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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Tikir Dam will irrigate highland farms and produce 50 kilowatts of electricity through a mini-hydroelectric power station. **PHOTO: MNA**

Tikir Dam to bring regional development to Htantalan

VICE President U Henry Van Thio, who was in Chin State to review the progress of regional development works, inspected the Tikir Dam project in Htantalan Township Sunday morning.

He also inspected the inflow of water into the dam and the status of the dam construction from the dam viewpoint.

The Vice President and his delegation were then explained the water storage and electricity generation capacity of the dam, the water distribution network to nearby villages, the setting up of hillside and highland farms, and the regional development works by Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department Director General U Kyaw Myint Hlaing.

The Vice President then spoke about planting Japanese cherry blossoms, and coffee and pine trees to establish a natural environment in the catchment area and basin area of the dam, distribute clean water to Tikir Village and 11 other villages, set up 550 acres of highland farms to replace slash-and-burn hillside farms, distribute water to the highland farms once it is set up and implement a new eco-tourism project.

SEE PAGE-3

Gov't to hold NCA signing ceremony for NMSP, LDU on 13 Feb

THE New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) will sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA in Nay Pyi Taw on 13th February.

The signing becomes the first one of its kind for the ruling NLD government. "The New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union are the first organizations which have taken the path of peace in the time of the NLD government and we also continue our efforts for non-signatories to sign the NCA and to participate in our peace process," said U Kyaw Tint Swe, Deputy Chairman of the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre and Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor in his opening address at a planning meeting yesterday for holding the signing ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw.

The signing ceremony would bring delight to the people, especially the people in Mon State and Lahu people, he said. The two armed groups announced their decision to sign the NCA following their meetings separately with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 23 January.

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Pyithu Hluttaw discusses classification of ethnic nationals

Kyaw Thu Htet,
Hmwe Kyu Zin

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE name Rohingya was never mentioned in any of the census lists, and it is not included among the list of 135 ethnic nationals, said Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe during the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting yesterday.

During the 12th-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday, U Tin Aye of Metmung constituency raised a question on the plan to inform the people of Myanmar, as well as those across the world, of there being no ethnic nationals under the name Rohingya. The Union Minister was responding to his question.

Union Minister U Thein Swe added that according to records, a race census was made by the British government in 1911, 1921 and 1931, prior to independence, and censuses were collected after independence in 1953-1954, 1973 and 1983. According to Part I – Provincial Totals of Races by Religion census report for 1921 and 1931, the name Rohingya was never mentioned.

When the ethnic race list was prepared for census collection after independence in 1973, it was based on the ethnic race list included in the 1931 census, 1953-1954 nationality lists, 1961 suggestions by the historical literature and culture office, operating under the ministry of culture, and suggestions by the Myanmar History Commission and coordination of ethnic national affairs committee of Burma (Myanmar) Socialist Programme Party. The 135 ethnic nationals in that census do not include the name Rohingya, explained the Union Minister.

The word Rohingya was not used in state-owned and private media, and Rohingya not being included in the ethnic national list has been mentioned repeatedly. Myanmar diplomats in the world and United Nations organisations do not recognise the usage of that word, and if others were using it, official objections, protests and indications were made consistently, said the Union Minister.

The government is conducting work for the long-term benefit of the people and towards national interest. In conducting these works, it is not responding to sentimental words but to legal and formal processes in calm, dignified and effective ways.

The race list obtained from the 2014 census will be published only after consultation with ethnic affairs committee members; ethnic national leaders; ethnic national representatives; history, culture and social science experts; relevant departments and organisations, as there are contentious matters in the inclusion of ethnic nationals, sub-tribes of ethnic nationals, spellings, new names and classification of ethnic nationals, said the Union Minister.

Questions raised by U Sai Aung Kyaw of Kehsi constituency, U Naing Naing Win of Tamu constituency and Dr. U San Shwe Win of Yekyi constituency were also answered by U Thein Swe.

A motion urging the government to set up appropriate policies to assist Myanmar nationals who return to Myanmar after facing difficulties abroad for various reasons due to migrant labour laws of the host countries, tabled by U Sai Thiha Kyaw of Mairel constituency, was then discussed by Daw Khin Hnin Thit of Padaung constituency, U Sai Tun Aye of Mongshu constituency, U Sai Thant Zin of Hsipaw constituency, U Win Thein Zaw of Salingyi constituency, Daw Cho Cho of Oattwin constituency, Daw Nan Than Than Lwin of Hpa-an constituency and Dr. Daw Khin Sithu of Loikaw constituency.

In his discussion on the motion, U Thein Swe said the socio-economic development of workers and the employment of nationals are priorities for the ministry. The ministry has drawn up and is implementing policies on migrant workers and employment matters, added the Union Minister.

When our migrant workers return from abroad, whether they go there officially or not, or they have official documents or not, the ministry does its best to assist them. The union minister suggested the motion be put on record, as it is an important matter that the government is conducting consistently with all the ministries.

The Hluttaw decided to put the motion on record. In addition to this, the bill to repeal the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act 1948, returned without amendment by Amyotha Hluttaw, was also approved by the Hluttaw after the Hluttaw's decision was obtained. ■

Amyotha Hluttaw discusses Ponnagyun Industrial Zone

Aye Aye Thant
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw held its 12th-day meeting yesterday morning in Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting hall, where asterisk-marked questions were asked and answered and a motion was tabled.

First, U Kyaw Kyaw of Rakhine State constituency (4) questioned the progress of the work and how much longer it would take to complete the Ponnagyun Industrial Zone that has been under implementation for six years, since the first Pyithu Hlutaw took place. Union Minister for Industry U Khin Maung Cho said the industrial zone was earmarked to be constructed on 1,963.74 acres of land along the eastern part of Yangon-Sittway road in Rakhine State, Sittway District, Ponnagyun Township. During the previous government's time, it was designated and permitted as Industry Zone No. (22). Supreme Development Co., Ltd. and Myanmar Kyauk Phyu Special Economic Zone Holding Public Co., Ltd. participated in the tender that was called in 2015. Myanmar Kyauk Phyu Special Economic Zone Holding Public Co., Ltd. was selected on 24 August, 2015, and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on 16 September, 2015. The MoU term of four months was extended three times and on the fourth extension, the company defaulted on signing the MoU, which ended on 12 April, 2017.

Exo World Group Co. of Israel was permitted to lease 50 acres of land in Ponnagyun Industrial Zone to conduct livestock breeding, cold storage, manufacturing of animal feed, fuel and lubricant storage for ships in the Rakhine State government's meeting of 28 July, 2017. Granting of permission and the start of preliminary works by Exo World Group Co. was informed to the State directorate of investment and company administration on 24 January, 2018, said the Union Minister.

According to the conceptual plan of the industrial zone, it will include small and medium factories; garment works; livestock, prawn and fish factories; and wood-based factories. Interested economic entities and organisations will be widely invited and permitted to work systematically at set rates and taxes. As the Ponnagyun Industrial Zone is in a least developed region, local and foreign investors will have special privileges and incentives, as mentioned in the Myanmar Investment Law. Interested local and foreign businesses were being invited, and as the works of the implementation committee on the recommendations of the advisory commission on Rakhine State are being implemented, and with the special privileges and incentives, local and foreign companies will invest in the Ponnagyun Industrial Zone, explained the Union Minister on behalf of the Rakhine State government.

Next, questions by U Pe Tin of Mon State constituency No (6) on the government Aung Bar Lay lottery and U Mya Min Swe of Bago Region constituency (9) on ceasing the collection of the city entry toll were answered by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Set Aung and Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myint Tun.

Similarly, questions by Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency (11) and U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency (5) were answered by Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw and Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing.

Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency (11) then tabled a motion urging the government to give priority to the least developed states and regions and to implement One Village One Product (OVOP) rural development strategy with the relevant ministerial departments, including a budget for it. The motion was supported by U Sai Wan Hlaing Khum of Shan State constituency (3).

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than asked for the decision of the Hluttaw and then announced the acceptance of the motion by the Hluttaw.

The 13th-day meeting of the seventh session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw is scheduled for 6 February. ■

Vice President U Myint Swe shakes hands with Gen. Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Myint Swe receives Gen. Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan

Vice President U Myint Swe received Chief of Defence Force of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Gen. Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan,at 10:45 a.m. yesterday at the diplomatic lounge of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw. During the meeting, they discussed the matters relating to friendship between the two countries, boosting the relationship and cooperation.

Also present at the meeting were Vice Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Minister for Defence Rear-Admiral Myint Nwe and officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Supreme Court hear special civil appeal cases

THE Union Supreme Court sat at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morning with Chief Justice of Union Supreme Court U Htun Htun Oo and other Union Supreme Court judges to pass judgment on seven special civil appeal cases and hear four special civil appeal cases. — MNA ■

UN Peacekeeping Operation Training Course ceremony held

VICE Senior General Soe Win attended the opening ceremony for the UN Peacekeeping Operation Training Course held in Park Royal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.

The UN operation is a joint training venture between Myanmar's Tatmadaw and India's military. Vice Senior General Soe Win and the Indian Ambassador to Myanmar delivered a speech at the ceremony. Next, a senior instructor from India's Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) showed a PowerPoint on India's UN peacekeeping operations.

The training will include theoretical and practical instructions on topics such as ethics of UN Peacekeepers, protecting civilians, protecting children, military-civilian cooperation, history of UN peacekeepers and their operations. The training course will last till 16 February. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Tikir Dam to bring regional…

Vice President U Henry Van Thio and officials visit Tikir Village coffee tree nursery. **PHOTO: MNA**

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Next, U Henry Van Thio; Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu; State Chief Minister U Salai Lian Luai; and State Hluttaw Speaker U Zo Bwe were presented with gifts by U Kyaw Myint Hlaing.

The Tikir Dam is situated near Htantalan Town and Tikir Village and is a 500-foot-long and 75-foot-high dam. At full storage capacity, it can store 1,265 acre feet of water and can distribute water to Tikir Village, 11 nearby villages, irrigation water for highland farms and produce 50 kilowatts of electricity through a mini-hydroelectric power station.

Next, the Vice President and his delegation viewed the dam and the possibility of setting up eco-tourism around it from Tikir Village to Sutaung Hill.

Later, the Vice President inspected the status of the construction of a water storage pond to distribute water to Tikir Village and the 11 villages.

The water storage pond is 50 feet long, 50 feet wide and 15 feet deep, capable of storing 235,000 gallons.

The Vice President then arrived at Tikir Basic Education Sub-High School and inspected the status of the construction of two 60x30 square feet staff houses, a 140x30 square feet two-storey reinforced concrete school building, a hostel for students and the Tikir football field.

The Vice President then went to the Tikir Village coffee tree nursery, where he, along with the State Chief Minister, state Hluttaw speaker and deputy ministers, presented coffee plant saplings to coffee farmers. They then continued to inspect the construction of the Tikir diversion dam.

The Vice President also went to the construction site of a 16-bed Tikir cottage hospital to inspect the staff house and the status of project works.

After arriving at the project briefing hall, Tawwin Kyaphu Company Limited's construction-in-charge U Thiha Soe explained the project matters.

The Vice President then attended the Tikir Village Baptist Church prayer service and met the local populace and elders from nearby villages.

During the meeting, the Vice President said the visit was conducted to view firsthand the regional development works.

By constructing the Tikir Dam, water can be distributed sufficiently to Tikir Village, as well as the 11 nearby villages. Model highland farms were being established to replace slash-and-burn hillside farms and the local people were being urged to understand the good intention of the government and strive towards setting up agriculture- and livestock-breeding works. Natural resources such as forests and mountains need to be effectively utilised to establish eco-tourism businesses. Natural surroundings must be protected and preserved, and the area should be a model region.

The Vice President explained the education, health, road and telecommunication works conducted by the government for regional development.

The local people then explained the requirements for regional development, to which the Vice President replied that short-term works that can be completed in a short time will be conducted, while those that cannot be done in a short time frame will be coordinated and handled within a set time frame. The Vice President added that everyone must strive together for regional development.

The Vice President then inspected the Tikir Dam on a boat after which he and his delegation and him went to Htantalan Township Salan Village and Vambai Village, where local villagers and elders greeted them with traditional dance performances.

From there, the Vice President went to the site where Htantalan Airport is planned to be constructed. At the site, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lain and Department of Civil Aviation Director U Kyaw Soe explained the preliminary site inspection status.

The new Htantalan Airport runway is 6,000 feet long and 100 feet wide, while 202.02 acres of land has been set aside for the airport. — Myanmar News Agency ■

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Sea View Condo sales room opened in Myeik

SEA view condominium will be built at the opposite of the Andaman Sea on the Strand Road of Myeik in Taninthayi Region. The sea view condo project will include walking street market and the first sale of shops at the market was opened on the first week of February.

At the opening, the Managing Director of Pyay Phyo Tun International Co.Ltd gave greetings and CEO from Sea View Condo Project explained about the project and stores. Afterwards, attendees looked around the replica of stores and condo at the display and purchased some shops in some loctation at the market.

Visitors view model of apartment blocks at sea view condominium sales room in Myiek, Taninthayi Region. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

At the project, there are 168 shops in the walking street market and 111 have been sold. The estimated price of a shop is from 40 million to 400 million. The customer can buy on hire purchase because the company is linked to Central Bank in order to be easy for those who want to start an own business. Those who want to purchase the shop must make 30 per cent downpayment and 70 per cent of the rest will be paid with an installment plan during eight years according to the Operation Director of the project.

Construction of the Sea View Condo's street market has been completed in 60 per cent; the completion of the store construction is one year.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Erosion control block broken in Mrauk U

EROSION control block was disjoined at the river bank of Apaukwa village in Kyauktaw Township, Mrauk U District.

Twelve houses were destroyed by the land erosion and nine houses are close by the landslide, so they made a move to a safe place with their own plans. No casualties were reported yet. Twelve households including 30 men and 64 women temporarily lived at neighboring houses.—Myanmar Digital News ■

MoC, Korean company agree to construct logistics hub

THE Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and HUBS MK Company from South Korea entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 24 January, 2018, to construct a logistics hub of international standards, according to a report in Myanma Alinn yesterday.

This logistics hub is slated to be constructed on 59.107 acres in Hlaingthaya Township. The MoC is trying to bolster exports by laying down the national export strategy. In a bid to reduce the supply chain transport cost, a logistics hub is required for exporters and importers.

"We will conduct a feasibility study for the construction of the hub with advanced technology, U Aung Soe, Director General of Myanmar Trade Promotion Organisation, noted.

More logistics hubs are required in Myanmar, as it is faced with storage problems at its ports. However, the construction of a logistics centre requires heavy capital.

"High inflow of foreign investment can contribute to the development of fundamental infrastructure. So, we are inviting more foreign investors," said U Aung Soe.
— Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

Record high cases of human trafficking in Yangon region, Shan State

THE number of human trafficking cases has increased in the Yangon region and Shan State in January 2018, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

In January, some 23 cases were recorded in states and regions. Among them, nine each were recorded in the Yangon region and Shan State, two in Mandalay region, and one each in Kayin and Kachin states and the Bago region.

In January, some 68 human traffickers were arrested in 23 cases. Most victims were reportedly sold as fraudulent marriage partners and forced labour in the neighbouring countries. Two-thirds of the victims were women, most of whom were lured with false incentives, according to the anti-human trafficking police force.

According to the trafficking report in January, many cases of human trafficking came to light, with 39 per cent recorded in Yangon, nine per cent in Mandalay, four per cent in Bago, 39 per cent in Shan State, five per cent in Kachin State and four per cent in Kayin State.

The police are trying to work with the public to prevent human trafficking and conduct more awareness training courses. The police are also distributing handouts and posters to the public to create awareness. —GNLM ■

Security guards stand near a tanker carrying aviation fuel during the opening ceremony of Puma Energy fuel storage facility at Myanmar International Terminal Thilawa outside Yangon. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Domestic consumers face mounting fuel oil price

Khine Hset Wai

GLOBAL fuel oil prices reached a peak in three years, hiking the fuel oil prices in the domestic market, said Dr Win Myint of the Myanmar Fuel Oil Importers and Distributors Association.

"Myanmar's fuel oil price is positively related to the global crude oil market and the dollar exchange rate. Global crude oil prices have increased on account of a significant drop in America's oil storage facilities and a threatened strike in Nigeria. The price has registered a three-year record high," he said.

According to the global market price, the brent crude oil price per barrel was worth US$66.87 on 2 January. The price reached the highest of $70.53 on 25 January, and it dropped to $68.58 on 3 February. The retail price of Mandalay's fuel oil was Ks890 per litre of 92 Octane, Ks940 for 95 Octane, Ks890 for diesel and Ks950 for premium diesel on 3 February.

"According to existing policies, local petrol stations are not allowed to store more than the prescribed limit. The price may change with the stock," Dr Win Myint maintained.

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other petrol oil producers met in November 2017, with a view to control the global petrol price. They decided to reduce the production rate, leading to a rise in the price.

"A decrease in the wholesale price will not have an immediate effect on the retail price," said a retailer.

The Thilawa Port stores some 12,000 tonnes of fuel oil to be distributed in the domestic market. It is difficult to handle the imported oil because of the storage limit, resulting in chaos in the local fuel oil market.

The top oil-producing countries are Russia, Saudi Arabia and the United States. Saudi Arabia is planning to scale up the price to 80 per cent in its domestic market. OPEC is also trying to increase the price, which has a strong impact on the global crude oil market. ■

Demand for rice steady despite China's import restrictions

THE demand for rice from China has been steady, with some 6,000 tonnes being traded at the China-Myanmar border gates, despite import restrictions by China, according to a report in Myanma Alinn yesterday.

Rice produced in the Bago, Ayeyawady and Sagaing regions is primarily sent to the border gates.

It is exported via the Chinshwehaw and Lwejel checkpoints, besides the two countries' main border gates, Muse, U Chan Thar Oo, vice chairman of Muse commodity depot, told Myanma Alinn.

More than 1 million tonnes of rice, with an estimated worth of US$338 million, was exported so far. This year's export broke a 50-year record. Rice exports are carried out via sea, as well as the border gates.

A tonne of low-quality rice fetches $336 at the border gates, whereas it is worth only $298 through sea.

The Chinese yuan has appreciated against kyat this fiscal year (FY), with the exchange rate increasing by Ks13 per yuan, compared with the last FY.

Rice export volumes via the Muse gate were more than 1.2 million tonnes, worth $446 million in the 2014-2015 FY; 1 million in the 2015-2016 FY, with an export value of $374 million; and 600,000 tonnes, with an estimated value of $208 million, in the 2016-2017 FY. —Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

Over 300 livestock exported to China daily

SOME 300 live cattle were exported daily from the Muse 105th Mile trade zone, according to a report in Myanma Alinn yesterday.

After getting a permit for live livestock export, cattle with an estimated value of US$7.25 million were sent out of the country, as of the second week of January.

The export of live cattle started mid-December 2017. More than 330 live goats and 200 cattle were traded daily at the Muse 105th Mile trade gate by Chinese merchants. Some 60 companies were found to be engaged in the live livestock export business.

U Yan Naing Tun, Director General of the Trade Department, told Myanma Alinn that the domestic hog production could not satisfy local consumption. Therefore, export of live pigs was rare.

The inspection departments concerned are making efforts to facilitate trade by issuing health certificates to meet the import regulations of buyer countries.

To export live livestock, a health certificate and a permit must be procured from the region and state's Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, besides an export licence from the trade department, operating under the commerce ministry. —Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Thai Armed Forces General Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan inspect the Guard of Honour. **Photo: MNA**

A meeting on holding the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signing ceremony for the New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union is held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **Photo: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Thai Armed Forces General

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Chief of Defence Force of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Gen. Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan with a Guard of Honour, in front of Zeyar Thiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In their meeting, they discussed the matters relating to boosting the friendship between the two armed forces, exchange on friendly visits of cultural troops and athletic teams, exchange of visits between the naval ships, and strengthening of relations between the two armed forces. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Gov't to hold NCA signing ceremony for NMSP, LDU on 13 Feb

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At the meeting, U Zaw Htay, Director-General of the Union Peace Implementation Department, reported on detailed plans for holding the ceremony.

U Thant Sin, Director-General of the Protocol Department, reported on sending out invitations; Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung on accommodation and seating plans at the ceremony; Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo on transportation; Union Minister U Ohn Maung on accommodation and reception; Deputy Minister U Min Thu on decoration of the ceremony; Myanmar Police Force Police Chief Aung Win Oo on security; Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint on registration of media, issuing security cards, live broadcast and issuing documentary photo albums; Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe on health matters, Director-General U Zaw Naing on financial affairs, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin on coordination among sub-committees; Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win on preparations for the signing ceremony and Dr. Myo Aung, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, on preparing the MICC-II building where the signing ceremony will be held.

The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Suspects in killing former MraukU administrator arrested

POLICE detained a family on suspicion of their involvement in the murder of former MraukU administrator U Bo Bo Min Theik, who was stabbed to death in a car on the highway on 30 January.

Police are still actively pursuing others who are suspected of being involved in the killing.

After interviewing eyewitnesses to a car crash in Rakhine State, police arrested Min Than Htay, also know an as Min Than Htike, son of Kyaw Myint, also known as Khaing Kyaw, a former village administrator of Teinnyo Village in MraukU Township, near the Kyeikwine Pagoda Road's traffic light in Mayangon, Yangon on 31 January, the day after the killing.

> Their plan was to abduct U Bo Bo Min Theik as he travelled to Sittway.

Later that evening, Kyaw Myint and his wife, Daw Kyi Kyi Win, were arrested at Mitta Gonyaung Nunnery in Latyatsan Village, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region. They were reportedly hiding in the nunnery, trying to elude arrest, police said.

Their sister-in-law Ma Khaing Zar Hlaing, wife of Min Than Htaik, was also found at the monastery and arrested, according to police.

U Bo Bo Min Theik's body was found near an overturned vehicle that had crashed between mileposts No. 169/0 and 169/1 on Yangon-Sittway Road near Thayet Cho Village, between Yongu and Aungpyupin villages, some seven miles north of Punnagyun, Rakhine State. His body was found with several stab wounds, including two to his chest, 12 on his back and one cut over his left eyebrow.

According to witnesses, there were four men in the car, including U Bo Bo Min Theik. U Bo Bo Min Theik reportedly struggled with the men as he was being stabbed, causing the vehicle to overturn. The three other men fled on foot towards a nearby mountain range, witnesses said.

As a result of an interrogation, Kyaw Myint, who is also known as Khaing Kyaw admitted to hatching a plot on 25 January with Ko Latt, Sa Paing, Zaw Myo Aung, who is also known as Zaw Moe Aung, and his neighbour mechanic Myo Chit Aung to kill U Bo Bo Min Theik, police said. Ko Latt, Sa Paing and Zaw Myo Aung are reportedly organisers for AA armed ethnic group in Rakhine State.

Their plan was to abduct U Bo Bo Min Theik as he travelled to Sittway, police said.

On 26 January, they phoned U Bo Bo Min Theik, offering to drive him to Sittway, where he was relocating for a new job.

On 30 January, as they were driving to Sittway on on Yangon-Sittway Road, Sa Paing and Zaw Myo Aung allegedly stabbed U Bo Bo Min Theik to death when a struggle ensued after the men tried to seize his mobile phone.

It was also discovered that Kyaw Myint and Min Than Htay were transporters of illegal drugs from Shan State to Buthidaung and Maungtaw and selling the illicit drugs.

The income from the drug trading was allegedly spent on buying arms for the AA ethnic armed group.

The father-and-son team admitted to earning more than Ks397 million from transporting and trading more than 4.4 million YW Yaba pills from December 2016 to November 2017.

> Measures are being taken to expose additional suspects who may be involved in the case.

With the proceeds of the first drug haul, they bought two pistols and four cartridges in June 2017, police said. Later the same month, they purchased 10 semi-automatic M-16 rifles and 50 bullets for the pistols after the second drug run. In August 2017, after the third drug run, nine M-16 rifles were purchased for the ethnic armed group. After they tranported and sold illegal drugs a fourth time later in August 2017, they bought 38 cartridges and 6,000 rounds of ammunition for the M-16s, two pistols and four cartridges from a woman in Mandalay, they told police. They also bought one pistol from a man in Myawady, one cartridge, nine bullets, 19 M-16 rifles, 38 cartridges and 6,000 bullets, five pistols and 8 cartridges with 59 bullets. The father and son admitted to transferring 23 weapons, 46 cartridges and 6,050 bullets to the AA armed group.

The pair kept one pistol, one cartridge and nine bullets for their personal use, police said.

The investigation is active and ongoing, authorities said, and measures are being taken to expose additional suspects who may be involved in the case.—Myanamr News Agency ■

Angumaw-Maungtaw road to development

U Aung Kyaw Zan (Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation)

U Ye Htut (Chief Administrator of Maungtaw District)

U Myo Khaing (Asia World Foundation Officer)

U Nay Lin (Engineer from Asia World Co.)

U Maung San Thein (School Principal)

Aung Ye Twin, Ko Min
PHOTO: AUNG MIN

AS part of the UEHRD's (Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine) task force, Asia World Foundation has been handling the upgrading of the Angumaw-Maungtaw road since November 2017.

The following are excerpts of interviews with the project's officials and local residents on their opinions of what kinds of positive development would the completion of the project bring in.

U Aung Kyaw Zan (Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation)

This road used to take 4-5 hours to travel either way but after the upgrade we estimate it will only take an hour for a trip. Of course, this will make it faster for security forces and administration personnel to travel and it will attract more businesses to the area too. I admire Asia World's system and skills in building concrete roads.

The UEHRD's task forces have invited a lot of overseas development to the area. The Rakhine State Government will also help the development of the state as much as our budget permits.

U Ye Htut (Deputy Commissioner of Maungtaw District)

Asia World Co. is helping with the basic infrastructure sector for the area and I believe they have the necessary skills and equipment for this. However, they are currently short of sand and gravel, which is in low supply in the area. But they have promised that 50 per cent of the project will be completed before the rains set in.

Daw Khin Oo Shwe (Teacher)

U Myo Khaing (Asia World Foundation Officer)

Asia World is using its funds for the project. It's a sort of donation to the area. The road is 49 miles 6 furlong and 18 feet wide and we're upgrading it to a concrete road. The project is headed by the Union Government, supported by the local government and the UEHRD.

U Nay Lin (Engineer from Asia World Co.)

Asia World Foundation is helping the Union Government by taking on this project. This road used to be a 12 feet wide gravel road and it took cars 4 hours to cross from either end. Our aim is to cover about 20 miles within this year. We're employing 1,500 workers and 200 pieces of machinery for this. We're expecting the road to withstand around 30 tons of pressure.

U Maung San Thein (Headmaster)

I believe transportation and infrastructure are important for the development of an area. I have been stationed here for two years and the roads during that time have been very bad.

But now that Asia World is upgrading the road I believe that the area's education, economic, social and health sectors will get better. They're using machines we've never seen before too.

Daw Khin Oo Shwe (School Teacher)

The new road will be much better for the students and local residents. The old road was hard to access during the rainy season but after the upgrade we won't have to spend too much time on the road. For that we are grateful to Asia World. ■

Music show boosts morale of students in Maungtaw

THE Yeikhita Swan Arr (National Spirit) philanthropic group organized a music show for teachers and students who were trapped for three days in Nanthartaung Monastery, Maungtaw Township, during the ARSA terrorist attacks on 25 August 2017.

The music show was done with the hope of boosting the morale of the teachers and students and was held in the Strand Hotel in Sittway City.

U Win Maung Maung, the Patron of Yeikhita Swn Arr, Shwe Latt Myar (Golden Hands), and WSKD Youth Philanthropic groups, presided over the show. He conferred honorary awards to the presiding Sayadaw of Nanthartung Monastery for "bravely giving protection to 400 students" and also to the presiding Sayadaw of Shwezedi Monastery for making sure the education of the displaced students would continue.

The Yeikhita Swan Arr (National Spirit) philanthropic group is composed of 21 separate philanthropic organizations and has donated over Ks100 million to the Maungtaw area since the 25 August attacks.

The group also has plans to donate items of clothing and food to the security forces stationed in Maungtaw.

The music show hosted actor Min Yarzar, actress Phoo Son, both famous and up-and-coming singers from Rakhine.
—Han Lin Naing ■

Music show organized by Yeikhita Swan Arr (National Spirit) philanthropic group held in Maungtaw. **PHOTO: ZAW ZAW NAING**

Responding through dialogue is democratic culture

NO one can predict what the New Year will bring. However, the first month of 2018 has seen good and bad events.

In January, armed conflicts broke out in northern Myanmar, instigating deadly riots in MraukU.

The good news was that the New Mon State Party-NMSP and the Lahu Democratic Union-LDU agreed to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement soon, following their promise on 24 December.

Coinciding with the announcement, a dinner to mark the 71st Mon National Day was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 1 February and Mon National Day celebrations were held in Yangon and Mon State. Peace will prevail in Mon State soon. The dream of the people in Mon State will come true.

Besides this, the second anniversary of the second Hluttaw was held on 1 February and the State Counsellor's address at the ceremony has brought delight, hope and courage to the country.

The bad news was the protest by the students of the University of Mandalay and its consequences. Since before independence, movements of students have played an important role in Myanmar, and so did the role of Buddhist monks. Similarly, the movement of the people in 1988 brought the country on the path to democracy.

These changes resulted in the emergence of the civilian government elected by the people today. However, the more than 20-year-old journey was not a bed of roses. To reach this position today, many struggled for more than 20 years, facing oppression. We should have a deep understanding of the fact that the current political climate is different from the past. Representatives elected by the people are making laws in the Hluttaw.

Today, no one can decide a law in one sitting. Students and those who want to work in the interest of the country need to lobby with the Hluttaw, and the Hluttaws have kept open their lobby doors to listen to the voices of the people. This manner of negotiation or dialogue is better than making high demands that can plunge the country into crisis. Democracy is a culture of dialogue.

Students, actually, are willing to consider the interest of the country and its people. Similarly, the people who are now in the government and the Hluttaw have also struggled for democracy for decades. Hence, the path of dialogue is the key to solving issues. ■

Essential Elements in Binding Union Spirit

Maung Thaung Win
(Ex-diplomat)

ACCORDING to the definition of Myanmar Dictionary, "spirit" means "temper or disposition of mind; mental condition or disposition".

Union spirit means the strong determination of all the national people to live in unity through thick and thin.

Myanmar is a union composed of national races, having different cultures, traditions and religions. The national races living in respective geographical areas have been living together in harmony and friendship.

Myanmar is an ethnically diverse nation with 135 distinct ethnic groups, and primate fossils found in the Pontaung Ponnya region, Magway Region are proof that the ancestors of Myanmar have habited in Myanmar for 40 million years.

The glorious cites and capitals like Tagaung, Sri Ksetra, Beikthanoe, Bagan, Pinya, Innwa, Sagaing, Myinsaing, Taungoo, Nyaung Yang and Kong-baung flourished and thrived in the country. Myanmar has a wealth of different cultures, each with its own set of traditions: from cuisine and dress to celebration, faith and occupation. All the ethnic races have lived in Myanmar with union spirit.

Unfortunately, Myanmar was under the British Colonization after waging three wars in 1824, 1852 and 1885. As a result, Myanmar was under colonial rule for 120 years.

By around the start of the 20th century, a nationalist movement began to take shape in the form of the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) which was also known as religious association.

In 1920 the first university students' strike broke out in protest against the new University Act which the students believed would only benefit the elite and perpetuate colonial rule. 'National School mushroomed across the country in protest against the colonial education system.

A wave of strikes and protests that started from the oilfields of central Burma in 1938 became a general strike with far-reaching consequences.

All the ethnic races had struggled to fight against the imperialists in order to regain her independence. A national movement then emerged in the country and Thakhin Aung San led a group of comrades and formed Burma Independence Army (BIA) and drove the British out of the country with the help of Japanese troops. But, it soon became apparent that Japanese promises of independence were merely a sham. The Japanese occupation of Myanmar was the period between 1942 and 1945.

When the Second World War broke out, all the ethnic races had been in cooperation with the Allies to fight against the fascists. However, the British colonialists who came back to Myanmar were hesitant to grant independence to Myanmar nationals. It is evident that they intended to give independence only to the main land but not the hilly regions.

Bogyoke Aung San and national leaders held the Panglong Conference on 12th February, 1947. Then they agreed in unison, and called for independence of the whole nation and signed the Panglong agreement. The essence of the Panglong Conference was the equal independence for all ethnic races in the country. The day that proved and highlighted the unity of all national races was recognized as "The Union Day" of Myanmar.

It is of vital importance for all the ethnic races to equally participate in promoting the national unity and the union spirit which can keep the Union strong. Moreover to ensure national reconciliation, it is essential for us to establish clear confidence and trust between the nation and ethnic groups so that we can create a trust-building process.

When we have gained national unity and national reconciliation, it is sure for us to be able to build a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Federal Republic. Moreover, cooperation should be made in order to implement the National Reconciliation and Peace process.

Union Spirit is the key

If you look at the current state of the world, you will find that countries that have failed to maintain their unified national spirit had fallen apart from saboteurs and internal conflicts.

It is of vital importance for all the ethnic races to equally participate in promoting the national unity and the union spirit which can keep the Union strong.

Without unity neither lasting peace nor a Democratic Federal Republic will emerge in the future.

Our ethnic brethren also need to harbor the union spirit so that with one goal and one mind they will be able to march forward to lasting peace.

Lasting peace for all

Successive governments, with the aim of lasting peace in mind, have welcomed armed ethnic groups to unite as one. This desire finally culminated in the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on 15 October 2015.

The NCA was signed between the Union Government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw and eight armed ethnic groups. Additionally, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) on 23 January 2018 announced they would be signing the NCA as well.

The desire to unify all ethnic races with strong union spirit was evident in Panglong Village 71 years ago.

If we manage to solidify, nourish and maintain this union spirit in the years to come then there is no doubt that the lasting peace all of us wishes for will be within our reach in the near future. ■

Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung and
Zaw Htet Oo

The translations turn ridiculous, insulting silly

By Arakan Sein

Translators do translations ; translations get involved in several steps of proofreading , choice of words and acquisition of languages and cultures concerned. The translators can hardly hope to convey in the mother language every shade of meaning that attaches to the word in the original. A word, indeed in one language is seldom the exact equivalent of a word in a different language.

If many translators are allowed to translate the same article or essay, they are believed to produce many different translations. One thing is certain; the essence of the article or essay must be the same. That is why when it comes to translations of Buddhist texts, the Bible or the Holy Quran, the translators have cautiously shaped the very languages in which they have translated. They have been under pressure in the course of translation process in order to avoid terrible mistakes which believers may easily get offended. Accordingly, translators do their best ; still, they tend to make mistakes.

We translate Myanmar into English and English into Myanmar daily in the Myanmar and English newspapers. A lot of new words are added to English every day; it is very hard to understand the meaning of each word because words from other languages have entered English every moment of the day.

Different translators and interpreters do different translations and interpretations. As English is highly sensitive language, we must focus on proofreading, typing and knowledge of the language and culture of the country. The arrangement or position of a letter in an English word makes the meaning totally different from each other. For example, let us have a look at this sentence: Tiger Woods was on the trail when he fired five under par; Tiger Woods on the trial when he fired five under par. Tiger Woods happened to be in the law court, not on the golf course.

Some works sound ridiculon ,some insulting and some silly. Outstanding examples are hereby mentioned below:

Guinea pig ဖါယဝါးနိဒ္ဓိဒိန်ပေါ့ ဂက် (မှား)၊ မူး (မှန်) Red ant ပုရွက်ဆိတ် နီ (မှား)၊ ခါချဉ် (မှန်)

White ant ပုရွက်ဆိတ်ဖြူ (မှား)၊ ခြ (termite) Sweet potato အာလူးချို (မှား)၊ ကန်စွန်းဥ (မှန်)

Begging bowl သူတောင်းစားခွက် (မှား) Alms bowl or monk's bowl သဝိတ် (မှန်)

Martial Arts ကိုယ်ခံပညာ Marital Arts စကားစု၊ အဘိဓာန်တွင် မရှိ။ Htilar Sithu ထီလာစိသူ Hitlar Sithu ဟစ်တလာစိသူ

There translations made Sayagyi U Tet Toe angry and withered a phrase. အရှမ်းဘာသာပြန်နဲ့

Only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches. ကိုယ်ဝတ်မီးနာ ကိုယ်သာသိ

Where there's a will there's a way. လိုလျှင်ကြံဆ၊ နည်းလမ်းရ

One swallow does not make a summer. ဝိတောက်တစ်ပင် ပွင့်ရုံဖြင့် ဝိတောင်ပြင် မကျနိုင်ပါ။

My wife died; send me a substitute. A telegram was sent to the main office. This sentence is too short to understand. The telegram is tantamount to a request of sending a new wife. Actually what he meant to say is to send an officer to replace him so that he could go back home for his wife's funeral.

I t was in 1969 Translation Seminar at Gandhi Hall on Bo Aung Kyaw Street, one of the translators cracked a joke something like th is: I tell မသိ. golden king ရဲ့ that you be elephant-mosquito နှင်ဆင်ခြင်ပါဦး (considerate).

The Prince of Wales visited our country in 1930s when we were under the British rule. As he was very fond of hunting, he went to Bago Yoma to hunt wild animals. Luckily he shot and killed a bison on his hunting trip and the news report was immediately sent to a nearby newspaper late in the evening . At that time a young proofreader remained in the office to edit incoming news to send it to the press.

In the morning newspapers , the Prince shot dead a cat appeared in the headlines. The young proofreader might think a young prince in the British Royal Family could not shoot a bison which is as large as a buffalo or rather it must be a cat ; for the bison(pyaung ပြောင်) rhymes with the cat(kyaung ကြောင်). The Prince found the news story to be hilariously funny.

A wild cat claps when the forest is on fire.

(တောမီးလောင်တောကြောင်လက်ခေါင်းဆော်) This sentence is grammatically correct, but sometimes literal translation does not produce the exact meaning. One might ask whether the cat ran away or not when the forest was actually on fire.

In Japan and Singapore Professional Translation Services are easily available; they even hire native speakers with background knowledge in legal, commercial, scientific and other related fields and they charge $ 25 per page.

The above short article highlights that we are greatly in need of Certified Professional Translation Services as the country has opened its doors to the outside world. Naturally, the Chief Executive Officers of Foreign Direct Investment will want their legal and business documents to be properly translated. ■

Shan State Chief Minister Dr. Lin Htut delivers the opening speech at the meeting for Ethnic literature festival in Shan State. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ethnic literature festival planned in Shan State

THE Ministry of Information and the Shan State Government held a discussion meeting yesterday to plan ahead for the Ethnic literature and paper reading festival to be held at a later date.

Shan State Chief Minister Dr. Lin Htut, who is also the Patron of the Ethnic literature and paper reading festival planning committee, delivered the opening speech.

Next, Chairman or the Ethnic literature and paper reading festival planning committee and Minister for Bamar Ethnic Affairs, Dr. Aung Than Maung explained the process of the upcoming Ethnic literature and paper reading festival.

The festival will include exhibition booths for traditional ethic handiworks, traditional literature recitals and dances. There are 24 topics in the recital part and 10 of them are about culture. Participants include Yinkyar, Yinnet, Tanaw, and An ethnics reciting their traditional literature, Eastern and Northern Shan ethnics reciting Lisu literature and Kachin people residing in Shan State will recite their traditional literature as well. The festival will also host booths selling traditional ethnic cuisine, traditional costumes and paraphernalia.

Next, U Ye Naing, the Director General of the Information and Public Relations Department lead discussions with the various committees for the festival's organizations, ranging from the committee for handling invitations to the committee for organizing entertainment. —Shan State IPRD ■

Myanmar-Japan to jointly implement affordable housing project

MYANMAR will implement an affordable housing project, in cooperation with the Japanese government, this fiscal year, as a pilot project in Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

The project will be implemented with two housing designs. The technology and other construction materials that are used in the project will be showcased in the showroom, said U Shein Win, vice chairman of Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association (MCEA).

As for the pilot project, MCEA will take responsibility for land allocation, while Japan will provide financial assistance for the construction.

After three years, Japan will transfer the building, along with the land and showrooms, to the MCEA. Currently, the Japan-Myanmar Association for Industry of Housing and Urban Development and MCEA have signed a memorandum of understanding on 4 December, 2017, to run trials of the affordable housing project. —GNLM ■

Forestry Department, WCS Myanmar to protect river tern nests

THE forestry department and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Myanmar are protecting river tern nests in the upstream of Chindwin river, with the cooperation of the local people, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

The combined population of river terns in their major habitats in the Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers is hardly more than 100, while the majority of the population is found between Khamti and Homalin in the Chindwin river. During the survey in 2017, some 41 nests were found near the Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers. Some 40 per cent of the breeding was successful. This year, 11 nests were found, and a survey is still being carried out to find more. Since 2017, the forestry department and WCS Myanmar have worked to protect the nests from humans and animals, with the cooperation of the local people.

As it is breeding season now, the WCS has set up a warning system and signboards on the sandbanks and islands to increase awareness.—GNLM ■

Inspection in Maungtaw and Buthidaung's rural development

U KHANT ZAW, the Director General for Department of Rural Development travelled to Maungtaw and Buthidaung townships yesterday to inspect the rural development plans in effect.

U Khant Zaw and his group first travelled to Kayay Myaing Village in Maungtaw Township to inspect the construction of a reservoir which received its budget in the 2017-2018 financial year. They then listened to and discussed a request from local residents to dig up a well.

Next, they met with the Maungtaw branch for Rural Development and listened to officials explain the workings of different sectors.

At noon, the Director General and entourage travelled to Ywartarywar Village, Maungtaw Township, and toured a motorcycle workshop training center opened by the Rural Development Department.

The course is free of charge. The center's instructor explained the teaching process to the Director General. The center currently has twenty students.

The Director General then travelled to Buthidaung Township and met with the Rural Development Department there. He listened to officials explain the workings of different sectors and gave advice on related topics. —Aung Ye Thwin, Ko Min ■

Director-General U Khant Zaw and officials visit rural area in Buthidaung. **PHOTO: AUNG MIN**

Price of rough rice increases slightly

THE price of rough rice, which is mainly exported, has increased slightly in the local market before the arrival of the summer paddy crop.

Also, the foreign ship meant to purchase Myanmar rice has been berthed, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

"The price of good quality rice, which is consumed mostly in the local market, has stabilised. However, the stock of rough rice that will be exported has decreased gradually. Summer paddy will be supplied to the local market by the end of February," said U Than Oo, secretary of Myanmar Rice Association.

In the last two weeks, the price of rough rice was between Ks18,500 and Ks19,000 per bag. However, now, the price of rough rice has increased to Ks20,000 per bag.

Currently, the Pawsan variety from the delta region is selling for between Ks30,000 and Ks40,000 per bag, while the new Shwebo Pawsan variety costs some Ks40,000 per bag. The price of old Shwebo Pawsan is Ks60,000, because there is no old stock left.

In the coming week, the price of Export-25 mark rice will not drop, and the price is expected to rise by Ks100 and Ks200 in the Bayinnaung wholesale market, according to the rice market. —GNLM ■

'Judge me' - Paris suspect refuses to answer Belgian court

BRUSSELS — The prime surviving suspect in the 2015 Islamic State attacks on Paris said he would answer no questions as his trial in Belgium over a shooting that preceded his arrest got under way in Brussels on Monday.

Salah Abdeslam, 28, his long black hair and beard a stark contrast to the cropped, clean-shaven young man familiar across Europe from wanted posters during his four months on the run, was asked by the judge to rise and identify himself.

Appearing in public for the first time since the November 2015 attacks and his arrest in Brussels four months later, he remained seated, flanked by two masked Belgian police officers.

"I do not wish to answer questions," Abdeslam said.

After a first session during which his alleged accomplice admitted to having fought for Islamic State in Syria and said that both accused were present during the March 2016 shootout with Brussels police, the judge again asked Abdeslam to speak.

Citing his right to silence and declaring his Muslim faith, he accused the media of condemning him before his trial: "Judge me. Do as you want with me," he told the judge.

Salah Abdeslam, one of the suspects in the 2015 Islamic State attacks in Paris, appears in court during his trial in Brussels, Belgium on 5 February, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"I put my trust in my Lord."

"I remain silent. That is a right which I have" he said, adding: "My silence does not make me a criminal or guilty."

"I am defending myself by remaining silent."

He asked the prosecution to base itself on forensic evidence "and not swagger about to satisfy public opinion", adding: "Muslims are judged and treated in the worst kind of ways. They are judged without mercy. There is no presumption of innocence."

That reluctance to engage with the court may prove a disappointment to Parisians who hoped that he might end more than two years of silence to give some indication of how and why the attacks which killed 130 people were organized.

His trial in France is not expected until next year. He was not charged over the Islamic State attacks in Brussels four days after his arrest, though prosecutors say the suicide bombers who killed 32 people acted swiftly out of fear that Abdeslam might reveal plans for a new attack in France under interrogation.

Among those attending the trial was Bob de Zwart, who survived the gun attack during a rock concert at Paris's Bataclan concert hall on Friday, Nov. 13, 2015. He told Reuters that he had come to Brussels because he wanted to see Abdeslam.

He was, however, not surprised that the alleged lone survivor of the group had not broken his two-year silence.

Abdeslam arrived under heavy guard from France, where he has been held under 24-hour suicide watch near Paris.

He will spend the nights of the coming week of Belgian hearings in a high-security French prison just across the border. Co-accused Sofien Ayari, a 24-year-old Tunisian, told the court that he had been with Islamic State forces in Syria. He said he had been with Abdeslam at the site of the shootout, though only a third man, who was killed by police marksmen, had he said, fired on the police officers who raided their hideout.—Reuters ■

China advises its tourists to avoid Maldives till politics stabilise

BEIJING — China's foreign ministry on Monday advised Chinese citizens to avoid visiting the Maldives until political tensions subside on the Indian Ocean archipelago.

A tropical paradise for holidaymakers, the Maldives has been beset by fractious politics for years, but concern over potential instability heightened after its attorney-general warned on Sunday that the government would resist any attempt by the Supreme Court to impeach President Abdulla Yameen for disobeying its order to free jailed opposition leaders.

"China suggests that Chinese citizens who are preparing to go to the Maldives in the near term to postpone going until the situation on the ground stabilizes," Geng Shuang, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told a regular briefing, noting that the upcoming Chinese New Year was a peak period for Chinese tourists to visit the Maldives.

Geng said that China supports the resolution of differences between all relevant sides in the Maldives through dialogue and consultation to protect its national and social stability.

The Chinese embassy to the Maldives on Friday issued a travel warning urging Chinese citizens to be cautious when travelling to the country, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Mohamed Anil, attorney general of the Maldives, said on Sunday that the government had received information that the Supreme Court was preparing to fire Yameen, but such a move would be illegal and the police and army had been instructed not to carry out such an order.—Reuters ■

Turkey detains nearly 600 for opposing Syrian offensive

ANKARA — Turkey has so far detained 573 people for social media posts and protests criticising its military offensive in Syria, the government said on Monday.

The crackdown, which has extended to the national medical association, has deepened concerns about free speech under President Tayyip Erdogan, who has criticised opponents of the military intervention as "traitors".

Turkey last month launched an air and ground offensive, dubbed Operation Olive Branch, against the Kurdish YPG militia in Syria's northwestern Afrin region. Authorities have repeatedly warned they would prosecute those opposing, criticising or misrepresenting the incursion.

"Since the start of Operation Olive Branch, 449 people have been detained for spreading terrorist propaganda on social media and 124 people detained for taking part in protest action," the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The operation has been widely supported by Turkey's mainly pro-government media and by most political parties, with the exception of the pro-Kurdish opposition.

Last week, a prosecutor ordered the detention of 11 senior members of the Turkish Medical Association, including its chairman, after the organisation criticised the incursion, saying: "No to war, peace immediately".

Erdogan criticised the body as traitors. Detention orders were issued for another 13 people for supporting the medics.

Three of the doctors were later released on probation, according to the Hurriyet newspaper.

"There are laws that prohibit the glorification of terrorism, support for terrorism through propaganda and media. The prosecutors are implementing the laws," Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, told reporters in Istanbul at the weekend.

Ankara considers the US-backed YPG, which controls Afrin, to be a terrorist group and an extension of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which has fought an insurgency in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast since 1984.

Turkey is in the midst of a widening crackdown that began after a failed coup attempt in July 2016. Some 50,000 people have been jailed and 150,000 sacked or suspended from their jobs.

Critics, including rights groups and some Western allies, say Erdogan is using the coup as a pretext to muzzle dissent. The latest arrests have also drawn criticism from the European Union.

Turkey says its measures are necessary due to the gravity of the security threats it faces. —Reuters ■

Autistic British hacking suspect wins appeal against extradition to US

LONDON — An autistic British man accused of hacking into US government agencies won his appeal against extradition to the United States on Monday after warnings that he would be at high risk of suicide if sent to a US jail.

Lauri Love, who has Asperger's syndrome, is accused of involvement in a series of hacks in 2012 and 2013 into computers at agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US army, the Missile Defence Agency and the Federal Reserve.

He had been facing a life prison sentence in the United States if found guilty, a fate which he has said could lead him to taking his own life.

A lower court in London had approved his extradition in 2016 despite warnings from his family, lawyers and supporters about the state of his mental health.

Supporters clapped and cheered in court when judge Ian Burnett, who is the head of the judiciary in England and Wales, said Love's appeal was upheld and extradition would not take place.

US authorities say Love was connected to Anonymous, an international group of hackers, and that his actions had caused millions of dollars' worth of damage.—Reuters

Russia's Defence Ministry has completed the construction of two radars for the country's Space Forces and four storage facilities for Bulava sea-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles. **PHOTO: TASS**

Russia builds two radars for Space Forces

MOSCOW — Russia's Defence Ministry has completed the construction of two radars for the country's Space Forces and four storage facilities for Bulava sea-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles, Deputy Defence Minister Timur Ivanov said on 1 Wednesday February, 2018.

The radars were built in Orsk in the Urals and in Barnaul in southwest Siberia while the Bulava storage facilities are based in Severomorsk in northwest Russia, he said.

"With regard to the Space Forces' facilities, the construction of two radars of high factory headiness was completed in Orsk and Barnaul," Ivanov said on the single military output acceptance day

As the deputy defense minister also noted, "The construction of four storage facilities for 3M-30 items of the basic loading terminal No 17 has been completed at the items' loading point in Severomorsk," he said.

According to public sources, the item 3M-30 is designed in various documents as the Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile.

As part of the aerodrome network development, artificial pavements have been restored at the airfields in Mozdok in the North Caucasus and Engels in the Volga area for the basing and the use of the Russian Aerospace Force, the deputy defense minister said.—Tass ■

Greenpeace appeals after losing Norwegian Arctic drilling lawsuit

OSLO — Environmental groups launched an appeal on Monday after an Oslo court rejected their arguments that Norway's oil and gas exploration in the Arctic violates citizens' right to a clean environment.

Greenpeace and Nature and Youth disputed the Oslo District Court's verdict last month, particularly that Norway could not be responsible for greenhouse gas emissions from the use of its oil and gas exported abroad.

The Oslo court said a 2015 licensing round that granted offshore exploration rights to companies including Statoil , Chevron, Lukoil and ConocoPhillips was acceptable under Norway's anti-pollution laws.

"There is already enough carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to seriously damage our future," said Truls Gulowsen, head of Greenpeace Norway, in launching the appeal.

"By opening up these pristine areas for oil exploration, Norway is effectively smuggling its emissions outside of its own borders and furthering climate change, which harms everyone, everywhere," he said.

Greenpeace says the court battle is the first in the world to test whether climate change is a threat to rights enshrined in a nation's constitution. About 100 national constitutions around the world, including Norway's, include guarantees of a safe environment.—Reuters

Italy's Leonardo to step up Asia sales under new business plan

SINGAPORE — Italian defence group Leonardo aims to sell around 8.4 billion euros ($10.49 billion) of products in Asia over the next five years as part of a business plan designed to boost exports, a senior executive said.

The state-backed conglomerate last week promised double-digit profit growth in its first business plan under Chief Executive Alessandro Profumo but disappointed investors on shorter term prospects, three months after a profit warning clubbed shares.

As part of the plan, Leonardo expects to sell 70 billion euros of products like helicopters and weapons systems over the next five years, a growth of around 6 per cent a year, with 60 per cent of sales to export markets.

Asia is forecast to account for 20 per cent of export sales during that period, Chief Commercial Officer Lorenzo Mariani said in a phone interview ahead of the start of the Singapore Airshow on Tuesday.

"We are going to expand very quickly, opening new offices and facilities in Indonesia, Thailand, Australia and Bangladesh," he told Reuters.

Profumo, a veteran banker, was picked to steer Leonardo on an aggressive expansion drive as part of a broader and longer term strategy targeting higher growth than in the past.

As the group shifts its focus towards foreign markets, Leonardo is due to almost double the number of international marketing offices and open logistics hubs offering customer support to its clients, particularly in key markets such as the Middle East and Asia.

Leonardo on Monday announced plans to set up a new helicopter maintenance centre in Japan to service the fleet of more than 120 of its rotorcraft operating in the Asian nation.

The Italian company makes civil and military helicopters, as well as aeronautics and weapons systems and the Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jet in partnership with Airbus SE and BAE Systems PLC.—Reuters ■

Nepali tea receives int'l trademark after 154-year cultivation

KATHMANDU — Nepalese tea has finally received its own brand logo or trademark in the international market after over a century long cultivation, government authorities said on Monday.

According to the National Tea and Coffee Development Board under the Ministry of Agricultural Development, it developed and registered the brand logo in the Department of Industry and has been endorsed.

"Nepali tea producers used to export tea with respective companies names or logos. Now, the tea will be sold in the international market with a common logo, which represents the national identity," Sheshkanta Gautam, executive director of the Nepal Tea and Coffee Development Board, told Xinhua.

The trademark comprises an image of mountains with "Nepal Tea: Quality from the Himalayas" written below it. Gautam informed that the logo will be formally unveiled during the third International Tea Festival in Nepal in March.

With the approval of Nepali Orthodox Tea Certification Trademark Implementation Directive, the board has already asked the producers, processors, packagers and traders to use the logo.

According to the National Tea and Coffee Development Board, Nepal produces tea in over 27,688 hectares of land in 44 districts, mainly in eastern districts like Ilam, Jhapa, Dhankuta, Terhathum and Panchthar.

Nepal has been exporting tea to eight international destinations, mainly India, Canada, Germany, the United States and China among others.

Shankar Sapkota, co-spokesperson at the Ministry of Agricultural Development, told Xinhua, "Having Nepal's own trademark is indeed good news which will be beneficial for the farmers and overall tea industry."

According to the statistics, the tea cultivation started in the Himalayan country from eastern district Ilam, some 154 years ago, while Nepal became a member of International Tea Committee in 2007.

The government of Nepal has also been marking 15th Baisakh as per the Nepali calendar as National Tea day. —Xinhua ■

Worshippers attend a church service at the City Harvest Church in Singapore on 1 March, 2014. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Singapore seeks to amend law after 'too low' megachurch fraud sentences

SINGAPORE — Singapore's government is seeking to amend a law that led to shortened sentences for church leaders convicted of misusing millions of dollars, in a case that has gripped the city-state where there is little tolerance for corruption.

This follows a decision last week by a Singapore court to reject a prosecution appeal to reinstate longer jail sentences for the church leaders, after the High Court reduced their sentences in April 2017.

The government believes the sentences are "too low" for those including City Harvest Church's co-founder Kong Hee, convicted of using funds to support his wife's pop-singing career, Minister for Law Kasiviswanathan Shanmugam said.

Kong, 53, was originally sentenced to eight years in jail in October 2015 for criminal breach of trust and falsification of accounts. The High Court later reduced that sentence to three-and-a-half years.

"It is now up to parliament to amend the law, and that we should do soon," Shanmugam said in parliament on Monday.

Singapore's governing People's Action Party has a large majority in parliament.

Shanmugam said the judgment shows there is a "lacuna" or gap in the law around punishment for senior officers charged with criminal breach of trust.

"The government's policy is clear ... If you abuse that trust you should be more culpable, and you should be liable for more severe punishments compared to a normal employee."

"For the last 40 years the law, as applied by the courts, reflected this principle. In April last year, the position changed."

The mix of money, faith and scandal in the City Harvest Church case is unique in Singapore, and gained much public interest during a legal battle that spanned nearly five years.

Local media said it was the largest amount of charity funds ever misappropriated in Singapore, and the country's most expensive criminal trial.

While megachurches originated in the United States, some of the largest are in Asia, where packaging the traditional biblical message into a more dynamic format of pop music, lively services and social media has lured a new generation of followers and turned the churches into major enterprises. —Reuters ■

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

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Box Office: 'Jumanji' Regains Top Spot for Modest Super Bowl Weekend

LOS ANGELES — Sony's resilient "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" has returned to the top of the North American box office, leading a modest Super Bowl weekend with $11 million at 3,553 sites. The session caps a remarkable run for the Dwayne Johnson-Kevin Hart action comedy, which also won the box office on its third, fourth and fifth weekends. "Jumanji" has become the 42nd highest domestic grosser of all time with $352.6 million, less than $500,000 behind Johnson's "Furious 7" for the 41st spot.

"Jumanji," which declined just 32 per cent, is only the 11th title to top $11 million in its seventh weekend. It's the lowest total for a first-place film since the second weekend of "The Hitman's Bodyguard" won the final frame of August. Fox's "Maze Runner: The Death Cure," which won the box office last weekend, finished second with $10.2 million from 3,793 locations. The weekend's sole opener, Helen Mirren's horror-thriller "Winchester," launched in third with $9.3 million at 2,480 venues, topping modest expectations which had been in the $6 million to $8 million range. Overall domestic business was typically modest for a Super Bowl weekend with $92 million overall, according to comScore, as studios remain reluctant to open major titles during the frenzy surrounding the pro football championship. The lowest recent Super Bowl weekend came in at $86 million in 2014, when the third weekend of "Ride Along" led with $12 million. The 2018 box office has remained close to even with last year thanks to "Jumanji," with $1.06 billion through Sunday, down 0.5 per cent from last year at the same point. 'Jumanji' gets the MVP box office award for Super Bowl weekend with a stunning late run ascension to the number one spot as 'Maze Runner' adds to its total and 'Winchester' enjoys a bit of counter programming success amidst a sea of Oscar contenders over what is a typically slow moviegoing weekend," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst with comScore.—Reuters ■

Celebrity Kylie Jenner announces birth of baby girl

Television personality Kylie Jenner. **PHOTO REUTERS**

LOS ANGELES — US reality TV star Kylie Jenner announced on Sunday the birth of her child with rapper Travis Scott, after months of rumours surrounding her pregnancy.

The 20-year-old Jenner said in a post on social media platform Instagram that her "beautiful, healthy baby girl" arrived on 1 February and apologised to fans for keeping her pregnancy a secret.

"I'm sorry for keeping you in the dark through all the assumptions," Jenner wrote. "I understand you're used to me bringing you along on all my journeys. My pregnancy was one I chose not to do in front of the world."

Jenner's half-sister Kim Kardashian, 37, and her rapper husband Kanye West announced the birth of their third child on 16 January, a girl born to a surrogate. Jenner's other half-sister Khloe Kardashian, 33, announced in December that she is six months pregnant with her basketball player boyfriend Tristan Thomas.

Jenner, who has parlayed her family's reality TV show and a 101 million Instagram following into a lucrative cosmetics line, posted a teaser on Instagram to a YouTube video entitled "To Our Daughter," that shows her in the delivery room just after giving birth, holding her newborn baby.

The arrival of Jenner's child quickly became the top trending topic on Twitter in the United States, surpassing #SuperBowlSunday just hours before the start of the big game.

Soon after Jenner made the announcement, her mother Kris and sisters Kendall, Kim and Khloe all posted messages of love and support on social media. — Reuters ■

Timberlake back at Super Bowl halftime, no wardrobe malfunctions

MINNEAPOLIS — Justin Timberlake posed for a selfie, paid tribute to music legend Prince and played it safe at a halftime Super Bowl performance on Sunday, returning to the gig where he and Janet Jackson introduced "wardrobe malfunction" to the American lexicon.

Timberlake danced and sang his way through a roughly 12-minute set before a television audience estimated at over 100 million people, mixing a song from his new album and staples such as "Can't Stop the Feeling" that made him an intentionally known solo artist.

In an homage in Minneapolis to the state's native son Prince, who died in 2016, Timberlake played a white piano and sat beneath a projection of Prince on a screen to sing a cover of "I would Die 4 U."

The only major piece of clothing that came off this time was Timberlake's jacket. In 2004, he infamously ripped off part of Janet Jackson's garment during their halftime show in Houston and briefly bared her breast.

Justin Timberlake performs during half time of Super Bowl LII between the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, MN, USA on 4 February, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

The incident dubbed "Nipplegate" was blamed on a wardrobe malfunction. It also lit the Internet on fire with a flash of the bare breast becoming the most-searched image in Internet history at the time.

Timberlake said via social media just ahead of his 2018 performance that he would not be sharing the Super Bowl stage with Jackson on Sunday.

Jackson ended up taking most of the blame for the 2004 incident, with some radio stations boycotting her music. Timberlake came away from the incident with little damage to his career.

A few hours ahead of the game, Jackson's fans stormed social media and made #JanetJacksonAppreciationDay the top trending item on US Twitter. Supporters of the singer flooded the social media platform with messages of appreciation for Jackson, who as a solo artist has sold more than double the number of records of Timberlake, according to Recording Industry Association of America data. —Reuters ■

in Picture The second Graduation Ceremony of Global Gateway University was held at Lotte Hotel on Pyay Road on 3 February. **PHOTO: GNLM**

"Long banquet" held in southwest China to welcome Spring Festival

CHONGQING — A traditional "1,000-metre-long banquet" was held over the weekend in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality as locals welcome the Lunar New Year.

More than 800 tables of delicacies were presented at the banquet along a street that stretches more than a kilometre in Chongqing's Zhongshan Old Town. The food was for the hosts' relatives as well as more than 30,000 tourists.

Residents of the town traditionally hold these banquets to welcome the Spring Festival, which falls on 16 February this year. In the past, the town was a busy port, and locals would prepare food along the street to cater to business people and porters who could not make it home for family gatherings.

In 2005, locals decided to boost local tourism by resuming the tradition. Each year, on weekends before the Spring Festival, families cook their best dishes beside their homes to entertain visitors.

Resident Li Chunmei prepared smoked pig trotters and sausages on Sunday. She prepared 45 tables of food for visiting gourmands. "Hosting the banquet has always been the busiest day in town," Li said. "Business has been really good."—Xinhua ■

Paris atelier provides safe haven for exiled artists

PARIS — Paris, whose bohemian culture attracted some of the world's finest painters at the turn of the 20th century, is opening its doors to a new wave of talent, driven its way this time by war and poverty.

Lina Aljijakli, a 35-year-old Syrian born in the now war-ravaged city of Hama, is one of a record number of immigrants seeking asylum in France. Her art is being exhibited at the grand Palais Royal along with works by 14 other exiled artists.

She said freedom of expression was compromised in Syria, where a seven-year civil war has killed hundreds of thousands of people and forced millions from their homes. "You never knew what could happen. You could get arrested, get killed," Aljijakli told Reuters TV. A large studio in Paris' 18th arrondissement has become a dedicated workspace for some 150 exiled artists from countries such as Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Iran. It has provided Aljijakli with a sanctuary from where she can express her emotions on canvas. One of her works on display in the former royal palace shows faces of women and children outlined against a blue background. The painting represents the suffering of Syrian women imprisoned and separated from their children, she says, of women hurt by aerial bombardments and of women who make the perilous sea-crossing in search of safety. Judith Depaule, who runs the atelier, sees the artists as the latest chapter in the artistic history of a city that gave rise to Impressionism, Art Nouveau and Cubism, and is synonymous with artists from Picasso and Van Gogh to Hemingway and Beckett.

"So it's about time that tradition is renewed," Depaule said. "Art and French culture have a lot to learn from this melting pot, from this contribution from other cultures." Another artist is Syrian filmmaker Mohammad Hijazi. Aged 29, he applauded the opportunity Paris has provided but wants to be known for more than just his portrayal of war. "My hope is ... to tell the world that we are able to produce work not simply because we have a war or a revolt or a conflict or fighting." —Reuters ■

School's out

A group of students on Baho Road in Sanchaung are apparently happy that school has ended for the day. **PHOTO: MARK ANGELES**

"Astro Boy" headlines opening of annual Sapporo snow festival

SAPPORO — An annual winter festival began on Monday in Sapporo with some 200 snow and ice sculptures on display, including one of the famous manga hero, "Astro Boy."

More than 2 million people from Japan and abroad are expected to visit the 69th Sapporo Snow Festival in Hokkaido, a weeklong event held in three venues in the capital of Japan's northernmost prefecture.

Commemorating the 90th anniversary of the birth of legendary manga artist Osamu Tezuka, a sculpture of his iconic cartoon character Astro Boy is featured along with other ice exhibits such as Yakushiji Temple, one of the most famous Buddhist temples in Nara. The temple sculpture will be used as a canvas for a projection mapping show every evening of the festival.

A man and his sister pose for a photo in front of a snow sculpture of Kotaro Kiyomiya, a highly touted Nippon Ham Fighters rookie, at the annual Sapporo Snow Festival in Hokkaido on 5 February, 2018. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Also among the exhibits at the main Odori site are smaller statues of much-talked-about Nippon Ham Fighters rookie baseball player Kotaro Kiyomiya and popular comedienne Blouson Chiemi. The Tsudome festival site, the festival's second largest display area, opened Thursday and has been drawing visitors to its large snow slide.

The event at the Susukino site will begin Monday evening, showcasing frozen fish in ice displays.—Kyodo News ■

Last-gasp Kane penalty earns Spurs draw at Liverpool

LONDON — Harry Kane scored his 100th Premier League goal from the penalty spot in stoppage time to snatch a point for Tottenham Hotspur in a thrilling 2-2 draw with Liverpool at Anfield on Sunday.

Mohamed Salah capitalised on a mistake from Eric Dier to put Liverpool in front in the third minute, taking his tally to 20 league goals for the season.

Substitute Victor Wanyama thundered home an equaliser 10 minutes from time before Kane missed from the penalty spot in the 87th minute.

In the most dramatic of finales, Salah thought he had won it in the 91st minute, only for Spurs to win another penalty which Kane converted to leave his team fifth in the table, two points behind third-placed Liverpool.

"It is difficult to get every decision right," Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino said. "When they are right and show character I needed to congratulate them."

Defender Virgil van Dijk, returning to the Liverpool starting lineup, did a fine job of keeping an unchanged Spurs quiet for the majority of the first half.

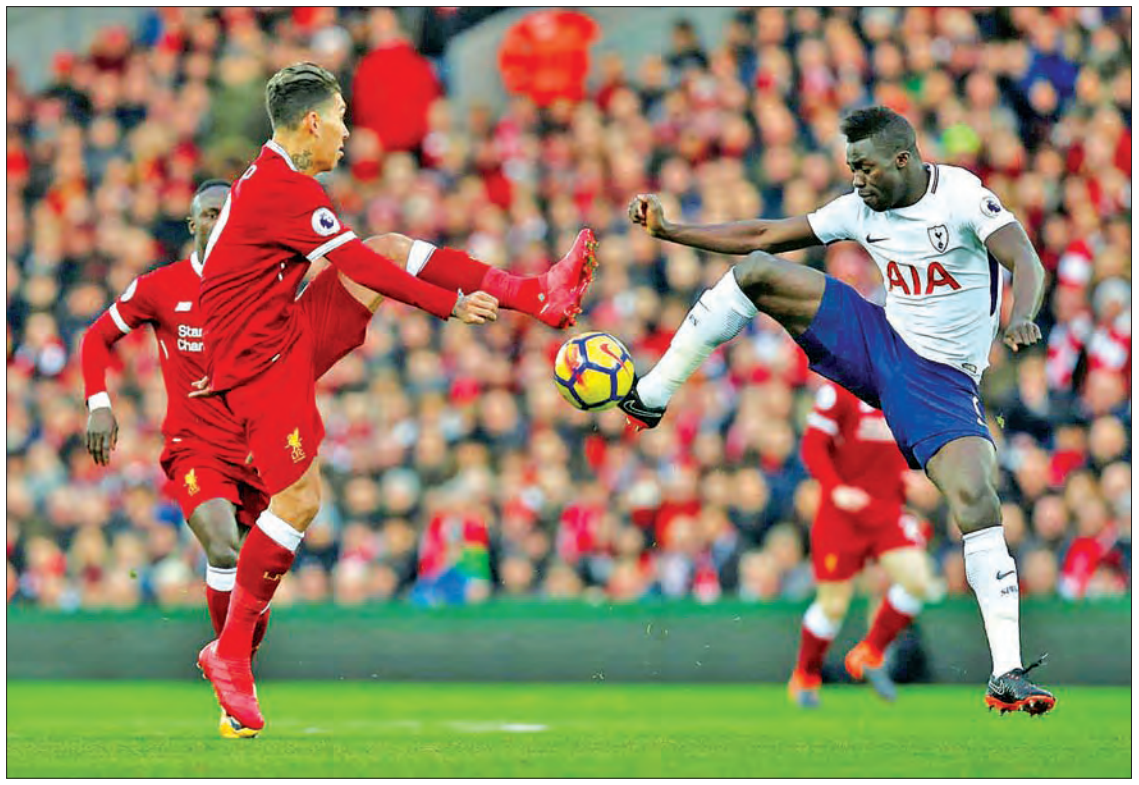
Liverpool's task was made easier by their early opener. Dier, in attempting to make an interception, diverted the ball into the path of Salah, putting the Egypt international clean through to break the deadlock.

Tottenham's only shot on target in the first 45 minutes came via the boot of Mousa Dembele, but his half-volley was easily saved by Loris Karius.

Spurs improved after the break and almost equalised through Son Heung-min in the 58th minute, but Karius stood tall to make the block.

The visitors equalised out of the blue when Wanyama thundered the ball into the net from distance before the drama unfolded.

Kane's tame penalty was easily saved by Karius after the England striker had been felled in the box before Salah danced his way past two Spurs defenders and fired into the net to score what looked likely to be the winner.



Tottenham's Davinson Sanchez in action with Liverpool's Roberto Firmino during the match of Premier League between Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur at Anfield in Liverpool, Britain on 4 February, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

However, the linesman spotted a foul by Van Dijk on substitute Erik Lamela in the box, giving Kane the chance to make amends.

"The softest touch in the whole game decides the game," Klopp said. "It is not a penalty."

Kane duly converted from the spot with virtually the last kick off the game to silence Anfield.—Reuters ■

AC Milan's coach Clarence Seedorf gestures during their Italian Serie A soccer match against Genoa at the Ferraris stadium in Genoa on 7 April, 2014. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Seedorf poised to coach Deportivo — reports

BARCELONA — Deportivo La Coruna are poised to appoint former AC Milan and Real Madrid midfielder Clarence Seedorf as their coach, Spanish media reported on Sunday.

The Dutchman, who previously managed Milan and Chinese side Shenzhen, will take over as the team's third coach this season after Cristobal Parralo, who was sacked on Sunday, and Pepe Mel. Depor, 18th in La Liga and three points from safety, were crushed 5-0 by Real Sociedad on Friday and have not won in seven league games. Seedorf won the Champions League five times as a player along with five league titles in Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. The 41-year-old has taken charge of only 36 games as a coach, with Depor turning to him after first-choice Martin Lasarte reportedly rejected their offer.—Reuters ■

Leeds fire manager Christiansen

LONDON — Leeds United have sacked Dane Thomas Christiansen as manager after eight months in charge, the Championship club said on Sunday.

Leeds, three-times English champions, lie 10th in the second-tier standings and have not recorded a league win since 26 December.

"Leeds United can confirm that head coach Thomas Christiansen has left the club," the club said in a statement.

"Chairman Andrea Radrizzani and the Board of Directors would like to thank Thomas and his staff for their hard work over the past eight months."

The 44-year-old Christiansen formerly managed Cypriot side APOEL.

Leeds, relegated from the Premier League in 2004, are looking for their seventh manager since 2014 and British media reported that former England boss Steve McClaren was among the favourites to get the job. —Reuters ■

Atletico see off Valencia to close gap on Barca

BARCELONA — Angel Correa's thunderbolt earned Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win over Valencia on Sunday, helping them to close the gap on Barcelona to nine points at the top of La Liga.

In a predictably tight game between the second and third-placed clubs at the Wanda Metropolitano few chances were created but Atletico had the upper hand, with Neto tipping away a Saul Niguez piledriver from some distance and then repelling Diego Costa's header from a corner. Correa broke the deadlock in spectacular fashion in the 59th minute, receiving the ball from Koke and crashing a shot into the top right corner from outside the area for his sixth league goal of the season.

Atletico Madrid's Angel Correa in action at Wanda Metropolitano in Madrid, Spain on 4 February, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

It was enough to help Atletico move closer to Barcelona, who dropped two points earlier after drawing 1-1 at local rivals Espanyol.—Reuters ■