

■ NATIONAL

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of ambassadors of Thailand and Belgium

► PAGE 3



■ NATIONAL

Four ministries hold press conference on one year performance

► PAGES 6-7

■ NATIONAL

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Swiss Ambassador to Myanmar

► PAGE 2

■ LOCAL BUSINESS

Hong Kong to help Myanmar set up gold exchange

► PAGE 5

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File photo shows midwives and nurses attending to pregnant patients in the Central Women's Hospital in Yangon in March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Monetary help for pregnant women, Rakhine State given high priority

Maung Sein Lwin
(Myanma Alin)

THE Union government announced that it will further expand care for its people by providing monetary assistance to pregnant women, with the people of Rakhine State one of the first states to receive this money.

The department of social welfare has previously implemented

projects for the protection of children, the protection of women, the disabled and the aged.

“The State, this year, will perform the tasks of giving monetary subsidies to expectant mothers from the budget of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (SWRR), starting in early June, with Rakhine State to be categorised as the 2nd priority area (with Chin State also receiving

subsidies early),” said U Ne Win, permanent secretary of the SWRR ministry at a meeting clarifying the tasks to be done linking Union Ministries, region and state cabinets and rules and regulations, held at a meeting room in the Office of Rakhine State government on Tuesday.

“In the present budget year, it has been arranged to support expectant mothers and their newly

born babies up to the age of two years with Ks15,000 per month. The programme will be launched starting in Chin State, as of next June, with Rakhine State designated as the second area to receive the funding. Statistics and data will be collected in the third week of May. Following this, expecting mothers will be supported with money starting from June every quarter.”

SEE PAGE 3 >>

Major effort for development of Myanmar tourism

VICE President U Henry Van Thio, Chairman of the Central Committee for the Development of the National Tourism Industry, addressed the co-ordination meeting of the committee and pointed out the importance of improving, expanding and refining the country's tourism sector.

The Vice President made his remarks yesterday at the CCDN-TI (1/2017) meeting held at the Mingalar Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

“Priorities ... for the development of the socio-economic life of citizens include the tourism industry, a sector that will help the national economy”, U Henry Van Thio said. “Myanmar is a country rich in tourism resources. There are a lot of cultural heritage and national ethnic people's traditions and customs that can attract globe-trotters to the Regions and States of Myanmar. These must be explored for the systematic development in the long run.”

The VP added that the refinement and improvement of the tourism experience will continue to attract visitors.

“It must also be carried out to make arrangements for tourists to be convenient for travelling and accommodating from the time of their arrival to their departure, and for their secured touring during their stay. We have had a major tourism project for the systematic development of Myanmar tourism industry. As it can be implemented by changing as needed, depending upon

SEE PAGE 3 >>



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Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Swiss Ambassador to Myanmar

SPEAKER of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint received Swiss Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Paul R. Seger at the hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw at 11 am yesterday.

Matters relating to amity and cooperation between Switzerland and Myanmar, peace process and national reconciliation were discussed during the meeting.



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint holds talks with Swiss Ambassador Mr. Paul R. Seger in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

MPs invited to attend Amyotha Hluttaw session

THE Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw has sent invitation letters to the Amyotha Hluttaw representatives to attend fifth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw to be held at

Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting hall at 10 am on 18 May 2017.

The Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, either they receive or not invitation letters are urged to contact Amyotha Hluttaw Hall (I-19) not earlier than 16 May and not later than 17 May along with their member of Parliament scrutiny cards.

—Myanmar News Agency

9th meeting of BIMSTEC held in Yangon

THE opening ceremony of the 9th meeting of The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Sub group on Anti-money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism was held at Novotel Hotel in Yangon yesterday morning.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Yangon Region Advocate General U Han Htoo, the Secretary of Yangon Region government, the Secretary General of BIMSTEC Mr. Sumith Nakandala and forty representatives from seven BIMSTEC countries.

During the meeting, Maj-Gen Aung Soe and Mr. Sumith Nakandala delivered speeches. The meeting will be continued today and discussion topics will include matters of membership



The 9th meeting of BIMSTEC in progress in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

countries, evaluation for the better cooperation in combating the financing of terrorism, the cyber threat in the financial sector of BIMSTEC, development of human resources to fight the illicit financial flow and preventing

financing of terrorism, and the issues on cooperation between international organizations, improving the legal framework of the membership countries and other future procedures.

—Myanmar News Agency

Mol reviews printing and publishing enterprises

THE Ministry of Information, with compliance from the Union Government, issued the Printing and Distribution Enterprise By-law Notification No. (48/2014) on 10 October 2014, which permits granting of publishing licences after careful scrutiny of the enterprise.

In accord with the afore-

mentioned procedure, the Ministry of Information in an administration committee meeting on 24 April approved issuing of licences to applicants which had been submitted between 20 to 31 March 2017. The applicants include two printing enterprises, two journals, two magazines, two general publishing enterprises, and three news agencies.

Since the conception of the Printing and Publishing Enterprise Bylaw on 10 October, the Ministry of Information has approved of 1,421 printing enterprises, 2,086 publishing enterprises and 64 news agencies, a total of 3,571 enterprises.

—Ministry of Information

List approved from 10-10-2014 to 24-4-2017 for printing and publishing

	Approved List	Presented List	Total (up to date)
Printing	1419	2	1421
Publishing	2080	6	2086
News Agency	61	3	64
Total	3560	11	3571

Pyithu Hluttaw representatives informed to attend parliamentary session

THE Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw has sent invitation letters to the Pyithu Hluttaw representatives to attend fifth regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw to be held at Pyithu Hluttaw's meeting hall at 10 am on 18 May 2017.

The Pyithu Hluttaw repre-

sentatives, either they receive or not invitation letters are urged to contact Pyithu Hluttaw Hall (I-12) not earlier than 16 May and not later than 17 May along with their member of Parliament scrutiny cards.

—Myanmar News Agency

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office
Notification 2/2017
1st Waxing of Kason 1379 ME
26 April 2017

Summoning Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fifth regular session

In accord with Section 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 13 of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fifth regular session is summoned at 1:30 pm on the 8th Waning of Kason 1379 ME (18 May 2017) (Thursday).

Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than
Speaker
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Pyithu Hluttaw
Notification 2/2017
1st Waxing of Kason 1379 ME
26 April 2017

Summoning Second Pyithu Hluttaw fifth regular session

In accord with Section 126 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the 2012 Pyithu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2013 Pyithu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyithu Hluttaw fifth regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 8th Waning of Kason 1379 ME (18 May 2017) (Thursday).

Sd/ Win Myint
Speaker
Pyithu Hluttaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Amyotha Hluttaw
Notification 2/2017
1st Waxing of Kason 1379 ME
26 April 2017

Summoning Second Amyotha Hluttaw fifth regular session

In accord with Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the Amyotha Hluttaw Law for the 2012 and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2015 Amyotha Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Amyotha Hluttaw fifth regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 8th Waning of Kason 1379 ME (18 May 2017) (Thursday).

Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than
Speaker
Amyotha Hluttaw

Monetary help for pregnant women, Rakhine State given high priority

>> FROM PAGE 1

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will increase the giving of subsidies more than ever and expand new projects. For now, the department of social welfare has been implementing 10 projects such as child protection, protection of women, the disabled and the aged, drugs and social protection.

Presently, those above 90 years of age will be subsidised starting in June. Those who turn 90 by the end of March 2017 will be eligible this year. The particulars, including facts and figures, has been given to respective districts and townships in regions and states. The aged in question are required to attach passport photos, national registration cards (original), and form 66 (D) of household

registration certificates. Without these documents, recommendation letters need to be collected from ward or village tract administrators and two respectable town-elders at the first stage and then these must be submitted to the township administrator's office, and then to the offices of respective regions and states.

At the third stage, particular documents must be delivered to headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw. At the fourth and final stage, lists sent after approving the 90-year-old people have to be checked and support will be given. On 8-9 May, heads of the social welfare department of regions and states will conduct training about the process, according to the ministry of social welfare, rescue and resettlement.

U Hau Do Suan presents his Credentials to Vice President of the Republic of Cuba

U Hau Do Suan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Cuba, presented his Credentials to Her Excellency Ms. Gladys Maria Bejerano Portela, Vice President of the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba on 21 April 2017, in Havana. —Ministry of Foreign Affairs

OCHA Donor Support Group meet with Rakhine State Government

Maung Sein Lwin
(Myanma Alin)

UNITED Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Donor Support Group (ODSG) and Rakhine State Government held talks yesterday at Rakhine State Government Office over provision of humanitarian assistance and the requirements.

At the meeting, ODSG Chairman Carol Chan said they came to see the work done on donation made and to fulfill the requirement of the locals. Donors want to fully understand the work done by the organizations to which the donation was made and more donations will be made if necessary.

Afterward, secretary of Rakhine State Government office U Tin Maung Swe said Rakhine State is formed with 5 districts, 17 townships and 9 towns and peace and stability prevail in the remaining townships except Maungdaw and certain achievement has been made in time of the new government. The incumbent government is trying its utmost to develop and there were in fact some developments.

At the end of the meeting, donors of ODSG were individually presented with a book entitled "Historical background of Rakhine State" by Rakhine State Minister for Planning, Finance, Revenue and Commerce U Kyaw Aye Thein.—Maung Sein Lwin

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of ambassadors of Thailand and Belgium



President U Htin Kyaw accepts the credentials of Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand Mr. Jukr Boon-Long. PHOTO: MNA

MR. JUKR BOON-LONG, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw at 2 pm yesterday.

Similarly, Mr. Philippe Kridelka, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi

Taw at 2:35 pm yesterday.

Present on the occasions were Deputy Minister for the President's Office U Min Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Zeya and Director-General U Thant Sin of the Protocol Department. —Myanmar News Agency



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the co-ordination meeting of Central Committee for the Development of the National Tourism Industry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Major effort for development of Myanmar tourism

>> FROM PAGE 1

changing time and condition, we want to urge you to manage what can be implemented, depending upon the natural resources in the country."

U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism and secretary of central committee for the development of the national tourism industry, then clarified the systematic development of the tourism industry, followed by discussions by Central Committee Member and Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Union Ministers U Thant Sin Maung, U

Ohn Win, U Thein Swe, U Kyaw Win, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, Chief Ministers of Regions and States, chairman of federation for Myanmar Tourism Industry, joint-secretary of central committee and responsible officials.

In closing, U Henry Van Thio said the tourism industry in Myanmar can reach new heights of success with a coordinated effort that involves citizens, the private sector and all government ministries.

"Only if the government, entrepreneurs from the private sector and people will co-oper-

ate, will the Myanmar Tourism Industry be successful. That is, not only the respective ministry but also related ministries and respective cabinets of regions and states must work hard to achieve success. Community-based tourism is being implemented to increase creation of job opportunities and to earn more income for local people. Myanmar needs to sustainably maintain the acquired good image of our country and to further assure our good image for survival in the international tourism industry market." —Myanmar News Agency



Local and foreign travelers cross U Bein Bridge over Taungthaman Lake in Mandalay. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Tourism booms at U Bein Bridge and Taungthaman Lake

MORE local and foreign travelers are visiting U Bein Bridge and Taungthaman Lake in Amarapura Township, Mandalay District during and after Thingyan festival. Most of the tourists come from Germany, Netherland, French, Britain, Spain, Italy, United States, New Zealand, Thailand, Japan and Korea.

Visitors capture photos and videos of the ancient wooden U Bein Bridge watch the sunset view of Taungthaman Lake by boat. U Bein Bridge was very busy with the families and group visitors, whose tours were arranged by Travel and Tours Agencies based in Yangon. Local and foreign

visitors bought souvenirs from U Bein Bridge and sampled the local foods, taking rest in the restaurants of Taungthaman Lake.

U Bein Bridge was built under the supervision of Mayor U Bein and construction started from 1211 ME and was completed in 1213 ME. U Bein was built with 1086 pillars and includes 4 places to take rest and is 1.2 km long. Pillars and floors were damaged overtime by the water and nature. Maintenance works are being carried out under the cooperation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Department of Archaeology and Mandalay Region Government.—200

Furniture making courses to open in May

A wood-based furniture making training course 2/2017 will be opened free of charge at the wood-based industrial technology department on Pinlon road, Dagon (North) township, Yangon Region on 2nd May, according to the wood-based furniture entrepreneurs' association.

The training course is aimed

at developing human resources. The three-month training course will be opened by a wood-based furniture entrepreneurs' association. "The trainees who attend the training course will enhance their ability. The training will widen their scope of knowledge on furniture manufacturing," said U Nay Lin Aung, the chair-

man of the wood-based furniture entrepreneurs' association.

The training course will provide knowledge ranging from cutting to making the finished products.

The association is planning to send Myanmar youth abroad to attend wood-based furniture training courses.—200

Internet users spend 2.4 hrs a day on 'net

MYANMAR people are spending an average of 2.4 hours per day on the internet. Among them, people use Facebook the most, according to a survey.

Sixty per cent of the people surveyed said social media was the main reason they accessed the internet, followed by 45 per cent of people who use message and internet phone services whereas 40 per cent of the people watch online videos.

About 59 per cent of the people use social media networks, 36 per cent use Facebook messenger, 36 per cent use Viber, 7 per cent BeeTalk and 6 per cent YouTube.

Moreover, 51 per cent of the people use the internet for entertainment, 31 per cent for information about products and services, 20 per cent for surfing information and 24 per cent for sharing their opinion.



A person using Facebook with a phone. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Digital media has penetrated Myanmar rapidly in a short amount of time, making traditional print and electronic media less popular. Myanmar has increased the number of digital media users by 52 per cent, according to Kantar TNS research. About 93 per cent of people aged between 15 and 24 have smartphones, followed by those between 25 and 34, according to the survey conducted by LIRNEasia and MIDO.—200

Cargo ship capsizes near Bargayar Port

THE cargo ship M.V ShweLet-twar that shuttles between Yangon and Sittway capsized from its overloaded cargo near Bargayar Port in Kyimyindine Township yesterday evening.

"There were two ships anchored at Bargayar Jetty's bollard-1 and when the other vessel left port this ship began to sink towards in the direction of the bollard from all the cargo over the weight limit. Soon only the front part of the ship was peering above the water. Two cars were included in the cargo," said Ko Maung Oo, a witness.

The captain and eight other staff members of the ship began their operations around 3pm and the ship began to capsize on its right side around 4pm after water entered the deck until it reached



A firefighter rescuing a dog at the site of the sunken ship. PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)

its current sunken state around 6:20pm.

Workers at the port together with responsible officials, firefighters, police officers and social relief groups endeavored to unload as much of the cargo as possible when the ship began to sink.

The ship arrived in Bargayar port on 20 April and was scheduled to sail to Sittway in Rakhine loaded with two cars, foodstuffs, 52-gallon barrels of cooking oil, and other commodities all weighing 450 tons.

No casualties occurred from the mishap but a value of Ks100 million worth of cargo was reported to be lost and security forces are currently working to secure the area of the sunken ship. Port authorities are reported to file a case against the captain of the ship in accord with the law.

Action was being taken to retrieve the sunken ship last night but strong currents are reported to be interfering with the rescue effort.—Zaw Gyi (Panita)

Myanmar crafts need more proficient makers

UMBRELLA crown of pagodas, shrine room, seats, pillars with hintha birds, naming plates and other Myanmar crafts with gold steel foils based on Pante, the arts of making materials with coppers, bronze or brass, were more donated to Pagodas, monasteries, Theins and Dahma halls in Nay Pyi Taw and other townships, but proficient Pante makers are rare.

"Donors are ordering more Myanmar crafts with gold steel foils for Pagodas, monasteries and Dhama Yone, during this year compared to last years. Our income depends on donors' mon-

ey. Entrance and passageways of the monasteries were decorated by wooden crafts before using the gold steel foils. Donors prefer to use gold steel foils to avoid repainting and decaying of iron. This profession depends on Pante, one out of ten Myanmar Traditional Arts. Nowadays, more professionals and learners are needed in this zone", said a Myanmar craftsman from Pyinmana Township.

The wages of professional makers are Ks 12,000-15,000 and apprentices make Ks 8,000 per day in this profession.—200

LOCAL Business



File photo shows employees work on a production line at a garment factory in Hlaingthaya, Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Export of CMP garment products hit over US\$1.8b

THE export of garment products on Cutting-Making and Packing (CMP) basis fetched US\$1,836 million in last Fiscal Year 2016-2017, according to the Commerce Ministry.

In the export sector, natural gas and agricultural products individually made

up 25 per cent, while the CMP garment accounted for 16 per cent, minerals for eight per cent, fisheries for five per cent and forest, animal products and other products for 21 per cent, it is learnt.

Japan plays a key role in Myanmar's garment in-

dustry. Currently, Japan and European countries are placing the largest orders. Additionally, garment exports also go to Chinese and American markets, it is learnt.

Garment producers are eyeing Myanmar for investment because of the cheap

labour, which sometimes causes conflict between the garment factory employer and labourers, according to the market watchers.

There are currently over 400 garment factories in Myanmar, with over 300,000 workers.—Ko Htet

Hong Kong to help Myanmar set up gold exchange

THE operator of Hong Kong's Gold Exchange will help Myanmar establish a similar stock exchange for transactions of precious metals, gold and silver in the country, said Haywood Cheung Tak-hay, president of the Chinese Gold & Silver Exchange Society.

"This is the right timing for Myanmar to establish a gold exchange, as the country is very keen on modernising its economy," Cheung told the South China Morning Post. In addition, Myanmar lies on the path of China's "One Belt, One Road" project, which enables the country to have access to opportunities of commodities and other forms of trade in the region, he added.

Hong Kong's exchange has already agreed to provide advisory and technical assistance through the Hong Kong-Myanmar Chamber of Commerce, which will collect a fee. Regulatory approval is still required. The Chamber will find a way to deal with the shareholder structure on the gold ex-

change.

This is the very first attempt of Hong Kong's Gold Exchange which was established in 1910, to expand its services into a foreign country. The One Belt, One Road project was introduced in 2013 with an aim at enhancing trade and infrastructure, including roads and railways, to link 60 countries in Asia (including Myanmar) and Europe with China.

Trade with China constitutes 40 per cent of total trade in Myanmar. Small and medium-sized enterprises from Hong Kong can enjoy business opportunities investing in Myanmar, said Albert Oung, the chairman of this Chamber. The price of gold has recently increased. Rising political uncertainties in the country resulted in an increase in gold investors.

Hong Kong is a platform for mainland and international investors to trade gold in different currencies ranging from US dollars and Hong Kong dollars to Yuan, said Jrearz, vice chairman of the Chamber.—Mon Mon

Gov't pushing to enhance private sector

THE government is effectively implementing plans to effectuate development in private sectors with five principles stated in Private Sector Development Framework, establishing a public-private partnership in a bid to improve the trade.

During the last fiscal year, export values reached over US\$11.6billion, with 32 per cent from the State and 68 per cent from private sector, whereas imports hit over US\$17billion, with six per cent from the State and 94 per cent from the

private sector. The private sector is witnessed to perform better, according to the Commerce Ministry.

From 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, Myanmar earned over US\$2.9billion from agricultural products, over US\$10million from animal products, over US\$246million from forest products, over US\$538million from minerals, over US\$581million from fishery products, over US\$5.3billion from finished industrial goods and US\$1.5billion from other products.

Meanwhile, the capital goods imports fetched over US\$6.9billion, which is down by over US\$1.3billion against that of FY 2015-2016 because the import of cement, equipments, tools and machines has decreased.

The import values of raw industrial goods including diesel, petrol and fertilizer were over US\$6.1billion, whereas the import of personal goods including palm oil, medicines and beverages fetched over US\$4.1billion.—Ko Khant

Weekend bazaar to launch next month

THE weekend bazaar, the special market festival for the month of May, is planned to launch three days a week in People's Park in Yangon, with several entertainment programmes including an unplugged music show, its organiser said.

The weekend bazaar will take place in the Paukan Food Court and Night

Bazaar inside the People's Park on every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in May between 3 p.m. and 11 p.m., with plans to sell food as well as handicrafts made by students. "This is a good opportunity for students and young adults wishing to introduce their own product ideas through the bazaar to seek more customers for

their products," said Daw Su Hlaing Myint, managing director of the Paukan Food Court and Night Bazaar.

Inspiring young people to start a business of buying and selling for raising their income during their free time is one of the key objectives of launching the weekend bazaar thrice a week, she added.—200

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegonedine

Available @

Ocean City City Mart

Four ministries hold press conference on one year performance

FOUR ministries jointly held a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw on their performance in the first one-year period.

Ministry of Commerce

Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint disclosed that Myanmar's agricultural product export is still relying on narrow market of neighbouring countries though the country has seen expanded market.

"Myanmar is facing a decrease in income from export of agricultural products and loss of tax due to illegal export to neighbouring countries, meanwhile its natural resources are depleting," said Dr Than Myint.

Meanwhile, illegal import of foodstuff has damaged local small and medium businesses and has caused health hazards to local people, he added.

The Ministry of Commerce participated in the 8th World Rice Conference in Thailand and could find 53 new export markets including Africa, according to the ministry.

Since Myanmar received the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), the ministry has been working to export its agricultural products to 28 EU countries.

In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the country saw a decrease of about US\$1.4 billion in the natural gas export and US\$ 200 million in the jade and mineral export, though it earned extra US\$480 million in the agricultural and fisheries and livestock export sector.

Agricultural products export in the 2016-2017 FY reached more than US\$ 2.9 billion, an increase of US\$315 million compared with the previous FY.

Ministry of Education

Due to the National Education Law, the education period in Myanmar is exactly in-line with ASEAN member countries said Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi.

He said the priority works in the government education sector reform are in providing early childhood nurturing and development program, providing at least a primary level education to all and increasing access to middle and high school level education, providing education to physically and financially handicapped children and children in difficult and least developed areas, compiling syllabus for ethnic languages under the supervision of region and state governments to support the ethnic language and culture, arranging for adequate number of teachers to obtain a good student-teacher ratio, arranging to increase the teaching proficiency the teachers, providing education materials to schools in difficult and least developed areas as well as to middle and high school that lacks the education materials, developing the right to draw own curriculum,



Union Ministers Dr. Pe Myint, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi and Dr. Than Myint attend press conference on one year performance of the four ministries at the hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

have independent administration and freedom of research in universities to attain a world level education system, equal development of the vocational training schools, institutes and universities, providing an effective education service that is not a burden to the parents, students and the community, utilizing the education funds obtained from the government, private and public effectively and transparently and implementing education reform management and study programs based on correct and precise information.

During the academic year 2016-2017, a total of 3,312 schools were newly opened/upgraded out of which 2,375 were in difficult and least developed areas. At the basic education level sector, an increase of 522 schools, 18,697 teachers and 422,267 students were achieved during the academic year 2016-2017.

Under the teacher mentoring program, central level trainings, teacher mentor trainings, work discussions, workshop on Teacher Mentoring Cluster Support Program and review workshop on implementation process were conducted.

There were 10,299 schools with 20,673 teachers and 558,641 students that are taught in 49 different ethnic languages.

In off-school and life-long education programs, Nay Pyi Taw Council and 30 townships conducted 2080 teaching circles for 205,727 person, 7 townships in Kayah State conducted 455 teaching circles with 455 teachers for 5,335 person and 9 townships in Taunggyi conducted 2,596 teaching circles with 2,680 teachers for 26,794 person.

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock & Irrigation and Ministry of Hotels & Tourism set up Nyaung Shwe Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) and conducted hotel reception basic training, housekeeping training, food and beverage training, training on producing farm and plantation products under the GAP system, training on planting, fish breeding training, training on repair and maintaining single cylinder engine, basic electrical and computer trainings.

According to the Human Development Report 2016, Myanmar was at Low Human Development Index Rank in 2015 and was upgraded to Medium Human Development Index Rank in 2016.

Ministry of Information

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint said today's event is one of the ministry's performance. Conducting such press conferences is the duty of the ministry. Press conferences were held throughout the year in this hall for spoke persons and media to meet and to set up good relationship between the two. This is to set up

sectors like education, health, culture, international relationship and thus information department at the ministerial level need to be set up.

Looking at the information related ministries of the world, countries like Cambodia, Egypt, Israel, Indonesia and Bangladesh had the word "information" while India had "Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Some used the word "Communication". Myanmar had Ministry of Information prior to independence.

In the present Ministry of Information, there is Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV), News and Periodicals Enterprise

“Suggestion was made for officials to answer to the media's question and for the media to publish their findings to the public effectively.

the culture of meeting between the three pillars and the fourth pillar. As we pass through this year, I can see that this culture has also been fairly established.

Suggestion was made for officials to answer to the media's question and for the media to publish their findings to the public effectively. The reason in suggesting this to both side is for the people in our country to get the news completely. This is the development/progress of our media.

It is learnt that some do not fully understand what information is. People immediately see television and newspaper when they hear information. Information department is not answering questions only. In addition to answering question, information that people need to know must be released. It is more of submitting a report. As a government formed by the elected representatives of the people, the Ministry of Information report about what is being done for the people. That is why reporting is added into the definition of information.

Information sector is required in anything that is related to the public. Government is a big organization that is conducting many things nationwide in various

(NPE), Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD), and Printing and Publishing Department (PPD).

PPD is the earliest department and it is doing the same thing now as it did under the British government. Under the British, the British government's gazette and letters were printed. Central Printing Press in Yangon is more than 100 years old. Providing information and news are the main observable duties of the Ministry of Information. In other word, it is the work of submitting reports to the people. It is done through radio, television and newspapers.

Myanmar literature development and increasing the knowledge of the people is the function of PPD and IPRD. There was a well-known, respected and valued department in Myanmar once. It is Sarpay Beikman. We are developing Sarpay Beikman and it is now preparing to publish the Myanmar encyclopedia.

Throughout the year, political paper reading, history paper reading, and book fairs were held. Soon, paper reading on translation will be held. Paper readings and book fairs are Ministry of Information's work to develop Myanmar literature and increase the

knowledge of the people.

Ministry of Information had held child literacy events and all these events were teeming with people and could be considered a success. Yangon's Theinbyu Road Book Street was also held successfully, the Union Minister said.

Ministry of Industry

U Ko Ko Lwin, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry said Good Storage Practice (GSP) in accordance with the norms and standards of the WHO was introduced to pharmaceutical factories of the ministry to manufacture medical products under the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and distribute directly to Ministry of Health and Sports and other ministries.

Bogus drugs with BPI trademarks and expired drugs in the markets were investigated, tested and rounded up in September and action taken against the bogus drug makers. In order to prevent production of BPI trademarked bogus drugs and provide a better quality packaging, 69 pills, 1 medical powder, 64 injection vials were produced in new packaging.

Morphine sulfate syrup and morphine sulfate tablets for cancer patients are undergoing stability test and measures are being taken for producing Tenofovir (300 mg) for HIV and Hepatitis B patients. A new anti-venom production building was opened at the Pharmaceutical Factory (Insein) on 20 May 2016 to increase anti-venom production. Steel hospital equipment and instrument were produced and distributed to Ministry of Health & Sports. Hospital beds embedded with locker and medicine cupboards are test produced under a pilot scheme.

In the agricultural sector, the ministry has innovated farm equipment according to the need of farmers and changes have been made in the hydraulic system and clutch of Zwe tractor, powered tillers, harvesters and small rice mills and sold into the market.

For private sector industrial development, state-owned factories and mills went into partnership with private sector through inviting local and foreign investments in order to secure technology and capital.

Altogether, 59 out of 118 factories under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry are now running in public-private partnership. In an attempt to develop financing to small and medium enterprises in Myanmar, 456 business owners were provided with special government loans and 189 business owners were provided with Two Step Loan from Japan. According to the Central Bank of Myanmar Law, repayment period is one year but the repayment period for the special government loan and Japan's Two Step Loan was set at 5 years for increased circulation of investment.

SEE PAGE 7 >>

Four ministries hold press conference on one year performance

>> FROM PAGE 6

Approvals were given to 648 business owners to obtain loan. In 2016 only CB bank practiced Credit Guarantee Insurance (CGI) system but discussion were conducted with KBZ Bank and Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank (SMIDB) who also wanted to practice the CGI system. Discussions are held with Thailand's Kasikorn Bank to cooperate in development of Myanmar SME.

Afterward, Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers and officials replied to the questions of the media.

Excerpts from the Q and A session of the press conference

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister U Win Maw Htun from the Ministry of Education answered questions on the National Education Bylaw, granting of licenses to teachers, the expected number of applicants of teachers in the coming year and criticism of giving passing grade for passing in only one academic subject. The Deputy Minister replied that the academic bylaw has been drafted and is being applied according to each sector while teachers will be granted licenses or another form of professional acknowledgement after the Private School Act has been ratified. Appointing of new teachers in the 2017-2018 academic year will be dependent on the requirements of each district. As to the complaints of giving pass grade for passing only one subject, the deputy minister and other officials replied that it is valid only for the final examinations as progress evaluation is

carried out throughout the whole ten academic months. There should be increased awareness of the difference between doing well on the exam and actually learning something, which is why the evaluation reports throughout the entire academic year, is added at the end of the 2-hour long final examination.

The Deputy Minister also replied to a question posed on whether universities will move from a central administration system and if the Yangon University Students' Union (YUSU) will be reestablished, saying that currently universities already have free administration with only the financial sector administrated by the Union Minister, while the budget for the construction of the Ks5.2 billion YUSU building has already been approved.

Ministry of Information

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint replied to a question regarding the publishing of interviews of one-year performance of the incumbent government in state newspapers saying that every ministry reviewed their performances and communications with the media in the on-year period so that they can express their views on politics, commerce and economy as well as confer new year wishes at the same time. This procedure has nothing to do with policies but is just a normal procedure for the ministry to receive outside feedback on the government's performance while showcasing prominent figures.

Director-General U Myint Htwe of MRTV replied to a question on granting five private companies as content providers

saying that the companies were chosen after careful, transparent evaluation on financial stability, legal liability, and ability to follow current and future policies implemented. Only five channels were available for grant and the selection was based on fair, unbiased judgment.

Dr. Pe Myint replied to a question asking on the National Literature Award saying there are many varieties under National Literature Award and each sector had a subcommittee formed for its evaluation, comprised of well-known literary figures as committee members while working

With regard to the question about media access to the Rakhine State, the Union Minister replied that the ministry is trying its best to assist in reporting news in Rakhine State and majority of the news about the Rakhine State covered by the foreign media are one-sided news based on unreliable sources.

The report issued by International Crisis Group (ICG) highlights the problems in Northern Rakhine State by interviewing the locals and using the interpreters capable of speaking and understanding local language, he added. The journalists residing in

home and abroad in a rapid manner on real time and to implement the goals of the ministry.

Ministry of Industry

Regarding the question on the status of anesthetics production in BPI pharmaceuticals, Permanent Secretary U Ko Ko Lwin of the Ministry for Industry replied anesthetics for cancer patients include the production of morphine and codeine with morphine imported and around 6,500 grams of raw drugs for codeine will be supplied by the Ministry of Home Affairs as agreed upon. The latest technology is being used in the production for the two drugs and will be sold locally at an affordable price. Meanwhile, production of Tenofovir (300 mg), used in treating HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B, is being tested in Yangon Pharmaceuticals Factory using technology from India and is in the process of getting an FDA license for commercial distribution. BPI focuses on high quality, safety and effectiveness in its pharmaceutical productions.

The production status of glass tables incorporating Burmese lacquer ware, kanote drawings and traditional carvings designed by the State Counselor and is mass-produced in the Kyaukse Glass Factory with the objective of acquiring a market space for Burmese traditional arts while also using high quality glass. In the six months since production 20 tables have been sold with prices ranging from Ks1 Lakh to Ks2 Lakh depending on the designs. Further production will be carried out according to market demand. —Myanmar News Agency

“The ministry is trying its best to assist in covering news in Rakhine State and majority of news about the Rakhine State covered by the foreign media are one-sided news based on unreliable sources.

under the rules and regulations of the appointed groups. The Union Minister also replied to a question asking about the code of ethics of news and media personnel saying it is the responsibility of the people working in the media business to uphold their code of ethics.

The Ministry of Information collaborates with concerned organisations as it is the ministry's duty to promote development of the media. Although the media business has improved in the past 4-5 years there are still areas of weaknesses and to improve the code of ethics it is essential for everybody to work together, stating the Ministry of Information is always ready to extend a helping hand.

Rakhine State will understand the root-cause of the conflict at that time and the local correspondents failed to report the real situation and the root-cause of the conflict they faced in Maungdaw District while international media were broadcasting the false and unreliable news, he said.

The print media are struggling to survive in the age of technology in the world and the plan to launch the digital newspaper will be in accord with technological advancement as online media industry is booming in the world. He underlined that the move is intended to disseminate information on the latest developments and undertakings being carried out the incumbent government for the people and the readers at

Fire destroys religious building in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State

A FIRE broke out in Zedi Pyin village in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State yesterday at 10 pm, destroying a religious building.

Arphaut Tullah, who took action as a security guard in the village, informed the head of

one-hundred households after he saw the fire.

The fire destroyed religious books and four carpets worth Ks50,000. The blaze was put out by villagers.

Local police are investigating. —Myanmar News Agency

Stabbing in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State

Ma Phyu Ma Gyi, 28, and her daughter Ma May Phyu Thant, 11, were attacked by an unknown man wielding a knife in Oak Pho village in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State on Tuesday.

The mother was injured on

her neck and chin and the daughter suffered small wounds. The police have sent the victims to the hospital.

Action is being taken to capture the suspect, who fled from the scene. —Myanmar News Agency

Invitation to young writers for new Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is now accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its new weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform starting in May.

Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150 NgarHtatGyiPayar Street, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information:

- (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.),
- (2) Real name and (if different) your penname,
- (3) Your level of education,
- (4) Name of your School/College/University,
- (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses,
- (6) A color photo of the submitter,
- (7) Copy of your NRC card,
- (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).

- Editorial Department
- The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

Union Peace

Khin Maung Oo

MAN has different fingers in length, nature and function. At one time in the past, these characteristics have been described in a Reader prescribed in schools, namely thumb, index, middle, ring and pinky. Though these five fingers differ from each other, anyone can perform any particular task, by grasping it firmly with five fingers.

The middle finger may say that “I, being the tallest in the middle, need not do any work”. In the same way, the ring finger may say that “only I should wear a golden ring”. In such a case no work would be given to him. All things cannot be the same, compared to each other. Unless we can cooperate by negotiating these differences, we will never ever come to a result that we can all accept. As long as we cannot reduce these differences little by little, we will be far and far away from our destination as the time goes by.

In making an effort to make the Union peaceful in these days as well, we will experience similar events. In the country which consists of over 100 ethnic nationals, there will be more than 100 differences, like the fingers on our hands. Though they are not similar to each other, these different fingers working collectively can achieve the desired objective. The different ethnic nationals in the nation can be likened to fingers. These nationals must accomplish the task of bringing about the emergence of peace and prosperity in our mother land, in unity.

Presently, our national leaders are finding out the solution to these differences. Due to living in different situations for over 70 years, the country had suffered a lot, and ethnic nationals which are like fingers had to live under unfavorable conditions. Management to negotiate these different ideas, opinions and beliefs without hate and any conflicts may be considered to be progress. It can be said that this is progress based on mutual trust and understanding. When mistrust arises among people, feelings of doubts, grudges, hatred and aggression develop in them.

Holding the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong and political dialogues, we are witnessing better results through political negotiations in different regions. We have seen better outcomes in which different groups which had been silent all the time without participating in any negotiations were pushed to the state of coming to the negotiation table. We must acknowledge that we can reach the desired goal if we try our best to reach the next stage by changing our attitudes.

Now, we have seen that many groups with different views have come to the state of gaining mutual understanding. In the near future after the appearance of good results the Second Union Peace Conference--21st Century Panglong will commence. During this period, we will acquire mutual respect, trust and understanding, and we firmly believe that the Union peace which all the people had hoped for will develop from these promising foundations.

Yadanarbon Daily in The Past Representing Thousands of Eyes & Ears

Khin Maung Aye (Mandalay)

KING Mindon, who founded Mandalay City and Mandalay Palace & sponsored the 5th Buddhist Synod built up the Yadanarbon City with the moat around the Palace, Maha Loka Marajain Pagoda, Maha Sima Hall preaching Sacred Maha Pahtana Canon, Maha Atula Veyan (Atumashi) Monastery & Sudhamma Resting Place with grandeur and splendor, just after hearing a burst of cannon fire at the very nascent hours of Sunday just after 2 am under the Myanmar traditional timing system on 13 Waxing of Kason month, 1221 ME.

Myanmar with High Status & Good Reputation

There were a total of 729 Sacred Buddhist Pitaka Stone Scription Pillars built in caves each, as the holy shrines. These existed as a grace in Mandalay for Mandalay city dwellers to stand tall as the world's biggest book. Our Myanmar people managed to live proudly on a grand scale, under the rule of our kings in our country.

During the reign of King Mindon, the Monarch, Myanmar literature was remarkably well-known for its advanced status. Out of variety of literature which emerged in that period, there included kinds of composition

Thandawsint meant for “officer of the court who received and transmitted the king's orders.” Ah Hee mastered in 6 languages and knew publishing work very well but he lacked skills of writing Myanmar so that the then people would like. It was Maha Mingaung, Myothit Myosar who supervised the newsroom.

At that time, a lad named Maung Lwin, son of Minhla Yarzar U Tun-Daw Kho was sent to U Cheint, Myaukhla Myosar by U Pandita, Reverend Sayardaw of Khinmagan monastery, who ordained the nephew of the co-residing Sayardaw U Zargara, naming him Shin Varajein meant for thunderbolt or weapon carried by Indra.

Renaming Maung Lwin as Maung Htin

Myaungghla Myosar apprenticed Maung Lwin to Kinwun Mingyi. When asked of his name, he replied that his name was Maung Lwin. Being similar to the king's name, the lad was renamed as Maung Htin, by Kinwun Mingyi. When he entered the press work, his salary was 15 kyats only. Though being the manager of the Press, Mr Ah Hee acknowledged Maung Htin's qualifications, assigning suitable duties to Maung Htin.

Yadanarbon newspaper became very popular with extremely attractive writing style of Maung Vajira. As Maung Vajira's works became gradually well-known in the paper, the king condescended to see Maung Htin in the palace. Since the very advent of the publication of the newspaper, the King himself ordered newsmen to disclose of the truth if the king and the queen were proved guilty. To his great surprise, he saw Maung Htin, noting that the lad was too young.

Yadanarbon & Ko Vajira

When U Thott, senior clerical staff of the royal court, came to know that Maung Htin's remuneration was only 15 kyats per month, he made the salary raised up to 60 kyats per month. Some figures such as Kinwun Mingyi, Yaw Atwinwun U Po Hlaing perused the weekly newspaper which was published 4 times every month, praising Ko Vajira's works highly. After working for the press for two years or so, Ko Vajira resigned from the job on the pretext of suffering a sore on his arm to return to the Khinmagan monastery. Such a condition was assumed to have been attributed to tangled royal affairs.

Just after the demise of King Mindon, King Thibaw ascended to the throne. Freedom of expression in the newspaper was not any longer broadly granted as before, and the king and the queen were not like the previous ones. So he seemed to have decided to live far away from the press. From this event, we can see that the then public of Po Vajira's time of running the press seemed to love freedom of press.

Glass-Walling

Ceremony for paying obeisance to the doyen news media men for the third time was held in the Yangon City Hall on 10 December, 2016. As regards outlooks of the media-men toward the press media world, they disclosed, “Freedom of press has been granted, like a house with the door open. But when a man enters the room, assuming that the door is open, he happens to collides with the glass wall with a great thud. Now we are marching toward a democratic state. We have had a civilian government. It is being said that we have had openness. Yet, we are as if being separated with a glass walling. Compared to the previous time, the condition of Myanmar press media world went to the state of operating in the restricted way.

Progress achieved

One of the veterans named U Mya Shwe also said, “Paying to the respect to the aged will bring about auspiciousness, good health and wealth, intelligence and might to those who pay. Thanks to this meritorious deed, he is said to be liberated from “Apariya—the four nether worlds, according to the Buddhist canons. Compared to the past, the condition of the present Myanmar press

media world has developed considerably. These days, internet and face-book can be said to have occupied numbers of readers reading print media, but these news sources cannot be proved true. They are mixed up with true and false ones, whereas newspapers report their news covered by their correspondents. In the previous time, we ourselves had to go the places of news sources. On arrival at the place, reporters had to write the news based on the information collected from the persons in question. Now that people post the news as soon as it has been heard, some may not be true.”

Abide by the media ethic

As for the outlook toward the media world, Hanthawady U Ohn Kyaing stressed, “Today can be said to be the extraordinary one. I am now 88 years old. The mayor had made a solemn promise verbally that an event for a paper reading will be held. We demanded for it for the sake of posterity, completely not for us. We had had freedom of press, but we need to follow and exercise it, on one condition that we should not write news and information randomly and in an unrestrained way. In addition, newsmen need to carefully study the criminal law and the penal code. At the same time, I want to urge them to do so. All are required to follow the media ethic adopted by our veterans.”

Newspapers tell history.

We will never think that it will be wrong if we claim that newspapers tell history and newspapers can be called “The mirror of life,” as it reflects lives of people throughout the history. Newspapers always warn people and bring about light to them. Our Mandalayians love, admire and value newspapers. The first thing in the morning, dailies go into their hands. News media work seems to be easy and superficial in outward appearance but it is quite different from that supposition. With the passing time, newsmen have been working for the news.

It is the work of presenting news &

information taking places everyday in the country, to the public as rightfully and promptly as it can. Hence, a newsman is required to be quick at covering news, astute and able to distinguish which kinds of trees or plants they are, just by seeing barks. In other word, he must be equipped with knowledge.

Read a lot as much as one can

Ceremony for paying respect to the doyen journalists for the 3rd time had been held. Suck a custom is only in Myanmar. Sayarmagyi Daw Kywe Kywe expressed her opinion, “Presently, news media world has developed much though numbers of readers decreased. I am not really satisfied with the people. Due to the lack reading, crimes are committed more than ever. On account of scanty knowledge, they are easily deceived. Human trafficking is in fact attributed to having little knowledge. Knowledge is acquired from newspapers and literature. So, read a lot. Being well-read can save us from deceit and it will give us medical knowledge.”

“I would like our literary fellows to exert our concerted effort in developing Myanmar literature for the sake of our younger generation.

However it is, in the time of our younger generation of journalists the current of Myanmar literature is casting light over them, like the shining sun at dawn. Let me conclude my writing here by presenting an appealing letter by Reverend Ledi Sayardaw, who had composed over 60 treatises.

Pretended mind,
Boast is high up to the sky.
Compose just to believe!
Hyperbole over-exceeds.
Dirt in the interior,
Only in the outside is clear.
Avoid challenges from behind.
Pretenders depict only one side.
Sweet as the wording tasteful,
As if the flavor of honey juice.
Temperament is bitter like Neem.
If chances are in favor,
Excessively one will savor.
Little frightened of nether worlds,
In life circle doomed to failure,
Assuming the Present as Nivarna
As per usual, saying impermanence.

Such villains who cheated and exploited people with sweet lies, as if slicing meat thinly with a sharp knife have come to a close desperately. Last but not least, I would like our literary fellows to exert our concerted effort in developing Myanmar literature for the sake of our younger generation.

Translated by Khin Maung Oo (Tada-U)

Reference:
Kyemon Daily issued on
11th December 2016
Sandawchein daily issue
on 11th December 2016
Mandalay & literary
journey, Myanmar literature
and periodicals association

Export mushrooms fall short of standard quality

MUSHROOMS mostly cultivated in Yangon are difficult to export due to their poor quality said U Tin Aung, Secretary of Myanmar Mushroom Cultivators and Distributors Association.

Most of the exported mushrooms are mostly cultivated in Taikkyi, Hmawbi, Thongwa and Kayan townships in Yangon Region and Latbatan Township in Bago Region. Mushroom cultivators need training to upgrade their knowledge and the technology to be able to produce mushrooms of better quality. The mushroom cultivators currently have to rely on the domestic market. The cultivation of the seeds of poor quality and lack of guarantee in the quality of mushrooms are the main drawbacks in penetrating the export market.

The prices of Kanas, mushrooms cultivated in hays are Ks 10,000 per viss. Needle Mushrooms, Enokitake are also grown more as it can be sold at a good price.—200

New transformers for increased electricity demand

AROUND 100 new 200k VA transformers will be installed in Yangon to deal with the shortage of electricity.

Consumption of electricity in Yangon Region increased up to 1,253 MW in April, 2017, an increase of 100MW of electricity consumption compared with last year. More new 100 transformers of 200k VA are preparing to be constructed in Yangon due to the high electricity consumption of its populaces.

“New transformers will be installed in the needed townships. Yangon populaces will be able to consume full supply of electricity after the installation of the new transformers”, said an official of Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation (YESC).

New transformers will be installed mainly in the wards of Yangon that consume more power supply than the other townships.—200

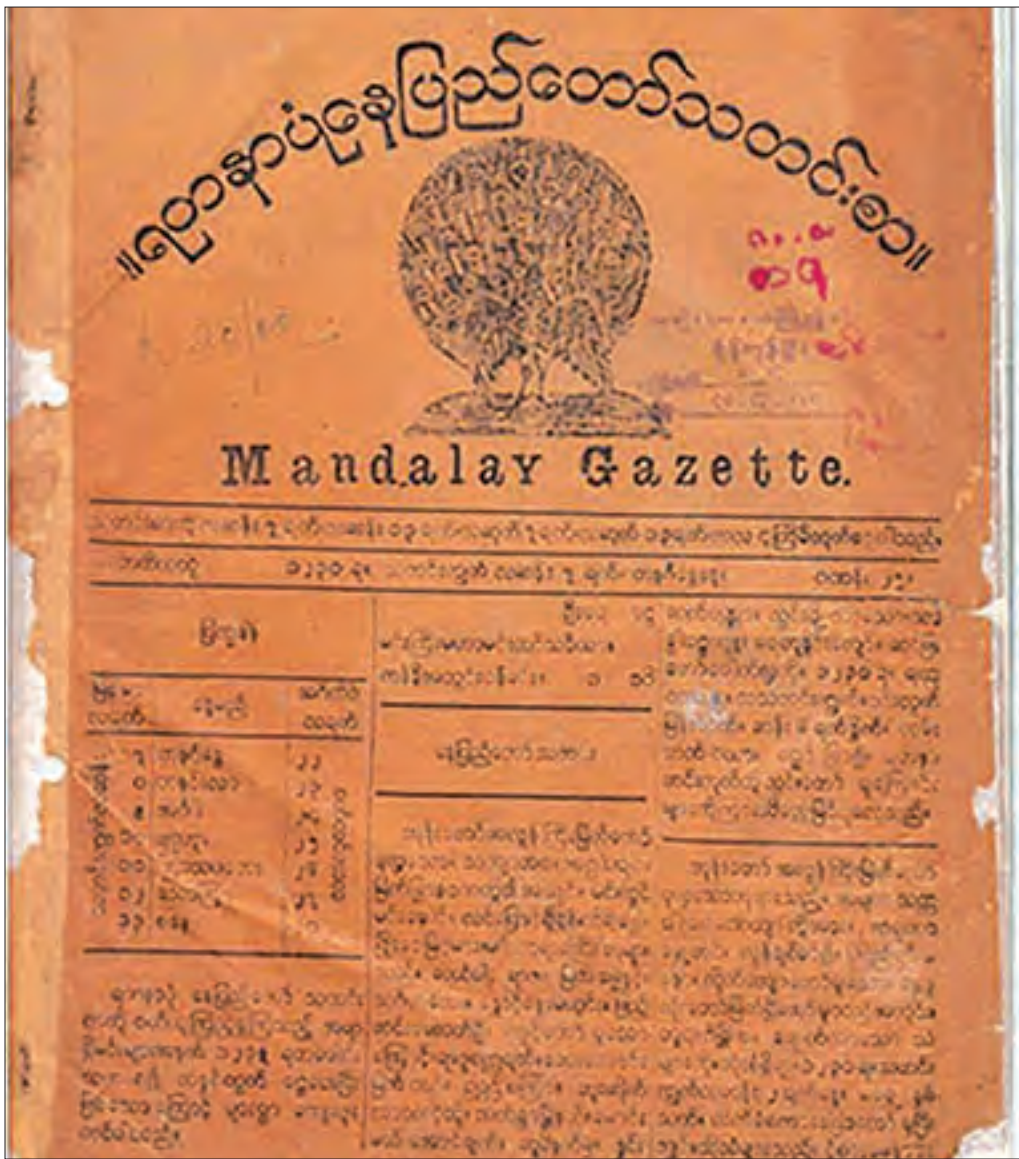
Water Taxi Services to launch in third week of May

WATER Taxi services will be launched in Yangon in the third week of May and every passenger will be charged Ks 300 per route, according to an official of Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA).

Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) plans to run Express Water Taxi with the fare of Ks 300 for the whole route with the view of reducing traffic jams in Yangon. This planning started from November, 2016.

Arrangements to sell tickets are being prepared for the Express Water Taxi to start as early as possible.

Water Taxi will stop at 11 places which will be near bus stops so that passengers can change from water way to road way comfortably.—200



Trump administration to brief full US Congress on North Korea policy

WASHINGTON — Traction so far: a clear strategy for dealing with a major national security threat.

As a standoff escalated over the reclusive Asian nation's development of nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles, President Donald Trump invited all 100 members of the Senate to attend the session with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of Defence Jim Mattis, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and Marine General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

While administration officials typically travel to the Capitol building to brief lawmakers on national security issues, on Wednesday the entire Senate will hop on a bus to the White House where four top officials will meet with them simultaneously. The same four officials will then go to Capitol Hill to brief the entire House at 5 pm EDT (2100 GMT), a senior House aide said.

"I hope and expect that it is worth the time of the trip and that we'll hear things we don't know, and that we'll come out of it better informed. We'll see," said Senator Chris Coons, a Democratic member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The meeting was set for one day after a North Korean holiday on Tuesday marking the 85th anniversary of the founding of its army. While North Korea has in the past staged nuclear or missile tests to mark the day, this year it conducted a major live-fire exercise.



White House spokesman Sean Spicer. PHOTO: REUTERS

It also comes as Trump tries to put the best face on his first 100 days in office, a period in which the president signed a variety of executive orders to roll back Democratic policies but has been defined by an absence of any major legislative achievements.

Lawmakers, including some of Trump's fellow Republicans, also have said the early months of his presidency have been marked by a lack of communication with Congress, partly because the administration has been slow to fill key posts and partly because Trump has been slow to develop policy positions.

Although the White House has downplayed the importance of Saturday's 100-day anniversary, Trump will mark the day with a rally in Pennsylvania.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said Tillerson and the other offi-

cials would talk about the US posture and activities, and that Dunford "will lay out some of the military actions" and the Pentagon's view of the situation.

Trump has discussed North Korea with UN ambassadors, increased the US military presence in the region, and leaned on China to pressure Pyongyang. Tillerson also will chair a UN Security Council meeting on Friday to discuss tougher sanctions, possibly including an oil embargo and punishing Chinese companies that do business with North Korea.

North Korea denounced the US actions.

"There is a saying that those who are fond of playing with fire are destined to perish in the flames.

The same can be said of the US," a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said in the statement.

Members of the Sen-

ate said they hoped the administration would seek to deal with Pyongyang through diplomacy, rather than the use of force.

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham said that if Trump has "red line" on North Korea, he needs to make that clear.

"North Korea will never stop their ambitions to deliver a nuclear weapon to America until the cost of doing so is greater than the benefit.

And if China and North Korea both believe that President Trump will never allow that to happen, then you have a chance to peacefully solve this," he said.

Graham and fellow Republican Senator John McCain, both defense hawks who have been Trump critics, discussed North Korea with Trump at dinner at the White House on Monday night and said they were impressed with his resolve.—Reuters

Russia says US missile strike on Syria was a threat to its forces

MOSCOW — Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu complained on Wednesday that a US missile strike on a Syrian air base earlier this month had posed a threat to Russian troops and was forcing Moscow to take extra measures to protect them.

Speaking at a security conference in Moscow, Shoigu restated Russia's view that the strike — which Washington con-

ducted in response to what it said was a deadly chemical weapons attack by Syrian government forces — was "a crude violation of international law."

US officials said at the time that they had informed Russian forces ahead of the strikes. No Russian personnel were injured in the attack.

As well as housing Syrian military jets, satellite imagery suggested that

the base which was struck was home to Russian special forces and military helicopters, part of the Kremlin's effort to help the Syrian government fight Islamic State and other militant groups.

"Washington's action created a threat to the lives of our servicemen who are fighting against terrorism in Syria," said Shoigu.

"Such steps are forc-

ing us to take extra measures to ensure the safety of Russian forces." He did not specify what those measures were.

The Russian Defence Ministry said after the US strike that Syrian air defences would be beefed up, while Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev complained that the attack was just one step away from clashing with the Russian military.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vucic: Talk of Greater Albania a co-ordinated action

LESKOVAC — Commenting on statements about a Greater Albania, Serbian PM Aleksandar Vucic said on Tuesday they were a well-coordinated action by Albanian politicians in Albania, the territory of Kosovo-Metohija and the Presevo valley.

This raises a few questions: are Albanians doing this on their own or in coordination with someone else — perhaps someone on another continent — why now, and what are their real intentions, he said.—Tanjung

France's Hollande tells ministers to ensure big election defeat for Le Pen

PARIS — French President Francois Hollande told government ministers on Wednesday to do all they can to ensure the biggest defeat possible for far right leader Marine Le Pen in the 7 May vote for the presidency against Emmanuel Macron, his spokesman said.

Hollande has asked ministers "to fully commit themselves in the election campaign to ensure that Marine Le Pen has the lowest possible score," the spokesman, Stephane Le Foll, said.

Hollande, who has urged people to vote for Macron, asked each minister to be "totally mobilised in this campaign," Le Foll added.—Reuters

Bulgaria opts for Swedish Gripen combat jets

SOFIA — Bulgaria has decided to start talks with Sweden to acquire eight new Gripen combat jets made by SAAB, interim deputy prime minister Stefan Yanev said on Wednesday.

The Balkan country has picked the Swedish offer ahead of offers to buy secondhand US F-16s from Portugal, equipped with US weaponry, and secondhand Eurofighter Typhoon fighters from Italy.

A deal is estimated to be worth about 1.5 billion levs (\$836 million).

A special commission for the negotiations is expected to be set up within a week, Yanev said. The talks with Sweden will be held by Bulgaria's next government, which is expected to take office next week.—Reuters

British PM May's Conservatives up 6 pct points on 49 pct, matching Thatcher's 1983 lead — Ipsos MORI

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party has increased its lead over the opposition Labour Party and now has 49 per cent support ahead of a 8 June election, a lead equivalent to that held by Margaret Thatcher in 1983, Ipsos MORI said.

The telephone poll of 1,004 adults conducted from 21-25 April put May's party up 6 percentage points on 49 per cent, Labour down 4 percentage points on 26, the Liberal Democrats unchanged on 13 per cent and the United Kingdom Independence Party down 2 percentage points on 4 per cent.

Gideon Skinner, head of political research at Ipsos MORI, said May's lead matched the biggest lead ever recorded for the Conservatives in an election campaign back in 1983. In that election, Thatcher won a majority of 144 seats.—Reuters

Sarkozy says will vote for Macron in French election

PARIS — French conservative former president Nicolas Sarkozy said on Wednesday he would vote for centrist presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron.

Sarkozy said in a message on social networks he was doing so because the alternative in the 7 May runoff was Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Front, and that his vote for Macron was not an endorsement of the centrist contender's programme.—Reuters

Erdogan says Turkey could reconsider its position on Europe

ANKARA — President Tayyip Erdogan told Reuters on Tuesday that Turkey would reconsider its position on joining the European Union if it was kept waiting much longer and if the current hostile mentality of some member states persists.

Erdogan said a decision on Tuesday by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), a leading human rights body, to put Turkey on a watch list was “entirely political” and Ankara did not recognise the move.

He said he was ready to take the question of EU accession to a referendum and that Turkey could not wait indefinitely after 54 years at the door.

“In Europe, things have become very serious in terms of the extent of Islamophobia. The EU is closing its doors on Turkey and Turkey is not closing its doors on anybody,” Erdogan said in an interview at the presidential palace in Ankara.

“If they are not acting sincerely we have to find a way out. Why should we wait any longer? We are talking about 54 years,” he said.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan attends an interview with Reuters at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey on 25 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

“The UK asked her people and they voted for Brexit ... They have peace of mind, they are walking towards a new future, and the same thing was conduct-

ed by Norway ... and the same thing can be applied for Turkey too.”

It is a critical week for Turkish-EU relations. EU lawmakers

will debate ties on Wednesday, while the bloc’s foreign ministers will discuss the issue on Friday and EU leaders are expected to exchange views at a meeting on

Brexit on Saturday.

Erdogan said he would be closely watching.

“I am very curious as to how the EU is going to act vis-a-vis this last (PACE) resolution,” he said, criticising EU member states that have called for an end to accession talks.

He said Turkey was still committed to negotiations.

“There is not a single thing that we are not ready to do, the minute they ask for it. Whatever they wish, we do. But still they are keeping us at the door,” he said. Erdogan pointed to the French presidential election, in which far-right leader Marine Le Pen has threatened to take France out of the European Union, and said the bloc was “on the verge of dissolution, of breaking up.”

“One or two countries cannot keep the EU alive. You need a country like Turkey, a different country symbolising a different faith, this would make them very strong,” he said.

“But the EU member states don’t seem to realise this fact. They are finding it very difficult to absorb a Muslim country like Turkey.” —Reuters

Israel grants work visa to Human Rights Watch official after initial denial

JERUSALEM — Israel gave a one-year work visa to a Human Rights Watch researcher on Wednesday after initially denying him a permit and accusing the organisation of engaging in “Palestinian propaganda”, the group said.

The decision in February to deny Omar Shakir a work permit was criticised by the United States.

Shakir, a US citizen, received the visa on arrival at Tel Aviv’s Ben-Gurion airport and he will take up his position as the New York-based rights group’s Israel and Palestine director.

“We welcome this opportunity to work in Israel and Palestine alongside vigorous national human rights organisations,” Iain Levine, executive deputy director for pro-

gram at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement on the group’s website.

“Israeli authorities do not always agree with our findings, but, in facilitating the ability of our staff to carry out our research and documentation, they have taken an important step to safeguard the principle of transparency and demonstrate their openness to criticism.”

Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon said in February that the decision to deny Shakir a work permit stemmed from HRW’s work “at the service of Palestinian propaganda”.

But he also said the application may be reconsidered if an appeal was lodged, and Shakir was

allowed to enter Israel on a tourist visa on 6 March for a 10-day stay. Final approval for a one-year permit was given on 20 April, HRW said.

The US State Department said after Shakir was banned that it strongly disagreed with Israel’s characterisation of the group, which it considers a credible human rights organisation.

In its statement, HRW said it has had regular access to Israel and the occupied West Bank for nearly three decades, with staff and offices in Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Gaza for much of this period. It said that since 2008, Israel has refused it access to Gaza, which is run by Hamas Islamists, except for one visit in 2016.—Reuters

Islamic State developing new weapons despite losses —arms monitor

ERBIL — Islamic State militants have developed an improvised explosive device (IED) that can be launched from rifles or dropped from an aerial drone, an arms monitoring group said on Wednesday.

Conflict Armament Research (CAR) said the Sunni militant group was “promoting the development of ‘own-brand’ weapons” to provide its insurgents with otherwise unavailable armaments.

“The (IED) can be thrown, launched from an improvised rifle attachment, or in its most recent phases of development, dropped from a commercial, off-the-shelf unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or drone,” CAR said in a report following visits to Mosul in November, February and March.

Iraqi military and elite counter-terrorism forces launched a sweeping, US-backed offensive in October to retake the city, Islamic State’s last major urban stronghold in Iraq seized in a lightning offensive in 2014.

They have retaken most of Mosul, including its half east of the Tigris River, and surrounded the militants in its northwest quarter including the

Old City, home to the Grand al-Nuri mosque where IS declared a “caliphate” over parts of Iraq and Syria.

CAR, which identifies and tracks arms and ammunition in war zones, reported in December that IS had been making weapons on a scale and sophistication matching national military forces and that it had standardised production across its realm.

The monitor’s findings suggested IS was centrally managing the design and production of improvised weapons with the ability to test its systems on the field and refine them as well as use new technologies such as drones.

The report said Islamic State was using the battle for Mosul to field-test different types of ordnance, an important step in any weapons research and development programme.

“Evidence of research and development by IS forces, compiled by CAR since 2014, suggests that such adaptations are likely to continue and will result in further UAV innovations in the near future, potentially for use in theatres other than Iraq.” —Reuters

South African court rules nuclear plan unlawful, must be set aside

CAPE TOWN — South Africa’s controversial push to build a fleet of new nuclear plants suffered a setback on Wednesday after the High Court set aside the procurement process and a pre-agreement with Russia.

South Africa, which has the continent’s only nuclear power station, has asked power utility Eskom to procure an additional 9,600 megawatts (MW) of new capacity as it diversifies its energy mix away from ageing coal-fired plants.

The expansion plan is opposed by environmental and clean-ener-

gy groups, while some economists have said the country’s ailing economy cannot afford to build new nuclear plants whose costs are estimated around 1 trillion rand (\$76 billion).

Judge Lee Bozalek said any request for proposal or request for information to kickstart the procurement process was set aside as well as a deal to cooperate with Russia on the plan.

“The minister’s decision on or about 10 June 2015 to table the Russian IGA before parliament... is unconstitutional and unlawful

and it is reviewed and set aside,” he said.

In late 2014, then energy minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson signed an Intergovernmental Agreement, with Russia state nuclear company Rosatom, saying the countries would cooperate in reactors with total installed capacity of up to 9,600 MW.

It was not immediately clear whether the government would appeal the ruling.

Both Eskom and the Department of Energy declined to comment on the ruling.—Reuters



Russian Pantsyr-S1 air defence weapon system and the S-400 long-range air defence missile systems deployed at Hmeymim air base in Syria. Photo: TASS

Putin points out Russian weapons' top performance in Syria helped boost exports

RYBINSK — Russia's weapons export contracts have been growing largely on the effective use of military hardware in the anti-terrorist operation in Syria, President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting of the military-industrial commission on Tuesday.

Interest towards Russia's weapons has been growing around the world, which is seen in the volume of contracts, he stated.

"This is largely a result of the more effective use of our weapons in real combat conditions, including the anti-terrorist operation in Syria," Putin said. "This opportunity for gaining a firmer foothold on the world market of armaments should not be missed."

"As for the production of various kinds of weapons, our defence companies are almost completely loaded with orders from

the Defence Ministry so they have been facing difficulties in fulfilling orders related to military cooperation with other countries," Putin said. "I would like additional measures to be taken to ensure general-purpose weapons export," he added.

According to Putin, if today Russia rejects foreign orders, it may lose prospective partners, as well as its place on the market.

The Russian president also said that the government needed to coordinate the work of the Defence Ministry, the Federal Service for Military and Technical Cooperation and defence companies, so that they could fulfill defence procurement orders on time. Army requires new types of armaments and reconnaissance.

The modern army requires new types of armaments and re-

connaissance systems, Putin said. He suggested discussing on Tuesday a number of major issues, including those that concern the creation of new armaments and military hardware, "first of all for general purpose forces, and for reconnaissance and information support systems". "Recent events have once again demonstrated that these armaments are much-in-demand in the modern army," Putin said. He also asked representatives of the military-industrial complex to report how they comply with the requirements set by the Defence Ministry to these and other new generation armaments, what tasks have been set to design bureaus and defence enterprises, and "what will be the time framework for their implementation and how much this will cost the budget". —Tass

Death toll in Venezuela's unrest rises to 26

CARACAS — Two Venezuelan men died on Tuesday from gunshots at political demonstrations, bringing to 26 the number of fatalities around this month's protests against President Nicolas Maduro's socialist government.

The state prosecutor's office said Orlando Medina, 23, was gunned down on a street in western Lara state during a protest local media identified as anti-Maduro.

Luis Marquez, 52, died in the Andean state of Merida in the early morning after being shot on Monday at a pro-Maduro rally, state ombudsman Tarek Saab said. In more than three weeks of chaos since Venezuela's opposition launched street protests, 15 people have died in violence around demonstrations and 11 others in night-time lootings, the state prosecutor's office said on Tuesday.

Political activists and Venezuelan media have reported more deaths, but those have not been confirmed. The ruling Socialist Party accuses foes of seeking a violent coup with US connivance, while the opposition says Maduro is a dictator repressing peaceful protest. With near-daily demonstrations by both opponents and supporters of Maduro, there have been fatalities on both sides, as well as one National Guard sergeant killed during a protest.

"Any death hurts, government or opposition," chief state prosecutor Luisa Ortega said in a speech. Four fatalities were ado-

lescents and 437 people had also been injured.

The opposition's main demands are for elections, the release of jailed activists and autonomy for the opposition-led legislature. But protests are also fueled by a crippling economic crisis in the oil-exporting nation of some 30 million people.

The unrest is Venezuela's worst since 2014, when 43 people died in months of mayhem sparked by protests against Maduro, the 54-year-old successor to late leader Hugo Chavez.

Nearly 1,500 people have been arrested, with 801 still detained as of Tuesday, rights group Penal Forum said. Trying to keep the pressure on Maduro, the opposition Democratic Unity coalition is planning a march on Wednesday toward downtown Caracas. Past attempts to reach that area have been blocked by security forces using teargas and rubber bullets against masked youths hurling stones and Molotov cocktails. "The Venezuelan people will stay in the street until there is an election timetable, a humanitarian aid channel, freedom for political prisoners and independence for public institutions, especially the National Assembly," said Ismael Garcia, a legislator with opposition party Justice First. Thousands of red-shirted Maduro supporters marched in the state of Falcon on Tuesday, chanting pro-government slogans and denouncing the opposition for violence.—Reuters

Crabs invade Cuba's Bay of Pigs

BAY OF PIGS, Cuba — Cuba's Bay of Pigs has been invaded again, this time not by US-backed anti-Castro forces, but by millions of red, yellow and black landcrabs.

Each year, after the first spring rains, the crabs march for days from the surrounding forests to the bay on Cuba's southern coast to spawn in the sea, wreaking havoc along the way.

At dawn and dusk they emerge, scuttling sideways toward the sea, climbing up house walls and carpeting the coastal road that curves around the bay. The stench of crushed crab fills the air and their sharp shells puncture car tires.

"Thirty to 40 can enter without you even realizing it," said Edian Villazon, who runs a food hut opposite the sea, which does not serve up crab meat. Cubans believe this type is toxic. "We have to always keep the door shut."

The Bay of Pigs, where in 1961 Cuban exiles landed in a

failed attempt to end Fidel Castro's revolution, lies within a national park where 80 per cent of Cuba's endemic birds, along with crocodiles and other wildlife, can be observed.

With its deep sinkholes, coral reefs and turquoise waters, the bay is known as one of Cuba's best spots for diving. Visitors have spiked in recent years, in tandem with the overall tourism boom since the US-Cuban detente.

"It's very surprising and impressive to see so many crabs in one go and to watch them crossing so quickly," said 36-year-old French tourist Emilie Lannegrand, adding it was "a little heartbreaking" to see so many crushed on the road.

As cars speed by, some swerving to avoid the 10-legged crustaceans, the cracks of carapaces zing through the air.

That does not threaten the survival of the two prolific species, *Gecarcinus ruricola* and *lateralis*,



Crabs coming from the surrounding forests gather near the sea to spawn in Playa Giron, Cuba, on 21 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

which are not endemic to Cuba, said Jorge Luis Jimenez, a science ministry official who works in the park.

Similar crab migrations occur in other parts of Cuba at the same time of the year, as well as in some other special ecosystems such as Australia's Christmas Island.

At the Bay of Pigs, the adult

crabs return to their forest burrows after releasing clouds of eggs and are joined a couple of months later by the baby crabs which hatched at sea, said Jimenez.

For locals, the crab invasion is good business.

Ito Molina, 45, said tourists would happily pay \$10 for tire repair, a princely sum compared

with the average state salary of around \$25 per month.

For patches, he applies condoms, which get put to many uses in Cuba given how cheap and readily available they are.

"All the cars pass along this road, and they all get punctures," he said. "So we stand there and repair the tires."—Reuters

US military begins moving THAAD missile defence to South Korea site — media

SEOUL — The US military has started moving parts of the controversial THAAD anti-missile defence system into a planned deployment site in South Korea, Yonhap news agency reported on Wednesday, amid high tensions over North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes.

The United States and South Korea have agreed to deploy THAAD in response to the threat of missile launches by North Korea but China says it will do little to deter the North while destabilizing the regional security balance.

Trailer trucks carrying parts of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system entered the site on what had been a golf course in the county of Seongju in a southern region of South Korea, Yonhap news agency and YTN

television reported.

South Korean defence ministry officials and US military officials could not immediately be reached for confirmation.

The United States began moving the first elements of the advanced missile defence system into South Korea in early March after the North test-launched four ballistic missiles.

But the US and South Korean militaries have been reluctant to publicly discuss the progress of the deployment as candidates in a 9 May presidential election debated whether the move should go ahead or be delayed until after the vote.

South Korea has said China has discriminated against some South Korean companies in retaliation against the deployment. —Reuters



A US military vehicle which is a part of Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system arrives in Seongju, South Korea on 26 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Eighth time lucky: NASA launches super balloon to collect near space data

WELLINGTON — A stadium-sized pressure balloon launched by NASA in New Zealand began collecting data in near space on Wednesday, beginning a 100-day planned journey after several launch attempts were thwarted by storms and cyclones.

The balloon, designed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to detect ultra-high energy cosmic particles from beyond the galaxy as they penetrate the earth's atmosphere, is expected to circle the planet two or three times.

"The origin of these particles is a great mystery that we'd like to solve. Do they come from massive black holes at the centre of

galaxies? Tiny, fast-spinning stars? Or somewhere else?"

Angela Olinto, a University of Chicago professor and lead investigator on the project, said in a statement.

The balloon's monitoring was only the start of a long quest which would next involve a space mission currently being designed by NASA, she added.

The balloon, launched on Tuesday in Wanaka, a scenic spot on New Zealand's South Island, will collect data from 34 km (21.1 miles) above the earth.

New Zealand was also the base for NASA's scientific balloon program in 2015 and 2016. —Reuters



NASA's Super Pressure Balloon stands fully inflated and ready for lift-off from Wanaka Airport, New Zealand before it took flight at 10:50 am local time on 25 April, 2017 (1850 EDT on 24 April, 2017). PHOTO: REUTERS

Former Trump adviser Flynn likely broke law with Russia trip — lawmakers

WASHINGTON — Former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn likely broke the law by failing to get permission to be paid for a trip to Russia in 2015, the leaders of a House of Representatives committee said on Tuesday.

During the visit, Flynn, a retired lieutenant general who advised Donald Trump's presidential campaign, dined with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"General Flynn had a duty and an obligation to

seek and obtain permission to receive money from foreign governments," Jason Chaffetz, the Republican chairman of the House Oversight Committee, told reporters. "It does not appear to us that that was ever sought, nor did he ever get that permission."

The oversight panel is looking into whether Flynn fully disclosed payments from Russian, Turkish or other foreign sources.

"As a former military officer, you simply cannot take money from Russia, Turkey or anybody else.

And it appears as if he did take that money. It was inappropriate and there are repercussions for the violation of law," Chaffetz said.

Flynn was forced to resign on 13 February for failing to disclose talks with Sergei Kislyak, the Russian ambassador to the United States, about US sanctions on Moscow and misleading Vice President Mike Pence about the conversations, which occurred in December before Trump took office.

He is a subject in investigations by intelli-

gence committees in the House and Senate, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, into allegations Russia meddled in the 2016 US election. Russia has denied the allegations, which have cast a shadow over the first 100 days of Trump's presidency.

Representative Elijah Cummings, the top Democrat on the oversight panel, said it also appeared as if Flynn had not fully disclosed the payments after the fact as required, saying a failure to do so would be a felony.—Reuters

Macron's campaign team confirms cyberattacks, says no data stolen

PARIS — French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron's campaign team on Wednesday confirmed it had been the target of at least five advanced cyberattack operations since

January, which it said had failed to compromise any campaign data.

"Emmanuel Macron is the only candidate in the French presidential campaign to be targeted," Ma-

cron's "En Marche!" party said in a statement. "It's no coincidence if Emmanuel Macron, the last remaining progressive candidate in this election is the priority target." Macron's cam-

paign cited as evidence the results of a study by security firm Trend Micro, which said it had found proof that the spy group, dubbed "Pawn Storm", had target its campaign.—Reuters

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV ARCA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ARCA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.4.2017 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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.4.2017 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.

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Family ties test the unconventional 'Guardians of the Galaxy'

LOS ANGELES — After causing havoc in the universe and saving it from destruction, Marvel's "Guardians of the Galaxy" are back in a new adventure that takes the unconventional group of friends on a quest to discover their family ties.

"Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2," which begins its international rollout on Tuesday, sees roguish thief Peter Quill, green-skinned warrior Gamora, the muscle-bound Drax, mischievous Rocket Raccoon and baby tree-alien Groot split up after being pursued by a gold-skinned villain named Ayesha.

The plot centres on Peter's long-awaited reunion with his father, an ancient god called Ego (Kurt Russell), who is the life force of a planet, and his tense relationship with his adopted father figure, the fin-headed Yondu (Michael Rooker).

"The most compelling way to find out something about a person you're interested in is to explore their relationships," Chris Pratt, who plays Peter, told Reuters.

"I can't think of too many movies or stories on the screen that have honoured that type of

relationship, so it's really kind of cool if you like a contemporary family story."

"Guardians Vol 2," once again written and directed by James Gunn, comes after the surprise blockbuster success of 2014's "Guardians of the Galaxy," which ushered in a new cadre of unlikely heroes into Disney-owned Marvel's expanding film franchise.

Following the catastrophic events of the first film in which Groot sacrifices himself to save the Guardians, the sequel sees the powerful tree alien as a baby sapling, changing the dynamic between the five heroes.

Baby Groot offers up comedic relief during high-stakes scenes, such as a battle with a giant monster in which the tree sapling dances his way through the chaos and delivers tiny roars.

"Having a child in the group just leads to a even bigger sense of a family," said Dave Bautista, who plays Drax.

After spending much of the first film trying to kill each other, warring sisters Gamora (Zoe Saldana) and Nebula (Karen Gillan) find themselves in close quarters in "Guardians Vol 2" and faced with



Cast members (L-R) Dave Bautista, Zoe Saldana, Pom Klementieff, Chris Pratt, Kurt Russell, Karen Gillan, director James Gunn and Michael Rooker pose as they attend a premiere of the film "Guardians of the galaxy, Vol 2" in London, Britain on 24 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

their underlying hatred towards their adopted father Thanos.

"They went through something very traumatic and they dealt with it in different ways,"

Saldana said.

Gillan added that the "angry, bitter and twisted" Nebula is more sympathetic in the sequel.

"We start to see the cracks in

her exterior and we learn about her bad relationship with her father and her sister and all the layers are chipped away," she said. —Reuters

Actress Zoe Saldana welcomes 'Avatar' sequel filming announcement

LONDON — Actress Zoe Saldana is happy release dates for the long-anticipated sequels to 2009 box office smash hit "Avatar" have been announced, joking she does not want to get "too old" to not be able to do her own stunts in the adventure fantasy.

At the weekend, the official "Avatar" Facebook page posted a photo of director James Cameron with a production team beneath a caption reading: "Great to be working with the best team in the business! Avatar takes flight as

we begin concurrent production on four sequels.

"The journey continues on 18 December, 2020, 17 December, 2021, 20 December, 2024 and 19 December, 2025!"

Speaking to Reuters at the London premiere of "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2" on Monday night, Saldana welcomed the announcement.

"I'm happy that it's finally here because...I don't want to get too old

and shoot it because I won't be able to do my stunts," the 38-year-old actress, who played Neytiri, said. "If I haven't warmed up, I can't do a stunt to save my life."

Set in 2154 on the magical moon Pandora and offering plenty of visual effects, "Avatar", which also starred Sam Worthington and Sigourney Weaver, took in some \$2.8 billion at box offices worldwide, smashing records.

A sequel had been first eyed for 2014 but was delayed. —Reuters



Actor Zoe Saldana attends a premiere of the film "Guardians of the galaxy, Vol 2" in London 24 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Star Wars: Episode IX' gets May 2019 release date: Disney



Characters of Star Wars take part in an event held for the release of the film 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' in Disneyland Paris in Marne-la-Vallée, France on 17 December, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — The final film in the new "Star Wars" trilogy, "Star Wars: Episode IX," will be released in May 2019, movie studio Walt Disney Co said on Tuesday.

The 24 May release date marked a shift in strategy for Disney, whose two previous new entries in the sci-fi adventure have all been set for release in mid-December, during the winter holidays.

Disney gave no details on "Star Wars: Episode IX," about which little is known except that it will be directed by Colin Trevorrow.

"Episode IX" completes the trilogy that began after Disney

bought George Lucas's Lucasfilm in a \$4 billion deal in 2012. "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," which reunited the original cast of the first 1977 film, was released in December 2015, and "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" is due to open worldwide on 15 December, 2017.

Disney on Tuesday also announced that another of its blockbuster franchise revivals, a new Indiana Jones movie starring Harrison Ford, had been pushed back by a year to July 2020. The studio gave no explanation for the change in the release date for the as-yet untitled film that had been originally scheduled for July 2019. —Reuters

Madrid show highlights Picasso's Guernica as abiding symbol of war

MADRID — Eighty years after the bloody air raid on the Spanish town of Guernica that drove Pablo Picasso to paint a masterpiece, a new exhibition in Madrid highlights the enduring relevance of his depiction.

Adolf Hitler sent aircraft in support of Francisco Franco's nationalist forces to strike the Basque town on the afternoon of 26 April, 1937, killing as many as 1,600 and wounding hundreds.

The show at the Reina Sofia museum, the painting's home since 1992, includes newspaper photographs of the destruction which the Spanish artist saw at home in Paris, and drew on in the black-and-white oil painting.

More than 7.5 metres long and 3.5 metres high, "Guernica" was commissioned for the Spanish pavilion at Paris's World Fair in



(L-R) George Steer, son of journalist George Steer and historians Angel Vinas, Paul Preston and Xabier Irujo talk on the eve of the 80th anniversary of the aerial bombing of the town by Germany's Condor Legion during the Spanish Civil War, on a hill overlooking the Basque town of Guernica, Spain on 25 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

1937.

Rosario Peiro, Head of Collections at the Reina Sofia, said that while re-

searching she had seen a photograph of an image of "Guernica" on display in the Syrian town of Aleppo.

"It addresses a system of destruction and terror which sadly is very much a part of our lives," Peiro

told Reuters. "It is so hard to fathom, you never really stop thinking about it."

Versions of the image have been produced at times of conflict in places from Afghanistan to South Carolina, exhibition curator Timothy James Clark said.

"Picasso's painting seems to live on, indispensably, as a protest against the lie of collateral damage," Clark said. "It speaks to the horror of death from the air ... the lived reality of terror bombing."

A debate is scheduled on 27 April in the autonomous Basque parliament over a proposal by separatist party EH Bildu to bring the work to Gernika, as the town's name in the Basque language.

"At a time when it is essential to build a historical memory that recognizes all

suffering, the power of this painting and the extent to which it condemns will be multiplied if it is in the town of Gernika on the eightieth anniversary," EH Bildu wrote in a parliamentary motion.

The Reina Sofia and Spain's culture minister have so far resisted such requests.

A museum spokesman said the painting needed particular care after having been rolled up 88 times to be shown in more than 30 cities, and was a cornerstone of the museum's collection.

It might not be moved again. "Just as in many other museums in the world, some works do not get lent," the spokesman said.

The exhibition — "Pity and Terror: Picasso's Path to Guernica" — runs until 4 September. —Reuters

Treasures from Paris's Louvre museum go on display in Hong Kong

HONG KONG — A selection of artwork from Paris' world-renowned Louvre museum goes on display in Hong Kong on Wednesday, offering Chinese patrons a rare opportunity to view

some of the institution's cultural treasures on their doorstep. The "Inventing le Louvre: From Palace to Museum over 800 Years" exhibition at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum features

some 130 works, including paintings, sculptures, ceramics and tapestries from various periods spanning centuries. It features a statue of French writer Jean de La Fontaine and a fragment of

a horse head dating from before 500 BC.

The exhibition is being held to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Hong Kong's Special Administrative Region (SAR) government after the territory was handed back to China in 1997 following over 150 years of British rule.

It also underscores the importance of Chinese visitors to the Paris museum, according to Pascal Torres, Chief Curator of the Louvre's department of interpretation and cultural programming. "The most important visitors of (any) foreign country are Chinese," he told Reuters. "So it was necessary for us to permit to some good part of the Chinese public, who will not travel very easily to France or to Paris, to know a little about the Louvre Museum."

"Inventing the Louvre" runs until 24 July. —Reuters

Pure gold replica of Darth Vader mask to be put on sale in Tokyo

TOKYO — A Tokyo jeweler said on Tuesday it will put on sale a pure gold replica of the facial mask worn by Darth Vader, a character in the Star Wars film series, for 154 million yen (\$1.4 million).

The life-size mask, weighing around 15 kilograms, will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the release of "Star Wars," the first film in the sci-fi franchise.

Tanaka Kikinzoku Jewelry KK said the mask, 30 centimetres in height and 26.5 cm in width, will be put on sale on 4 May, the date fans celebrate the series due to its iconic line, "May the Force be with

you." It will be displayed at the company's head office in the upscale Ginza shopping district beginning on Wednesday.

The jeweler will also offer a commemorative plaque featuring three small oval coins made of pure gold and a replica Star Wars poster from the film's release 40 years ago.

The plaque's suggested sale price is 1.22 million yen (\$11,000). The coins bear designs associated with the film series and the number "1977525," indicating on 25 May, 1977, the date of the first film's release. Tanaka Kikinzoku will sell only 77 copies of the plaque. —Kyodo News



Tourists stand in front of the Louvre Pyramid designed by Chinese-born US Architect Ieoh Ming Pei in Paris, France on 13 September, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



Supplied photo shows a pure gold replica of the mask and helmet worn by Darth Vader, a character in the Star Wars film series. Tanaka Kikinzoku Jewelry KK, a jeweler in Tokyo, will put on sale the life-size representation for 154 million yen (\$1.4 million) on 4 May, or Star Wars Day, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the release of "Star Wars," the sci-fi franchise's first film. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS



Myanmar International
Programme Schedule

(27-4-2017 07:00am ~ 28-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	History of Wishfulfilling Mai-Lamu Pagoda
07:46	Am	Rakhine Traditional Wedding Ceremony
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	Aesthetic Chinlone
08:53	Am	Guiding Star of Song Birds
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Products of Myanmar — Shin Ma Taung Thanakhar
09:42	Am	The Hills of Phowintaung And Shwebataung
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Historic Temples of Massiveness And Unique Structure

10:42 Am Ngapali, Unique Spot To Relax

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Visit to Htam Hsan Cave A Miraculous Place
07:52	Pm	Human Right Human Dignity International Film Festival (2015)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-4) Tumbling Doll, Pyit Tine Htaung
08:38	Pm	Bollywood Actress "Laila Khan" Born & Raised in Myanmar (Part-2)

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

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

Sports&Edu FC beat Gandamar FC 2-0

THE second day of 2016-2017 Women's National League (KBZ Bank Women's League) was held at the Aung San Stadium and Sports&Education FC beat Gandamar FC 2-0.

Sports&Education FC included the elite players and showed better performances than Gandamar FC during the match. Sport & Edu scored a valuable counter-offensive opener by Shwe Moe Aye at 25 min.

Gandamar FC players tried to equalize in the first half but failed to translate their opportunities and chances into action as a result of Gandamar FC's defenders.

In the second half, Sports&Education strikers showed off their brilliant performances. At 85 min, Wai Wai Aung touched the ball straight to



Players from Gandamar FC and Education FC vie for the ball during 2016-2017 Women's National League at Aung San Stadium in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE THAW ZIN

the opponent's goal net and scored the winning goal for Sports&Edu FC.

The third day match be-

tween Zwe Kapin FC and YREO FC will be held today at the same venue.—Kyaw Zin Lin

Dortmund midfielder Sahin signs deal extension to 2019

BERLIN — Borussia Dortmund midfielder Nuri Sahin has signed a contract extension that will keep him with the Bundesliga club until 2019, Dortmund announced on Tuesday.

The Turkey international, who made his Dortmund debut as a 16-year-old and became the league's youngest scorer at 17, joined Dortmund's youth structure as a teenager back in 2001 and helped them to the 2011 Bundesliga title.

He left, having been voted player of the season in

2010-11, and joined Real Madrid but returned a year-and-a-half later after also having a brief spell at Liverpool.

"Everyone knows how I feel in Dortmund, in this club and this stadium with the unusual fans," said Sahin, a crowd favourite who used to be a ball boy at home games when he was young.

Plagued by injuries for much of his career, the highly-skilled 28-year-old suffered a partial ankle ligament tear in their 3-2 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach on Saturday.—Reuters



Dortmund's Nuri Sahin . PHOTO: REUTERS

Sunderland's Moyes charged by FA over 'slap' comment

LONDON — Sunderland manager David Moyes has been charged by the English Football Association for telling a reporter that she "might get a slap even though you're a woman" during an interview after his side's goalless Premier League draw against

Burnley in March.

FA chairman Greg Clarke had criticised Moyes for his comments.

"It is alleged the Sunderland manager's remarks were improper and/or threatening and/or brought the

game into disrepute, contrary to FA Rule," the FA said in a statement on Wednesday.

Former Manchester United manager Moyes, who had apologised for his comments, has until 3 May to reply to the charge.—Reuters

Chelsea's Eden Hazard celebrates scoring their first goal during the match of English Premier League between Chelsea and Southampton at Stamford Bridge on 25 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



Chelsea extend Premier League lead with 4-2 win over Southampton

LONDON — Buoyant Chelsea extended their Premier League lead to seven points on Tuesday, as goals from Eden Hazard, captain Gary Cahill and two from a buzzing Diego Costa earned them a 4-2 win over Southampton.

It took them less than five minutes to open a lead when Costa controlled a pass from Cesc Fabregas, surged forward and cut the

ball back for the advancing Hazard, who angled his shot into the bottom corner of Fraser Forster's net.

Former Chelsea midfielder Oriel Romeu equalised in the 24th minute, forcing home from close range. But Chelsea, boosted by their FA Cup semi-final win over nearest rivals Tottenham Hotspur at the weekend, took the lead again just before halftime when Cahill

headed in from a N'Golo Kante punt into the area.

Costa, who has been misfiring of late, took his chance in the 53rd minute and fired in a header — his 50th Premier League goal — then added a second for good measure in the 89th after a one-two with Hazard.

Southampton scored an injury-time consolation goal through another former Chelsea player Ryan Bertrand.—Reuters

Cavani extends PSG contract until 2020

PARIS — Uruguay striker Edinson Cavani has extended his contract with Paris St Germain by two years until 2020, the French champions said on Tuesday.

Cavani, 30, has scored 125 goals in 192 competitive games for PSG, 20 of them in the Champions League — a club record. "It is with a lot of joy that I extend my commitment to Paris St Germain," said Cavani.

"It has always been clear that my priority was to continue my history with PSG."

PSG are second in the Ligue 1 standings, behind Monaco on goal difference.—Reuters