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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, senior military officers and ethnic leaders discuss national reconciliation and the peace process at Thingaha Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

'It is progress to disagree without hate'

State Counsellor, Tatmadaw and ethnic leaders negotiate peace issues and implementation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement

A meeting to evaluate the peace process yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw was described as being "of great benefit", with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of the national reconciliation and peace centre, members of the Tatmadaw and ethnic leaders assembled in a hotel conference room to discuss the implementation of a nationwide cease-fire agreement.

The gathering at the Thingaha Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw was significant, one general noted, because of the long, deliberate road toward peace that Myanmar has endured over the years and through different administrations.

"The Coordination Meeting on Joint Implementation of Nationwide Cease-fire Agreement held today is the first-ever meeting in the reign of the incumbent government", said Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief of the Army. "In the previous government's tenure there were four meetings held. It is the meeting in consequence of the Nationwide Cease-fire Agreement held on October 15, 2016. Till now, 10 per cent of the national populace is still in the warring areas. Likewise, 40 per cent is still in the area of conflicts. Only 70 per cent are enjoying the fruits of peace just in a short period of time, as a consequence of the NCA. It is necessary to include 10 per cent and 20 per cent into 70 per cent or to implement for achieving nationwide peace to the full. And we need to be aware concerning to which extent the part of implementation of the facts included in NCA is very valuable for us. We have disclosed that mutual trust and respect between one group and another, negotiation, cooperation and Panglong spirit are of great importance for 21st Century, in performing the tasks for the peace process.

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Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than receives Indonesia Upper House delegation

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received a delegation led by Prof. Dr. John Pieris, Chairman of Institutional Capacity Development Committee, Regional Representative Council, Upper House of Indonesia yesterday morning at the hall of Amyotha Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to promoting friendship, legislative affairs and cooperation between the parliaments of the two countries.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung, Chairman of Amyotha Hluttaw Commission on Non-Government National and International Organizations Affairs U Min Oo and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw office.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than holds talks with Prof. Dr. John Pieris in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Members of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Committee for the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw pose for a documentary photo before departure for Vietnam. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar delegation to observe real estate services in Vietnam

Members of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Committee for the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Tin Maung Oo and U San Lwin together with Chairman of Myanmar Real Estate Services Development Association U Tin Maung and U Kyaw Myint and U Aung Tun from M Law Group left Yangon for Vietnam by air yesterday morning.

Myanmar delegation is planned to observe real estate services in Vietnam to be able to help draw up real estate services law in Myanmar. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives ceremonial Guard of Honour in Austria

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was welcomed a ceremonial Guard of Honour at the Ministry of Defence of Austria at 10:00 am local standard time yesterday by General Othmar Commenda from Austrian Armed Forces.

Next, the Senior General held talks with the General Othmar Commenda at the Latter's office.

Afterwards, the Senior General and party visited the Schonbrunn Palace in Vienna at 2:30 pm local standard time on 23 April.

The palace displays the attractive architectural, cultural, and historical of Habsburger monarchs. The Schonbrunn Palace was inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage List in 1996.

Then, the Commander-in-Chief and party visited Donau Tower at 4:10 pm local standard time and viewed the Vienna's scenic beauties. Then, the Commander-in-Chief and party were hosted dinner by General Othmar Commenda and wife at Marriott Hotel in Vienna.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and General Othmar Commenda from Austrian Armed Forces inspect the ceremonial Guard of Honour at the Ministry of Defence of Austria. PHOTO: MNA

Yangon Region Hluttaw reviews YBS bus system

Ko Moe

In the Yangon Region Hluttaw meeting on 24 April, 26 Hluttaw representatives discussed the YBS bus system currently in place.

"We need to improve the public transportation system and urge the regional government to be transparent to the public when laying down rules and regulations," said U Wai Phyo Han of Yangon Constituency.

To this, Daw Kyi Pyar of Kyauktada Constituency (1) added, "Although the government implemented the current bus system with good intentions, there are still inconveniences for the public. The policy should be written inclusively with people who ride the buses, otherwise, without them, the policy will be like pouring water into sand."

She also stated that responsible officials from YRTA should give more consideration for public end users while also encouraging the drivers and spares to adopt the new changes.

The Hluttaw Representatives also stated that at the time of implementing the new YBS system, there was no submittal to the Hluttaw nor forewarning, but only a few days notice, when modifications of systems should be reported to the Hluttaw well in advance.

The current YBS system had weak prior planning and management, resulting in insufficient vehicles during rush hours leading to jam-packed buses, representatives said.

"After abolishing the old Ma Hta Tha, we have to consider with what policy the YBS system will go forward, because the Ma Hta Tha had the Yangon Region Private Transport Act and we need to consider what legal route the new system will take. After the implementation, we have heard the voice of the public, but where is the voice of the Hluttaw? It's not good if the voice of the Hluttaw is lost," said U Kyaw Zaya of Dagon Myothit Constituency (2).

The Yangon Region Government introduced the new bus system on 16 January to reduce traffic jams and organise the buses, but even after three months passengers state they still face difficulties.

The current bus system still suffers from instances of overcharging, speeding by drivers, and failure of drivers to stop at appointed bus stops, similar to the old Ma Hta Tha system.

The regional Minister of Electricity, Industry, Transport and Communication Daw Nilar Kyaw said the regional government will answer questions posed today on 27 April.

On 17 February, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein stated at a press conference in the regional Hluttaw office building that they will replace the old buses with new ones in the next three months and attempt to improve the system to international standards by the end of the year.

The regional government stated they will review the YBS system every three months and the Yangon Region Transport Authority announced it will transfer the bus lines to public hands during 2017.

According to the YRTA, there are currently 80 bus routes and 3,500 buses in place for the 2.5 million daily commuters in the country's largest city. Yangon's population is approximately 6 million.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives OCHA Donor Support Group

STATE COUNSELLOR and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received a delegation from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Donor Support Group (ODSG) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 4 p.m. on 24 April.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on pertaining to ODSG's 2017 humanitarian assistant program to Myanmar, current situation of the humanitarian assistant works and cooperation between Myanmar and OCHA. — *Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with delegates from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President U Henry Van Thio arrives back from the Netherlands

Vice President U Henry Van Thio being welcomed by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials at Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President U Henry Van Thio and entourage arrived back in Yangon by air yesterday morning after paying a working visit to the Netherlands at an invitation of Deputy Prime Minister of the Netherlands and Minister of Social Affairs and Employment H.E. Mr. Lodewijk Asscher. The Vice President and entourage were welcomed by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, H.E. Mr. Wouter Robert Marie Jurgens, ambassador of the Netherlands to Myanmar and officials at the Yangon International Airport.— *Myanmar News Agency*

U Win Naing presents his credentials to Philippines President

U Win Naing, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of the Philippines, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines on 20 April 2017, in Manila.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

U Hau Do Suan concurrently appointed as Ambassador to Jamaica

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Hau Do Suan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations, New York, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Jamaica.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Peace conference to resume on 24 May

THE Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong will resume on 24th May, and all participants of the second meeting will make efforts for reaching consensus for a fundamental policy at the meeting.

The announcement was made by U Zaw Htay, the Director-General of the Office of the State Counsellor, following a work coordination meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday on implementing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

The work coordination meeting also called on those organisations which have not yet held national-level political dialogues to step up efforts to draw up specific procedures for unclear matters related to resolutions of the national-level political dialogues.

The participants of the meeting also decided yesterday to discuss the Joint Monitoring Committee's matters at the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee, as they reached beyond the framework of UPDJC and submitted them to the Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting (JICM) after discussion, he added. At the meeting, they also agreed on several issues to be jointly coordinated by both sides during the period from the singing NCA to reaching Union Agreement.

Director-General of the Office of the State Counsellor U Zaw Htay.

The JICM also agreed to form working groups during the period and JMC agreed to settle the disputed issues including demarcation between the Tatmadaw and the RCSS. Both sides also agreed to make more efforts for inclusiveness of the peace process based on NCA paving the ways for non-signatories to include in the peace process.

JICM will also form a joint group to discuss a deadlock for formation of a joint monitoring committee in Chin State.

"There are agreements reached between the government and ethnic armed organisations, and of these, some agreements remained to be implemented and they will be discussed at the meetings held every two weeks at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre", said U Zaw Htay.—*Myanmar News Agency*

National Level Political Dialogue for Shan State continues for second day

THE National Level Political Dialogue for Shan State continued for second day at the City Hall in Taunggyi, Southern Shan State yesterday morning.

U Khun Maung Thaung, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative, U Kyaine Lon, Chairman of Lahu Literature and Culture Association, U Win Myint, former Minister for Inn Ethnic Affairs, U Tun Naing, Chairman of Kokang Literature and Culture Association and U Kan Hla, member of Ta'ang Palaung Literature and Culture Association acted as the Chairman and members of the meeting.

First, Chairman of the meeting U Khun Maung Thaung made an opening speech and paper reading session followed. The paper on economy, paper on national level economy, paper on basic principle for regional development, paper on regional development that enables the federal union and paper on basic principle for economic development of the ethnic people based on federal system were read out by the representatives from Langkho District, Keng Tung District, Tachilek District, Lashio District, Muse District, Momeik District, Wa Self-administered Division, Danu Self-administered Zone, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, Taunggyi District, Union Solidarity and Development Party and National League for Democracy. U Hsai Nut read out the paper submitted by Wa National Unity Party and U Ai Hsaw, the paper submitted by Wa Democratic Party. In the evening, the paper reading session continued. The paper on land and environment sector, paper on national level politics, economic and land and environment, paper on policy for land and environment and paper on points should be carried out for utilization of land based on federal system were read out by the representatives from PaO National liberation Organization, Taunggyi district, Loilem District, Keng Tung District, Monghsat District, Tachilek District, Lashio District, Muse District, Momeik District, Wa Self-administered Division, Danu Self-administered Zone, Shan Nationalities Democratic Party, USDP and NLD. The papers submitted by Shan Nationalities League for Democracy and Ta'ang National Party were read out by Daw Nan Mya Oo from Shan Nationalities League for Democracy and U Aung Kyaw of the Ta'ang National Party.

The 2nd day meeting was attended by the Shan State government ministers, the chairmen and leading committee members from self-administered division and region, MPs, members of political parties, representatives of ethnic people, members of NCA signatory groups Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO) and Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), departmental officials, civil society organizations, literature and cultural groups numbering more than 300. A total of 33 papers were read out at the meeting.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Education Ministry invites students to apply for ASEAN scholarship award

THE Ministry of Education announced that outstanding students who completed at least Grade 9 are eligible to apply for the ASEAN scholarship award.

The scholarship award winners will be able to study overseas in Singapore.

The scholarship is for studies in selected Singapore schools from Secondary Three to Pre-University Two and is renewed annually, subject to the satisfactory performance of the scholar. After the four-year programme, they will receive the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A-Level) of equivalent certificate.

Proficiency in English and a good record of participation in co-curricular activities are essential for the applicants. Short-listed candidates for the selection test and interview to be conducted in Yangon will be notified one week ahead of time.

Eligible citizens born between 2001 and 2003 may send their application forms to the respective region/state education offices no later than 26 April.

"The ASEAN Scholarships aim to provide opportunities to the young people of ASEAN to develop their potential and equip them with important skills for the 21st century", according to the scholarship provider.—*Shwe Khine*

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Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 25th April 2017 kmma@kcyangon.com

Submission of IEE Study of 2D Regional Seismic Survey in Onshore Block MOGE-3 by PTTEP SA

PTTEP South Asia Limited (PTTEP SA) plans to conduct a 2D onshore regional seismic survey for Block MoGE-3, located in Magway Region, Myanmar. The survey is approximately 300 line-km and scheduled to commence in mid of 2017.

An Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) Study for the proposed activity has been prepared by PTTEP SA and Environmental Resources Management (ERM) and was submitted to the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) on April 11th 2017. The report is publically viewable at the following locations

- PTTEPSA's office in Yangon: 2 Sei-Myaung Yeiktha Lane,8 ½ Mile Road, Mayagone Township, Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- Magway District General Administrative Department Office, Magway Region
- Thayet District GeneralAdministrative Department Office, Magway Region
- On PTTEPI's website asfollows: www.pttep com

Feedback on the report can be submitted to PTTEP SA in writing by contacting the following e-mail address TinNilarsoe@pttep.com

Population of golden deer increases at Chutthin Wildlife Sanctuary

File photo shows goldern deers seen at Chutthin Wildlife Sanctuary in Kanbalu, Sagaing Region.
PHOTO: STRINGER/KYEMON

THE population of golden deer has increased by almost 250 this year compared with the same period of last year at the Chutthin Wildlife Sanctuary in Kanbalu township, Sagaing Region, said an official from Chutthin Wildlife Sanctuary.

According to the survey which was conducted in March, 728 golden deer are found in the wildlife sanctuary. There were only 480 golden deer in April, 2016.

"This year, the local hunters cooperate with the authorities in golden deer conservation. Previously, we found many snares in the sanctuary. But, we don't find any snare this year. The population of golden deer has increased because of improvement of the environmental conservation," said the official.

The official from Chutthin Wildlife Sanctuary attributed the increase in deer population to the proper supervision and the assistance of the Sagaing Region government.— *200*

Crop insurance to be introduced in Shwebo, Pyay townships

STATE-OWNED Myanma Insurance said it will start implementing a pilot project to introduce crop insurance in two townships to protect farmers from financial losses due to untimely weather occurrences.

With the technical assistance of Sompo Japan Nippon Koa Insurance Co, the Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank (MADB) and Myanma Insurance (MI) will initiate the new scheme in Shwebo Township in Sagaing Region as well as Pyay Township in Bago Region.

No exact date has been fixed for the launch of this service. However, the development of a crop insurance system is projected to be implemented this year, said an official from MI.

In collaboration with the Japanese insurer, MI is now developing the necessary policies and appropriate methods to successfully launch the new plan, which will then be submitted to the Insurance Business Regulatory Board (IBRB). The insurance authority will introduce the plan after getting the permission from the IBRB.

Crop insurance plays an essential role in the agriculture sector because erratic weather common and thus a big challenge for growers and investors. Crop insurance will cover the losses caused by natural disasters such as torrential rains and flooding.

For the time being, the MI is studying weather conditions in the project areas and discussing a suitable premium rate. Based on the results of the pilot projects, the service will be expanded to other regions and states.—*200*

Heroin and methamphetamine pills seized

A local anti-drug squad in northern Mandalay seized about 1960 methamphetamine pills and 0.95 kilo of ice from Sai Myo Tun and Nay Linn Aung at Ngwe Hlaing tea shop on 49th road, Zeegon Kywat Thit in Pathaingyi Township on 22 April.

After interrogation, the police searched the house of Aung Kyaw Oo from Kaynin village, Lashio Township, and found another 135 stimulant pills on 23 April.

The suspects confessed that they bought methamphetamine pills from Arrti lived in Nammawouk 2 village, Naungmom village track, Lashio Township. The police searched Arrti's house and discovered 264 grams of heroin and 5700 methamphetamine pills.

Acting on a tip- off that the drugs will be sent to Win Ko, a local anti-drug squad in eastern Yangon searched Win Ko and the vehicle driven Min Htet Lwin in Hninsemyaing street on Pyay road, Sawbwargyi Gon ward in Insein Township. In the search, the police discovered 145 stimulant pills and a cell phone.

According to the inspection, Win Ko carried the stimulant pills given by Tun Tun Win who accompanied and got off on the Toyota Success vehicle in Thiri Myaing street. The squad arrested Tun Tun Win and searched his house in No.61, Thiri Myaing street, Sawbwargyi Gon ward in Insein Township and found 2000 methamphetamine pills.

All suspects are charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— *Myanmar Police Force*

Myanmar citizens granted health care licence

YANGON Region government is granting the private health care services licences only to those holding Myanmar Citizenship Scrutiny Certificates, it is learnt.

Currently, Yangon region government is investigating and taking legal action against the private health care services centers which are owned by foreign investors. Although action is being taken against the foreigners' owned private clinics and hospitals, the aliens are stilling engaged in providing healthe care service under the names of Myanmar citizens.

The regional private health care centers supervising committee is cooperating with Hluttaw representatives to take legal action against those who are illegally providing health care services.

According to section 31 of chapter 15 of The law Relating to Private Health Care Service, anyone who opens a private health centre without license shall be given of a minimum sentence of one-year imprisonment and a maximum sentence of five-year imprisonment and fine.—*200*

Invitation to World Intellectual Property Day

The 2017 World Intellectual Property Day's celebration organized by the Ministry of Education (Science and Technology) will be held on 26 April from 9 am to 4 pm at the Myanmar Convention Center (MCC) on Min Dhamma Road, Yangon.

At the celebration, discussions dealing with copyright, displaying of local products, meals and conferring of remembrance gifts will be included.

Everyone who is interested in the event can join and enroll at the following contact phone numbers: 09-261882588, 09-421727020, 09-43004093 and 09-73060034.—*Myanmar News Agency*

LOCAL Business

Ayeyawady farmers remain to repay over Ks286billion of loan debt to MADB

MYANMA Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) reminded farmers from Ayeyawady Region they they have over Ks286billion of loan debt to repay.

The farm debt has been accumulating from 2012 to 2016. Nearly Ks300billion remained to be paid off for the past four years. Law enforcement is attempting to get loan repayments, with limited success, said U Than Htay Aung, a manager of Ayeyawady Region MADB (branch).

"The loan debt will continue to increase as long as law enforcement remains weak and so, a penalty should be exercised on those who fail to repay the loan, he added.

The main reason for loan debt is attributed to the weakness in financial management of the farmers, said U Win Myint Hlaing, the chairman of the Regional Rice Federation. "Farmers spent loans on current needs rather than cultivation, which forces them to take out loans from both private and public lenders. When they have to repay loans from the private sector together with heavy interest, they usually use the loan from government meant for cultivation in the coming season. In this way, they are suffering a vicious cycle for loan payment", he continued.

The MADB grants Ks100,000 of loan per acre to every farmer holding a Form 7 Farmland Work Permit Certificate, for up to 10 acres per farmer.

According to the by-laws of MADB, farmland or crops can be confiscated from those farmers who fail to repay the loan.

The government has a plan only to extend the term loan period, it is reported.—*Myo Min Paing (AMIA)*

Price of cars with non-Yangon licences falls

THE prices of cars with non-Yangon licences slumped when cars imported under the consignment system were allowed to apply for a licence of a region other than Yangon, according to the automobile market.

The cars imported under the consignment system by car showrooms and centres can now seek a licence of other regions apart from Yangon for 2002-2005 cars costing between Ks3million and Ks6million.

This action resulted in a slump in prices for cars from other regions, with car price decreasing up to Ks1.5million. The price is likely to continue to drop in the middle of this year when these actions comes into operation, said car dealers.

There are over 6,000 vehicles imported under the consignment system and those cars are soon to enter the auto market. Therefore, the prices of cars with licences from other regions will decline, said Ko Nay Aung, a car dealer.

The Yangon Region government suspended the granting of Yangon licences for cars, resulting in the prices for cars already bearing a Yangon licence to rise starting from early 2017.—*200*

Myanmar invited to show fruits, flowers and vegetables in South Korea exhibition

Myanmar was invited to exhibit its fruits, flowers and vegetables at the Dessert & Snack Korea 2017 Exhibition that will hold in South Korea, from 17 to 19 August, it is learnt from the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers Association.

Businessmen who want to show their wares at this exhibition can contact the Exhibition Department of UMFCCI, Tel: 01-2314344~49, Ext: 301, Mobile: 09-450200350 or email ma@umfcci.com.mm. Businessmen who want to show their products in this exhibition must register at the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, UMFCCI no later than 30 June.

Technologies for growing and the foreign markets of fruits can be studied at the exhibition. The exhibition is also an opportunity for introducing Myanmar fruits and vegetables to foreign markets and export sectors.—200

A vendor arranges oranges at a fruit stall in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

Pineapples growers Thaton have reaped healthy profit this year. PHOTO: KHUN (WINPA)

Growers get high price for pineapples

GROWERS in Thaton Township of Mon State say that they reaped a healthy profit from the sale of pineapples, which is in higher demand than other fresh fruits this season.

"When compared to last year, the month of April has seen a rise in the sale of pineapple produced in Thuwunnawaddy Town and nearby areas, which are currently crowded with buyers from far and near", one of local farmers said.

In previous years, growers sent their products by car to fruit and vegetable wholesalers in Yangon. A Nissan mini-truck can carry about 1,300 fruits. The value of one piece of fruit reached Ks130 after adding in the transportation costs. Growers normally receive the net profits calculated by subtracting general expenses including transportation charges.

But direct selling between fruit producers and commercial buyers at farms help growers reduce other expenses and increase their profit, farmers say.

"Pineapple, a delicious topical fruit, is more popular than durian in the domestic market," said U Tun Oo, a grower from Winpa Village, who expects the fruit to continue to sell well. A pineapple is currently offered from Ks300 to Ks1,000, depending on quality and freshness of the fruits.—*Khun (Winpa)*

Ministries hold press conference on performances in one year

Union Minister U Kyaw Win (centre) at press conference on performance during the one-year term of the current government at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

A press conference on performance during the one-year term of the incumbent government was held yesterday at 1 p.m at meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw.

Attending the press conference were Union Minister U Kyaw Win, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win, Ministry of Planning and Finance, Permanent Secretaries from Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, departmental officials and responsible persons and media personnel from local and foreign media.

Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win said two checkpoints currently operating are arranged to inspect 2-4 cars simultaneously and inspection time for each car is for a few minutes only. Furthermore, inspection is based on solid information received so there is no interruption or stopping in the flowing of goods.

He want to put on record that combined groups of personnel from each ministries at the inspection gates were not misbehaving and conducting their duties responsibly as plans were put in place to reward such government employees.

If there is an increase in tax, it will be at a level that is fair and within bearable level for the people and the changes in the tax system were made after consultation and coordination with local and foreign experts

Of the changes, the first is increasing the Aung Ba Le lottery ticket charge to 500 Kyat. The prize money set at lakh 10,000 is sizable enough for the winner to start a business sufficiently well. Later, the prize money will include lakh 5000, lakh 3000, lakh 2000. By doing this, the people are providing indirect tax without incurring any burden. The Ministry of Planning & Finance is conducting this in such a way that many who didn't win can also feel satisfied that these monies are used for the country's education and health sector.

Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank was transferred to Ministry of Planning & Finance with the belief that agriculture sector will develop if the bank is properly utilized. The Ministry is arranging loans not only for planting but also for providing capital input into the agriculture sector.

A plan is drawn up to enable employee ownership of their home by the time of retirement. In addition to drawing up the project and finance related matters for this plan, coordination with other ministries were made to conduct direct and indirect work of this plan with the support of these ministries. Furthermore, attempts are made to use satellite in the ministry's work. Implementation of e-Government process using DATA IT Card system will be started in 2017-2018. Plans are drawn to increase the power generation to 3000 MW in the coming three years.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win said Myanma Economic Bank provided agricultural loan of 150,000 Kyat per acre to each farmer totaling Kyat 1792.811 billion in the fiscal year 2016-2017 through Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank. On the matter of Two Step Loan, in the fiscal year 2016-2017, 175 business owners were provided with Kyat 36,750.43 million through KBZ, AYA, MAB, CB and SMIDB banks.

Internal Revenue Department charged 5% commercial tax on phone calls in accordance to the 2016 Union Tax Act for fiscal year 2016-2017 and up to 2016 April collected Kyat 7.454 billion and was transferred to use it in the education sector.

For quick clearance of goods, Customs Department starts using Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) in Yangon ports and airport on 12 November 2016.

Financial Regulatory Department granted operating license to 170 small scale financial institutions to support the uplifting of the socio-economic situation of the 70% of the people in Myanmar who are living in rural area. During fiscal year 2016-2017 financial services amounting to Kyat 2354 billion in loan and Kyat 140 billion in savings were provided to 15,986 villages with a population of 2.519 million.

Afterward U Thet Naing Oo, Director General, Settlement and Land Records Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock &Irrigation said that during this year 53,941 farmers and 109,572 land owners were issued form 7 for 41,758 acres.

Irrigation and Water resources Management Department provided 4,196 irrigation channels to provide water for agriculture and conducted 1,126 preventive and responsive works to natural disasters. Drip irrigation system started on a pilot scale with an 8-inch-tube artesian well in Anauk-Palin Village, NyaungU Township is notable.

Agriculture department set up seed-producer associations and 10,561 acre of seed producing area was developed in 206 townships with 318 farmers. According to rural development of Korea, a project of new village movement, "Myanmar Saemaul-Undong" with the US$ 22 million subsidy from KOICA for 5 years is being implemented in 100 pilot model villages in 9 states and regions.

> "Union Minister U Kyaw Win said plan is drawn up to enable employee ownership of their home by the time of retirement.

Agriculture Mechanization Department ploughed 885,000 acre, harvested 42,000 acre, and planted 7,000 under the machine rental system and it was 587,900 acre more than the plan for this year. Private sector is also complementing by providing 39 services in this area.

390 more cooperatives were formed in fiscal year 2016-2017. Transformation to mechanized agriculture and upgrading of the farms were implemented to 27,949.99 acres for 550 cooperatives with 7157 members. 20 service providing cooperatives, 29 branches of service-providing cooperatives, 20 combine harvesters, 107 tractors and other helpful services were created while 1816 small sized industries were registered.

Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department conducted pilot livestock count with the help of FAO-LIFT Fund project in 4 townships from Kyaukse districts, 3 from Meiktila district and one from Myingyan district.

Department of Fisheries issued 617 Catch Certificate and 3,821 Health Certificate for marine products exported to 13 countries. Site Network Certificate was obtained for conservation of Ayeyawady dolphins and Thameehla Island sea turtles.

Department of Rural Development expanded Emerald Village Project to 2107 villages and is currently benefiting 5,831,000 people in 8,756 villages with Kyat 215340 million subsidies, interest earning of Kyat 33,910 million.

With World Bank aid and loan amounting to US$ 480, the Community Driven Development (CDD) project was targeted to develop 63 townships, with 27 in the past and 20 townships in the incumbent government's tenure – 47 in all.

Afterward U Khin Maung Yi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation said that by coordinating with Ministry of Commerce, import and distribution of chain saw were banned to prevent illegal logging, 50,026 tons of illegal teak, hardwood and other woods were detained and Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA) is implemented with the help of European Union (EU) to prevent inclusion of illegal logs in exporting to EU countries.

Reforesting depleted forests is conducted with a aim for long term conservation of the environment, maintaining the eco system, reducing climate change and sustainable forest management.

Arrangements are being made to have Khakaborazi area, the far north of Myanmar designated as the world heritage zone, designation of Indawgyi Lake region as UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) and inclusion of Thameehla Island as Ramsar Site.

Limited mining of minerals and gems was allowed but permit to mine new sites were suspended with effect from 1 March 2016. Starting from 1 April 2016, it was strictly prohibited to renew mining permit and on 26 July 2016 permit to mine new sites were totally stopped.

In determining mineral reserve, in the coal sector, there are a total of 1,168,345 acres of which 865,442 acre is in Sagaing Region and 302,903 acre is in Magway Region. In the graphite sector Mandalay region have 11,1100 acre and in the ferrous metal sector Kachin State had 8,047 acre making up a total of 1187492 acre of mineral reserve area.

In his answer to the questions raised by reporters, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win refuted the information that the ministry would double the salary of the employees of the Internal Revenue Department.

He clarified that the ministry has a plan to give bonus to dutiful employees in accordance with the financial rules and regulations.

The ministry, however, would make assessment on efficiency, free of corruption and efforts for tax collection of the employees every three month, he said.

Regarding the State Lottery issue, the deputy minister said 60 percent of the income from the lottery tickets sales are spent on prizes and 40 percent is collected as tax by the State.

U Maung Maung Win also disclosed that the ministry is working on amending the lottery law to run en e-lottery system in the country. When the e-lottery system comes into operation, the lottery might be held every two week.

Regarding the allocation of revenues, 15 percent of the commercial tax is allocated to regions and states, said the deputy minister, adding that the ministry is studying revenues sharing system in democratic federal countries.

Regarding the tax collection, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win stressed the need to fight tax evasion.

Director General U Thet Naing Oo from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation stated that anyone wishing to truly utilize vacant, inactive and wastelands can submit proposals with the proper forms.

SEE PAGE 7 >>

'It is progress to disagree without hate'

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Hence, we need to carry this out to gain success as described in the NCA".

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her opening address, noted that the successful and necessary national-level meetings held by the Karen National Union (KNU), a signatory to the NCA.

"This is the first-ever held Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting on the NCA", Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said. "Firstly, I want to congratulate Saw Mutu Say Poe. We were greatly rejoiced for our KNU to have successfully held the nationwide meetings. The major objective of such peace meetings is to achieve the eternal peace in our country. In any parts of discussions or any viewpoints, we hope that we will be always with the ideas as to how successfully, smoothly and effectively we will perform. Only if all participate in the peace process, can the peace be achieved."

Daw Aung Sun Suu Kyi went on to say that the discussions have been made in a respectful manner, without rancor, which gave her great hope for success of the Panglong meeting to be held next month.

"Groups which were not at the round-table talks in the past have come to the round-table talks, sitting together," she said. "This has shown that some ideas, matters and opinions reached the state all can accept. We hope that we all, that is, those present at the meeting, will approach with the ideas as to how they can support the peace process, how they support for the development, and how they will perform for the success."

Present at the meeting were Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe, Chairman of Peace Commission Dr Tin Myo Win, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, deputy ministers, Lt-General Yar Pyae, Lt-General Min Naung, Lt-General Tin Maung Win, Chairman of Karen National Union and leader of the peace-process steering team Saw Mutu Say Poe and members—Dr Naw Kapaw Htoo, Sai La, Khaing Soe Naing Aung, Khun Okkar, Puzin Kyone, U Than Khe, Saw Mu Shae and responsible officials.

Among the issues to be discussed were a code of conduct that would be followed by armed ethic groups as well as the Tatmadaw, a important step in the ongoing peace process.

"As for the Tatmadaw, there have been six principles for the peace laid down, such as the code of conduct and principles to be kept on the army", said Vice-Senior General Soe Win. "Provided that armed groups will perform by strictly abiding by the facts concerning their respective opinions, groups which did not sign yet will be capable of joining the group that had signed the agreement. If so, we will be able to reach the state of gaining the eternal peace as expected by the whole populace, as soon as possible."

Saw Mutu Say Poe, the chairman of the Karen National Union and leader of the peace process steering team, said an ongoing dialogue during which negotiation and compromise might take place was essential for moving forward.

"According to the nature of the peace process, without dialogue, it will be ordinary political negotiation, producing no results. So, we must try our best for unnecessary matters not to come into existence. And we should not forget that there are different things among our human societies. On the other hand, it is necessary to have an official political platform for us to negotiate our differences among us. We are required to find solutions from this joint implementation coordination meeting, without holding their respective opinions dogmatically. Instead, it needs to find out common principles. In brief, if we measure NCA with a measurement unit, all have been different in small amounts between one and another. If the difference goes uncorrected right now, the difference will be bigger as time goes past. So, it must be reassessed deeply. Hence, we urge to reassess the implementation of NCA and bilateral agreement. We demand to reassess whether there are still differences in the bilateral agreement and we want to submit to the meeting for JICM to lay down instructive decisions."

At the meeting, discussions were held on the following:

- The date to hold the UPC—21st Century Panglong 2nd Conference
- Finding out all-acceptable basic principles in the UPC—21st Century Panglong 2nd Conference
- Groups that cannot hold national-level political dialogues,
- Terms of Reference matter submitted by Joint Monitoring Committee
- Amendment of authorities of JMC in the working instructions of joint monitoring committee on ceasefire
- Designation of ceasefire zones and areas
- Negotiation and cooperation after submitting to JCB concerning needs for the development of national ethnic people
- Matter for national ethnic armed groups to take part in peace process more than ever.
- Matters on formation of JMC-S in Chin State and
- Matters on remaining agreements still to be carried out among the agreements included Bilateral Agreement.

In conclusion, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi declared the meeting a qualified success because there were disagreements discussed without anger.

"I regard that the meeting is of great benefit, because I assume that progress has been made. There had been disagreements among us. We regard that it is a success to some extent, for us to be able to openly say our disagreements. It is progress to reach the stage of presenting our disagreements without any quarrel and hate. I think this is one of the developments of our trust. A person does not want to disclose what is conceived in his mind to another whom he does not believe. He may feel doubt whether it will cause a problem if he discloses. There are many things of difference in our discussion.

I noticed that people replied to something they cannot accept, politely, without disputes. I think this opens the road to the stage of agreement. This is the changing of the spirit that I must have, what I want, I assume. It is a success that we can discuss the disagreements in this meeting. We have decided to try our best to gain more success by seeing this success. Here I conclude my speech by saying my hope that we will gain much development for the peace we all hope for, depending upon more trust and understanding in the 2nd Panglong Conference".

According to the agreement of the JICM, Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd meeting will be held on 24 May. — *Myanmar News Agency (Unofficial Translation)*

Ministries hold press conference . . .

>> FROM PAGE 6

On the topic of agricultural projects running on foreign investments, Deputy Director General U Hla Myint Aung from Department of Agriculture explained they are currently working with eleven international organisations including collaboration with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) for the three-year new village housing project started in 2016 with a net worth of US$22 million. There has also been an advanced project for one hundred villages in nine states and regions, while an average of $20,000 is spent on one village a year and handled with three guidelines as a basis. The first guideline is for the improvement of the people's skills, second is for the realization of sustainable income based from the loan money, and third is for the improvement of schools, transport and irrigation sectors.

Director General U Myo Aung of Co-operative Department stated the Co-operative Bank did not grant individual loans and only granted loans for Co-operative committees' improvements and developmental purposes.

Permanent Secretary U Htay Aung of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation stated progress is being made in limiting exploiting of natural resources for future sustainability, no new lease for gemstone mining is being granted and renewal for existing leases are halted with the land areas to be marked as vacant land, while similarly new grants for mineral mining will be temporarily halted until a thorough review is conducted after the enactment of the new mineral mining law is released.

Managing Director U Aung Nyunt Thein from Myanma Gems Enterprise said mining for precious gems will only be granted to local ethnic-run companies while foreign-based companies will only be allowed to run businesses dealing in finished products of gems and gemstones. Director General Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw from Department of Forestry stated progress is being made in preserving the forests so that by 2030 around 30 per cent of the country's forest can be marked as permanent forestry areas. Progress is also being made in increasing environmental conservation areas up to 10 per cent of the country's area. Logging is no longer permitted and efforts are being made to restore existing forests to their original glory so that the next generation of trees can be planted as well as restore barren lands to forestry areas. —*Myanmar News Agency*

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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.

The Importance of Thinking

Kyaw Myaing

IN implementing a project or a process, the importance of thinking cannot be stressed enough. A carefully formulated project will be easy to implement because right from the conceptual stage the person who has taken the responsibility to formulate the project has taken time to "think" carefully and deeply.

Even in the life of an individual it is necessary to "stop and think". Why do we say this? We say this simply because in this day and age of Smart phones, Facebook and the World Wide Web, we are inundated by information. In short we can say that there is an information glut.

> It is therefore very important for us to allot an adequate amount of time to think.

It is therefore very important for us to allot an adequate amount of time to think. That is why philosophies in the East give a great deal of emphasis on meditation.

This simple word called "meditation" may look simple but actually it has a very deep meaning. In the Eastern context, especially in Buddhism, the word meditation does not mean contemplation, although it may play a minor part. To get the maximum benefit from the thinking process we need to begin by following some essential ground rules.

First of all we need to be in the proper frame of mind. If we are beset by worries we would find it difficult to concentrate. "Leave your worries at the door", that is what they say. Keep the "Five Precepts". Promise to yourself not to kill, not to take intoxicating drinks or drugs, not to tell lies, not to steal and not to commit adultery. Once we have promised ourselves to keep these five precepts a lot of our worries will vanish. Step two: this step involves what is known as "Samadhi" building. Samadhi is achieved by focusing the mind on one meditation object such as your in-breath and out-breath or a candle flame or a white disc. The objective is to drive out unwanted thoughts by fixing the mind on one meditation object. Step three: this is the step where you gain knowledge. In Pali it is called Panna. It is at this stage that you will get the right answers to many of your mundane problems by concentrating on the chain of cause and effects. All things happen for a reason.

In the West, there are of course many other ways of thinking such as Systems Thinking and Holistic Thinking. Briefly, Systems Thinking view the problem as a whole system and tries to find out how different parts of the system behave in the way they do.

In the case of Myanmar, which is now confronted with finding a way to achieve internal peace, it might be wise and profitable for all those concerned to do some deep systems thinking.

Alarmingly Oceans Are Contaminated With Plastics

San Shwe Aung

THIS article is dedicated to the "Earth Day" which falls on 22nd April every year since 1970. The first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, activated 20 million Americans from all walks of life and is widely credited with launching the modern environmental movement. The passage of the landmark Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and many other groundbreaking environmental laws soon followed. Twenty years later, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage. Earth Day Network is the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement, working with more than 50,000 partners in nearly 195 countries to build environmental democracy. More than 1 billion people now participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it the largest civic observance in the world.

Clean water is essential for human survival and the whole world is concerned for the availability of clean drinking water, clean domestic water and clean water resources including "clean ocean" which is indispensable for the health & growth of marine bodies, fish and other marine lives. Many environmental bodies around the world are concerned about the contamination of seas and oceans by various kinds of wastes including plastics.

Plastic is essential for modern way of life in many different forms. Perhaps we, modern people, cannot survive without plastic. The majority of accessories and home appliances, we use everyday, are made of plastics; such as bags, cups, spoons, boxes, food packages, trash bins, TVs, telephone handsets, computers, laptops, containers, stools, chairs, many components in cars, motorbikes and you name it. Then the problems start when we dispose of old used plastic accessories. According to the research and studies, just 5% of waste plastic is effectively recycled at recycle plants in the world. Where do the rest of plastic wastes go then? Of course many plastic wastes are dumped on the ground (or land filling dumping sites) and many plastics go into the waterways, creeks, rivers and then into the seas. In the world, one refuse truck's-worth of assorted plastic debris is dumped into the sea every minute, and the situation is getting worse.

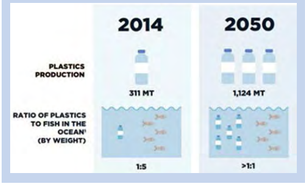
According to "Ocean Conservancy" organization, 192 countries bordering the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian Oceans and Mediterranean and Black Seas produced 2.5 Billion Metric Tons of solid waste in 2010. An estimated 8 Million Metric Tons of plastic entered the oceans that same year. Out of 2.5 Billion Metric Tons of solid waste 275 Million Metric Tons are plastic waste. 2 Billion people living within 30 miles of the coast create and dump 100 Million Metric Tons of coastal plastic waste. "Ocean Conservancy staff members are scientists and lawyers, accountants and advocates. But they are also surfers and divers, fishermen and kayakers, who love the seas and oceans." www.oceanconservancy.org

Constantly increased use of plastic

"The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking The Future Of Plastics" a report produced by the World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in March 2016 highlighted that plastics production has increased twentyfold since 1964, reaching 311 Million Tons in 2014. It is expected to double again in the next 20 years and almost quadruple by 2050. Despite the growing demand, just 5% of plastics are recycled effectively, while 40% end up in landfill and a third in fragile ecosystems such as the world's oceans. Much of the remainder is burned, generating energy, but causing more fossil fuels to be consumed in order to make new plastic bags, cups, tubs and consumer devices demanded by the economy. Every human being has to take the following warning very seriously; "A carelessly discarded plastic bag can break down in the sea, especially in warmer waters, but the process releases toxic chemicals that may be digested by fish and end up in the human food chain."

A recent claim that there will be more plastic than fish in the sea by 2050 was intended to highlight a pollution crisis in the oceans. The problem really does exist, but do the figures hold water, or is there something fishy going on? The prediction was made by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the World Economic Forum, in the above mentioned report, which looks at the amount of plastic that ends up in the sea. One of the big headlines from the report was that if we continue dumping plastic in the sea at the present rate, measured by weight, there will be more plastic than fish by 2050.

A diagram in the report shows a projection of plastic to fish ratio of "greater than 1:1" by weight in 2050 in the oceans.



Sources of Plastic Toxins Entering the Ocean Food Chain

Trash in world's oceans threatens wildlife, economy and human health, UN warns. 11% of all solid waste entering into the seas is plastic trash. Marine debris – trash in our oceans – is a symptom of our throw-away society and our unwise approach to how we use our natural resources. Our tendency as humans to be irresponsible about cleaning up after ourselves is about to get us in trouble. We risk losing many species in the ocean as well as negatively effecting ourselves. The average person produces half a pound of plastic waste every day. No wonder the oceans are filling up with waste! As far as plastic entering the ocean, about 20% of the trash comes from ships and platforms that are offshore. The rest sources from litter being blown into the sea, picked up by tides on the beach, or intentional garbage dumping. The worse part is, these plastics don't biodegrade, so they brake up into tiny pieces that are consumed by fish and sea mammals. Plastic is killing more than 100,000 sea turtles and birds a year from ingestion and entanglement. Chemicals in plastics are released into the water as well as the atmosphere. Fish easily become contaminated from the chemicals in the water. This is a direct link of how plastic chemicals enter the food chain. Different plastics spread throughout the ocean. As styrofoam breaks into smaller parts, polystyrene components which sink lower in the ocean, so that the pollutant spreads throughout the sea column. In fact, not only do the toxins in plastic effect the ocean, but acting like sponges, they soak up other toxins from outside sources before entering the ocean. As these chemicals are ingested by animals in the ocean, this is not good for humans. We as humans ingest contaminated fish and mammals. There are different types of ways that plastic is dangerous for humans. Direct toxicity from plastics comes from lead, cadmium, and mercury. These toxins have also been found in many fish in the ocean, which is very dangerous for humans. Other toxins in plastics are directly linked to cancers, birth defects, immune system problems, and childhood developmental issues. Part of the problem is that we don't recognize how this issue starts with the individual. There are obviously life style changes we can make to solve this problem. We just have to be willing to accept this issue and look past our denial. The government also needs to make regulations on plastics if anything is going to change. Surprisingly, there is little to no information on governmental websites about pollution in the oceans. Perhaps they are afraid to address the problem; it is a costly fix. However there have been some treaties formed to minimize the amount of trash entering the oceans. This is still not enough. The grassroots organizations are vital to the protection of the oceans, striving to spread information and awareness about this tragic pollution. We should really all be involved because it is everyone's responsibility. Let us make these changes before it is too late and we kill the all oceanic life, or even our own. In a major report issued few years ago – Marine Litter: A Global Challenge – UNEP details the human actions, accidental or intentional, that are the sources of marine litter. Ocean-based sources include merchant shipping, cruise liners, fishing vessels and military as well as offshore oil and gas platforms and drilling rigs, and aquaculture. On land, the culprits include beaches, piers, harbours, marinas, docks and riverbanks, and municipal landfills located on the coast, as well as rivers, lakes and ponds that are used as illegal dump sites, discharges of untreated municipal sewage and storm water, industrial facilities, and medical waste. We now produce 20 times more plastic than we did in 1964, a vast rubbish-scape of bottles and wrapping and hard plastic lids that is expected to double in size in the next 20 years – and almost quadruple in size by 2050. These were the findings of a 2016 report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, launched at Davos last year. But the new plastics economy isn't yet here. To help us over the threshold, the report's authors suggest three decisive strategies.

1. Improve the way we design, recycle and re-use plastics. About 30% of the plastic we create is destined for landfill (or the ocean). The report urges a fundamental rethink of the way we design packaging, in order to make what happens to it, after we've used it, a little less hard on the environment.

2. For at least 20% of plastic waste, re-use is an economically attractive option. New and creative delivery models based on reusable packaging could unlock an economic opportunity to the tune of $9 billion, according to the report.

3. For the remaining 50% of plastic, we need to make recycling pay. Improving packaging at the design stage would make recycling easier. It would also make it more profitable than sending plastic waste to landfill.

Underpinning these three actions, say the report's authors, is the issue of how plastics are made. A lot of plastic is currently derived from crude oil. But it doesn't have to be: switching to renewable sources such as natural gas or the by-products of natural gas processing would bring us many steps closer to a greener, cleaner plastics economy. All it would take is some circular-economy thinking, and for everyone – from packagers to politicians to the people who buy the products – getting on board. All in all this is an alarming time for every human being to reduce, re-use and recycle the plastic products especially plastic bags to protect our earth, its bio-diversity and our valuable marine life.

Reference:

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US, Philippines scale back next month's military drills, no more 'war games'

MANILA,— About 5,000 American and Philippine troops will hold humanitarian exercises next month instead of annual war games, scaling back military drills in response to President Rodrigo Duterte's disdain for their longstanding defence alliance.

Troops taking part in "Balikatan" will simulate a response to a devastating super typhoon in the central Philippines, modeled on typhoon Haiyan in 2013, which killed at least 6,300 people and left more than 200,000 families homeless.

"Balikatan is designed to meet current challenges facing the Philippines," US embassy press officer Molly Koscina said in a statement on Monday.

Duterte has made no secret of his grudge against the United States and believes a US military presence of any kind in the Philippines puts his country at risk of being dragged into conflict. He has threatened to abrogate treaties with Washington, but has yet to follow up.

The volatile leader has reached out to Russia and China and invited their warships to come to the Philippines for exercises too.

He has taken issue with the United States on its approach to the South China Sea and said Manila will never take part in joint patrols, to avoid provoking China.

Balikatan, which means "shoulder-to-shoulder", has taken place on 32 occasions and every year since 2000, involving conventional warfare activities, as part of a mutual defence treaty between the two countries under a 1951 security pact.

Nearly 9,000 troops participated in a simulation of retaking an oil-and-gas platform last year, seized by an imaginary enemy, and practiced an amphibious landing on a Philippine beach near an area of the disputed South China Sea.

US marines also used for the first time in the Philippines a long-range truck-mounted multiple rocket launcher. A Philippine army spokesman said the downsizing of the exercises was in response to Duterte's dislike of war games with Washington.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte announces the disbandment of police operations against illegal drugs at the Malacanang palace in Manila, Philippines early 30 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

"We made some adjustments, based on the pronouncements of the president that such exercises should be focused on humanitarian operations," Major Frank Sayson told reporters. "Just to make it clear, this is not a war game." Sayson said the two sides agreed to scrap two major military drills — Amphibious Landing Exercise or "Phiblex" and Cooperation Afloat and Readiness Training (CARAT) — geared toward external and maritime defence.

He said the two armies would work on marksmanship and defusing of homemade bombs, as part of counter-terrorism exercises. —*Reuters*

Thailand approves $393-mln purchase of Chinese submarines

BANGKOK — Thailand's cabinet has approved the first of three planned submarine purchases from China worth $393 million, a government spokesman said on Monday.

The plan to buy the three Chinese-built submarines worth 36 billion baht ($1.05 billion) was confirmed in July, signalling warming ties with the regional superpower since relations with the United States cooled after a May 2014 military coup.

The first submarine purchase was approved last week. "The cabinet approved one submarine purchase on 18 April," spokesman Sansern Kaewkamnerd told Reuters, adding that a budget of 13.5 billion baht ($393 million) has been earmarked for the Yuan Class S26T submarine over a six-year period.

The media were not told about the purchase following a cabinet meeting last week because it was a matter of national security, he added.

Public criticism and questions have arisen as to whether Thailand really needs new submarines.

"In the current situation, where the government cannot successfully solve economic problems, buying expensive submarines is completely unnecessary," Watchara Petchthong, a politician with the Democrat Party, told Reuters.

Navy spokesman Admiral Jumpol Loompikanon said the Thai navy owned four Japanese submarines nearly 60 years ago, so new submarines were necessary to protect the country's maritime interests. "Thai people can rest assured that the navy's submarine spending will be worth it and beneficial to Thailand," Jumpol told Reuters. Thailand's navy chief, Admiral Na Arreenich, will visit China soon to finalize the government-to-government purchase, a source at the defence ministry, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter, told Reuters. Maritime security is a hot issue in Southeast Asia, given competing claims over the South China Sea, but Thailand is not a claimant in that dispute.—*Reuters*

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV PACITA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PACITA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19.4.2017 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 NEW GLODEN SEA

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV EVER APEX VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER APEX VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.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 EVERGREEN SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Hundreds flee Mosul fighting as others return to former IS areas

MOSUL, Iraq — Heavy two-way traffic of carts carrying children, clothes, and the elderly crowded the main Baghdad-Mosul road on Sunday as hundreds of Iraqis fled heavy fighting or made their way back to areas seized back from Islamic State. Families paid no heed to the sound of heavy mortar, artillery and machine gun fire raging in the background as US-trained Iraqi forces battled Islamic State some two km (about a mile) away.

Some had walked miles to a government checkpoint where the men were placed in army trucks and sent for security screening to ensure no militant sleeper cells get out of the city. Women and children were put on busses and sent to camps housing hundreds of thousands, some displaced since the offensive to retake the Islamic State stronghold began in October. "We left because of darkness, hunger, and death. There are bullets and air strikes. We were injured, our children were injured," said Younnes Ahmed, who was fleeing al-Thaura district with his family, their clothes all piled on a cart. There was a deep bullet wound on his hand. A group of young men further inside the city sat on the street as soldiers gave them back identification cards they had taken to conduct background checks before letting them go.

Most houses were reduced to rubble, either because of air strikes or Islamic State bombs. Cars were hollowed out.

"Islamic State blew up my house with TNT to shield against air strikes," said Hossam Saleh who now lives in rubble because he has nowhere to escape to.

Others were walking back into the city, eager to reclaim their homes after their neighbourhoods had been retaken from Islamic State by US-backed security forces. "We left because of the air strikes but have now returned. But we want the government to restore services like electricity and water and to allow us to drive instead of using carts," said Mosaab Mohamed who was walking back into Mosul with his family. Iraqi forces have taken much of Mosul from the militants who overran the city in June 2014. The military now controls the eastern districts and are making advances in the west. Islamic State fighters, holding out in the Old City, are surrounded in the northwest and are using booby traps, sniper and mortar fire to defend themselves.

A displaced Iraqi family is transported on a cart as the battle between the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service and Islamic State militants continues nearby, in western Mosul, Iraq on 23 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Three policemen were killed in a suicide attack south of Mosul. A group of about 10 assailants, including four suicide bombers, had tried to infiltrate a Federal Police helicopter base in Al-Areej, a police captain told Reuters.

Those who have returned say the government has been slow to restore services even to western districts that had been retaken a while ago.

"We are besieged in the Resala area. There are stray bullets from other areas where there is fighting; three children have died," said Mohamed Sobhi.

"Water and aid cannot reach us. I call on the government to redistribute the people in areas like ours into other safer areas in Mosul."

Hundreds of thousands of civilians are still trapped in western Mosul, where Iraqi forces are making slow progress against Islamic State in what is a labyrinth of narrow streets.

As of 20 April, some 503,000 people have been displaced from Mosul since October, according to government figures provided by the UN refugee agency UNHCR. The UN migration agency, the IOM, puts the displaced figure at 334,518 people as of 23 April.

Still, there were signs of a slow return to commerce on Sunday, with one man setting up a cigarette stand and a family selling candy bars and water on the Mosul-Baghdad road, and residents were eager to rebuild.

"We do not want anything from the government, we just want to be alllowed to help ourselves. If we can have letters allowing us to go other places we will get our own water, and transport it back," said Omar Khaled as he carried his infant son back into the city. —*Reuters*

Al Qaeda chief urges jihadists to use guerrilla tactics in Syria

AMMAN — Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri has called on Syrian Sunni jihadists to wage guerrilla war against enemies ranging from Syrian President Bashar al Assad and his Iranian-backed allies to Western powers.

In an audio recording posted online on Sunday, Zawahri called for the rebels to be patient, saying they should be prepared for a long battle with the Western-led coalition in Iraq and Syria and Iranian-backed Shi'ites fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar al Assad's government.

"Our people in Sham (Syria) prepare yourselves for a long battle with the Crusaders and their allies the Shi'ites and Alawites," the successor to Osama bin Laden said.

Muslim Sunni militants consider Shi'ites and Alawites heretics.

Zawahri said jihadists were targeted by their enemies because they sought to impose Islamic rule in Syria, adding that the West and its allies were doing everything they could to prevent an "Islamic" wave that was sweeping the region.

It was not clear when the recording, in which the militant leader also said holy war (jihad) in Syria was not just the prerogative of Syrians but all Muslims, was made.

He also warned insurgents not to turn the conflict into an purely internal Syrian one.

Syria's former al Qaeda branch Nusra Front now spearheads an alliance of Islamist brigades known as Hayat Tahrir al Sham which is leading battles against Syrian government forces and their Russian and Iranian backed allies on most of the main fronts in the country.

This alliance plays a key role in the control of most of Idlib province, although US led coalition strikes have killed dozens of its leaders in recent months. —*Reuters*

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV USD CYPRUS VOY. NO (83)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV USD CYPRUS VOY. NO (83) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MERIDIAN SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV ANDAMAN STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANDAMAN STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BATAM VOY. NO (008)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BATAM VOY. NO (008) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.4.2017 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 INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV ANAN BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANAN BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P 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 NEW GLODEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Swedish think tank puts Russia in world's top three biggest defence spenders

STOCKHOLM — With military expenditures of $69.2 billion, Russia ranks third in the list of the world's biggest defence spenders in 2016, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in its survey published on Monday.

The top 15 countries with the highest military spending in 2016 were the same as those in 2015, although some changes have been made in their ranking. The United States topped the chart with last year's military expenditures estimated at $611 billion (up 1.7 percentage points year-on-year), which is nearly three times the level of China with $215 billion (up 5.4 percentage points year-on-year). In 2016, total US military expenditure of $611 billion is over one third (36%) of world's total military expenditure.

Russia is third with $69.2 billion (up 5.9 percentage points year-on-year). Saudi Arabia slashed its military financing by impressive 30% and was down to the fourth place in 2016, with a defence budget of $63.7 billion.

"As a result of an unexpected increase in Russia's military expenditure in late 2016 and large cuts to Saudi Arabia's military budget, Russia moved above Saudi Arabia to the position of third largest spender in 2016," SIPRI said.

Russia's military spending in 2016 was 5.3% of its GDP-the highest proportion since the breakup of the Soviet Union and the seventh highest military burden globally.

According to the report, "this increased spending and heavy burden on the economy comes at a time when the Russian economy is in serious trouble due to low oil and gas prices and the economic sanctions imposed since 2014."

"It was originally expected and planned that the Russian Government would reduce its spending, including military spending," the report reads. "However, late in 2016 actual spending was pushed substantially higher by a decision to make a one-off payment of roughly $11.8 billion in government debt to Russian arms producers. Without this debt repayment, Russia's military spending would have decreased by 12%," US military spending grew by 1.7% between 2015 and 2016, the first increase after five consecutive years of decline. Despite this slight growth, US military expenditures remain 20% lower than their peak in 2010.

The small upturn in 2016 can be attributed to legislation adopted in 2013 and 2015, which eased the budget limits imposed in 2011.

However, given the context of the presidential election and the inability of the US Congress and the White House to reach agreement on a budget to be implemented on 1 October 2016, there is uncertainty about short-term developments in the country's military expenditure.—*Tass*

The US topped the chart with 2016 military spending estimated at $611 billion, nearly three times the level of China with $215 billion. PHOTO: TASS

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.4.2017 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV INNWA STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV INNWA STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.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.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P 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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Thailand reaches for the stars with new Michelin Guide

BANGKOK — Thailand will be the latest country to have a Michelin Guide, its state tourism agency said on Monday, taking its place on the culinary world map just days after authorities announced they would shut down Bangkok's vibrant street food scene.

The dining publication was introduced by the French Michelin tyre company in 1900 to encourage people to take road trips. Its star system began in the 1920s.

The guide to hotels and restaurants, which will be released in Thai and English, will be the company's sixth in Asia. It has guides for China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The news comes days after authorities in Bangkok said they would banish some of its world-famous street food vendors as part of a clean-up drive by the military government, outraging foodies and threatening the livelihoods of the city's road-side cooks.

The guide could end up featuring some of Bangkok's street food. In 2016, Singapore made history when two modest food stalls – one serving chicken rice and the other pork noodles – were among dining venues featured in the Singapore guide.

"Bangkok is one of the world's culinary capitals," Lionel Dantiacq, president and managing director of Michelin East-Asia Oceania at Michelin, said in a statement.

As well as its famous street food, the Thai capital is home to a burgeoning fine dining scene, attracting an increasing number of world-class chefs.

"The guide will also inspire local restaurants to improve their quality and raise the bar in terms of gastronomic excellence," said Yuthasak Supasorn, governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. This year Gaggan, an innovative Indian restaurant in Bangkok, nabbed the top spot for the third year running at the Asia's 50 Best Restaurants awards sponsored by S Pellegrino and Acqua Panna. —*Reuters*

Le Pen attacks Macron on security ahead of French presidency runoff

PARIS — French far-right leader Marine Le Pen on Monday accused Emmanuel Macron, her inexperienced opponent in next month's runoff for the presidency, of being weak in the face of Islamist terrorism.

Global markets reacted with relief to Sunday's first round of voting, which broke the dominance of established parties of the centre-left and centre-right but still left a pro-European Union centrist and former economy minister in pole position to become France's next leader.

The euro briefly reached five-month peaks while European shares rose sharply.

The latest opinion polls indicate that Macron, a 39-year-old who has never held elected office, will win at least 61 per cent of votes.

Those figures soothed investors who have been unnerved by Le Pen's pledges to ditch the euro, print money and possibly quit the EU, and were nervous of another anti-establishment upheaval to follow Britain's "Brexit" vote and Donald Trump's election as US president.

Le Pen, 48, has also touted her pledges to suspend the EU's open-border agreement on France's frontiers, and to expel foreigners who are on the watch lists of intelligence services, as the right response to a series of Islamist attacks in France.

Seeking to exploit Macron's lack of experience in the area, she told reporters in her northern stronghold of Henin-Beaumont: "I'm on the ground to meet the French people to draw their attention to important subjects, including Islamist terrorism, on which Mr Macron is, to say the least, weak."

Marine Le Pen, French National Front (FN) political party leader and candidate for French 2017 presidential election, comes back from her haidresser in front of her campaign headquarters in Paris, France, on 24 April, 2017 the day after the first round of presidential elections where Le Pen ended in second place behind En Marche ! movement candidate. PHOTO: REUTERS

France has seen a series of attacks by Islamist militants in the past two years which have killed more than 230 people; only three days before Sunday's vote, a policeman was shot dead and two others were wounded in central Paris in an attack claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group.

But despite this, opinion polls consistently found that voters were more concerned about the economy and the trustworthiness of politicians. Macron's internal security programme calls for 10,000 more police officers, and 15,000 new prison places. He has recruited a number of security experts to his entourage, and noted that Le Pen has less experience of national government than he does. Macron won 23.74 per cent of votes in the first round against Le Pen's 21.53. A Harris survey saw Macron going on to win the runoff against her by 64 per cent to 36. An Ipsos/Sopra Steria poll gave a similar result while a new poll by Opinionway on Monday put the margin at 61 per cent to 39 per cent. Others in Le Pen's campaign took aim on Monday at what they see as further weak spots: Macron's previous job as an investment banker and his role as a deregulating economy minister in the discredited Socialist government of the outgoing president, Francois Hollande. "Emmanuel is not a patriot. He sold off national companies. He criticised French culture," Florian Philippot, deputy leader of Le Pen's National Front, told BFM TV.

Analysts say Le Pen's best chance of overhauling Macron's big lead in the polls is to paint him as a part of an elite aloof from ordinary French people and their problems. Philippot called Macron "arrogant" and said his victory speech on Sunday had shown disdain for the French people by making it appear as though the presidency was already won.

He said a post-election dinner with friends at Paris's Rotonde brasserie — by no means a top-tier restaurant — was a flashy "bling-bling" gesture.—*Reuters*

New Zealand considering restricting laptops on flights from Middle East

DUBAI/WELLINGTON — New Zealand is considering restrictions on laptops and other large electronic devices on flights from some Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East, the country's prime minister said on Monday.

The new rules would follow similar measures introduced last month by the United States, Britain and Australia.

The New Zealand leader elaborated on comments made by transport minister Simon Bridges, who told Reuters in an interview in Dubai on Sunday that the country's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) "is assessing the evidence to determine what is appropriate".

Prime Minister Bill English told reporters in Wellington that the aviation agency was considering the issue and would make a decision on whether to restrict large electronic items on flights from the Middle East independently of the government.

"A number of our security partners put those arrangements in place. With this particular proposition there's a balance between inconvenience for passengers, many of whom live off their laptop on the one hand, but on the other hand it's making sure that the flying is safe," English said.

On 25 March, the United States banned electronic devices larger than a mobile phone from passenger cabins of direct flights from eight countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey, including Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Britain followed the same day with similar measures, including banning larger electronics on flights from some Middle East countries but not Qatar and the UAE where it instead requested additional security checks.

Additional security measures required by New Zealand would affect passengers flying from Dubai in the UAE and Doha, Qatar, where carriers Emirates and Qatar Airways, respectively, fly direct to New Zealand.

The CAA said in a statement that it was routinely monitoring security screening in international airports.

"The comments by the Minister of Transport in Dubai refer to routine activity at last ports of departure to New Zealand — assurance that security screening meets the expected standards for flights in-bound to New Zealand," said Mike Richards, CAA manager of communications and safety.

The agency said there was no specific timeframe for when a decision would be made.

The additional security measures by the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia were made based on intelligence suggesting flights could be targeted for attack.

Last week, Emirates said it was cutting flights to the United States after new restrictions weakened demand.

Bridges said he is scheduled to meet with Emirates Chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al-Maktoum this week where he would make clear that New Zealand is open to additional services.—*Reuters*

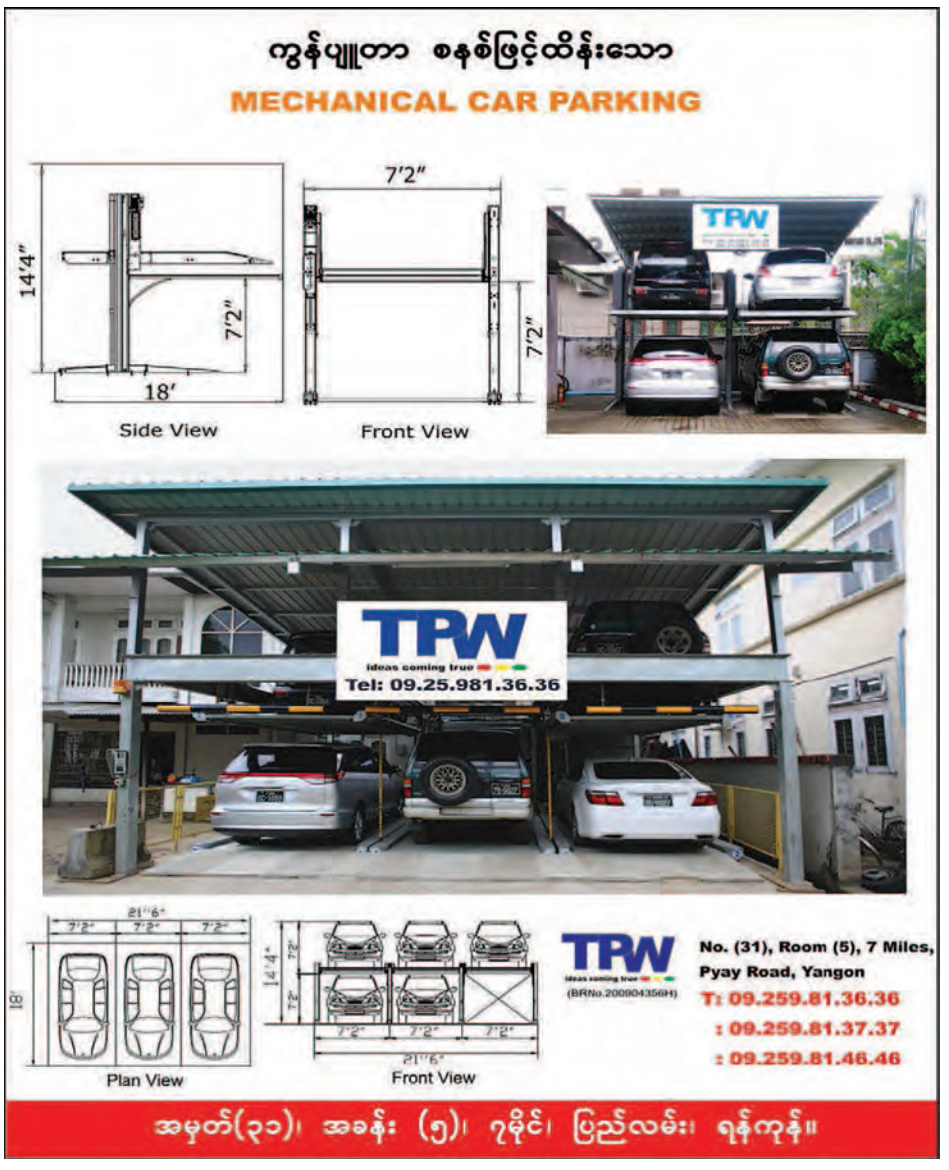
EIA Study of Zawtika Phase 1C and 1D Development in Offshore Block M9 by PTTEPI

PTTEP International Limited (PTTEPI), following the success of Phase 1A and 1B Development, plans to develop the Zawtika Phase 1C and 1 D in Offshore Block M9. The development of Phase 1C consists of 4 remote well head platforms ZWP8 ZWP11 including associated pipelines. The first platform is expected to install quarter of 2017. The development of Phase 1D consists of 8 remote wellhead platfoms ZWP12 - ZWP19 including associated pipelines. The tentative plan for commencement will be in 2020.

Regarding the Scoping Report which was submitted to Environmental Conservation Department (ECD), PTT EPI and Environmental Resources Management (ERM) are currently undertaking an EIA Study which includes associated stakeholder engagement. The EIA will be conducted in accordance with the Myanmar EIA Procedure (2015).

More information about the proposed activity can be found on PTTEPI's website as follows: www.pttep.com.

Questions and comments can also be submitted to PTTEPI in writing by contacting the following e-mail address: TinNilarSoe@pttep.com



'Fate of the Furious' Stays on Top; 'Unforgettable,' 'The Promise' Bomb

LOS ANGELES — "The Fate of the Furious" is racing to defend its title at the top of the box office, while a number of new releases including "The Promise" and "Unforgettable" are being left in the dust.

Universal's eighth installment in the Fast and Furious franchise proved to be a global box office titan when it opened last weekend to a record-shattering $532.5 million. This time around looks to tell mostly the same story — while domestic grosses slipped 61% from its first to second weekend, the movie is still easily topping the box office with $38.7 million from 4,329 locations.

But slipping domestic earnings (and lower US grosses than "Furious 7," which pulled over $250 million in its first two weekends versus "Fate's" current sum of $163.6 million) are majorly overshadowed by the movie's international appeal. A bankable, diverse cast including Dwayne Johnson, Vin Diesel and Charlize Theron is leading the film, directed by F Gary Gray, to a two-frame global total of $744.8 million and worldwide sum of $908.4 million.

While studios wait for summer season to commence, there are no surprise hits to come of this weekend's releases. Warner Bros.' "Unforgettable" seems to have slipped audiences' minds, earning $4.8 million in its first weekend from 2,417 theaters.

"It just didn't resonate with the intended audience," said Jeff Goldstein, the president of domestic distribution at Warner Bros. Goldstein stressed that the movie was made for a moderate price, and the marketing was "targeted and appropriate" for the audience.

Actors Tyrese Gibson, Nathalie Emmanuell, Vin Diesel and Ludacris attend 'The Fate Of The Furious' New York premiere at Radio City Music Hall in New York, US April 8, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

The directorial debut of Denise Di Novi stars Katherine Heigl as a scorned ex-wife, and Rosario Dawson as a woman who is newly engaged to the same man. In his review for Variety, critic Peter Debruge lauded Heigl's "terrific" performance, and wrote that her casting "savvily exploits the actress's prickly reputation within the industry." "Unforgettable" joins a string of so-so to disappointing releases from Warner Bros so far this year, including "Chips" and "Fist Fight." At least the Heigl movie had a low production budget (about $12 million) to minimize losses.

"The Promise," too, couldn't follow through, despite a social media push from stars including Leonardo DiCaprio, the Kardashian sisters and Cher. The movie, from Open Road Films on behalf of Survival Pictures, looks to round out the weekend with about $4.1 million from 2,251 locations — barely cracking the top ten for the weekend.

While "The Promise" could be considered a massive disappointment for its $90 million price tag, the film's backers hoped it would raise awareness more than earn money. Oscar Isaac, Charlotte Le Bon and Christian Bale make up the central love triangle in the movie directed by Terry George ("Hotel Rwanda"). The film is set during the Armenian Genocide, and bankrolled by the late businessman Kirk Kerkorian who wanted to bring visibility to the systematic extermination to 1.5 million Armenians at the order of the Ottoman empire in 1915 — a politically fraught subject that Turkey continues to deny happened. All proceeds made from the movie will be donated to charity.

"We certainly hoped for a better box office result," said Open Road's president of marketing Jonathan Helfgot, adding that the film's mission was not purely box office-related. "It was about bring the world's attention to this issue," he said. "And looking at the amount of conversation ... it's undeniable that there's been more focus and attention in the past two weeks than the past hundred years since the atrocity took place."

Disney's latest animal documentary "Born in China," a co-production between Disneynature and Shanghai Media Group, is making $5.1 million from 1,508 theaters. Narrated by John Krasinski, the docu earned more than previous films "Monkey Kingdom" ($4.6 Million) and "Bears" ($4.8 Million), and is the highest grossing Disneynature opening since 2012's Chimpanzee ($10.7 million).

Cinelou's "Phoenix Forgotten" opened at 1,592 theaters to an estimated $2 million this weekend. A24's "Free Fire" raked in only $1 million from 1,070 spots in its first weekend. In its fourth frame, Fox's "The Boss Baby" will bottle up $12.8 million from 3,697 locations, putting it in second place behind "Fate." Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" should hold onto third with $10 million from 3,315 theaters.

Warner Bros.' "Going in Style" should slide into fourth with $5 million from 3,038 spots. The heist comedy starring Morgan Freeman, Michael Caine and Alan Arkin is targeting an older demo, and saw only a 20% decline in ticket sales from its second to third weekend. "Born in China" looks to round out the top five.—*Reuters*

Hillary Clinton makes surprise appearance at New York film panel

NEW YORK — Hillary Clinton, who until recently had avoided the spotlight in the wake of her election defeat in November, made a surprise appearance at New York's Tribeca Film Festival on Saturday as a panelist to discuss illegal elephant poaching.

The discussion followed the premiere of Academy Award-winning director Kathryn Bigelow's virtual reality documentary "The Protectors: Walk in the Rangers' Shoes." The eight-minute film allows viewers to experience what it is like to work as a park ranger trying to save elephants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"We've got to bust this market," Clinton said of the global ivory trade.

The unexpected public appearance on Earth Day was one of several Clinton has made recently, following a period of silence after the former Democratic presidential candidate lost the November election to President Donald Trump.

Clinton said she first began focusing on the "horrific slaughter" of elephants when she was secretary of state and later helped launch an anti-poaching initiative at her family's nonprofit Clinton Global Initiative.

More than 30,000 elephants are killed by poachers every year in Africa.

In addition to endangering vulnerable elephant populations, trafficking also provides financial support to extremist militant groups, Clinton said.

"When we were looking at this, we thought there were three overriding goals: stop the killing, stop the trafficking and stop the demand," she said.

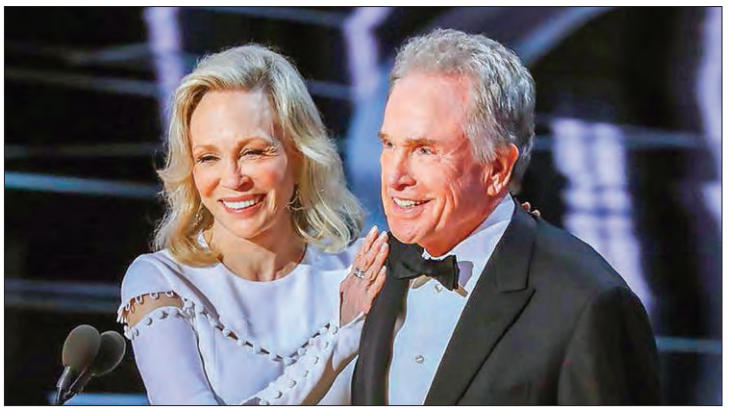
While China is the world's biggest market for illegal ivory, the United States ranks No 2, Clinton said, requiring Americans to take a leading role in fighting elephant poaching.

Clinton also mentioned the March for Science, which took place in Washington and other cities around the world earlier on Saturday. The Earth Day event was in effect a protest against what critics say has been the Trump administration's disregard for evidence-based knowledge and research.

"Here it is, Earth Day, and we are marching on behalf of science," Clinton said to applause in the theater.

In early April, Clinton granted her first interview since her defeat by Trump, breaking her silence at the Women in the World Summit in New York. In front of a live audience, she voiced support for US bombing raids on Syrian airfields and said Russian interference in the presidential election was a theft more damaging than Watergate. —*Reuters*

Film industry needs to accept streaming services:Warren Beatty



Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway present for Best Picture at the 89th Academy Awards. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Hollywood legend Warren Beatty says he thinks the film industry needs to accept home video streaming.

The 80-year-old actor has seen a lot of changes in Hollywood over the years and believes the fact there is no longer a need to rely on a cinematic release to attract attention to a film has freed moviemakers from restrictions such as running time, reported Metro online.

"I think were on the verge of another big change, which is the acceptance of home video (streaming). With the advent of the home screen, were finding movies that last six hours or 15 minutes," he says.

"So, all the necessities in storytelling are up for grabs. This will, I think, ultimately rescue us... rescue what David Lean once said to me was the great near-art form of the 20th century. It will rescue us from sequels." —*PTI*

English language teachers spreading passion for "sanuki udon" noodles

TAKAMATSU (Japan) — A pair of English teachers from a Kagawa Prefecture language school are promoting to foreign visitors "sanuki udon" noodle bowls, an udon dish popular in the western Japan prefecture, through a poster explaining the intricacies of eating at a local noodle shop.

More than 200 copies of the poster, titled "An English Guide to Sanuki Udon" and made by American Jeremy Lanig and his British coworker Gary Wilkinson, have been distributed to udon eateries in Kagawa.

The idea for the poster came from Lanig, a 37-year-old udon enthusiast. Upon arriving in Japan in 2006, he faced the complex system of ordering udon noodle bowls at shops in Kagawa.

The noodle bowls, for example, come in different serving styles, such as "kake" (basic, in hot broth) and "kamatama" (just out of pot, eaten with a raw egg and soy sauce).

Eager to simplify the ordering process for newcomers, Lanig and 31-year-old Wilkinson started working on an infographic poster last July. Their effort resulted in a colorful illustrated guide about the kinds of udon bowls offered at a typical shop and how to order them.

Lanig said he struggled with some Japanese words that cannot easily be translated into English, while Wilkinson, who handled the illustrations, said he used vivid colors so the poster would stand out.

They began distributing posters in October and the response has been positive, with some shop owners finding them useful to learn English themselves. The duo has also received inquiries about the poster from shops outside the prefecture.

"The poster is useful not just for overseas customers but also for us to learn how to explain (the dish) in English," said Shimpei Yonetsu, who runs an udon restaurant in Takamatsu. Lanig said he hopes their efforts will lead more people to understand and experience the world of sanuki udon noodles. —*Kyodo News*

Re-enactment of WWII Battle of Berlin staged in Moscow

MOSCOW — More than a hundred stunt men, trophy German armored vehicles and restored Soviet tanks of World War II times took part in historical reconstruction of the Berlin offensive operation of Red army in Moscow's "Patriot" park. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, during the re-enactment the participants used two T34-85 tanks, two IS-2 tanks, two self-propelled artillery units, four BM-13 "Katyusha" launchers — from the Soviet side, four PzKpfw IV tanks, two PzKpfw III tanks, a PzKpfw VI tank, a Sturmgesch•tz self-propelled gun, armored vehicles on the side of the Wehrmacht and two Messershmitt Bf-109 E. The audience saw performed tank fights, aviation duels, as well as infantry clashes.—*Tass*

Participants storm a Reichstag building. PHOTO: TASS

mitv Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(25-4-2017 07:00am ~ 26-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	The Richly Blessed Gem Land
07:51	Am	MONASTERY (Shwe In - Pin Kyaung)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Marvelous Solo Cane Ball Playing
08:43	Am	Atuladhipati Mahamunisacca Koe Htat Kyee Pagoda
09:03	Am	News
09:25	Am	Culture Show: Abdication of King Thibaw
09:42	Am	Talented Musicians
09:50	Am	Today Myanmar: CBT in Kampetlet Township
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Styles of Mro & Thet
10:32	Am	The Man and The Elephant (Part - I)
10:47	Am	The Man and The Elephant (Part - II)

(11:00Am~03:00 Pm)-Monday Repeat(07:00Am~11:00Am)
(03:00 Pm~07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat(07:00Am~11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Day Out With Sarah (EP-7)
07:53	Pm	Tea
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Discovering Tribes "MUUN (Ep - II)"
08:52	Pm	Chef Life: Cho Wut Ye

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)-Today Repeat(09:00Am~11:00 Am)
(11:00Pm~03:00Am)- Monday Repeat(07:00Am~11:00Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am)-Today Repeat(07:00Am~11:00Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Ancient bamboo slips for calculation enter world records book

BEIJING — A set of bamboo slips dating back more than 2,300 years were officially recognized Sunday by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's earliest decimal calculation tool.

"The significance is that it's decimal, not duodecimal as seen in other countries. Decimal did not appear in Europe until the 15th century," said Li Xueqin, head of the Research and Conservation Center for Excavated Texts of Beijing-based Tsinghua University.

The 21 slips, crafted around 305 BC during the Warring States Period, are 43.5 centimetres long and 1.2 centimetres wide each.

When arranged together as a multiplication table, the slips can perform multiplication and division of any two whole numbers under 100 and numbers containing the fraction 0.5.

The slips have inscribed numbers and holes, where threads used to go. A user would pull the threads corresponding to numbers needed to be calculated in order to see the result.

The owner of the slips remains unknown, according to Li. "Our guess is that the tool might be used in trade, or measurement of land in the kingdom of Chu."

In July 2008, Tsinghua acquired a rare collection of 2,500 slip bamboo items from the late Warring States period, which had been smuggled out of China, including the multiplication table. —*Reuters*

Sony to launch high-speed, silent mirrorless camera

TOKYO — Sony Corp will launch a mirrorless single-lens digital camera capable of photographing silently at high speed, targeting professionals and bird watchers who want to shoot without distracting their subjects.

The new model, Alpha 9, can continuously shoot up to 20 frames per second with the help of a CMOS image sensor to process data up to 20 times faster than previous Sony full-frame mirrorless cameras.

The Japanese electronics giant will start taking orders Thursday ahead of the product's release on 26 May.

The CMOS sensor allows the camera to stay focused on athletes without a pause, helping capture them in motion during competition.

The silent shooting function helps photographers operate in noise-sensitive environments, such as around wild animals, or when a golfer is playing a shot.

The camera body weighs about 673 grams, including its battery. An expected retail price for the body is around 540,000 yen ($4,950), according to the company.—*Kyodo News*

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

14th Waning of Tagu 1379 ME | Tuesday, 25 April 2017

Myanmar to host invitational Chinlone contest prior to 29th SEA Games

MYANMAR will host an invitational Chinlone (cane ball) competition prior to the 29th Southeast Asian Games, a multi-sport event to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, next August, according to organisers.

Jointly organised by the Asian Chinlone Federation and the Myanmar Chinlone Federation, the invitational tournament is due to take place on 5-8 May in the capital Nay Pyi Taw. The host country Myanmar will participate in the contest together with counterparts from four ASEAN member countries — Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Myanmar athletes arranged to take part in the four categories of men's cane-ball events, which are planned to be included in the 29th SEA Games.

Since 2013, the Myanmar Chinlone Federation has organised the invitational competitions on a yearly basis with the aim of providing platforms to improve the skills of participating teams as well as promote the players' friendly relationship between Myanmar athletes and those of neighbouring countries.

"This is part of the preparation for the upcoming Kuala Lumpur SEA Games 2017 and those players would have a golden opportunity to continue improving themselves in all tactical, technical and physical aspects of the sport", a spokesperson of the MCF said.

Chinlone, the national sport of Myanmar, was first introduced in the 27th SEA Games hosted by Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw.—*200*

2017 General Aung San Shield to be celebrated

THE 2017 General Aung San Shield Knockout Football Competition will be held starting from May 2nd and will be organized by the Myanmar Football Federation. It is the league cup competition started in every Myanmar football season. The Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) is planning to rename the tournament as the General Aung San Shield after several years of being known as the MFF Cup.

In the first round, ten clubs competing in 2017 MNL-2 and two clubs which were promoted to 2017 MNL, twelve teams in total, will be playing at a neutral ground with six teams to emerge as winners. Round one match will feature two games a day and will start from May 2nd.

In the second round, twelve clubs competing in 2016 MNL and the six winners from the first round, sixteen teams in total, will be playing at a neutral ground with eight teams to emerge as winners. The games of Round two will start from 10 May. The Quarter-finals will still be played as one-legged matches but the Semi-final will be competed as two-legged (Home and Away) matches.

File photo shows Magway Football Club celebrate with their shield after winning of 2016 General Aung San Shield. PHOTO: PHOE THAW ZIN

All tournament games will be played either at the Aung San Stadium or Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon and the final match will be played at the Aung San Stadium for the dignity of General Aung San.

The cup winner will receive K30 million (US$30,000) and is guaranteed a place in the 2018 AFC Cup. The first runner up will take K15 million and the beaten semi-finalists will get K7.5 million accordingly.—*Kyaw Zin Lin*

Messi's 500th Barca goal sinks Real Madrid in thriller

Barcelona's Lionel Messi in action with Real Madrid's Casemiro during the Spanish Liga Santander at Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid, Spain on 23 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

MADRID — Lionel Messi scored his 500th Barcelona goal with the last kick of the game to snatch a stunning 3-2 win at Real Madrid and put the two teams level on points at the top of La Liga.

James Rodriguez appeared to have rescued a point for the hosts with an 86th minute strike to make it 2-2 after goals by Messi and Ivan Rakitic had overturned Casemiro's opener.

Madrid captain Sergio Ramos was sent off for a two-footed lunge on Messi in the 77th minute and that left Barcelona in a strong position, until Rodriguez fired home at the near post.

But Messi's second goal in the final minute of added time earned Barca a vital win in the title race that leaves both sides with 75 points, although Madrid have a game in hand.—*Reuters*

Nadal claims record-extending 10th Monte Carlo title

MONTE CARLO — Rafael Nadal claimed a record-extending 10th Monte Carlo Masters title as he geared up for his beloved French Open with a 6-1, 6-3 victory against fellow Spaniard Albert Ramos on Sunday.

The fourth seed, who is also targeting a 10th Roland Garros trophy this year, was always in command as he claimed his first ATP title since triumphing in Barcelona a year ago.

The 14-times grand slam champion had won his two previous encounters against Ramos and the 15th seed failed to snap that run on Sunday.

"It has been an amazing week on one of the most important events on the tour. I played well here, which helps me a lot to start the claycourt season with confidence," said Nadal.

Nadal wasted three break points in the second game as Ramos levelled for 1-1, only for the claycourt king to win the next five games to bag the opening set. With Nadal's topspin working with devastating effect, Ramos struggled to stay close to his baseline.—*Reuters*

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