant natural resources of Myanmar, if we can bring about the tasks of making basic food sufficient for the people, reducing the poverty and strengthening natural ecosystems, it will be helpful to the sustainable development of the country. The Myanmar coastal region stretches up to 2,832 kilometer, abounding with important natural ecosystems in the environs of Indian Ocean. In the coastal regions in Myanmar, ecosystems of mangrove forests, ecosystem of coral reefs and ecosystem of marine grass can be found. These ecosystems serve in many ways such as marine products and environmental services. Coastal ecosystems are the regions in which variety of marine creatures including fish and prawns reside. Besides this, it protects marine creatures from the dangers of strong storms and tsunamis, as well as from the dangers of erosion of riverbanks in the delta area and, from protecting salty water from entering the land and underground fresh water resources. Hence, systematic management of the coastal areas will be helpful to the development of the socio-economic life of the people and protection from natural disasters."

U Myint Swe pointed out the delicate balance that must be maintained among the myriad ecosystems, because the failure or degradation of one will lead to the collapse of others.

"The ecosystem of the mangrove forests is of great importance for marine creatures and environment. If the mangrove forest is destroyed, (other) ecosystems will be destroyed. Under the current situation, natural resources of the coastal area in Myanmar are deteriorating for many reasons. With the increasing population, excessive production of resources for short term benefits, lack of knowledge on the value of the socio economy and weakness in management are the causes of the deterioration of coastal region's resources. During the past decades, mangrove forests, coral reefs and marine grasslands have been destroyed, according to the study. With climate change, the sea level is rising, and natural disasters are taking place. This makes the coastal resources deteriorate. Due to the rising sea level, housing areas and growing lands will be ruined. Four regions and two states are situated in coastal areas in Myanmar, where over 20 million people reside. So, it is necessary to deal emphatically with climate change. For the Myanmar coastal area to survive, long preliminary plans had been made to employ the system of multi-management," said Vice-President.

Afterward, responsible clarified respectively in detail. Following the discussions made by central members, further plans to be carried out had been laid down.—*Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor receives Executive Director of Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received a delegation led by Mr. Mark Dybul, Executive Director of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria based in Geneva, Switzerland, at 5pm at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to the fundings and programs of the Global Fund in Myanmar, strengthening cooperation between Myanmar and the Global Fund and utilizing health as a tool to promote national reconciliation process in a country.

Also present at the call were Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Zeya and responsible officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health and Sports.—*Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Mr. Mark Dybul. PHOTO: MNA

Workers refute accusations of Chinese factory owner

CHINESE factory workers refuted Chinese media reports, saying incorrect information was disseminated over the dispute between them and the factory owner.

At a press conference in Yangon yesterday, representatives of the workers denied the accusations mentioned by the Chinese Xinhua News Agency and China Daily and accused the employer of the Yangon factory of providing incorrect information to Chinese diplomats in Yangon that included details of a destructive 23-24 February attack at the factory. The Chinese embassy issued a paper that was carried by Xinhua News agency and China Daily that alleged the workers "stole personal belongings," of Chinese staff, strikers said.

The Chinese embassy in Myanmar has lodged a protest with authorities.

Although chairs and a car mirror were destroyed, workers said at the press conference, "We did not destroy any products nor machinery," at which photos of the attack were displayed.

It is believed that the attack on the factory was carried out by hundreds of striking workers angered by the sacking of a colleague last week. The Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar arranged the press conference for the workers because they have the right of reply, said U Maung Maung, Chairman of the CTUM.

"We have the law to settle the dispute between the employers and employees and tribunal bodies. Time and space should be given first to tribunal bodies instead of lodging a complaint to the Union Government through diplomatic channels," said U Maung Maung.—*GNLM*

Don't rely on leader for success: UCSB Chairman

CIVIL servants are required to constantly pursue lifelong learning to improve their capacity to serve the public interests and actively participate in the task of nation-building, said Dr Win Thein, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board at the closing of 8th batch of senior-level officials management course.

At the concluding of the eight-week course attended by 58 trainees from various government departments held at Central Institute of Civil Service (Phaunggyi) in Hlegu Township, Yangon Region yesterday morning, Dr Win Thein said the government has been undertaking reform processes for emergence of outstanding civil servants to offer better services to the public. He highlighted that UCSB also has been focusing on the motto "Cooperation of the Civil Service and Public Creates a Nation" to implement the goals laid down by the government in joining hands with the people. To achieve success, people should not rely on a leader and need to be professionals in their respective areas, he added.

The trainees were presented with certificates of completion by officials concerned. During the course, the trainees were given lectures by the directors-general and deputy directors-general from governmental organizations and the scholars from Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), UNDP, EU (GOPA), UN APCICT), EDS Business School/Akamal University USA, YCTC Business Institute and Business Innovation Facility.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Peace Commission, DPN reach agreement on nine points

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and members of DPN Khu Oo Ral, Dr Naing Shwe Thein, Nai Aung Mangae, U Min Tun and Tar Nyi Lu were present at the meeting. After the meeting, a press release was issued. The Peace Commission (PC) and DPN discussed nine points proposed by UNFC at the NRPC in Yangon. Both sides discussed nine points in a transparent manner and reached an agreement in principle. Both sides agreed to discuss Proposal No (3) at the meeting on reviewing political dialogue framework and Proposal No (5) at the meeting of Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC). Both sides also decided to urge all ethnic armed groups to take part in peace process and to attend Union Peace Conference—21st Panglong Peace Conference, according to the press release.

Int'l community urged to take more positive approach to help resolve rights issues

MINISTER of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin attended the High-level Segment of the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva from 27 February to 1 March 2017, and delivered a statement on 28 February 2017. In his statement, U Kyaw Tin underscored that the Human Rights Council should be promoting and protecting of the rights of all peoples in a manner of impartiality and the interest of all states. Any deviation from such inclusive, equal, and non-discriminatory approach will affect the confidence in the work of the Council by the member states of the United Nations. He also apprised the Council on matters pertaining to the Government's new approach of engagement and cooperation on the promotion of protection of human rights, the Government's priorities, peace process, the Government's effort for finding sustainable solution of the issue of Rakhine State including establishment of domestic mechanisms. He also pointed out that at a time when the Government's such efforts were gaining momentum, the coordinated armed attacks against three police outpost took place in northern Rakhine State on 9 October 2016. He briefed the Council of such attacks, conduct of area clearance operation to arrest the perpetrators and to retreat arms and ammunition taken away by the armed attackers and ongoing investigation through a national investigation commission on allegations of human rights abuses. The Minister of State also stressed that any action by the HRC must be a cure and part of the solution, not part of the problem; the Council's focus must be on resolving, not inflaming, the very evident tensions in the Rakhine State and on helping us bring the communities together instead of

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin. PHOTO: MOFA

driving them further apart. He also asked the international community to take a more positive approach to help resolve the issues, rather than focusing on condemnation, punishment and resentment.

On the sidelines of the High-level Segment, the Minister of State met with Mr. Alok Shama, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Special Representative on Human Rights of the European Union, Mr. Scott Busby, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour of the United States Department of State, and Ms. Marit Berger Rosland, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway separately. During the meetings, they exchanged views on matters relating to the national reconciliation and peace process in Myanmar, development in Rakhine State and sustainable solution of the issue in Rakhine State, promotion and protection of human rights, understanding and cooperation extended to Myanmar while discussing the human rights situation in Myanmar in the Human Rights Council.

The Minister of State attended the working lunch hosted by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations in New York, on 27 February 2017 in Geneva. During the working lunch, the Minister of State briefed them on the Myanmar Government's utmost efforts for peace and reconciliation and for development of the Rakhine State and sustainable resolution of the issue. U Htin Lynn, Permanent Representative/ Ambassador of Myanmar to the United Nations in Geneva also accompanied the Minster of State for Foreign Affairs at the abovementioned meetings.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs attended the dinner hosted by Permanent Representative/ Ambassador U Htin Lynn on 1 March 2017 at Kempinski Hotel in Geneva, in honour of former UN Secretary-General Dr. Kofi Annan and members of the Advisory Commission on the Rakhine State.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Women's Week-Myanmar Press Conference

THE Ministry for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Yangon Regional Government and Kanbawza Group of Companies held a press conference concerning Women's Week-Myanmar at Strand Square on Strand Road in Yangon yesterday.

Director U Myo Sett Aung of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement delivered the opening speech, and Head of UN Women Dr. Jean D'Cunha together with SMBC (Yangon Branch) General Manager Nobuyasu Akagi and Daw Yu Wai Maung from Kanbawza Bank Ltd. CSR Department answered questions by members of the media.

Women's Week is to be held from March 6 to March 12 and programmes include informative videos, discussion presentations, reviews of movements in the sports sector, literature reviews and other topics.

Women's Week is a tribute to International Women's Day, which falls on March 8 and celebrates empowerment of current and future generations of women both in Myanmar and internationally. It also aims to increase the understanding of women's value in society to both men and women in Myanmar. The event also presents a rare opportunity to meet and talk with top female leaders working in the government sector, NGOs and the private sector.

Head of UN Women Dr. Jean D'Cunha answers questions raised by media members at Strand Square in Yangon. PHOTO: THURA LWIN

Women's Week-Myanmar is an effort to promote gender equality and raise women's capabilities as part of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals #5.

The opening ceremony will be held in Nay Pyi Taw on 6 March.—*Thura Lwin*

Upgrading of Myanansankyaw golden palace expected be completed no later than March

UPGRADING of the Museum at Mandalay Palace, also known as Myanansankyaw, will be completed at the end of March, according to U Nyo Myint Tun, Director of the Mandalay branch of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum and library.

Myanansankyaw was upgraded because it was built in 1857 and suffered damage over the years. Currently, the golden palace upgrading is completed by over 70 per cent. Myanansankyaw is expected to reopen not later than March.

To be able to maintain the Mandalay Palace for posterity, renovation is being done with the use of Carbon Fiber technology, Brick Stitching technology, and Lime Grouting technology.

The 100-year-old Mandalay Palace and Myananasankyaw palace are of great historical interest to local and foreign tourists. With visitors in mind, there are plans to build gardens on the grounds for tourists.—*200*

Man dies from exhaustion in Kyaikhtiyo

A 43-YEAR-OLD man died from exhaustion after climbing up to the Kyaikhtiyo pagoda from Kyikan Pasat, a popular pilgrimage site in Kyaikto township, Mon state on Thursday, according to the Thaton district police force.

"The man visited Kyaikhtiyo pagoda together with his family. He went down from the pagoda platform to Kyikan Pasat. Then, he climbed up again. He said that he got dizzy when he was on board the car. So, his son sent him to the clinic on the pagoda platform but he died on the way," said an official from Thaton district police force.

The police identified the man as U Hla Nu Maung, from Yangon. The police sent the corpse to Kyaikto general hospital for postmortem.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Under-age suspect discharged from Buthidaung hospital

AN UNDER-AGE suspect culprit detained by Rakhine, Buthidaung No.3 Border Guard Police has been discharged from the general hospital following his recovery.

Yasim, 16, was detained under Penal Code 302/34 (Child) Unlawful Association Act 17(1)/(2) and (Child) Weapons Act Section 19 (E) by Ngakhura Police Station (Pa) 35/2016. Yasim was admitted to the hospital for the second time due to stomach ulcers and weak muscles on 1 March and discharged on 2 March.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Mandalay trade fair and workshop held

A TRADE fair was held in Mandalay in conjunction with a workshop to promote export and protect consumers on 2 March at the Mandala Thiri sports ground on 73rd street between Theikpan street and Ngu Shwe Wah street in Chanmyathazi Township , Mandalay.

The opening ceremony was jointly organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization and Yadanabon Trade Center. Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung, Mandalay Mayor Dr Ye Lwin, cabinets members from Mandalay Regional Government, merchants from Mandalay, Chairman of Mandalay Region Federation of Commerce and Industry (MRFCCI) U Aung Than and businessmen attended the opening ceremony.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung, Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization Director-General U Aung Soe and Chairman of MRFCCI U Aung Than formally cut the ribbon to unveil the trade fair.

Afterwards, the workshop was held and the Mandalay Region Chief Minister delivered the opening speech. Chairman of MRFCCI also discussed matters concerning cooperation with international organizations and protection measures for consumers.

The exhibition displayed cotton clothes manufactured by Wundwin Township in Mandalay Region, Inngyin handicrafts from Natogyi Township, coffee from PyinOoLwin and Ywangan Townships, tea leaves from Namhsan in Shan State, Myanmar Traditional foodstuffs from Mandalay, earthen utensils, thanakhar (Myanmar traditional make-up), cosmetics, wooden sculptures, traditional medicine products, bamboo wares, food stuff and clothes from Sagaing Region.

The trade fair exhibits over 40 showrooms where products will be sold from 9 am to 9 pm between 2 March and 4 March.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung and cabinets members visit trade fair. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MANDALAY)

Mayang Chaung check point reopened in Kyaikto

AN OLD Mayang Chaung checkpoint which has been closed for five years was reopened in Kyaikto township, Mon State on 1 March, according to the Mawlamyine Customs Department.

The old checkpoint was reopened because there have been many instances of illegal trading in unhealthy food, lower quality goods, illegal goods, arms and ammunition after the checkpoint was closed. "There is only Myawady trading zone in our side. But the goods are entering our country without crossing the legal trading zone. Many illegal trading gates are opening on the river side. So we reopened the old checkpoint to stop the illegal goods, said U Tin Tun Thu, Director-General, Mawlamyine Customs Department. Reopening of the old Mayang Chaung checkpoint was aimed at increasing the government's revenue and preventing smuggling from other countries. In the current fiscal year, 13,830 items were exported using the Mandalay-Muse Highway, whereas 13,080 items were imported. Additionally, 416 vehicles for export and 5,883 vehicles for import have journeyed on the Yangon-Myawady Highway.

An inspection team will be formed at the checkpoint to prevent traffic problems. Also, CCTV and mobile X-ray will be installed at the check point. To prevent bribery, the checkpoint team must check the vehicle within a described area. The media will be allowed to observe the checkpoint, and informants will be paid 50 per cent of the value of seized illegal items. Not all agreed with the re-opening.

"The Mayang Chaung checkpoint has been closed since the previous government. The checkpoint should be opened only in the border gate. We don't need to open the check point in Mayang Chaung if the border gate checkpoints are conducting systematically. Our association doesn't agree to reopen Mayang Chaung check point," said U Hla Shin, chairman of the Mon state Merchant Industry Association. The customs checkpoint was opened in 2003 and has closed in 2012. The check point was reopened on 1 March.

The Mayang Chaung checkpoint will be staffed by 11 combined teams comprised of members of the Customs Department, the Customer Protection Department, the Police Force, Traffic Police, the Road Transport Administration Department, the Immigration and Population Department, the Fisheries Department, the Agriculture Department, the Business License and Transport Supervisory Department, the Information & Public Relations Department and the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

LOCAL Business

Government earns Ks10 billion from signboards

The government earned Ks10 billion in the current fiscal year from signboards located on the beams of three flyovers, said U Sit Min Han, Assistant Head of the Administration Department under Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The commercial advertisements on the signboards cost Ks25,000 for the Hledan flyover, Ks20,000 for the Bayintnaung flyover, Ks45,000 for the Shwegondine flyover and Ks40,000 for the Myaynigone flyover. The YCDC invited signboard tenders to advertise businesses for a period of one year. Currently, three advertisers who bought space on the three bridges have already submitted appeals to YCDC to grant extensions for their advertising purchases.—*200*

Hledan Flyover in Yangon with signboard. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Land prices double in Lashio

LAND prices continue to rise in Lashio, a town in northern Shan State, due to tourism boom, according to local real estate agencies.

The prices of land located around Phanghkaw Waterfall, also known as Chaukhtet waterfall, which is a new tourist destination in the town, have doubled since late 2016 because of high demand from buyers especially from Lashio, said U Kyat Lone, a local property agent residing in Phanghkaw Village.

Phanghkaw Waterfall has received more interest not only from foreigners but also from local visitors since it became a favourite travel destination beginning late last year.

Residents, students, visitors from other towns and international tourists flock to the waterfall on weekends.

Local tour operators estimate that the number of visitors are likely to increase during the Thingyan Festival Water Festival), which falls typically in April, prior to the Myanmar New Year Day.

"Another popular time is Chinese New Year, when the natural waterfall becomes packed with visitors. This is one of the reasons why I decided to purchase land near the waterfall before Thingyan Festival," said U Kyaw Oo, a local entrepreneur, who plans to open a shop near the waterfall this summer. Last year, land prices in the area were about Ks1 million per acre. The prices have increased to Ks20 million per acre.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Portwest building factory in Myanmar

IRISH protective clothing company Portwest has completed the takeover of Australian Prime Mover Workwear in a deal worth €7.5m.

Mayo-based Portwest also confirmed it is to open a new factory in Myanmar this year that will cost in the region of €10m and employ 1,200 people.

Portwest recently made headlines when the Hughes family behind the brand bought the historic Westport House in Mayo for around €10m. Plans are underway to develop the 450-acre site.

The company currently employs 1,700 people at a manufacturing site in Bangladesh.

Portwest currently has warehousing facilities in the US, Dubai, the UK, Poland and Ireland. The company's protective clothing is widely used in mining, building and security industries.

Prime Mover is the largest privately owned workwear company in Australia. It was founded in 2004 by Brett Birkill who will remain with the company as CEO for Australia and New Zealand.

"This marks an exciting new phase of development for Portwest and we look forward to working with Brett in expanding our reach in this area," said Owen Hughes, acquisition and financial director at Portwest.

The deal is the latest in a slew of investments being undertaken by the company which is led by brothers Cathal, Harry and Owen Hughes of Westport.

"We were looking at another investment in Australia when Prime Mover came to our attention," said Owen Hughes. "Having talked with them it became clear that their business model is very similar to our own. We are going to leave the current management structure in place and we believe we can add a lot of value to the business."

Birkill said Portwest came along at just the right time. "I feel confident that the Portwest team will continue to uphold the quality and service I've spent 13 years building. They actually care," he said.

Meanwhile, around 200 jobs are expected to be created at Westport House, when the development is completed.

Portwest says that it expects turnover at the company to hit €350m by 2020. "We have a strong affinity to the area in that we are locals. That said, we are businesspeople and we invested in Westport House because we believe in its potential to generate returns," said Mr Hughes.

He said the upcoming expansion in Myanmar would harness the group's growth potential in the coming years.—*Irish Independent*

Businessmen invited to invest in agricultural and livestock breeding

YANGON region government has invited businessmen to invest in agricultural and livestock breeding on about 20,000 acres of land by the sea in Thongwa township, Yangon region, said U Nay Win, Yangon Region Hluttaw MP from Constituency 1 in Thongwa township.

The Yangon Region Hluttaw MPs have offered the businessmen the chance to implement an economic zone in their township under the direction of the Yangon region government chief minister.

"Over 20,000 acres of land in Thongwa have formed in the sea. The land is good to invest for agriculture and livestock. I just delivered the message to the businessmen," said U Nay Win, Yangon Region Hluttaw MP from Constituency 1 in Thongwa township.

The investment into agricultural and livestock breeding would create job opportunities for the local people and develop the economic sector. The land will be granted only to persons who will implement agricultural and livestock breeding. The government will take back the and if they find that the property has been sold to others. Yangon region chief minister is inspecting the fields to manage the land in Yangon region. The Yangon region government will grant permission for businessmen to invest in other places if the project is successful.

"There are 46 townships in Yangon region. The downtown area is well developed, but almost all other areas are less developed. So we need to implement the project in those areas," U Nay Win said. Currently, the government is implementing the Yangon Myothit project.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Singapore's supermarkets introduce Myanmar fruits, vegetables

MYANMAR fruits and vegetables are now available at supermarkets in Singapore, according to the Myanmar Golden Produce Co, an exporter of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables.

Chick peas, eggplant, ladyfingers, chillies and cucumbers grown in Myanmar have been available at 15 supermarkets in the Lion City since 1 March.

Thanks to Cold Storage Supermarkets, a major food store chain in Singapore, Myanmar has a chance to display its agriculture products for sale at those supermarkets, said a spokesperson of the MGP.

Ladyfingers, also known as okra, produced from Nyaungdon and Maubin townships in Ayeyawady Region, eggplants from Pyay in Bago Region and peas from Aungban Township in Shan State are currently being exported to Singapore markets, with the exporters expecting to increase export volume if the demand grows.—*200*

India services activity grows for first time in 4 months as demand slowly recovers — PMI

MUMBAI — India's dominant services industry returned to growth in February for the first time in four months as demand slowly recovers after the government's cash crackdown late last year, a private business survey showed on Friday.

The Nikkei/IHS Markit Services Purchasing Managers' Index rose to 50.3 in February from 48.7 in January, marginally above the 50-mark that separates growth from contraction.

The index slumped to a near-three year low in November after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise decision to outlaw old 500 and 1,000 rupee banknotes to crack down on "black money" and tax evasion.

The decision sucked 86 per cent of cash out of circulation, and everyone from street hawkers to big consumer goods firms suffered a slump in sales.

A sister survey on Wednesday showed manufacturing activity also expanded further in February, though at a lackluster pace.

Service providers reported new business grew for the first time since October.

Though the expansion was modest, they were able to raise their prices to partly offset rising costs.

The turnaround in business activity came as businesses recovered from the demonetization-related disruptions seen in the previous three months, wrote Pollyanna De Lima, economist at IHS Markit, in a note.

"Nevertheless, growth rates were mild at best and far from their historical averages."

Despite expectations that the cash crunch would exact a heavy toll on the economy, government data earlier this week showed India's economy still grew 7.0 per cent in the December quarter from a year earlier, slowing from the previous quarter but not as sharply as some had expected.

That has raised questions about the quality of government data, and prompted economists to look to other measures to gauge the strength of activity.

"So far, firms are doubtful about the sustainability of the economic recovery," De Lima said. "It is still too early to state that expansion rates will climb to their trend levels in the near term."

Doubts over the strength of the economic recovery and rising prices are also likely to further reinforce the Reserve Bank of India's latest move to hold interest rates steady and change its policy stance to neutral from accommodative.—*Reuters*

A cashier counts Indian banknotes as customers wait in queues inside a bank in Chandigarh, India, on 10 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Star-studded legal team will seek to save Samsung chief

SEOUL — Samsung chief Jay Y. Lee has handpicked 13 top lawyers to defend him against charges of bribing the South Korean president, nearly all of them former judges or prosecutors, according to the court where one of the richest men in the country will be tried.

Lee, 48, was indicted by a special prosecutor's office on 28 February, on charges of bribery and embezzlement over his alleged role in the corruption scandal involving impeached President Park Geun-hye. Four other Samsung executives have also been charged, a massive blow for the world's biggest maker of smartphones and memory chips.

Described as the "trial of the century", court proceedings begin on 9 March, and if convicted, Lee could face more than 20 years in prison. A verdict has to be delivered within three months.

Seoul Central District Court records showed that Lee has assembled a team of 13 outside counsel for his defence, 10 of whom work for Bae, Kim & Lee (BKL) — the country's second-largest law firm by headcount, and known for litigation expertise.

The firm has defended other heads of South Korean conglomerates, called chaebol, in high-profile criminal cases including SK Group chief Chey Tae-won and Hanwha Group boss Kim Seung-youn.

Kim was given a suspended three-year sentence after being indicted for embezzlement and breach of trust, while Chey was sentenced to four years in jail in 2013 for misappropriating company funds and served two years before receiving a presidential pardon.

According to South Korean media, two of the defence lawyers were considered for the special prosecution team they will now fight in court.

"In numbers we may be behind Samsung's extravagant team of lawyers but in terms of our ability and what we've achieved so far, you don't need to worry," said a special prosecution official, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the case.

The special prosecution team will be led by Yang Jae-sik, an assistant counsel and a long-time prosecutor, the official said.

Yang worked on several high-profile criminal cases as a prosecutor, including a 2006 probe into whether senior South Korean government officials colluded with private equity fund Lone Star Funds to allow the US firm to acquire Korea Exchange Bank at less than fair value.

He was also part of a team that investigated Park Jie-man, brother of the current president, when he was arrested for drug use in 1996.

BKL declined to make its attorneys available for comment, while the other three defence lawyers declined comment or were not immediately available.—*Reuters*

Samsung Group chief, Jay Y. Lee arrives at the office of the independent counsel team in Seoul, South Korea, on 19 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladesh arrests Islamist militant who urged killing of foreigners

DHAKA — Bangladeshi police have arrested the head of an Islamist militant group accused of inspiring followers to kill foreigners, the chief of the counter-terrorism unit said on Friday.

Shaikh Mohammad Abul Kashem, who founded an offshoot of the larger Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) group, was picked up on Thursday night in the Senpara Parbata area of the capital, Dhaka.

Kashem worked alongside Canadian citizen Tamim Chowdhury and Nurul Islam Marjan, two men police accused of masterminding an attack on an upscale Dhaka cafe in July in which 22 people were killed, most of them foreigners, Monirul Islam, the counter- terrorism chief, said.

"On the basis of a tip-off from a secret source, our force arrested him from the area when he was going to receive money that came through a mobile banking system," Islam said.

According to police, Kashem, who wrote several jihadi books and headed a religious school in northern Bangladesh, taught followers of his group, called Neo JMB, that killing foreigners would ease their path to heaven.

"His followers preferred to kill foreigners," Islam said.

"We have been trying to catch him on the basis of previously arrested militants, but every time he could escape."

Bangladesh has been battling a rise in Islamist-linked violence in the past four years, and since July has arrested or killed several men accused of involvement in the cafe siege. Since 2013, 48 people have been killed or seriously wounded by Islamist militants in Bangladesh, including at least six online critics of religious militancy who were hacked to death, among them a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin.—*Reuters*

Security personnel bring Shaikh Mohammad Abul Kashem, a spiritual leader of "Neo JMB", in front of media after his 2 March arrest by Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 3 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

With rocketing population, Pakistan to conduct first census in 19 years

ISLAMABAD — Fast-growing Pakistan will conduct its first census in 19 years in March, the statistics bureau said on Thursday, hoping to end years of wrangling by politicians concerned about how a survey would affect the makeup of their local electorates.

Changes could be significant in a country where 60 per cent of the population is under the age of 30.

In 2015, the World Bank estimated Pakistan's population at 188.9 million but the country still uses the official 1998 figure of 134.7 million. The population has exploded since its first census in 1951, when it had 33.8 million inhabitants.

Political leaders across the country have voiced concerns about the census, fearing a loss of influence from any changes in provincial demographics.

Chief Census Commissioner Asif Bajwa said the Pakistani army had been drafted in to provide security and ensure there was no harassment of officials.

"With every civil enumerator will be a military officer to ensure that the enumerator can enter the correct data without being intimidated by local political figures," Bajwa told a press briefing in Islamabad.

Electoral seats in Pakistan's parliament are assigned using population density data, and with rural populations fluctuating due to urbanisation, powerful feudal landlords and political families fear losing influence in Islamabad.

"Some regions are over-represented in the parliament and the political elite are wary of the census because it changes the voting pattern, changes the representation in the parliament," said Shahid Faiz, chief executive of Free and Fair Election Network, an organisation collecting electoral data.

Bajwa said 200,000 military personnel would assist civilian counters to complete the 70-day data-gathering campaign, which will start on 15 March.

The inclusion of Afghan refugees in the census, confirmed by Bajwa, had been strongly opposed by leaders from the country's sparsely populated Baluchistan province, where separatists are waging an insurgency.

The ethnic Baluch fear being turned into a minority in their own province due to growing populations of other communities. Similar fears have been voiced by Sindhi politicians in southern Sindh province.

In January, normally conservative Pakistan announced that the country's transgender community would be included in the 2017 census.

Originally scheduled for March, 2016, the census was postponed due to the unavailability of army personnel to oversee security.

The United Nations Population Fund will assign international observers to oversee the administration of the census, Bajwa said.—*Reuters*

Viet Nam mulls raising alert level against bird flu

HANOI — Viet Nam's Ministry of Health (MoH) on Friday proposed to raise alert level against the highly pathogenic bird flu to level two, after infection cases were detected in the country.

The remark was made by Vietnamese MoH Deputy Minister Nguyen Thanh Long at a meeting on measures to combat virulent bird flu with a high risk of transmitting to humans.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is urged to vaccinate poultry in areas with high risks of virus spreading, reported the state-run news agency VNA.

The two ministries will expand monitoring and carry out quick test in localities adjacent with China, especially in Viet Nam's northern Quang Ninh, Lang Son and Lao Cai provinces.

At the same time, the MoH should coordinate with other related sectors and ministries to increase local people's awareness.

According to Long, so far, no travel warning has been issued. However, local people should consider limiting traveling to those virus-affected areas.

A report by MARD's Department of Animal Health showed that since the beginning of 2017, bird flu outbreaks are reported in Viet Nam. Currently, H5N1 outbreaks were recorded in seven localities of Bac Lieu, Nam Dinh, An Giang, Soc Trang, Dong Nai, Nghe An while H5N6 outbreaks were detected in Quang Ngai province.

The report said there is a high risk that an epidemic will erupt and spread in the future. Meanwhile, viruses that have not been present in Vietnam, including H7N9, H5N2, H5N8, are likely to appear in Viet Nam via transportation, purchasing and consumption of smuggled poultry and poultry products.

According to MoH's General Department of Preventive Medicine, Viet Nam has reported no A/H7N9 bird flu human infection. In 2015, 2016 and early 2017, there has been no human infection of A/H5N1 virus.

In the first two months of this year, Vietnam has monitored over 900,000 passengers entering from H7N9-affected countries and found no suspected infection.

In addition, the MoH has tested 3,747 samples and found no H7N9, H5N1, H5N6 infections in human.—*Xinhua*

Police make 1st arrest for unapproved drone flight in restricted area

KITAKYUSHU, (Japan) — Police on Friday arrested a man for allegedly flying a drone in a prohibited area without permission, the first such incident since Japan began regulating flights of unmanned aircraft under a revised aviation law in 2015.

Koji Shiokawa, 58, was arrested on suspicion of violating the revised Civil Aeronautics Law by flying a drone around a park in the city of Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture, on 21 August. The park is near a residential area which is designated as a no-fly zone under the law due to its high population density.

A series of violations of drone flight rules have been recorded, including some cases in which perpetrators were referred to prosecutors. This instance, however, is the first in which a person was arrested for flying a drone in a prohibited area without permission, the National Police Agency said.

The police said Shiokawa visited a police station in the city on his own volition on 26 January, saying that he had lost his drone. Police officers then questioned him on a voluntary basis four days later suspecting he had flown his aircraft in a prohibited area.

Shiokawa later refused to respond to repeated requests by police to appear at the police station.

Fearing that he may destroy evidence, he was placed under arrest. Shiokawa later admitted to the allegation, according to the police.—*Kyodo News*

Viet Nam implements citizen protection measures for suspect arrested in Malaysia

HANOI — Viet Nam is implementing citizen protection measures for a Vietnamese suspect arrested in Malaysia in relation of the killing of a Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) man, said Viet Nam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Consular Department on Thursday.

On the same day, the department's representatives met with the family of Doan Thi Huong, a Vietnamese citizen, arrested in Malaysia.

The meeting aimed at explaining proceedings of the case and instructing Huong's family about legal assistance following the regulations of Malaysia laws and international convention, said a statement by the department.

Earlier, the department has informed Huong's family about the recent meeting with Huong in Malaysia and her health condition.

On Wednesday, two female suspects, including Huong and the other from Indonesia were charged with the murder of the DPRK man, said a local court in Malaysia.

According to the statement, representatives of the Vietnamese embassy in Malaysia were present at the court to protect legitimate rights of Huong.

The Vietnamese embassy in Malaysia is continuing to implement citizen protection measures within its scope to ensure the proceedings are fair, objective and non-discriminatory as well as ensure legitimate rights of the Vietnamese citizen, including assistance to seek a suitable lawyer for Huong, in accordance with legal regulations of Malaysia, said the statement.—*Xinhua*

Opinion

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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.

SME growth and financial challenges

Aye Min Soe

SMALL and medium-sized enterprises play a crucial role in the economic well-being of both developed and developing countries. The entrepreneurship of SMEs will be the future of the country's economic development because small and medium-sized industries create 50 to 70 per cent of the job opportunities in a developing country.

It is found that more than 70 per cent of job opportunities in Japan come from SMEs. About 66 per cent of jobs in Europe come from SMEs. On average, SMEs generate more than 30 per cent of income for a developing country.

Their importance is perhaps even more important in this country, because statistics show that SMEs in Myanmar make up more than 90 per cent of the country's private sector businesses. The development and nurturing of SMEs can effectively help alleviate poverty.

To develop SMEs, we must provide them with financial and technical support so that they can manufacture products and provide services that are currently in demand.

SMEs in Myanmar need to overcome a number of unique challenges. Many companies, especially those hoping to target the export market or foreign residents, need to upgrade their products and services to meet international standards. In this respect, the state should actively encourage business visitors and the participation of international suppliers in local trade fairs, exhibitions, conventions and seminars.

At present, the Ministry of Industry should provide assistance and organize seminars, workshops and exhibitions at home and abroad to facilitate the interaction of its own SMEs with their regional counterparts, suppliers and potential clients.

Securing access to finance for the SMEs is a sine qua non for their development. Without access to finance, businesses will not be able to cycle off inefficiency and low productivity, which springs from a lack of capital investment.

Meanwhile, it is required to review the rules and regulations of the SME Law to find out whether they are in compliance with the market-oriented economic system or not.

When we work for development of SMEs, we will face some challenges including financial support to SMEs.

We must provide the local SMEs which do not have strong assets for mortgages, such as land and buildings, with financial support. Two year's efforts starting in 2014 to grant loans to SMEs by a Japanese bank did not see success. However, some progress has been achieved, with the granting of loans to 21 SMEs through an insurance system. A further 16 are expected to receive loans soon.

Meanwhile, banks are not willing to take risks for granting loans to SMEs because many SMEs in Myanmar are not familiar with the documentation, information and paperwork necessary in dealing with banks.

The second way requires external investment into the businesses.

Section (2) (c) of the SME Law does not allow foreign investments in SMEs.

It is fair to discuss amending that clause in order to help SMEs, most of which are facing a lack of capital investment.

Transboundary Environmental Security in the Mekong River

R. Edward Grumbine

THE Mekong River Basin is one of the most contested rivers in the world as six countries with unequal political power and differing degrees of social, scientific, and institutional capacity have been implementing projects with inadequate regard for their neighboring states' development plans.

Until recently, the 1995 Mekong River Agreement, created to promote cooperation and coordinate development in the basin, was relatively successful at guiding the member states toward common goals. But now, weaknesses in the Agreement have been exposed as cumulative hydropower and other developments have reach a critical stage. China, the main engine for regional economic growth, has also been a role model for unilateral hydropower development on the Mekong. Laos is constructing the first two of multiple dams planned for the mainstream Mekong, despite concerns over projected losses of wild-capture fisheries that millions of rural poor in the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB) depend upon. Vietnam and Cambodia, while protesting Laos' dams, are also investing in their own Mekong projects. In December 2016, Thailand expects to release plans for a huge water diversion from the Mekong that would remove enough water to irrigate 5 million hectares of farmland (Thu, 2016).

Hovering over all these projects is climate change. In spring 2016, the Mekong experienced the worst drought in some 90 years; this event may portend a glimpse of future extreme events as virtually all regional climate models project increasing impacts into the coming decades.

While the Mekong Agreement was never designed to be an international treaty to guide the sharing of transboundary resources, it is clear that tipping points around the Mekong's hydrological and social systems are now close at hand. It is also apparent that, despite its importance as a shared transboundary river basin where water and other resources are fundamental to the ecological, economic, and political stability of all the Mekong states, they are still searching for a way forward.

Environmental security may offer answers to the transboundary common pool resource dilemmas of Mekong River states.

Since the 1990s, driven by environmental and economic change in an increasingly interdependent world, an environmental security framework linking national security with resource scarcity has become more influential. Security is no longer just about maintaining state borders through military means; it now includes non-traditional components such as managing ecological degradation, maintaining energy and water security, and aiding human adaptation to climate change (Grumbine, 2014). Major goals of environmental security are to maintain the critical ecosystem services that people depend upon, reduce the ecological and social risks from new water, food and energy developments, and support humans' capacity to adapt to change in the uncertain world of the 21st century. Environmental security goals become all the more important when shared natural and social resources create degrees of dependency across state borders. This is exactly the state of affairs in the Mekong.

But environmental security in the Mekong is not just about hydrology, hydropower, and hydropolitics. There are six drivers of change — ecosystem degradation, food, energy, and water issues, human development, and climate change — that have to be cooperatively managed.

Ecological Degradation

Biodiversity and ecosystem functions across Mekong ecosystems are under growing pressure. From 1973-2009, forest cover in the region (excluding China) was reduced by about 30 percent. A primary cause in every country is the broad land-use transition away from smallholder, swidden-based agriculture to commercial cash crops. For freshwater ecosystems, plans to build many more dams on both the mainstream and tributaries of the Mekong yield a poor prognosis for aquatic and floodplain health.

Food

Given that the Mekong accounts for about 13 percent of the worlds' wild-capture fisheries with tens of millions of people dependent to some degree on this resource, the key driver of food insecurity is dam development. If all mainstream dams are constructed, Mekong fisheries are projected to decrease by 27-44 percent (Ward and Smagjl, 2013).

Energy

Energy demand is projected to increase dramatically for all Mekong countries. Demand in Thailand is projected to double by 2030, while demand in Vietnam may triple (Middleton and Dore, 2015). Today, Thailand uses natural gas for about 70 percent of its electricity, but domestic supplies of this fuel may be exhausted by 2020. Laos remains committed to building over 100 hydropower projects. China is often blamed for downstream impacts due to its many Mekong dams, yet there are complex energy export and investment links between all Mekong states.

Water

Water security in the Mekong is paramount. Major issues are: impacts of hydropower development on riverine hydrology; effects of dams on local peoples' livelihoods; and lack of integrated analysis of cost/benefit tradeoffs within and between countries. If all of the proposed dams are built, projections show a 96 percent loss in sediment load in the Mekong Delta (Kondolf et al., 2014) with serious impacts on downstream fish and food production. And by 2050, agricultural demand for water may reach 32-50 percent of the Mekong's total flow, creating competition with fisheries livelihoods and hydropower operations.

To be continued

R. Edward Grumbine directs the Land Program and oversees the North Rim Ranches at the Grand Canyon Trust, USA. He was a senior international scholar at the Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Yunnan, China. He is the author of multiple scientific papers and three books on biodiversity protection in the US and China.

Police interaction with public should be harmonious: Myanmar Police Chief

POLICE should interact harmoniously with the public, as the police are under a democratic system, said Police Major General Zaw Win, Chief of Myanmar Police Force, at the completion of the Sub-Inspector training course for Ye Thi Ha squadron held yesterday at Zeepingyi police officer training school's parade ground in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay Region.

The Police Chief received salute from the trainees before inspecting the squadrons. Five outstanding trainees were awarded by the Chief of Myanmar Police Force, who was saluted in quick march and slow march by the squadrons before the prizes were presented.

The Chief of the Myanmar Police Force said the comrades should pay respect each other in their ranks and perform their duty by cooperating with harmonious efficiency at all levels. The police force should work together with society by respecting human rights that actively promotes public participation and could get the public trust in the rule of law process.

Police Major General Zaw Win said the improvement of democracy depends on the transformation from a control-oriented approach to a service-oriented approach.

"When we implement a service-oriented police system, all the police force will resolve to serve the people by treating them as if they are their relatives," he said. The police force has to follow the rules and regulations and, when confronted with unavoidable situations in which force must be used, meet international standards such as accountability, legitimacy and proportionality.

The training course was attended by 327 police officers, 106 of them women and 221 men.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Children Literary Festival to be held in Mawlamyine

DR PE MYINT, Union Minister for Information, attended a coordination meeting on organising a Children's Literary Festival in Mawlamyine yesterday morning.

The meeting took place at Mon State Government office, Aung San Hall with Mon State Chief Minister Dr. Aye Zan, Regional Ministers, Departmental Officials and responsible people in attendance.

In the meeting Dr. Pe Myint explained that it is the duty of the Ministry of Information to disseminate information, which includes spreading education and entertainment. It is important that a literary fair for children is organised so that children can develop a fondness for literature and receive exposure at an early age and develop a habit for reading. He also urged other government organisations and departments to help improve the best of their capabilities in this endeavour.

Mon State Minister for Social Affairs Dr Htein Lin said the Regional Government is assisting the formulation of this children's festival in nurturing children's knowledge and intellectual understanding of literature.

Afterwards, Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department U Maung Pe described the arrangements of the children's fair taking place in Mawlamyine University's great hall and discussed the requirements and gave advice to each department concerned.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint addresses coordination meeting on organizing Children's Literary Fair in Mawlamyine. PHOTO: MNA

The Union Minister then visited the District Information and Public Relations Department and viewed the books on display then instructed the staff to work harder so that its citizens recognise the workings of the department.

The Union Minister then visited the Mawlamyine Television Retransmission Station and conversed with the in-charge and staff from the station, urging them to try to improve their capacity and attended to the needs.

At 12 noon, the Union Minister visted the Sub-printing house (Mawlamyine) and met with staff members in the meeting hall and heard reports on organizational structure and work processes of the sub-printing house presented by the in-charge U Zaw Zin San.

The Union Minister then travelled to Mawlamyine University in the evening and toured the area where the Children's Literary Festival will take place and discussed with Department officials, city elders and members of organisations on successfully promoting the children's fair. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Exchange of notes on ODA loan and grant aid to Myanmar

Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win, Japanese Ambassador Mr Tateshi Higuchi and dignitaries pose for a photo in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

AMBASSADOR of Japan to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi HIGUCHI and Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win signed Exchange of notes for one ODA loan project amounting to US$ 95.8 million, and one grant aid project, amounting to US$ 20.10 million yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The ODA Loan – Hydropower Plants Rehabilitation Project will cost US$ 95.8 million. This project aims to rehabilitate deteriorated power generation facilities etc. of the Baluchaung No.1 Hydropower Plant and the Sedawgyi Hydropower Plant. This project will contribute to stabilizing electricity supply within Myanmar, promoting economic and social development, and upgrading Myanmar people's lives.

This project is supplied with the conditions of (a) 0.01% interest rate per annum, (b) forty years of repayment period (including ten years of grace period) and (c) untied procurement.

The grant aid – the project for Expansion of Broadcasting Equipment of Myanma Radio and Television will cost US$ 20.10 million. This project aims to expand broadcasting equipment of Myanma Radio and Television, a national broadcasting station, assisting the production of expressive and high-quality broadcast programs and contributing to capacity-building for socio-economic development, including the promotion of national reconciliation.—*GNLM*

Residents and social organisations want to build new jetty in Inle Lake

INLE LAKE residents and social organisations want to implement a new jetty project in Inle Lake, Nyaungshwe Township, according to an official from the Save The Inle Lake organisation.

Inle Lake has attracted more tourists, both domestically and internationally, but problems have been reported in the use of motorboats because of the declining water level.

Although most visitors use motorboats to travel to floating villages, the water level has decreased too much in Inle Lake. Vessel walls are being built for the water channels, but construction of the walls has affected the transportation of lake dwellers and visitors by motorboats.

Construction of a new jetty could be built on the west bank of Inle Lake about three miles away from Nyaungshwe Township. After the jetty is completed, visitors' travelling would not only be more convenient, but export of agricultural goods from the lake such as tomatoes would also be easier. —*200*

Visitors take a boat trip in Inle Lake, Nyaungshwe Township. PHOTO: THIHA TUN

Under fire, Trump's attorney general removes himself from campaign probes

WASHINGTON — US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said on Thursday he would stay out of any probe into alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election but maintained he did nothing wrong by failing to disclose he met last year with Russia's ambassador.

Sessions, a longtime US senator who was an early and high-ranking player in President Donald Trump's campaign before becoming the country's top law enforcement official, announced the decision after several fellow Republicans in Congress suggested the move would be appropriate.

"I have recused myself in the matters that deal with the Trump campaign," Sessions told reporters at a hastily arranged news conference. Sessions said he had been weighing recusal — ruling himself out from any role in the investigations — even before the latest twist of the controversy over ties between Trump associates and Russia that has dogged the early days of the Trump presidency.

The president backed Sessions, saying Democrats had politicized the issue and calling the controversy a "total witch hunt."

Sessions' announcement did nothing to quell concerns among congressional Democrats, a number of whom called for Sessions to step down. Trump and Republicans who control Congress are trying to move past early administration missteps and focus on issues important to them, including immigration, tax cuts and repealing the Obamacare healthcare law.

US intelligence agencies concluded last year that Russia hacked and leaked Democratic emails during the election campaign as part of an effort to tilt the vote in Trump's favor. The Kremlin has denied the allegations.

Sessions denied he had contact with Russian officials when he was asked directly during his Senate confirmation hearing to become attorney general whether he had exchanged information with Russian operatives during the election campaign. He told reporters he was "honest and correct" in his response, although he acknowledged he "should have slowed down" and mentioned he had met with the ambassador in his role as a senator.

"I never had meetings with Russian operatives or Russian intermediaries about the Trump campaign," Sessions said, adding he felt he should not be involved in investigating a campaign in which he had had a role. In a statement on Thursday night, Trump said Sessions "did not say anything wrong. He could have stated his response more accurately, but it was clearly not intentional."

Sessions' meetings with Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak were disclosed on Wednesday night by the Washington Post. Sessions received Kislyak in his Senate office in September and also met him in July at a Heritage Foundation event at the Republican National Convention that was attended by about 50 ambassadors. Trump fired national security adviser Michael Flynn last month after disclosures that Flynn had discussed US sanctions on Russia with Kislyak before Trump took office and that Flynn misled Vice President Mike Pence about the conversations.—*Reuters*

Scottish nationalists treat politics as a game, says May

New British Prime Minister Theresa May meeting First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon at Bute House in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 15 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — The Scottish National Party is treating politics as a game and obsessing over independence rather than focusing on improving public services in Scotland, Prime Minister Theresa May will say on Friday.

Since last year's Brexit vote, SNP leader and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has repeatedly said she could push for a new independence referendum if the country — which voted to remain in the European Union while England and Wales voted to leave - is forced into a clean break with the bloc.

Scots voted against independence in 2014, but sources close to the Edinburgh administration told Reuters last week it is increasingly confident it can win a new referendum and is considering calling one next year.

May, who insists there should be no second independence referendum, will criticise the SNP, which governs Scotland from its devolved parliament, in an address to her Conservative Party's Scottish conference in Glasgow.

"Politics is not a game and the management of devolved public services in Scotland is too important to be neglected," she will say, according to advance extracts released by her office.

"People in Scotland deserve a first minister who is focused on their priorities — raising standards in education, taking care of the health service, reforming criminal justice, helping the economy prosper, improving people's lives."

"Just this week we have learned that the SNP government has delayed its planned education bill, such is their obsession with the single issue of independence," she will say. Britain's Scotland minister David Mundell told Reuters in an interview that he was confident the government could seal a divorce deal with the EU that would win over the people of Scotland, but may never be able to please the SNP.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

German town that cancelled Turkish event receives bomb threat

BERLIN — German authorities in the southwestern town of Gaggenau evacuated the city hall on Friday after receiving a bomb threat, its mayor told German television, one day after he cancelled an event where Turkey's justice minister was to speak.

Asked by n-tv broadcaster if the bomb threat was linked to the cancellation, mayor Michael Pfeiffer said: "We presume this at the moment, but we don't know for sure. We presume there is a direct link." Police are searching the city hall.

"We don't know how seriously we should take this threat," Pfeiffer said. Turkish Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag had planned to address supporters of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in the town on Thursday.—*Reuters*

Zika caused twenty-fold spike in birth defects — US study

CHICAGO — Rates of microcephaly and certain other birth defects were 20 times higher in pregnancies affected by Zika compared with pregnancies in years before the virus arrived in the Americas, US researchers said on Thursday.

The increase emphasizes the ongoing risk of Zika during pregnancy, researchers from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The study, published in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality report, examined rates of birth defects in Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Georgia in 2012-2013 — before Zika's arrival in the Americas. They tracked the number of birth defects commonly seen among Zika-affected babies, including brain abnormalities and small head size or microcephaly, eye defects and other central nervous system problems.—*Reuters*

Afghan forces kill 5 militants, recapture several villages in western Badghis province

QALA-E-NAW, (Afghanistan) — Afghan security forces after killing five Taliban rebels and destroying their hideouts regained the control of several villages in Kandalan valley outside provincial capital Qala-e-Naw on Thursday, provincial police chief Abdul Rauf Taj said Friday.

According to the official, the security forces have seized huge quantity of arms and ammunitions, forcing militants to flee the area.

The police chief also added that the security forces would soon launch operations against militants elsewhere in Badghis province to ensure lasting peace there.

Taliban militants haven't commented on the situation.—*Xinhua*

US aircraft carrier to enter South Korea for joint military drill

SEOUL — A nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier is scheduled to enter South Korea's southern port city of Busan on 15 March for joint springtime war games, Yonhap news agency reported on Friday.

USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier will come into the Busan port to participate in the Foal Eagle field training exercises, the US-South Korea combined forces command was quoted by Yonhap as saying.

The joint war games, which kicked off on1 March, are set to last by the end of next month, mobilizing multiple US strategic assets including the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier and its attendant fleet.

About 10,000 US troops, including US Forces Korea (USFK), will be mobilized for the drill together with 290,000 South Korean soldiers. The Key Resolve command post exercise based on computer simulation is scheduled to begin on 13 March for a two-week run.

Other strategic assets to be brought to the drill would be F-35B stealth fighter jets that were deployed in the US military base in Japan in January.—*Xinhua*

Singapore to design fighting robots: defence ministry

SINGAPORE — Singapore will set up a robotic laboratory to design and invent robots fighting alongside with soldiers, Singapore's Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) said Friday during the Budget debate in Parliament.

The laboratory which will be set up in the DSO National Laboratories, the national defence research agency of Singapore, will be a "one-stop facility" that allows engineers to work on prototyping, integration, simulation and testing of systems prior to field trials for the Singapore Armed Forces, according to MINDEF.

Another Analytics and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory will also be formed under the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) to develop counter-terrorism operations through data analytics, according to local media.—*Xinhua*

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily
UB-017	17:45	19:15	Daily
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6

BANGKOK TO YANGON

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily
UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5
UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily
UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6

YGN TO DMK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-252	8:30	10:20	Daily
FD-256	12:55	14:40	Daily
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily
DD-4239	21:00	22:55	Daily
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily

DMK TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-251	7:15	8:00	Daily
FD-255	11:35	12:25	Daily
FD-253	16:20	17:05	Daily
FD-257	20:15	21:10	Daily
DD-4234	10:30	11:15	Daily
DD-4230	6:30	7:15	Daily
DD-4238	19:25	20:15	Daily
SL-200	08:45	10:00	Daily
SL-206	17:10	18:35	Daily

YGN TO CAN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-713	20;25	01:00+1	1
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5

CAN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-714	2:05	3:40	2
8M-712	14:15	15:50	2,4,5,7
CZ-3055	8:40	10:35	3,6
CZ-3055	14:40	16:40	1,5

YGN TO SIN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily
3K-582	11:35	16:05	Daily
TR-2823	9:25	13:55	1,2,4,5,7
UB-001	7:15	11:45	Daily

SIN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-232	13:45	15:15	Daily
SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily
MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6
MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily
MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,3,5
MI-533	11:30	12:45	2
3K-583	17:30	19:00	Daily
3k-581	09:10	10:40	Daily
TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,7
UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily

YGN TO NRT

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily

NRT TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-813	11:00	16:30	Daily

YGN TO ICN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily

ICN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KE-471	18:30	22:30	Daily

YGN TO KUL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily
AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily
8M-501	16:10	20:10	2
8M-501	11:45	15:45	1
MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily
MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7

KUL TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
AK-504	6:55	8:00	Daily
AK-502	17:20	18:30	Daily
8M-502	16:45	17:45	1
8M-502	21:10	22:10	2
MH-742	13:55	15:05	1,4,6,7
MH-740	09:10	10:15	Daily

YGN TO KMG

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily
MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily
MU-2012	12:55	19:55	3

KMG TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-415	10:50	11:30	Daily
MU-2031	13:50	14:30	Daily
MU-2011	08:20	11:55	3

YGN TO TPE

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CI-7916	10:50	16:10	Daily

TPE TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CI-7915	7:00	9:50	Daily

YGN TO PEK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-906	23:50	0550+1	1,3,5,7

PEK TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-905	19:30	22:50	1,3,5,7

YGN TO HAN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-956	19:10	21:30	Daily

HAN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-957	16:40	18:10	Daily

YGN TO SGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-942	12:10	14:55	2,3,4,5,7

SGN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-943	9:25	11:10	2,3,4,5,7

YGN TO HKG

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KA -251	1:05	5:25	Daily
UB-8027	09:00	13:30	1,3,5,7

HKG TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KA-250	21:50	23:45	1,3,5,7
KA-252	22:20	00:10	2,4,6
UB-8028	14:50	16:20	1,3,5,7

YGN TO DOH

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,3,4,6,7

DOH TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
QR-918	20:10	5:20	1,3,4,6,7

YGN TO CNX

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG -724	13:40	15:35	Daily

CNX TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-723	12:00	12:55	Daily

YGN TO DAC

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
BG-061	16:45	18:30	1,3,6

DAC TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
BG-060	13:30	16:00	1,3,6

MDL TO DMK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-245	12:55	15:15	Daily

DMK TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-244	11:10	12:25	Daily

MDL TO SIN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-533	15:45	20:50	2
MI-522	14:15	20:15	4,6

SIN TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-522	11:30	13:20	4,6
MI-533	11:30	14:50	2

MDL TO BKK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-710	14:10	16:35	Daily

BKK TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-709	12:00	13:20	Daily

MDL TO KMG

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2030	14:25	17:15	Daily

KMG TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2029	13:20	13:15	Daily

NYT to BKK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-722	19:50	22:50	1,3,4,5,6,7

BKK TO NYT

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-721	17:20	19:20	1,3,4,5,6,7

AIRLINE CODES

8M = Myanmar Airways International			
BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines			
MH = Malaysia Airlines			
MU = China Eastern Airlines			
NH = All Nippon Airways			
SQ = Singapore Airways			
PG = Bangkok Airways			
UB = Myanmar National Airlines			
VN = Vietnam Airline			
3K = Jet Star		AK = Air Asia	
AI = Air India		CA = Air China	
CI = China Airlines		CZ = China Southern	
DD = Nok Airline		FD = Air Asia	
KA = Dragonair		KE = Korea Airlines	
MI = Silk Air		QR = Qatar Airways	
TG = Thai Airways		TR = Tiger Airline	

DAY			
1 = Monday		4 = Thursday	
2 = Tuesday		5 = Friday	
3 = Wednesday		6 = Saturday	
		7 = Sunday	

‘I’ve never seen such war’ says 90-year-old rescued from Mosul

MOSUL, (Iraq) — Ninety-year-old Khatla Ali Abdallah has survived decades of turbulence in northern Iraq, but the frail grandmother who fled the battle for Mosul this week says the fighting there is the worst she has ever seen.

Carried across the desert by her grandsons, under sniper and mortar fire, she was one of thousands who braved the difficult and dangerous journey out of Islamic State’s shrinking stronghold in the west of the city.

“I’m a 90-year-old woman and I haven’t seen such a war,” she said in a camp for displaced people south of Mosul, where she was taken by Iraqi security forces.

Khatla lived through Saddam Hussein’s quarter century in power, when Iraq fought wars with neighbouring Iran and Kuwait and endured a decade of devastating sanctions. That was followed by a US-led invasion which toppled Saddam and led to years of sectarian war across the country.

“Even under the Saddam era, we were afraid because of the atrocities and the people killed,” she said. “But nothing is compared to this phase”.

Khatla Ali Abdullah, 90, a displaced Iraqi women who fled her home, is carried by a member of the Iraqi forces in the desert in western Mosul, Iraq, on 27 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Since the launch of the military campaign in October to retake Mosul from Islamic State, Khatla remained in her home in the city’s southwestern al-Mamoun district, now in the hands of Iraq’s US-backed Counter Terrorism Service (CTS).

At times she took shelter in her basement with the 20 chickens that she looked after — reminders, she said, of her youth when she also herded sheep and cattle.

“I haven’t lost any chickens, not even a one little chick,” she said. “We were trapped in the basement and we could hear the bullets hitting the metal roof of the chicken pen.”

Her grandsons carried her for miles in the desert to reach the CTS lines, and then she was taken on a bus to a camp for internally displaced people.

“We just want to make it through this war,” she said. “This one will make stories for generations to tell.”—*Reuters*

Afghan gov’t forces recapture key district in northern province

PUL-E-KHUMRI, (Afghanistan) — The government troops recaptured Tala-o-Barfak district in the northern Baghlan province on Friday after fierce fighting, a police official in the district said.

“We recaptured Tala-o-Barfak district today and Taliban rebels have run away,” Mohammad Hussain told Xinhua.

Taliban militants in a surprise move overrun the strategically important Tala-o-Barfak district on Wednesday.

Although the government officials have declined to comment on the situation in Tala-o-Barfak district, locals, media outlets and Taliban reported the fall of the mountainous district to the Taliban militants on Wednesday.

Hussian, who is fighting the Taliban insurgents in Tala-o-Barfak district, has claimed that the militants were in the run and the security forces had been chasing them.

Taliban, which is in control of parts of the northern Baghlan province, has yet to make comment on the situation in Tala-o-Barfak district.—*Xinhua*

Kennedy Library picks Obama for 'Profiles in Courage' award

Messages are seen next to a cut-out of former US President Barack Obama at a local shop during President Day holiday in Washington US, on 20 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Former US President Barack Obama on Thursday was named this year's winner of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library's "Profile in Courage" award, an annual honour for leaders who stand up to political opponents.

The museum cited Obama's signature healthcare reform law, which his successor President Donald Trump has vowed to repeal and replace, restored diplomatic ties with Cuba and the Paris climate change deal as key reasons for his selection.

"President Obama has embodied the definition of courage that my grandfather cites in the opening lines of 'Profiles in Courage': grace under pressure," Jack Schlossberg, the slain US president's grandson, said in a statement. "Throughout his two terms in office, he represented all Americans with decency, integrity, and an unshakeable commitment to the greater good."

The award takes its name from Kennedy's 1957 Pulitzer Prize-winning book about eight US Senators who took principled stands on unpopular issues.

Previous winners include former presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush; Gabrielle Giffords, the former US representative who left Congress after a gunman shot her in the head; and John McCain, the US senator and former prisoner of war.

Obama will receive the award in a 7 May ceremony at the waterfront Boston Kennedy library.—*Reuters*

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MANDALAY REGION GOVERNMENT
MANDALAY CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MANDALAY URBAN SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Invitation for Prequalification

Date: March ,2017

SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Invitation of Prequalification No: MYWW/4.0/01

Contract No: MYWW/4.0

Contract Title: Nankad Lake Waste Water Treatment Plant and associated facilities.

1. Mandalay City Development Committee has received financing from the Asia Development Bank towards the cost of Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards payments under the contract for Nankad Lake Waste Water Treatment Plant and associated facilities.
2. Mandalay City Development Committee now invites applicants to submit sealed prequalification documents for Design, Build and Operate (DBO) of Nankad Lake Waste Water Treatment Plant and associated facilities to be constructed in calendar year 2018, 2019 and 2020 with an Operation of Maintenance Period of 3 years.
3. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures as specified in the ADB's Guidelines for procurement of goods and works; the bidding documents shall be addressed only to the prequalified eligible firms following the evaluation result of the prequalification.
4. Interested firms may obtain the prequalification documents (PQD) from Project Manager, Project Management Office (MUSIP), Mandalay City Development Committee, wsdd@mandalaycity.info and acquire the prequalification documents during office hours 10:00 to 16:00 hours at the address given below.
5. A complete set of prequalification documents (PQD) in English may also be downloaded at:https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/coso/mya3316-PQ-%20MYWW-4.0_Nankad%20.pdf
6. Application for prequalification must be delivered to the address below on or before local time 16:00, 28th April, 2017. Electronic application of prequalification will not be permitted. Late application will be rejected.
7. A site visit (Nankad Lake and Ket Kyaw Pumping Station) and prequalification meeting will be held tentatively from 09h00 until 12h00 on 13th March, 2017, at 26thstreet between 71st and 72nd street, Mandalay City Development Committee. A data room shall be opened on the same day and location from 12h00 until 16h00
8. The address referred to above para 4 and 5 are:

Attention : Project Manager
Project Management Office (MUSIP)
26th street between 71st and 72nd street
Mandalay City Development Committee
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Telephone : +95 261631
E mail : wsdd@mandalaycity.info

Dutch paradox: Voters head for far right amidst rising prosperity

VOLENDAM, (Netherlands) — The Dutch fishing village of Volendam hardly seems like a hotbed of discontent: tidy, prosperous, little crime or unemployment. Yet a third of its voters are likely to back anti-immigrant nationalist Geert Wilders in the 15 March general election.

His appeal highlights a paradox that is challenging the status quo in Western democracies and fraying the European Union: voters are spurning the mainstream in favour of anti-establishment populism in times of economic wellbeing. The trend is especially striking in the Netherlands, where the economy is set to be the best performer in the euro zone this year and the people consistently rank near the top of global measurements of happiness and material comfort. Dutch anti-establishment sentiment is "first and foremost about culture and identity and less about economics", said Sarah de Lange, a University of Amsterdam political scientist studying the rise of far-right parties in the EU. It echoes the dissatisfaction that fuelled Britain's vote to quit the EU and Donald Trump's election as US president, and the Dutch vote looks like the next chapter of the populist backlash, even if Wilders does not win big enough to gain power. Polls show Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) will more than double its seats in parliament to 26, almost even with Prime Minister Mark Rutte's conservatives who stand to tumble from 41 to 27, with his coalition partner Labour plunging to 14 from 38. But because centrist parties rule out any alliance with Wilders, he will probably end up in the opposition again. Still, he has already succeeded in pushing mainstream politics toward the hard right, with centrist parties now endorsing an immigration ban. Anger at pro-EU metropolitan political elites over years of liberal immigration policy is a major driver of Wilders' appeal. Non-Western immigrants comprised 7.5 per cent of the Dutch population in 1996, and that figure rose to 12.1 by 2015, according to Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Around five per cent of the population of 17 million is now Muslim.

"Imagine what a mess it would be in the zoo if all the cages were left open," Volendam retiree Willem Veerman said when asked why he has embraced Wilders' anti-Islam, anti-EU agenda.

"Well, that's what's happening currently in Europe." The Dutch were long renowned for multicultural tolerance rooted in their history. But immigration has become the pivotal election issue regardless of whether voting districts are high- or low-income or have large or small numbers of foreigners. —*Reuters*

To be known by AMARA SINGAMV (A 238984360) and public

Golden Myint Kyina ,Co., Ltd had been opened at No. 3A3, Yankin Center, Yankin Township, Yangon, Myanmar where you are residing. Documents and seals of company had been kept in company office on belief. Regarding with the case crime/732/2016 opened by you misappropriated that documents and signature of managing director, seals without agreement of other directors it is notified to solve quickly that "it is not concerned with other directors of company". If fail, it is notified to take action by the company according to law-continuously.

by the instruction of managing director U Wai Lin

Daw Lin Let Lin Sr - 29435 | U Aung Nyan Min Sr - 29891 | Daw Aye Thae Khaing Sr - 41354

No. 101, 1st Floor, Seikkan Thar Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon City.

AUTHENTICATED, true and correct English Translation.

Brazil's Temer plays for time in case that could unseat him

BRASILIA — President Michel Temer's government expects a federal judge to recommend his removal for illegal campaign funding but believes it can stall a final decision by Brazil's top electoral court until after he leaves office next year, aides said.

If Temer can delay the process it could allow him to press ahead with fiscal reforms and austerity policies that have lifted Brazil's currency and stocks and raised chances the country will emerge from a deep recession in 2017.

The case before the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) alleges that proceeds from corruption and political kickbacks were used to fund Temer's 2014 election campaign when he was the vice presidential running mate to Dilma Rousseff, who was impeached last year for manipulating budget accounts.

Damaging new evidence was given on Wednesday by the jailed former CEO of Brazil's largest engineering firm, Marcelo Odebrecht, who confirmed that his company made illegal donations to the campaign to the federal judge handling the case.

Judge Herman Benjamin is now expected to recommend in coming weeks the ticket be annulled, presidential aides said.—*Reuters*

After drought, Zimbabwe seeks foreign help for flood victims

HARARE — Zimbabwe has appealed for international help for victims of floods that have left 246 people dead and displaced hundreds since December when torrential rains started pounding a country emerging from severe drought.

An El Nino-induced drought last year scorched crops in the southern African country, leaving more than 4 million in need of food aid, but Zimbabweans are now having to contend with floods after receiving above-normal rains.

Minister for local government Saviour Kasukuwere said floods had swept through villages in the southern and southwestern parts of Zimbabwe, destroying roads, crops and livestock and forcing people into temporary government shelter.

Kasukuwere said nearly 2,000 people were homeless, 74 schools were damaged and 70 dams had burst.

President Robert Mugabe's cash-strapped government has struggled to manage the inundation, whose effects were most severe in the areas hit hardest by last year's drought. Urban areas have not been spared, with many roads badly damaged.

"I am therefore appealing to the development partners, private sector and general public, inclusive of those in the diaspora, to rally with the government to support the emergency relieve programs," Kasukuwere said in a statement.

The government is seeking tents, drugs and food for those displaced by the floods, he added.—*Reuters*

Cattle stand over cracked earth as water levels drop in a dam near Mount Darwin, Zimbabwe, on 26 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

New Zealand military surrenders HQ to earthquake damage

WELLINGTON — New Zealand's military and defence administration is looking for a new home after being beaten out of its headquarters by the 7.8-magnitude quake that struck in November last year.

The 10-year-old building housing the headquarters of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is to be demolished because it was so badly damaged by the quake.

The NZDF said on Friday that repairs on Defence House — also known as Freyberg House — were deemed too expensive.

The 14 November earthquake, which was centered in the coastal town of Kaikoura, on the northeast of the South Island, triggered the evacuation of the building.

Since then critical headquarters staff for both the NZDF and MOD had operated out of Freyberg Building, immediately behind the Defence House, said a statement from the NZDF.

"By the end of April about 900 staff from the NZDF and MOD will be based in Freyberg Building," it said.

The owner of Defence House, AMP Capital, has been involved in investigations to determine the extent of the damage, but had advised the cost of repairs was not economically viable and it would be taken down.

"Long-term accommodation options for the NZDF and MOD in Wellington are under consideration, as we work out of our interim accommodation," said the statement.

Opposition lawmakers demanded to know why a building supposedly designed to the highest levels was brought low by an earthquake not even centered on Wellington. "That sets off alarm bells. Why is it that so many modern buildings in Wellington failed when so many other buildings, including ones stickered 'earthquake prone,' suffered little or no damage?" leader of the opposition New Zealand First party, Winston Peters, said.—*Xinhua*

Early surge in coal usage in 2017 may not last

NEW YORK — There are signs utilities are buying more coal this year than last thanks to a late-year surge in natural gas prices, but the black rock still isn't expected to regain its crown from gas as the leading fuel source for power generation.

That's even as President Donald Trump has said repeatedly that he wants a revival of coal production, a dirtier fuel than gas that has seen its fortunes decline thanks to a shale boom that has boosted gas production.

Gas prices rose in late December, and analysts have been predicting an improved outlook for 2017 for coal, as higher gas prices make coal the cheaper fuel for some power generators, according to analysts and government studies.

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) said on Wednesday that the number of rail cars loaded with coal in February increased over 19 per cent compared with the same month in 2016, the biggest percentage gain on record, according to AAR data to 1988. "While it's an impressive gain, February 2017 was, unfortunately, also the second worst February in absolute terms for coal since sometime before 1988," John Gray, AAR Senior Vice President of Policy and Economics, said in a release. Gas prices were expected to rise about 25 per cent in 2017, which would favor more coal production. Since late December, though, gas futures have dropped 30 per cent, which could threaten coal's projected comeback, after last year giving up the mantle as the primary source for US power production.

US coal production totaled 739 million short tons in 2016, lowest since 1978, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA). EIA projected coal output would rise to 762.5 million short tons in 2017.

The power sector accounted for 92 per cent of the coal consumed in the United States in 2016. Coal competes with gas as the fuel most used by the power sector to generate electricity.

However, with growing gas export demand, switching from coal to gas this year will be somewhat reduced, analysts said. —*Reuters*

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (165)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (165) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T 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
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV MAGNUM FORCE VOY. NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAGNUM FORCE VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 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
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV TOP FAIR VOY. NO (549)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TOP FAIR VOY. NO (549) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.3.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-3 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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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

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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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AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

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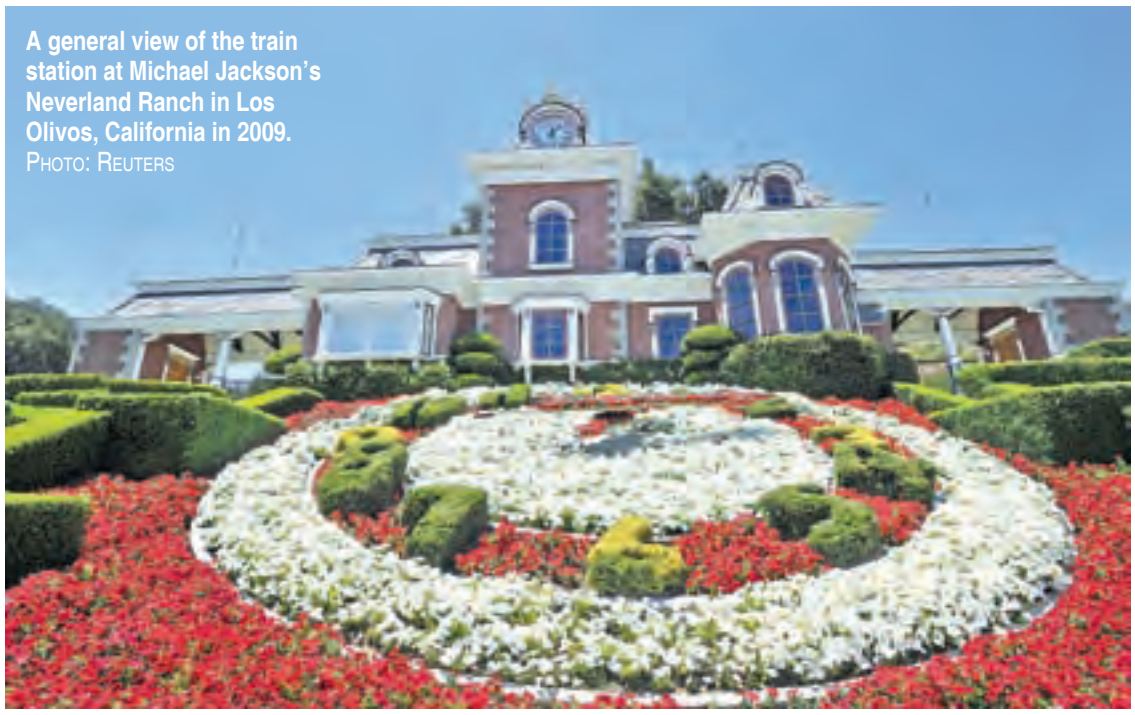

A general view of the train station at Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch in Los Olivos, California in 2009. PHOTO: REUTERS

Neverland Ranch back on market with cut price, no Michael Jackson reference

LOS ANGELES — Michael Jackson's famed Neverland Ranch in California is back on the market at a much reduced price of $67 million and with no mention of the late pop star in the real estate listing.

The sprawling 2,700-acre (1,100-hectare) estate, which once featured a zoo and theme park rides and where Jackson was accused of molesting a boy, is being touted for suitability for wine-making, keeping horses and a "lifestyle of relaxation and entertaining on a grand scale."

The estate, which was renamed Sycamore Valley Ranch several years ago, was last offered for sale in May 2015 at $100 million but failed to sell.

Jackson, who died from an overdose of the anesthetic Propofol in 2009 at age 50, bought the property in Los Olivos, about 120 miles (193 km) north of Los Angeles, in 1987 for $19.5 million. After financial troubles, in 2008 he handed over the title to the ranch to investment firm Colony Capital LLC, which held his $23 million loan on the property.

Neverland, a name taken from the "Peter Pan" tale of a boy who refused to grew up, became Jackson's favorite retreat. It also was where he entertained young boys, one of whom brought molestation charges against the "Thriller" singer that resulted in a 2005 trial and Jackson's acquittal.

The ranch's famous railway has now been removed but the listing by real estate company Coldwell Banker shows that the floral clock with the word Neverland remains. Other than that, the listing makes no mention of Jackson.—*Reuters*

Amitabh Bachchan bats for gender equality

PHOTO: REUTERS

MUMBAI — Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has come out in support of gender equality, saying his son Abhishek and daughter Shweta Nanda will have an equal share in his property.

The actor, 74, posted a picture on Twitter where he is seen holding a placard that read, "#WeAreEqual... and #genderequality... the picture says it all!!"

"When I die, my assets will be equally shared between my daughter and my son! #genderequality...

#WeAreEqual."

Bachchan recently starred in "Pink", a gritty courtroom drama about the prejudices that Indian women face in their daily lives.—*PTI*

Bette Davis, Joan Crawford's bitter rivalry comes alive in 'Feud'

LOS ANGELES — One of Hollywood's most famous rivalries is taking center stage in a new television series, as "Feud" explores a salacious battle between Golden Age screen legends Joan Crawford and Bette Davis.

"Feud," FX's new anthology series premiering on Sunday, will star Susan Sarandon as Davis and Jessica Lange as Crawford in a stylized retelling of their legendary clashes whilst filming 1962's Oscar-nominated thriller "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?"

Davis and Crawford's bitter rivalry escalated throughout their careers, their scathing barbs embedded into Hollywood lore. Crawford died in 1977 and Davis died in 1989.

At the show's red carpet premiere on Wednesday, Sarandon, 70, told Reuters that the role of Davis "has been chasing me for years," but the task of depicting the Hollywood star had seemed daunting until now.

"I was really scared. I wasn't really sure I wanted to do it," the actress said.

While the series is set against the backdrop of Hollywood's Golden Age - the rise of studio films from the 1920s to the 1960s — Jessica Lange, 67, said Hollywood continues to be a harsh environment for woman.

"The pressure is still there because you have five actresses who would be right for one part but only obviously one person (gets it). So there is a natural kind of competitive atmosphere always in Hollywood," she said.

Catherine Zeta-Jones who co-stars in "Feud" as Olivia de Havilland, said she was surprised to discover how competitive it was for women in film during the Golden Age. She added that her 100-year-old father-in-law Kirk Douglas, a star of the Golden Age, helped her prepare for the role.

"I think the strength of women who had to survive this, through the knocks, through the aging process, having your face on a twenty-by-twenty foot screen and people critiquing you, that is the same as today," she said.—*Reuters*

Actors Susan Sarandon (L) and Jessica Lange. PHOTO: REUTERS

Security boosted for accountants in Oscar gaffe who froze backstage

Martha Ruiz (L) and Brian Cullinan of PricewaterhouseCoopers confer on stage after the Best Picture was mistakenly awarded to 'La La Land' instead of 'Moonlight'. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Security has been stepped up for the two accountants responsible for botching the Oscar best picture announcement, their company said on Thursday, as the ceremony's stage manager said the pair had to be pushed onstage to set things right after the gaffe.

Accountancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) said security was provided at the homes of Brian Cullinan and Martha Ruiz following Sunday's blunder, in which an envelope mix-up led to the announcement of the wrong film as best picture winner during the live TV broadcast.

PwC gave no details but celebrity website TMZ.com said the pair had received death threats on social media and that photos of their homes had been posted online.

Cullinan, who posted a now-deleted backstage photo of Emma Stone on Twitter just before the gaffe, and Ruiz were barred on Wednesday by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences from taking part in the Oscars ceremony or ballot counting ever again.

Oscar show stage manager Gary Natoli told Hollywood website TheWrap that the two had frozen backstage when things went wrong during the climax of Sunday's ceremony.

Natoli said he was standing near Ruiz when actors Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway incorrectly announced on stage that musical "La La Land" had won the top award for best picture.

The winner of best picture was African-American independent film, "Moonlight."

"We watched for about 10 more seconds, and during that entire time, Martha was no more than five feet away from us. When 'La La Land' was announced, she did not try to get my attention, she did not say anything. And she's supposed to have memorized the winners," Natoli told TheWrap.

More than a minute passed before Cullinan said backstage that something was wrong.

Backstage crew were "trying to get Brian to go on stage, and he wouldn't go," Natoli said. "And Martha wouldn't go. We had to push them on stage, which was just shocking to me."—*Reuters*

Klimt painting sells for 48 million pounds at record-breaking London auction

LONDON — A painting of flowers by Gustav Klimt sold in London for 48 million pounds, a record for a work by the Austrian artist and the third-highest price for any work sold at auction in Europe, Sotheby's said on Thursday.

Described in the auction catalogue as a masterpiece of Viennese fin-de-siecle art, "Bauerngarten", completed in 1907, depicts poppies, daisies, zinnia and roses in full bloom in a garden.

It was the star attraction at Sotheby's sale of impressionist, modern and surrealist art, which took place on Wednesday evening.

The auction as a whole netted $241 million, which Sotheby's said was the highest total for any auction staged in London, propelled particularly by Asian buyers.

"Tonight's outstanding result is a new benchmark for London sales as much as it is a statement on the momentum of the global art market in 2017," said Helena Newman, chairman of Sotheby's Europe, in a statement.

Workers pose with Gustav Klimt's "Bauerngarten (Blumengarten)" ahead of an upcoming sale at Sotheby's auction house, in London, Britain, on 22 February 2017. A painting of flowers by Gustav Klimt sold in London for 48 million pounds ($59 million), a record for a work by the Austrian artist and the third-highest price for any work sold at auction in Europe, Sotheby's said on 2 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

The two artworks that previously sold for higher prices at European auctions were Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti's "Walking Man I", which sold for 65 million pounds in 2010, and Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens' "The Massacre of the Innocents", which went for 49.5 million pounds in 2002.

Sotheby's said another highlight of its Wednesday sale was Pablo Picasso's 1944 work "Plant de tomates", which sold for 17 million pounds.

The auction also set a record for a work by Alfred Sisley, a British impressionist who worked mostly in France. His 1874 painting "Effet de neige a Louveciennes" sold for 7.4 million pounds.—*Reuters*

New shopping centre opens in town hit by 2011 quake-tsunami

SENDAI — A new shopping centre built on elevated land opened Friday in a northeastern Japan town devastated in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, featuring shops that had been operating out of temporary buildings since then.

Marking a new phase in reconstruction of the Miyagi Prefecture town of Minamisanriku, hard hit by the disaster on 11 March 2011, 28 shops opened at the new Minaminsanriku Sun Sun Shopping Village in six wooden buildings designed by famed architect Kengo Kuma, who also designed the new National Stadium for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo.

Hideo Kitamura, a 67-year-old Hyogo Prefecture resident who had been volunteering in the town since the disaster, said, "There was nothing when I came at first as everything was swept away. This is the result of the collective hard work done by the whole town."

The shops include restaurants serving fresh local seafood, a hair salon and souvenir shops. Of the 32 businesses that had been operating at the temporary shopping center, 23 moved into the permanent shopping center together with five other shops.

"I was able to buy tasty seafood after a long time. I will keep coming," said Syuya Ogata, 72, who came to shop from the adjacent city of Kesennuma.

Floral wreaths and colorful flags were placed in front of each shop in celebration of their opening.

"I hope the shopping arcade and the town will thrive," said Eishi Chiba, 61, who has a seaweed shop at the new arcade. —*Kyodo News*

mitv Myanmar International
Programme Schedule

(4-3-2017 07:00am ~ 5-3-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon-The Ten Traditional Arts & Crafts
07:47	Am	All About Orchids
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Pakhan Traditional Nat Festival In Ku Ni Village (Part-1)
08:51	Am	Colourful Threads
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Ashin Thitzana or Martyr of Buddha's Sasana
09:40	Am	Adventurous Young Photographer
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Next Generation "Saw Noel (Violin)"
10:35	Am	We'll Leave After 12 Passengers are on Board
10:50	Am	Myanmar's Export: Mango

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Friday 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 Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-1)
07:48	Pm	Today Myanmar: Hand in Hand for Peace
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Creator of Imagination
08:53	Pm	Chaung Tha Souvenir Business

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Friday 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)

US cigar lovers stock up on Cuba visits, fearing clampdown

HAVANA — Puffing on a cigar at Cuba's annual Habanos cigar festival, American aficionado Paul Segal said he would buy as many boxes of cigars as he could carry home in case US President Donald Trump tightens regulations on visitors to the communist-run island again.

Segal, who writes a cigar blog called Segal and Cigars, said he took 25 boxes back on a trip last year, shortly after former US President Barack in October removed the $100 limit on the value of rum and cigars American travelers could bring back. An inexpensive box of 25 cigars costs about $100.

Trump, who took office in January, has threatened to reverse the United States' detente with its former Cold War foe. Segal and other American visitors to the island are not taking any chances and are stocking up.

"This may be the last trip on which I can bring back cigars," said Segal, who had several different brands sticking out of the pockets of his guayabera shirt.

"So far, I have only got about 10 boxes but I still have five days left before I head home."

The United States is the biggest market worldwide for cigars, but its trade embargo on Cuba has prevented the Caribbean island from selling its Cohibas, Montecristos and other legendary brands there for more than half a century.

US cigar aficionados have long had to make do with non-Cuban brands, such as those made in Honduras, Nicaragua or the Dominican Republic.

Despite his drive to normalize US-Cuban relations, Democratic President Obama was unable to lift the trade embargo, which requires action by the Republican-controlled Congress. He did, however, ease some trade and travel regulations since announcing the detente in December 2014. These proved to be a gamechanger for US cigar lovers, Habanos festival participants said.

Nicholas Syris, who hosts the Atlanta radio show "Smooth Draws" about "the cigar lifestyle," last year started leading cigar tours to Cuba due to interest from listeners. Travel had become a lot easier due partly to the re-establishment of commercial flights.

Smoking with other American festival goers in the gardens of Havana's iconic Hotel Nacional overlooking the Caribbean Sea, he said he brought up to 20 aficionados monthly and could not keep up with the demand. Meanwhile, the fact travelers could now bring back as many Cuban cigars as they wanted was impacting the US market, said Rene Castaneda, head of the North American operations of Swiss cigar manufacturer Villiger.

"We are seeing more Cuban cigars in the United States than ever and that hits sales of non-Cuban cigars," he said.

Syris said some of his tour participants were buying thousands of cigars at a time. In many instances, Habanos stores did not even have enough supply for the demand.

"People reckon they had better buy now because they don't know if it will be legal next year," he said. "You just don't know about tomorrow."—*Reuters*

A photographer takes a photograph of cigars on display at the 19th Habanos Festival in Havana, Cuba, on 27 February 2017. PHOTO : REUTERS

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Murray survives 38-point tiebreak to reach Dubai semis

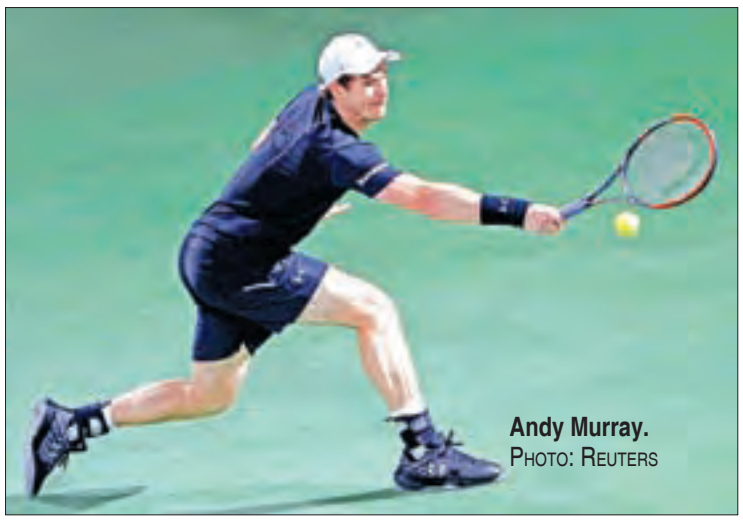
DUBAI — Andy Murray saved seven match-points in a 31-minute tiebreak that stretched to 38 points before he finally subdued Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-7(4), 7-6(18), 6-1 to reach the Dubai Championships semi-finals on Thursday.

A day after Australian Open champion Roger Federer was surprisingly beaten in the second round, world number one Murray found himself a point away - time and time again - from following the Swiss great through the exit door.

But number one seed Murray showed the resilience that carried him to the top of the tennis rankings last November as he inflicted a heartbreaking loss on Kohlschreiber.

The Briton finally bagged the second set tiebreak on his eighth set point to level the match. The ATP said no men's tour-level match has featured a tiebreak with more than 38 points since 1991 - six have finished 20-18.

"I've never played a tiebreak like that ever, not in juniors, nothing has been close to that," Murray, who is contesting his first tournament since losing in the fourth round of the Australian Open in January, told reporters.



Andy Murray. PHOTO: REUTERS

"I'll probably never play another one like that again. I've been playing on the tour for 11, 12 years now and nothing, nothing's been close to that."

With no end to the tiebreak in sight, Murray, Kohlschreiber and the umpire were left confused as the players forgot to change ends when they were locked at 15-15. Tennis rules state players have to change ends every six points during a tiebreak.

"I realised at 16-16 (that we had not changed ends), the umpire said he forgot and the (scoring) machine didn't recognise it, I do not know if the machines are made to go that high, it doesn't happen every often," added Murray.

The tiebreak left Kohlschreiber running on empty in the third set and Murray needed just another 30 minutes to secure a meeting with seventh-seeded Frenchman Lucas Pouille, who beat Federer's Russian conqueror Evgeny Donskoy 6-4, 5-7, 7-6(2).

"I could have easily lost tonight, but the way I played when I was behind will give me a lot of confidence after what was a tough start to the year," said Murray. "I want to keep that going now. It was a special match to win because of how it went."

The other semi-final will feature Fernando Verdasco of Spain and Dutchman Robin Haase, both unseeded.—*Reuters*

Carrick ponders retirement if no new United deal on table

LONDON — Manchester United midfielder Michael Carrick hinted he could call time on his career if the club do not offer him a new contract for the next season.

Carrick, who is out of contract at the end of the campaign, has been reduced to a bit-part role in United's squad under manager Jose Mourinho, having made just 11 Premier League appearances so far.

"(Retirement) almost depends on how long I'm here. I don't think there's many places I'd want to play, if any, after this anyway. I probably would say yes - that would be it if I left in the summer," Carrick told British media.

The 35-year-old Carrick, who was awarded a June 4 testimonial by United on Thursday, has spent 11 years at the club, winning 16 major trophies, including five league titles.

"I haven't really had that much of a conversation with him (Mourinho) at the moment. Obviously that will happen pretty soon. That's something I'm really relaxed about. I'm sure he is as well," Carrick added.—*Reuters*

PHOTO: REUTERS

Atletico's Torres 'conscious and lucid' after head injury

MADRID — Striker Fernando Torres is "conscious and lucid" after being taken to hospital with suspected head trauma sustained during Thursday's 1-1 draw at Deportivo La Coruna, his club Atletico Madrid have confirmed.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Torres, on as a second-half substitute, fell face down on the pitch in the 85th minute after challenging for the ball with Deportivo's Alex Bergantinos and required urgent treatment.

Bergantinos and new Deportivo coach Pepe Mel, who both visited Torres in hospital, also confirmed that the striker was well and happy.

"Good news," Atletico said on their official Twitter account. "Torres has undergone a cranial and cervical CT. There are no alterations nor traumatic injuries. He is conscious and lucid."—*Reuters*

Ace high Kyrgios stuns Djokovic in Acapulco

ACAPULCO — Nick Kyrgios served like a demon to bounce Serbia's world number two and top seed Novak Djokovic out of the quarter-finals of the Acapulco International with a 7-6(9), 7-5 victory on Thursday.

The Australian sixth seed served up 25 aces to the Serbian's two and forged the only break of the match to set up a semi-final against American Sam Querrey, who earlier beat Dominic Thiem 6-1, 7-5.

Rafa Nadal also reached the last four with a hard-fought 7-6(2), 6-3 victory over Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka and will next meet former US Open champion Marin Cilic, whose quarter-final opponent Steve Johnson withdrew with an ankle injury.

The hugely talented Kyrgios's 2016 season was curtailed by an ATP ban for "not trying" at last year's Shanghai Masters but there was no doubting his commitment in his first meeting with 12-times grand slam champion Djokovic.

The 21-year-old held his nerve when the Serbian battled back for parity in the first set tiebreak, going 1-0 up when Djokovic fired a forehand long, and kept his concentration throughout an equally tight second set.

That also looked like going to a tiebreaker until Kyrgios pounced when leading 6-5 on serve, taking advantage of an uncharacteristically nervous service game from the former world number one to claim three match points.

Kyrgios needed only one for victory, taking the initiative with a rocket of a return off the Serbian's second serve and finishing the match off with a fierce forehand winner into the backcourt.

Serbia's Novak Djokovic waves after losing match against Australia's Nick Kyrgios in Acapulco, Mexico, on 2 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Djokovic was returning to action as a wild card in Acapulco after a shoulder injury and playing only his second tour match since his stunning second round exit at the Australian Open at the hands of journeyman Denis Istomin.

Nadal, who won the title on both his previous appearances in Acapulco in 2005 and 2013 and reached the final at Melbourne Park in January, also had his back against the wall a couple of times against 21-year-old Nishioka.

The 14-times grand slam champion was 4-2 down in the first set and trailed 0-2 in the second but rallied each time and ended the one-hour, 57-minute match with an overhead smash.

"I did not play my best tennis, but that's why it has a merit," the Spaniard said. "I played great the previous rounds and today I was able to get over a tough situation. I'm happy to be in the semi-finals, that's great news."—*Reuters*

Aguero to hold talks with City in June over future

LONDON — Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero is determined to produce his best form in the final three months of the campaign before he holds talks on his future at the Premier League club in June.

Aguero's long-term prospects at City were doubted after the explosive Argentine striker lost his place in the starting line-up to young Brazil forward Gabriel Jesus.

Aguero, who is the club's top scorer with 22 goals in 30 appearances this season, has impressed since he was brought back into the team following an injury to Jesus last month.

"That will be seen in June," Aguero told British media when asked if he will be at City next season. "My intention is to stay but it is a long way away. There are three months left, the only thing I think is to give the best in these three months.—*Reuters*

PHOTO: REUTERS

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