

PARLIAMENT
Pyidaungsu
Hluttaw discusses
tax system
PAGE-2



LOCAL BUSINESS
Yangon Region
government plans to
reduce fuel oil price
PAGE-5



LOCAL BUSINESS
Myanmar likely to
reach target FDI for
2017-2018 FY
PAGE-5

OPINION
Prospects for rice
industry will bring
back past glory
PAGE-8-9

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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visits a booth displaying periodicals at the event celebrating International Women's Day in Nay Pyi Taw. **Photo: MNA**

Human rights start with women's rights: State Counsellor

Women on Myanmar's farms are true strength of the country

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday stressed the need for giving priority to promoting the role of women in Myanmar's rural areas.

She made the remark in

her opening speech at the International Women's Day event in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

"The role of women in rural areas is very important for our country, because 30 per cent of the GDP of Myanmar comes

from the agricultural sector, while 70 per cent of the total population is living in rural areas," she said.

The Union Government is striving to support and encourage the female population in

rural areas, she added.

"The more the women get their rights, the higher the standard of human rights of a country," said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

SEE PAGE-3

Employers warned not to resort to forced problem solving

By May Thet Hnin

YANGON Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein has warned employers not to demand a task force to deal with disputes involving employees.

He made the statement during the 15th regular meeting between Vice President U Myint Swe and entrepreneurs at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday.

"Some employers demand a government force to tackle labour problems. If labourers are

Unless the problems and disputes are dealt with immediately, they can create chaos and instability, he noted.

found violating laws, then they will face legal action. Problem-solving with force and taking legal action are totally different. Employers should not

expect the government to deal with the problem by using force," said U Phyo Min Thein.

"To ensure the development of the private sector and foreign investment promotion, employers and employees need to build a good relationship. Therefore, we encourage the development of a cordial relationship between them," he said. **SEE PAGE-3**



'BEST BANK IN MYANMAR'

Awarded by EUROMONEY 2017

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses tax system

THE seventh regular session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held its 13th-day meeting at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning.

At the meeting, union-level organisations explained the Public Accounts Joint Committee's report on the findings and comments on tax collected for the first six months of the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY), as well as matters discussed by the MPs on the report. The MPs also discussed the 2018 Union Tax Bill.

Union Minister U Ohn Win, deputy ministers U Hla Kyaw, U Tha Oo, Dr. Tun Naing, U Aung Htoo and U Maung Maung Win, and Nay Pyi Taw Council Member U Tin Htut explained the Joint Public Accounts Committee's report (4/2018) on the findings and comments on tax collected for the first six months of the 2017-2018 FY and the matters discussed by the MPs on the report.

Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win explained that of the Ks966.588 million earmarked for the first six months through the forest sector, Ks2.577.232 billion was collected, resulting in a collection percentage of 266.64.

In the mineral and gems sector, the planned amount for the first six months was Ks13.57 billion, but Ks19.942.53 billion was collected. Of the Ks320 million planned for pearl oyster tissue implant tax, Ks252.686 million was collected. Of the total Ks13.890 billion planned, Ks20.195.216 billion was collected, achieving a collection percentage of 145.39, said the Union Minister.

Similarly, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw explained that the Fishery Department planned to collect Ks1.500.38 billion, but Ks2.200.458 billion was collected. The excess collection



MPs discuss various tax systems and stock shares at the 13th day of the Seventh Regular Session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

was possible owing to a better price accrued through the auctioning of fish ponds and higher amount of tax collected through fishery works in the sea, said the Deputy Minister.

He further explained that the Immigration Department, Customs Department, port authority, the Department of Marine Administration, Myanma Economic Bank, Internal Revenue Department, Myanmar Police Force and the Fishery Department were providing one-stop service teams to the inspection stations.

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win then remarked on the comments made on increasing the tax collection and said the public was being educated on the benefits of paying stamp tax, so the habit of paying tax is instilled.

Keeping in mind those who had dutifully paid their taxes and to protect their rights, work plans are being set up to prevent illegal imports, and production and distribution of products for which tax is not paid. Starting from 2014, programmes to affix tax stamps on receipts of restaurants, hotels and motels were conducted. While importing fuel oil, a commercial tax of 5 per cent was collected, together with custom

duties collected by the Customs Department. Some Ks149.938 billion in outstanding taxes were to be collected, of which Ks75.895 billion was collected. Notifications were also published continuously in the daily newspaper to settle the outstanding taxes, which were being collected by field teams. Plans were drawn and implemented to form township support teams in states/regions to increase the tax base and ensure no one who ought to pay tax is left out, said the Deputy Minister.

The report was then submitted by Public Account Joint Committee Secretary Dr. Sai Hsai Kyauksan, and the Hluttaw decided to accept and confirm it.

Next, the 2018 Union Tax bill was discussed by MPs.

In his discussion, U Soe Thein of Kayah State constituency (9) said the reduction of the tax rate on cigarettes needs to be reviewed. To prevent the effect of cigarettes and liquor on the health of the public, countries worldwide are collecting high taxes on such products. Tax should be collected with a view towards benefiting public health, instead of businesses, he noted.

The government is helping and supporting small and me-

dium enterprises (SMEs) and should strive towards converting SMEs into businesses that do not harm the health and environment. Here, the example of Indonesia should be taken, said U Soe Thein. The amount of money circulating in the country is way above the amount printed by the Central Bank. Some local constructions were, in fact, just a front for foreign black money and drug money. He suggested considering the international money laundering law and other factors as well.

Daw Phyu Phyu Thin of Mingala Taungnyunt constituency said tax relief was being provided with an aim to help people participate in the country's economic development. Some countries, including America (United States of America), are giving tax amnesty. According to the proposed bill, incomes on which tax was not paid in Myanmar can enter into the legal fold. However, other countries have a good tax system and are good at implementing it, while Myanmar lagged in the implementation, he said.

Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin added that when businesses in the country develop, work opportunities will become transparent for workers, resulting in higher

living standards. However, if the money owned by Myanmar nationals in foreign banks and black money become white in bulk, tax reduction will not be beneficial. The real aim of tax amnesties is not to get more tax but to create investments that are beneficial to the country in the long term, said Daw Cho Cho.

U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency noted that the stock share market was yet to be a success in the country. To raise the understanding and participation of the public in stock shares, developing the stock share sector for the country's development and raising the living standard of the people is the responsibility of the government. U Khin Cho said that it was the responsibility of the legislative and administrative sectors of the government to develop the stock share sector.

Tatmadaw Amyotha Hluttaw representative Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Zaw said SME businesses must be considered when providing tax breaks. Clause 25 of the tax bill is welcome, but the matters of money laundering and black money becoming white must be noted. Reducing the tax rate to an amount acceptable by the public will increase the amount of tax flowing into the state coffers, but the time frame of six months is too short a duration. It should be at least a year to ensure there is sufficient time for the people of this country to adopt a good tax culture.

The money involved in real estate transactions is high, but the tax obtained from this is low. People are paying a high amount of money to buy and rent real estate, and if tax is collected at a low and transparent rate, the public's trust over the tax system will rise, while the state will also obtain higher revenue from it, said Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Zaw. —Myo Myint, Hmwe Kyu Zin ■

Nippon Foundation builds 100th school in Rakhine State

THE Ministry for Border Affairs held a ceremony to commemorate the opening of Kwee Tel Basic Education Middle School in Sittway, Rakhine State on Monday.

Kwee Tel school is the 100th school built by the Ministry in collaboration with the Nippon Foundation and Bridge Asia

Japan (BAJ), an INGO based in Japan.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu delivered the opening speech at the ceremony followed by a speech from Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Major General Than Htut. Nippon Foundation Chairman Mr. Yohei Sasakawa explained the school

projects they are implementing in Rakhine State. Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Tateshi Higuchi then gave a short speech followed by BAJ Chairperson Ms. Etsuko Araishi explaining their future plans for constructing additional schools.

Afterwards, Deputy Director for Rakhine State Basic Edu-

cation Department, U Sein Htun Hla, and a representative of Kyeel Tel Village expressed their gratitude for the school. Ms. Akiko Mori, a BAJ representative, then conferred commemorative flags to the attendees before they toured the completed school.

The Nippon Foundation has donated an estimated US\$6

million (Ks8.03 billion) for the construction of 100 schools in Rakhine State between the years 2013 and 2018. The initiative is headed by the Department for Border and Ethnic Development under the Ministry for Border Affairs with construction handled by BAJ. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Human rights start with women's rights: State Counsellor

FROM PAGE-1

"At the same time, using the power of the mass of women would contribute to the economic development."

Giving equal rights should begin with the family, at home, she said.

The ceremony to observe International Women's Day was conducted by the All Myanmar Women's Affairs Committee with the motto "Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives".

She also called for the new generation of women to make efforts for their security and for improving their skills while emulating the talented Myanmar women in successive past eras.

She also called on women, who make up more than half of the country's total population, to use the democratic practices of mutual respect, understanding and trust of each other so that they can fully apply their ability and skills when they participate in building a peaceful democratic federal society.

Yesterday's ceremony was also attended by First Lady Daw



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the International Women's Day event in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Su Su Lwin, Daw Khin Thet Htay, wife of Vice President U Myint Swe, Dr. Shwe Hlwan, wife of Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Union Ministers and their wives, the Union Auditor-Gen-

eral, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, MPs and departmental heads and their wives, Patron of Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation and

Chairperson, Chairperson of the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs.

Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Re-

lief and Resettlement, suggested that giving a larger role to women in nation building tasks will speed up the country's development. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Appointment of Venezuelan Ambassador agreed on

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Jorge Rondón Uzcátegui as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with residence in Hanoi.

Mr. Jorge Rondón Uzcátegui received Bachelor degree in International Relations in 1971 and Master degree in Economy in 1979 from the Central University of Venezuela. In 1973, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and served under various capacities at the Ministry and at the Venezuela's embassies in Iraq, Holland, Italy, Kenya, Belgium, Nigeria, Jordan and Viet Nam. Currently, he is serving as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.—Myanmar News Agency

Ministry's official website sole authority to provide eVisa

FOREIGNERS can apply for eVisa only through the official website of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population: <https://www.evisa.moip.gov.mm>.

However, some foreign tourists were found to have entered the country by correcting certain data and information in the eVisa approval letter that

was earlier issued through the ministry's eVisa website. Some websites were also found to be charging additional fees to apply for eVisa through the ministry's official website.

The ministry has not permitted tour agents to charge an additional fee to help visitors procure eVisa through the ministry's official website. The

ministry will not be responsible for eVisa applied through other websites operated by tour agents.

Legal action will be taken against anyone, in or outside Myanmar, who provides fake eVisas. The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population started the eVisa website in August 2014, and Myanmar

Ease Net Co. Ltd. is the sole service provider of the online eVisa system. No other entity and website are being permitted to provide eVisa, and the ministry's eVisa website is the sole one.

The ministry had issued a warning against fake eVisas in the state-owned newspaper on 2 June 2015.—MNA ■

Employers warned not to resort to forced problem solving

FROM PAGE-1

"Foreign countries reject products that are a result of labour exploitation. Therefore, our Yangon Region handles such problems with the utmost care and consideration," said the Yangon Region Chief Minister.

The Yangon Region government has solved many problems between employers and employees. Unless the problems and disputes are dealt with immediately, they can create chaos and instability, he noted.

After the Yangon Region

government issued a warning against forced problem-solving at the meeting, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association and Myanmar Industries Associations reported about strikes and unlawful means being used in industrial zones.

Officials from these two associations mentioned that labour strikes in industrial zones were creating economic and social chaos, with labourers even threatening co-workers who did not join them with physical violence. It can harm productivity, delay shipments and result in the suspension of purchase or-

ders, they maintained.

They called for prompt government action in line with existing laws. Additionally, they asked the government to issue a directive on the employment contract, for it to be made adaptable to the work environment, in line with the laws.

"There are reasonable reasons for labour strikes — mostly job oppression and exploitation of labour rights. Most employers do not deal with individual complaints in a friendly manner but dismiss them from the job. Labourers finally resort to strikes, as they

are unable to negotiate with the employers," said Daw Khaing Zar Aung, executive member of Confederation of Trade Union Myanmar. Labour-related disputes mostly happen in foreign-owned factories rather than domestic ones. Also, they occur in factories that do not have the presence of a labour union. Further, labour strikes are held only after seeking official permission, she said.

Although there is a systematic mechanism to solve such problems, there is widespread criticism of the task performers, she added. ■

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A village pagoda damaged after earthquake in Nay Pyi Taw

A moderate earthquake rocked Nay Pyi Taw's Ottara Thiri Township early yesterday morning.

The quake was strong enough to knock down the diamond bud of a 55 ft. high pagoda in Mau Lay Bin village. It also caused severe damage to the bottom of a 45ft high pagoda in Moe Swe village in Ottara Thiri Township, including the collapse of a nine feet high



Local residents from Ottara Thiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, salvaging pieces of a pagoda partially destroyed by a 5.5 magnitude earthquake yesterday. **PHOTO:MDN**

satellite stupa. A village medical clinic in Shwe Nan Thar ward also suffered damages that included a collapsed wall. The quake struck

at 3:43 am with a magnitude 5.5 on the Richter scale. Its epicenter was about 12 miles northwest of the Nay Pyi Taw seismological

observatory and 10 kilometer west of Mayankhone village in Ottara Thiri Township.—Myanmar Digital News

BSL-3 TB lab in Yangon to be completed this year

THE construction of a bio-safety level 3 tuberculosis laboratory (BSL-3 lab) in the Yangon Region is slated to be completed this year, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The laboratories will be built in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi. In 2016, some 150,000 new tuberculosis (TB) patients got access to public health and treatment. Myanmar will continue to conduct TB inspection

tours. Further, outpatient TB centres are being constructed with the aim of controlling the spread of TB through the Three Millennium Development Goal Fund (3MDG) Myanmar, according to a report in Myawady Daily on Tuesday.

In 2014, there was a TB outbreak among 457 people over 100,000, resulting in the death of 53 people. According to the Global TB Report 2016, some

365 new patients over 100,000 were detected with TB, resulting in the death of 49 people.

TB, HIV and multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) are still major public health concerns in the country. The inspection tour of new TB patients and treatment projects are being carried out in cooperation with Civil Service Organisations.

The Ministry of Health and

Sports provided free medical treatment to some 1,000 MDR-TB patients in the 2014-2015 fiscal year (FY), and some 1,200 each in the 2015-2016 and the 2016-2017 FYs.

The union government had allocated some Ks14 million to combat TB in the 1995-1996 FY, while the funding has increased to Ks626 million in the 2010-2011 FY, and Ks3,804 million in the 2016-2017 FY. – GNLM

Traffic police take action against over 2,000 drivers for not wearing seat belts

THE traffic police have taken action against more than 2,000 drivers for not wearing a seat belt while driving in the Yangon Region this year, said Police Captain Win Lwin of No.2 Traffic Police Office (Yangon).

"Drivers who fail to wear a seat belt will be arrested and have to pay a fine to the police,"

he added. The number of cases of drivers not wearing seat belts has increased in February compared with last month. There were 1,107 cases in February, as against the 924 cases in January.

In 2017, the traffic police registered some 11,575 such cases in the Yangon Region,

with 1,250 cases in January, 1,305 cases in February, 996 cases in March, 601 cases in April, 490 cases in May, 860 cases in June, 701 cases in July, 1,061 cases in August, 1,244 cases in September, 1,079 cases in October, 1,050 cases in November and 937 cases in December.

There are some 10 joint

traffic police groups who are educating drivers on the need to wear seat belts, as well as apprehending those who fail to wear them.

Motorists and passengers who fail to wear a seat belt are liable to pay a fine of Ks30,000 under the Motor Vehicle Law. —GNLM

Two six-wheel trucks carrying live chickens confiscated on Hpa-an-Hton-ai Road

A police unit successfully intercepted two trucks carrying illegally imported live chickens from Thailand along Hpa-an-Hton-ai Road on Wednesday morning.

During an inspection tour, the Hpa-an anti-crime police force, led by Inspector Thet Soe, confiscated some 1,070 live chickens in 231 cages from a six-wheel truck (YG-N/5J-9446), driven by Dargat aka Kyaw Kyaw (40).

Next, another six-wheel

truck carrying some 1,000 live chickens in 125 cages, driven by Ilsook aka Myat Ko Oo aka Ko Oo (38), was also intercepted.

The Hpa-an police force is preparing to take action against the two truck drivers under the Animal Health and Development Law. The live chickens were sent to the Hpa-an District Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, according to the Hpa-an police force. —Nay Myo Lwin (IPRD)



The truck used to smuggle live chickens illegally imported from Thailand into Hpa-an, Kayin State. **PHOTO: HPA-AN IPRD**



An employee at a gas station fills up a car while his colleague waits for another customer. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWA**

Yangon Region government plans to reduce fuel oil price

May Thet Hnin

THE Yangon Region government is making arrangements to reduce the price of fuel oil, as the domestic prices are high compared with global prices.

"We can control the price of fuel oil if we can store a million gallons. Now, the price is under the control of those who are permitted to store the fuel oil. In the 2018-2019 fiscal year (FY), the Yangon Region government plans to control these things. We are planning to form a company," said U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Chief Minister, during the 15th meeting between the Vice President and entrepreneurs, which was held on 7 March at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation

of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

"Fuel prices can be controlled if we purchase and store the fuel oil for six months or a year until the fuel price declines. In times of emergency, it is important for the country to be able to store fuel oil for long periods to maintain stability," he added.

Dr. Win Myint, secretary of Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association, said the price of fuel oil and the profit margin in the 2017-2018 FY were at the level where they should be.

"We update the price of fuel oil daily on our association's website. From the imported price and wholesale distribution price to the price in retail shops, profit percentage and transport charges, it can be

seen that the prices are stable and reasonable," he added.

"Many fuel oil shops were opened on lands without La Na 39 (farm land used for other purposes). There is no difficulty in granting permission to open a fuel oil shop according to the procedure, but there can be objections from neighbours. Then, the shops can't be opened," said U Phyo Min Thein.

There are some 70 fuel oil importing companies, and more than 2,000 fuel stations in the country. Most of the fuel is imported from Singapore. Some 200,000 tonnes of petrol and 400,000 tonnes of diesel are imported into the country every month. Petrol consumption in Myanmar increased six-fold over the past five years. ■

Myanmar likely to reach target FDI for 2017-2018 FY

MYANMAR is set to achieve its target of US\$6 billion for foreign direct investment (FDI) for the current fiscal year (FY), according to the Ministry of Commerce (MIC).

Myanmar has already received more than \$5 billion in FDI, while it is just a month away from the end of the 2017-2018 FY, said U Tun Aung Kyaw,

Deputy Director General of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

We are enquiring with businesses about their difficulties and responding accordingly, he added.

For the 2017-2018 FY, the MIC has approved 206 FDI businesses worth \$4,508.453 million

until February 2018, and a total investment, including pumping of capital into existing projects, of \$5,307.207 million.

Besides these, the MIC approved an FDI of \$366.530 million in Thilawa Special Economic Zone under the special economic zone law, with total investments reaching \$5,673.737 million. —GNLM ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့တိုင်း: **"Sunday Special"** အချုပ်ပိုင် (၈)
မျက်နှာပေါင်သော The Global New Light of Myanmar
နေ့စဉ်ထုတ် သတင်းစာကို အောက်ပါမြို့များတွင် ဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Independent journalists visit troubled areas in Maungdaw

Three dead, one hurt in IED explosion in Maungdaw Tsp

"Sunday Special"
အချုပ်ပိုင် (၈) မျက်နှာ
ပေါင်သော

နေပြည်တော်
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နေပြည်တော်
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ဧည့်သည်ခန်း၊ ခရိုင်လမ်းဆုံ၊ နေပြည်တော်၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၃၆၁၄၈၊ ၀၆၇၃၆၁၂၉

ရန်ကုန်
The Global New Light of
Myanmar သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊
ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း၊ ဗဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊
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မန္တလေး
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မကွေး
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မကွေး
နတ်မောက်လမ်း၊ တပ်မ (၈၈) တပ်နယ်ချေးအနီး၊
မကွေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၃၂၃၇၁၂

ကချင်ပြည်
မြို့ပေါ် (၃-၁)၊ အမှတ် (၁) လမ်းသွယ်၊ မြို့ပေါ်လမ်း၊
ကချင်တိုင်း၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၄၂၂၄၉၂

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EIA workshop held on offshore supply base project

AN offshore supply base that will support offshore oil and gas production will be implemented and constructed by Myint & Associates in Ayeyawady Region, Ngayokkang Township, Nanthapu. An environmental impact assessment (EIA) workshop over the project was held yesterday morning at Vantage Tower, Yangon.

In the years to come, offshore oil and gas production will develop. Myanmar didn't

have an international-level offshore supply base. We are relying on bases in Thailand and Singapore.

This is a waste of time and money. That is why Myint & Associates is arranging to set up an offshore supply base, said Myint & Associates Company Executive Director (Government & Public Affairs) U Tint Swe.

A study on the offshore supply base project affecting the natural environment,

eco-system and human society was being conducted since September 2017, said Craig Reid, Country Manager of Environmental Resource Management which is consulted for environmental, health, safety, risk and social matters.

The offshore supply base is planned to be completed in 2020-2021, and once it is completed, it will support offshore gas production in the offshore area of Rakhine State.—Taya ■



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) workshop in session to construct an offshore gas production base in Rakhine State. **PHOTO: TYAN**

Rain, thundershowers expected in Kachin, Shan states

RAIN or thundershowers are expected in Kachin and Shan states for two days, as the weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay, and generally fair elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, according to the Myanmar Daily weather report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology yesterday evening.

The forecast for Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and neighbouring areas for today is generally fair, and for Yangon and its neighbouring area is partly cloudy.

Seas will be slight in Myanmar waters. The wave height will be some 2-4 feet off and along Myanmar coasts.

Weather forecast for 2nd Dekad (10 days) of March 2018

The weather forecast for 2nd Dekad (10 days) of March 2018 is generally fair over the North Bay, and partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, according to the 10 days weather forecast report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology on 8 March 2018.

Rainfall over the next 10 days is likely to be above normal in the Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, Kachin State, and normal in the Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states.

There will be two to three days of rainfall in the Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, and

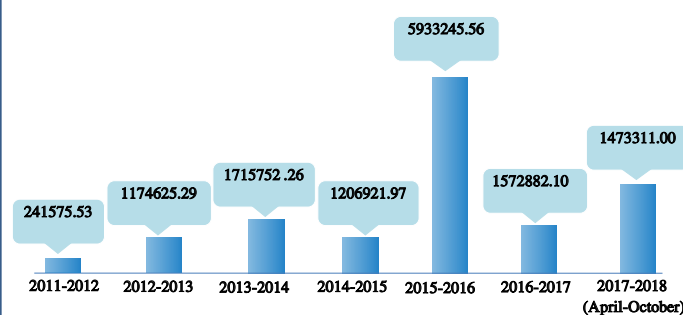
Kachin State, and one day of rainfall in the Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, as well as in Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states.

The daytime temperature will be some 1.5 °C above normal in the Mandalay, Magway, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, and Kayin and Mon states, and normal in the Sagaing, Bago and Taninthayi regions, and Kachin, Shan, Chin, Rakhine and Kayah states.

Foggy days are expected for five to seven days in the Sagaing region, and Kachin, Shan, Chin, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states, and for two to four days in the Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, as well as in Rakhine State. —GNLM

Situation of Myanmar Citizen Investment

(Kyat Million)



Source: Directorate of Investment & Company Administration (DICA)
Information Unit: Central Statistical Organization

34 inmates from Insein Correctional Department takes matric exam

THIRTY four inmates from the Insein Correctional Department have taken the matriculation examination for 2018.

The department has arranged classes for those who are sitting for the examination at the prison.

Teachers from schools and educated inmates have volunteered for the classes.

About 20 inmates from the prison sat for the examination last year and nine passed the exam.

The State granted presidential pardon to those who passed the examination with distinctions in the past.

Private donors also provided cash assistance to those who registered for the exam in the prison.—Zaw Gyi



Inmates from Insein Correctional Department taking the matriculation examination for 2018. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**

Talks on 60 year Myanmar-Japan diplomatic journey book

BOOK Club of Pyinmana will conduct a talk on the book titled "60 year Myanmar-Japan diplomatic journey" at Kantawmingala Hall in Pyinmana on 11 March.

The book club is formed by the Information and Public

Relations Department of the Ministry of Information.

The Tun Foundation award winning book by Khin Maung Tin (Master of Arts-MA) and the writer will participate in the book review. Anyone can attend the event.—Pyinmana IPRD

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends 15th ACDFIM

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General and other ASEAN Commanders-in-Chief attended the 15th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Informal Meeting (ACDFIM) held in The Fullerton Hotel in Singapore yesterday.

The assembly's chairman C-in-C of Singapore Defence Force Lt-Gen Perry Lim delivered the opening speech and proceeded to show the 15th ACDFIM documentary video to the ASEAN C-in-Cs in attendance.

This was followed with presentations from the Director of Singapore Military Intelligence Brig-Gen Ong Tze-Ch'n about the results of the 15th ASEAN Military Intelligence Informal Meeting, and from the Director of Singapore Military Joint Operations Brig-Gen Tan Chee Wee about the results of the 8th ASEAN Military Operations Informal Meeting.

Next, Lt-Gen Perry Lim headed the discussions on various topics with fellow ASEAN C-in-Cs taking turns in alphabetical order.



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meeting with Malaysia's C-in-C General Tan Sri Raja Mohamed Affandi Bin Raja Mohamed Noor. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing led the discussion on building mutual trust between ASEAN countries through co-operation. He said all ASEAN member countries need to work to integrate their differences in accordance with the ASEAN's motto of "Our Vision, One Identity, One Community".

The Senior General said that the world is currently facing trans-border crimes, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and cyber security threats and also other new forms of security threats. He said Myanmar is currently facing possible threats from il-

legal immigrants and measures have been taken by intelligence agencies to counter possible terrorist attacks. He said Myanmar is striving to effectively counter both conventional and irregular threats to the nation.

This was followed by the C-in-Cs discussing the 2018-2019

two-year working plan for ASEAN Defence Services and then signing the joint-declaration of the 15th ACDFIM.

Next, Singapore's Commander-in-Chief passed over the duty of Chairman for the 16th ACDFIM to the next host country's commander-in-chief, General Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan of the Royal Thai Armed Forces.

In the evening, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met separately with General Tarnchaiyan Srisuwan and Malaysia's C-in-C General Tan Sri Raja Mohamed Affandi Bin Raja Mohamed Noor.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended a welcoming dinner hosted by Singapore C-in-C Lt-Gen Perry Lim at the Ocean Gallery in S.E.A Aquarium Resort World Sentosa on 7 March.

Lt-Gen Perry Lim and his wife greeted all the ASEAN C-in-Cs first before giving a tour of the Ocean Gallery. Lt-Gen Perry Lim then delivered a welcoming speech before having dinner together with the invited guests.—Myanmar News Agency

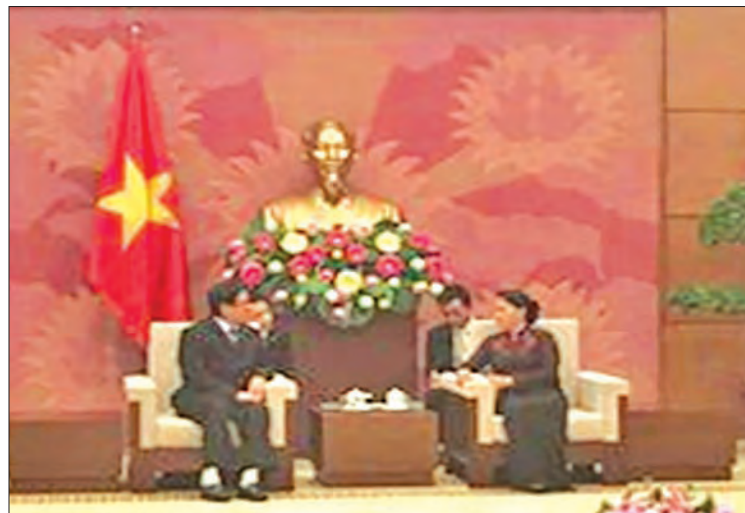
U Aye Tha Aung meets with Chairpersons of the National Assembly of Viet Nam

By the invitation of Parliamentary Network on the World Bank & International Monetary Fund (PN), a delegation led by Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung met with Mrs Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, the Chairpersons of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, at the Vietnamese Parliament, yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed the matters relating to boosting the relation-

ship between the two Hluttaws, governments and people; exchange programme, International Parliamentary Network and cooperation. Also present at the meeting were Ambassador of Myanmar to Viet Nam U Kyaw Soe Win, Myanmar Chargé d'affaires U Thaw Tar Aung and other embassy staff.

Then they exchanged the souvenirs and visited the building of Parliament.—Myanmar News Agency



Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung meets with Mrs Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, the Chairpersons of the National Assembly of Viet Nam. **PHOTO: MNA**



Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Transport and Communications U Chit Way hands over K101,792,000 to Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye. **PHOTO: MNA**

MPT hands over cash by mobile service users to UEHRD

More than K110 million donated by MPT mobile service users were handed over to the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State-UEHRD in Yangon yesterday.

The mobile users donated the cash by sending SMS to be

spend on rehabilitation and resettlement works in Rakhine State.

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Transport and Communications U Chit Way handed over the cash to the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement at the ministry

in Nay Pyi Taw through Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye.

Following the ceremony, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye handed over 3,000 clothes to Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Zone Tein for the internally displaced persons in Chibwe and Panwa in Kachin State.—MNA

Prospects for rice industry will bring back past glory

THE rice industry plays a key role in Myanmar's economy. With rice exports higher than they have been in 70 years, Myanmar prospects for regaining the past glory as the world's top rice exporter are bright.

But we need to be farsighted in order to predict the needs of the world market.

Most of the world has switched to organic crops, which are considered safer and healthier. We need to double our efforts to catch up with other countries because we have lagged behind in development for decades.

Today is the time for our new generation of farmers to have the mindset that they can turn opportunities in the agricultural industry into prosperity through modernization and smart planning. Today is the time to establish a new culture in the rice industry by ensuring the integrity of farming in the next generation.

We should take lessons from developed countries which are facing shortage of farm labourers as youths in rural areas leave their farmlands in search of jobs in the cities.

To counter climate change effects, we should find new technologies, for example, waste-to-products technology such as paddy-husk fired power plants, etc. The next generation of farmers should take a leading role in innovation in the agricultural sector.

the key for balanced agricultural development of the country.

The Union government has pledged to support organic farming, giving importance to balancing growth and ecology.

The most important part is to carry out research based on climate change and its impacts on crops.

The time has come to take seriously the path of agricultural development that is climate-change friendly into consideration. This will foster economic growth.

To counter climate change effects, we should find new technologies, for example, waste-to-products technology such as paddy-husk fired power plants, etc. The next generation of farmers should take a leading role in innovation in the agricultural sector. We hope to see the new generation turn the traditional farming of their ancestors into modern farming. The Union Government has pledged to support the new generation as much as it can. Businesses which are connected with the agricultural industry will not hesitate to assist them. If we work together, we will achieve success. Unity is strength. ■

Boosting Productivity and Economic Driving Force of Myanmar

Ti Kyi Maung

AGRICULTURE is the main industry in Myanmar, and rice remains one of the most crucial agricultural commodities of the country. The production of crops including pulses, beans, sesame, groundnut, sugar-cane, tobacco, sunflower, maize, jute, wheat and fish has increased due to supportive government policies as well as favourable market forces.

An agro-based nation

Myanmar is an agro-based nation, comprising of 70 percent of the rural populace as paddy-growers. The country possesses a vast area of arable land for growing and creeks, ponds, rivers and shallow parts of the sea for breeding fish and prawns. Provided that agriculture and breeding can be implemented effectively within 4-5 months, we can depend upon these sectors for national export.

What we mainly need is subvention, techniques and markets. In the past, people ever experienced rapid plunge of paddy prices. But as the government managed to open markets by linking with other countries, it caused paddy prices to recover into the normal stage.

Farmers raise livestock for both food and labour purposes. This includes cattle, buffalo, goats, sheep, oxen, chicken and others while most cattle are raised throughout the country.

Agricultural Sector

Agriculture can provide a majority of the employment and income in Myanmar and it includes crop production, hunting, fishing and forestry which are responsible for much of the income and employment in the country.

Agriculture including crop production, hunting, fishing, and forestry, is regarded the mainstay of the Myanmar's economy. The country produces enough food to feed its entire population.

Rice is the most important agricultural commodity of Myanmar and the crop is cultivated along the river valleys, coastal areas, and delta areas. A wide variety of crops are cultivated in the northern part of Myanmar and rubber and other commercially



Photo: Phoe Khwar

useful products are cultivated in the lower part of the country.

Economic Liberalization

Thanks to economic liberalization, economic growths have improved to some extent. Under the new economic system, the government distributed land among the landless, improved irrigation facilities, and increased the prices of paddy which the government procures from the farmers. Some private activity in the export sector has been allowed since the years of economic liberalization. As a result, the outcome of the agricultural sector in the GDP has gone up.

In order to maintain the steady flow of economy, systematic plans are needed to shape the economic development by encouraging SMEs in the long run. With the increasing amount of import substitutes, commodity prices will decrease and citizens will have more job opportunities at the same time.

Fishery Sector
Myanmar is rich in vast fishery resources in its coastal waters, rivers and inland lakes. Myanmar's re-emergence in the world of commerce offers exciting opportunities to address the issues of sustainability and conservation, as well as to boost its export potential.

According to data provided by the Department of Fishery, the country has earned US\$535 million through the export of marine products in the 2017-2018 fiscal years. Myanmar's fishery products are exported to many countries including China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

Fisheries Federation Association. The fishery sector is regarded as a very crucial stage which can contribute to domestic consumption, as well as generating national income.

Increase the productivity of fishery products

All possible ways and means should be used to increase the productivity of value-added fishery products, such as local dried fish businesses, and encourage the establishment of canneries and fish-ball factories across the nation. It can help Myanmar achieve the desired export earnings from marine products. The fishery sector plays an important role for the social and economic development of the country.

Stable Economic Development

In bringing about the stable economic development of a country, sustainable provision of supports for the development of small businesses from the private sector is essentially needed to be done while building up the

economic enterprises. In an economy, small productive industries are the most fundamental ones, increasing per capita income.

There are various kinds of spheres for economic in Myanmar. It is essential to constantly monitor conditions of small businesses from the public economic sector and to simultaneously encourage them. It is because a nation's economic development is directly proportional to the development of SMEs.

The requirement for the betterment of economy is for export products to become strong and imported goods to be reduced. The country is still relying upon imports of commodities of small value, not to mention heavy commodities. As it is, products of SMEs are finding it difficult to penetrate promising markets.

Imports from foreign countries are presently occupying a large section in the markets. That is attributed to their quality, reasonable prices and availability of adequate amount as much as what the people demand. Moreover, region-originated institu-

tions need to monitor and help their needs for the development of SMEs whereas businessmen and entrepreneurs as well are required to try their best to penetrate the whole market, without looking at their personal interests only.

In any economic, political or administrative system, only a solid foundation can support the emergence of strong infrastructures. In a democratic nation, the people play an important role, being the very basic foundation of human society.

There are still many challenges in various sectors on the path of economic development in the country. But there are some positive signs such as a gradual ease of doing business in Myanmar and consequently the attention given to the private sector which can boost the economic development. Even though Myanmar has numerous challenges, private sector development is the main driving force behind the national economic growth. ■

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung

UN highlights need for action to empower women and girls in Asia-Pacific on International Women's Day

Governments in Asia and the Pacific must take urgent action to ensure greater empowerment of women and girls to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations underscored at a forum in Bangkok today.

In commemoration of International Women's Day 2018, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UN Women and the UN RCM Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women held a joint event to discuss the progress made for women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality under the global theme: 'Time is Now: rural and urban activists transforming women's lives.'

Against the backdrop of an unprecedented global outcry for women's rights, the commemoration sought to transform this momentum into action, to advance women's voice, participation and leadership towards the achievement of gender equality and the 2030 Agenda.

Addressing the forum, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP stressed that responding to the call of the 2030 Agenda to 'leave no one behind' requires urgent action to ensure women in all settings are empowered in society and the economy - through equal opportunity, choice and access to resources.

"It is incumbent on policy makers to respond to legitimate demands for greater equality and justice with concrete actions," she said. "The sustainable approach is to empower women across Asia and the Pacific, in towns and the countryside. This would not only protect their human rights, but also bring considerable economic benefits. Let's make 2018 the year when gender equality, inclusive growth and sustainable development were all given a shot in the arm across our region."

Dr. Miwa Kato, Regional Director of the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific added that UN Women's recently launched global flagship report 'Turning Promises into Action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' highlights stark gender inequalities.

"Globally, women do 2.6 times the unpaid care and domestic work that men do," explained Dr. Kato. "In Central and Southern Asia, the figure is higher at 3 times, with a huge variation across countries within the Asia-Pacific region. In Cambodia, women do as much as 10 times the unpaid care and domestic work as men while the corresponding figure for Bhutan is 1.8. This highlights the dilemma so many women face of reconciling income with care, for which context specific policy change and action is so needed."

Dr. Kato also underscored the importance of moving from promise to action, with innovative financing models to support the advancement of gender equality and the further production of data to support gender-responsive policy-making and programming.

Women and girls continue to face structural barriers that impact their human rights and prevent them from achieving their full potential. Achieving adequate living standards, women's economic empowerment, land rights, food security, health care, quality education, resilience and preparedness to deal with disasters and conflicts are among the main challenges faced by rural women and girls in Asia-Pacific. In addition, urban poor women face heightened inequalities in access to infrastructure and services; as well as suffer high rates of violence which restrict their mobility and use of public spaces.

The event featured a panel discussion moderated by Ms. Fiza Farhan, member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment and Chairperson to the Chief Minister of Punjab's Task Force on Women's Economic Empowerment.

The panel members included Ms. Raushan Yesbulatova, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of Thailand and Permanent Representative to ESCAP; Ms. Mary Jane N. Real, Co-Director, Urgent Action Fund - Asia Pacific; Ms. Mahmuda Begum Shelly, Executive Director, Manob Progoti Shongho, and Ms. Ho Tran Thanh Huyen, Youth Programme Officer, Da Nang Youth Union.—ESCAP News ■

News release on the act of British MPs in connection with Rakhine issue and the decision of European Union Foreign Affairs Council meeting on Myanmar

1. European Union Foreign Affairs Council held its meeting with the participation of the ministers of foreign affairs of the European Union-EU on 26 February 2018. The meeting reached a conclusion that continued help must be provided to Bengali refugees, the media and the fact-finding mission of the UN Human Rights Council must be rendered freedom and cooperation, continued cooperation must be made with the special rapporteur on human rights, the verdict under the power of the International Criminal Court-ICC must be accepted, the defence cooperation with Myanmar must be reduced to the lowest level, the proposal to impose targeted restrictions and sanctions on senior officers of the Myanmar Tatmadaw who are responsible for human rights violations must be presented soonest.

2. Such a decision at the European Union Foreign Affairs Council meeting was triggered by 102 MPs of the House of Commons led by MP Rushanara Ali who submitted a letter to British Secretary of State Boris Johnson. The letter made a demand to exert more pressures on Tatmadaw leaders in connection with the Rakhine issue and to transfer them to the ICC and to discuss the issue at the European Union Foreign Affairs Council meeting.

3. The report also launched an accusation saying that over 688,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh due to offensive launched by the Myanmar military against Rohingya civilians, that according to the Bangladeshi government the number of refugees reached its country exceeded one million, that tens of thousands of local residents were fleeing Myanmar every week, that they were facing violence, intimidation and destruction of their property and belongings, and that news were appearing that they could no longer live in their homes because of pressures. Moreover, Medecins Sans Frontieres said that nearly 7,000 Rohingyas including 730 children were killed within a month in 2017, that the actual number could be higher than its estimation, and that military and security personnel and military-supported groups and people's militia raped hundreds of Rohingya women.

4. The report also stated that the government had no means to guarantee a safe return of the residents as it could not control the Tatmadaw and that although the government is nearly two years old, except from forming committees it could not do anything to improve the civil rights and humanitarian issue of the Rohingya in Myanmar. The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services is enlarging the conflict

with ethnic groups without any restrictions and threatening and disturbing the peace process. For the first time in many years, more military jets are being used to cause more civilian deaths and injuries. The military-appointed ministries are terribly disturbing and destroying the reform proposals of the democratically elected government.

5. The report continuously uses the term "Rohingya" which is totally unacceptable for all the people of Myanmar. The accusations made in the report are the same old ones that have been made since the start of the Rakhine issue. Press meets and the press releases of the government have already declared that the said accusations are wrong and the Tatmadaw True News Information Team has released for ten times the true situation of Rakhine issue.

6. In fact the conflicts broke out in Buthidaung-Maungtaung region of Rakhine State in 2012, 2016 and 2017 after Myanmar democracy transition in 2010 were not started by ethnic natives or security forces including the Tatmadaw. They were ignited by the illegal migrants who have been unlawfully living in the area for many consecutive years. The 2012 crisis broke out when Bengalis raped a native Rakhine woman and the 2016-2017 conflict broke out when armed terrorist group launched synchronized attacks against the police border guard headquarters and police outposts. During the conflict, nine Tatmadaw members, 21 police security personnel totalling 30 and 21 natives, 52 Hindus, 51 Muslims totalling 124 lost their lives. Ethnic natives and Hindus became homeless as they had to flee their homes. The government and the Tatmadaw have already released information about the events. ARSA, an extremist terrorist group has already committed that it launched all the terrorist attacks. ARSA also brutally murdered people of its own race and religion in Buthidaung-Maungtaung region. The government and the Tatmadaw conveyed the diplomats, local media persons and international media persons to conflict zones to know the truth. Sadly the report totally ignored the terrorist acts of terrorist and made one-sided accusations against the security forces doing their work in accord with the law. During the terrorist attacks occurred on 26 August 2017, about 4,000 extremist ARSA terrorist launched a well-planned attacks using excessive force. The conflicts have complicated and long historical backgrounds. This must be known. After the 1824 First Anglo-Myanmar War the British government imported from the Bengal region of India to use as farm labourers in Rakhine State. They settled

in the state and their population grew. Rakhine-Bengali conflict started when those Bengalis attacked and drove out native ethnics from their homeland. 152 Rakhine villages were destroyed in Alethankyaw incident in 1942 which displaced over 100,000 Rakhine people and left over 20,000 dead. Mujahid armed insurgency and Rohingya National Liberation Army emerged after Myanmar gained independence, and attempted to establish Buthidaung, Maungtaung and Rathaedaung townships in Rakhine State as Arkistan or Rohingya State. Every country in the world has its own citizenship laws and citizenship eligibility criteria, and as citizenship will be granted to eligible ones only through citizenship verification process, they were time and again urged to accept citizenship verification process, but they have rejected so far. And it is undeniable truth of the history that they have tried every trick in the book including violence to establish Buthidaung and Maungtaung as their foothold, stronghold and liberated area step by step.

7. Extremist terrorists launched coordinated attacks on a border police headquarters and three police outposts on 9 October, 2016, in which ten police were killed, five injured and 68 firearms and ammunitions were lost. During the unrest, 79 locals were killed and 37 went missing.

8. In the terror attack on 25 August, 2017, extremist terrorists led by ARSA launched coordinated attacks in 37 villages including an army headquarter and 30 police stations, with 500 to 700 residents in each place with swords, spears, improvised explosive devices and other weapons.

There were 38 engagements in single day, and one security personnel, ten policemen, a staff member of Immigration Department, totalling 12 were killed, and scores were injured, and six small firearms were seized from police outposts by Bengali terrorists.

9. To investigate if security personnel responded in line with existing laws and procedures, Rule of Engagement (ROE), and instructions of Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office as regards to 2016 October attack, the 12-member Rakhine State Investigation led by Vice-President U Myint Swe was formed on 1 December, 2016, a Tatmadaw investigation body led by Lt-Gen Aye Win of Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office on 17, February, 2017 and another investigation body led by Police Brig-Gen Win Tun of Myanmar Police Force on February 9, 2017.

Actions were taken in line with law in three cases discovered by the Tatmadaw investigation body. The investigation body led by Lt-Gen Aye Win was

also assigned to investigate if Tatmadawmen performed their duties in line with law regarding August incident in 2017. Moreover, field investigation was made and action was taken in response to the case of Inn Din Village.

10. Tatmadaw investigation body met and questioned 195 ethnic people from two ethnic villages, 205 Hindu villagers from two Hindu villages, and 2,817 villagers from 54 Bengali villages, totalling 3,217 residents in Buthidaung and Maungtaung townships, and could collect the testimony of 804 witnesses. According to the hard evidence found by the Tatmadaw investigation body, at least 10,000 to maximum 20,000 residents participated in attacks on police outposts on 25, August, 2017 though the number was first estimated to be just around 4,000. After 9 October attack, ARSA extremist terrorist leader Ataullah appointed terrorist leaders in villages and village-tracts. The name list of those leaders has been exposed. Through those leaders, terrorist groups were formed on a wide scale based on Mawlawi and village administrators. Those who are close to government departments, those who rejected giving allegiance to or joining the terrorist group, and those refused to attend the terrorism training were brutally killed by slitting their throats. Moreover, residents were forced to swear by the Quran to join the terrorist group, and as a result, the majority of villagers in every Bengali village were forced to join the terrorist group.

11. According to the accounts of 2,817 villagers of 54 Bengali villages and testimony of 362 villagers of 105 Bengali villages, it was found that security personnel did not commit extrajudicial killings or sexually abuse and rape women. There was no unlawful detention of people, beating, killing and arson as well. According to the testimony of the villagers in conflict area, terrorist leaders at different levels made preparation and ordered simultaneous attacks.

The attack was not successful though hardcore members of ARSA extremist terrorists, many villagers and even the children joined the attack. So ARSA extremist terrorists set fire to houses and fled to Bangladesh first. They also threatened, coerced and persuaded other villagers to flee to Bangladesh, and many fled as a result, it was found.

12. Extremist terrorists arrested 52 Hindu residents of Ye Bauk Kya Village and 53 Villagers of Kha Maung Seik (South) Village on 25, August, 2017, and looted their property, and broke apart altars and Buddha images and burned down citizenship scrutiny cards.

SEE PAGE-11

Union Minister inspects matriculation exam centres

Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi visited the examination centre opened in B.E.H.S (1) in Lewe Township, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday and observed students taking the English paper test on the second day of the matriculation examination.

Accompanying the Union Minister were Director-General U Myo Nyunt of the Department of the Myanmar Board of Examinations, the Acting Director General, the Deputy Director-General of the Department for Basic Education and other officials.

The Union Minister inspected the examination centre and the students

and then instructed officials to ensure the students can take the examination in peace during the entire 2018 matriculation examination period.

U Myo Nyunt also visited examination centres in Theaphyu B.E.H.S and Ayelar B.E.H.S (5) in Lewe Township, Thitlaylone B.E.H.S and B.E.H.S (3) in Pyinmana Township, and B.E.H.S (12) in Uttarathiri Township. He observed the students taking the exams and advised the teachers in charge to be careful in their administration.

On the second day of the 2018 matriculation examination for the English subject, some 789,070 students of the



Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, far back, inspects students sitting in the matriculation exam in Lewe Township. Photo—MNA

844,358 registered students from across Myanmar took the examination, while 55,288 students remained absent. Thus, 93.45 per cent of the students took the examination yesterday.

In Nay Pyi Taw, some 23,850 stu-

dents registered for yesterday's examination and 22,357 students took it, while 1,493 students were absent. Thus, 93.94 per cent of the students took the examination yesterday.—Myanmar News Agency

FROM PAGE-10

They cruelly tortured 45 residents of Ye Bauk Kya Village, and made them lay by pits and brutally slit their throats in front of Hindu women from Ye Bauk Kya Village and eight women from Kha Maung Seik (South) Village. Of 105 abducted Hindu followers, 60 remain missing whereas remaining Hindu women were forced to convert to Islam and brought to Bangladesh. Moreover, a group of terrorists attacked and set fire to seven Mro ethnics from Khonetine Village, Badaka Village-tract, Maungtaw Township, on 29 August. It was found that with the intent to gain power and influence, ARSA extremist terrorists killed a total of 131 local ethnics, Hindus and Bengalis by slitting their throats. Although ARSA extremist residents terrorists committed genocide and ethnic cleansing on a minority of ethnic people in Buthidaung-Maungtaw region, those who living at refugee camps of the other country, as instructed by them, accused the Myanmar Tatmadaw of committing genocide and ethnic cleansing when foreign diplomats and journalists made visits there.

13. The Tatmadaw acted in line with the existing military and civilian laws during the Rakhine crisis. An investigation team led by a lieutenant general was formed to check whether security troops committed crimes or not. The team made practical field trips and announced their findings in a transparent manner. Action was taken against those security forces who committed such a crime in accord with the existing laws. The duties of the commander of Western Command, who took charge of Rakhine security affairs, were terminated as he had weaknesses in his actions over the issue. Legal action was taken against seven officers and other ranks and three police members in line with

the existing laws. Civilians who got involved in the case faced legal actions at respective civilian courts. Action is being taken against residents in accord with the existing laws as well. Despite these efforts, mistakes of individuals are being exaggerated and accusations have erupted that the whole Tatmadaw committed a crime.

14. The Tatmadaw carries out state defence and security duties systematically only after presenting reports to the government. In the Rakhine conflict, as directed by the government, the Tatmadaw reduced from military operation to security and control operation. The government for its part is making plans to reaccept the returnees who fled to the other country after the Buthidaung-Maungtaw conflict and carry out national verification process in accord with the law. Actually, those residents fled to the other country only after 5 September 2017 when there were no more clashes. As the majority were close to ARSA extremist terrorists, they fled for fear of investigation and legal action or due to the persuasion that they would have the chance to go to third country. Talking about the family members of an offender, according to figures from the Labour, Immigration and Population Ministry in 2016, a family has 20 to 30 members on average. So there would be 200,000 family members if there were 10,000 attackers. Therefore, they might have fled together with their family members and relatives. Tatmadaw members are law-abiding citizens who stick to four oaths to even sacrifice their lives for the state and the people and who follow existing state laws, international laws and military laws. In the 2008 State Constitution, Section 338 states that All the armed forces in the Union shall be under the command of the Defence Services while

Section 341 says that the Defence Services shall render assistance when calamities that affects the Union and its citizens occur in the Union. According to these provisions, the Tatmadaw is protecting the administrative machinery, rule of law and all the people from the danger of terrorists. There were no orders and actions leading to violations of the existing laws. But legal action was taken against those who made mistakes amid their eagerness to protect the local and ethnic people. When it comes to the internal peace process, the Tatmadaw worked patiently in the hope of achieving eternal peace that the country really needs, and ten ethnic armed groups have signed the NCA so far. The Tatmadaw exactly follows the already agreed points and the NCA provisions based on the six-point peace policy of the Tatmadaw. Practically, the Tatmadaw is working together with the people in ethnic areas by placing emphasis on regional peace and ending conflict.

15. A PBS news crew based in Thailand made an interview with some members of ARSA terrorist group who are staying at the camps in Cox's Bazar on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. In their news story, they said groups of five had been formed under ARSA. Members of those groups had to do what the leader they had never seen asked. In every of 40 villages in Maungtaw, there were 100 to 200 ARSA members. They were holding discussion about a plan to form an ARSA extremist terrorist group with those living abroad. The story was published in February this year.

16. Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander in Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win received Mr. Stavros Limbrinidis, an EU special representative for Human Rights, and party at the Bayintnaung Villa on 5 March evening. Both sides

discussed attacks by ARSA extremist terrorists in Rakhine State in 2012 and 2016 and 25 August 2017, the reasons why hundreds of thousands of fled to Bangladesh, the response of fleeing residents and the other country to the Myanmar government's preparations to re-accept them, the reasons why they don't want to be back to Myanmar, the exaggerated news released by international media, diplomats and NGOs and the other country, actions of Tatmadaw and security troops in their clearance operations in line with the orders and instructions, investigation over following of the rules and orders and actions against some Tatmadawmen and members of security force who failed to abide by the rules. During the discussion, evidential documentary photos were also shown.

17. The one-sided accusations of British MPs who turn a blind eye to the real situation although there has a lot of strong evidence will badly impact the Tatmadaw's implementation of rule of law process, state security and participation in the democracy transition in accord with the Rules of Engagement (ROE) over the decisions followed by the EU Foreign Affairs Committee's meeting; the government's rehabilitation of Buthidaung-Maungtaw area and re-acceptance of victims. Those accusations may create misunderstanding among international and local organisations which have helped the country's internal peace-building and peace-making process and general public. It is needed to correctly review the real situation of this issue to make a fair compulsion and decision that is expected to bring about tangible progress for the Rakhine issue.

Tatmadaw True News
Information Team
(Myawady Daily)

AU chief meets Tillerson, says Trump slur 'in the past'

WASHINGTON — Washington's top diplomat began his first Africa tour Thursday by meeting with the African Union chief, who said the continent had moved on from a reported insult by President Donald Trump.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and AU commission chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat discussed security and counter-terrorism, trade and development, corruption and conflict in an hour-long meeting at the continental body's headquarters in the Ethiopian capital.

However looming over the meeting was Trump's alleged description of Africa as a "shithole" in January, which forced the president to pen a letter reaffirming his commitment to the continent and dispatch his top diplomat to try to heal rifts.

Faki, however, insisted the slur was now in the past.

"I received a letter written by President Trump to myself and I shared that with other African leaders. I believe this



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, at a press conference with the African Union's Moussa Faki.
PHOTO: AFP

incident is in the past," he said.

Tillerson's five-nation Africa tour — to include Djibouti, Kenya, Chad and Nigeria — has

been described by analysts as a "listening tour", with no deals or initiatives due to be announced.

"The purpose of my trip is to

listen to what the priorities of the countries here on the continent are and see where there is good alignment," said Tillerson.

Tillerson praised the AU as a "force for good".

He and Faki discussed continued US support to African counter-terrorism forces in Somalia and the Sahel but no new concrete commitments were given.

Tillerson said the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is "clearly an example of countries coming together to counter terrorism, promote stability and enable the delivery of much-needed aid."

"We have not yet won that battle in Somalia and we must stay at it," he said.

Tillerson also warned against blind acceptance of Chinese investment, warning African countries to "consider the terms of those investments" lest they "forfeit sovereignty".

He also solicited African support in pressuring North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons.

"African nations can contribute to this goal," he said.—AFP ■

Embattled White House promises quick tariff decision

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's team played down talk of a trade war Wednesday as it fought to limit a financial market sell-off, promising a quick decision on contentious tariffs that prompted a popular economic advisor to the president to quit.

Administration big guns Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin rushed to the cameras to calm market jitters over proposed steel and aluminum duties, which they indicated were still negotiable and would not hurt growth.

Trump is set to formalize the tariffs at a signing ceremony Thursday afternoon, and Canada and Mexico will be exempt initially, Peter Navarro, a top trade advisor, told Fox Business Network Wednesday night.

As markets fell on news that Wall Street favorite Gary Cohn, Trump's top economic adviser, had resigned from the White House in protest at Trump's trade decision and global partners vowed retaliation, Ross tried to calm fears of a trade war.



Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross says the US wants "sensible relations" with allies and isn't looking for a trade war. **PHOTO: AFP**

"We're going to have sensible relations with our allies," he told CNBC, claiming that Trump's policy was well "thought through. We're not looking for a trade war."

Mnuchin joined the effort, claiming that the tariffs, which are not yet finalized, would not hurt the administration's projections for three per cent growth.

"We're comfortable that we're going to manage through this so that it is not detrimental to our growth projections," he

told Fox Business.

As stocks fell off on Wall Street, a fierce battle over Trump's proposals raged behind the scenes in Washington.

Trump surprised and angered Republican lawmakers with his impromptu tariff announcement last week.

Congress is now starting to contemplate legislation that would block the measures from taking effect. "We are still trying to work with POTUS to avoid that outcome," a congressional source

told AFP.

Announcement this week

Even Trump's most accommodating allies have begun to speak out against what amounts to a major break with Republican orthodoxy.

"There is a lot of concern among Republican senators that this could sort of metastasize into a larger trade war," Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell told reporters.

"Many of our members are discussing with the administration just how broad, how sweeping this might be," he added. "There's a high level of concern about interfering with what appears to be an economy that's taking off in every respect."

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders also tried to soothe unease, projecting calm and saying a decision would come soon.

"We are still on pace for an announcement on that at the end of this week," she said, adding that Trump would also quickly move to replace Cohn with a mainstream pick.—AFP ■

PNG earthquake death toll estimated to be over 100:

SYDNEY - Papua New Guinean Prime Minister Peter O'Neill says the estimated death toll from a powerful earthquake that shook the country last month has topped 100.

O'Neill made a short visit on Wednesday to the Southern Highlands and Hela Provinces, the regions most affected by a magnitude 7.5 earthquake that struck on 26 February and numerous large aftershocks, including a magnitude 6.7 quake early Wednesday morning.

"Tragically, the Highlands Earthquake has already claimed the lives of an estimated more than 100 Papua New Guineans, with many more still missing and thousands of people injured," the prime minister said in a statement released Wednesday. O'Neill said there is "no quick fix" to the damage caused by the earthquakes, estimating the recovery could take "months

Brunei expects substantial increase in domestic rice production by 2020

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — Aiming to better achieve self-sufficiency of rice, Brunei has targeted to increase paddy production from 2,000 tonnes in 2015 to 7,700 tonnes by 2020. “We

will achieve self-sufficiency in rice production from 6 per cent in 2015 to 20 per cent by 2020,” Haji Ali, Brunei’s Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism, was quoted as saying by

local daily the Borneo Bulletin on Wednesday. In his speech at the 14th Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting, the minister said the new target was set to respond to Brunei’s Sul-

tan Haji Hassanali Bolki-ah’s concern on domestic food security. The minister said that the new target is going to be achieved with the help of introduction of a high-yielding hybrid rice

strain. Last September the minister said hybrid paddy technology can have a significant impact on rice production, generate more revenue for farmers and ensure sustainability of the

country’s rice industry.

Brunei is expected to introduce China’s hybrid paddy varieties that can produce at least 12 tonnes per hectare in irrigated areas.—Xinhua ■



San Francisco International Airport is among the structures built mostly on landfill. PHOTO: AFP

Land beneath Silicon Valley is sinking fast: study

SAN FRANCISCO — The San Francisco Bay area’s Silicon Valley is home to a plethora of wealthy tech companies, but the sinking land beneath risks leading to far worse floods in the years to come, researchers said Wednesday.

This sinking, or subsidence, coupled with sea level rise, doubles the territory in the area known as Silicon Valley at risk of flooding by 2100, said the report in the journal Science Advances.

Until now, official government flood maps and projections have been based solely on estimates of sea level rise.

“The ground goes down, sea level comes up, and flood waters go much farther inland than either change would produce by itself,” said lead author Manoochehr Shirzaei, as-

sistant professor in Arizona State University’s School of Earth and Space Exploration.

Most of the San Francisco Bay shoreline is sinking by less than two millimeters a year, but “in several areas we discovered subsidence rates of 10 millimeters (half an inch) a year and more,” said the study.

At particular risk are structures built mostly on landfill, such as the San Francisco International Airport which handles more than 200,000 annual landings and sees 56 million passengers passing through each year.

“When land subsidence is combined with projected rising sea levels, water will cover nearly half the airport’s runways and taxiways by the year 2100,” said the study.

Another trouble spot is Foster City, also built on reclaimed land between San Francisco and San Jose.

Since real estate is costly and hard to come by, an increasing number of companies have established themselves where “significant parts of the city will be at risk of flooding by 2100,” said the report.

Treasure Island, located between San Francisco and Oakland, is also sinking fast, at a rate of one-half to three-quarters of an inch (12 to 20 millimeters) per year.

Previous studies, which did not take sinking land into account, estimated that at a minimum, 20 square miles (51 square kilometers) of San Francisco Bay shoreline will face a risk of flooding by the year 2100.

Adding the effects of sinking ground along the shoreline, scientists found that the area threatened by rising seawater rose to at least 48 square miles (125 square kilometers).

The upper level, or worst cast scenarios in which sea levels accelerate due to glacial melting, predict around 160 square miles (413 square kilometers) at risk of flooding by century’s end.

The new findings are based on state-of-the-art satellite-based synthetic aperture radar (InSAR), collected from 2007 to 2011.

“There are many estimates and models for sea-level rise,” said Shirzaei.

“But they all fall short because they don’t take into account land elevation changes.”—AFP ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO. (026 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO. (026 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL
SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. (0231-560W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. (0231-560W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V ANAN BHUM VOY. NO. (212 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ANAN BHUM VOY. NO. (212 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

Sixties icon Anna Karina revels in comeback at 77

BERLIN — Anna Karina is wondering whether to say how many times she has been married.

“Oh la la! I prefer not to,” laughed the actress and director who was the face of the French New Wave.

“Less than Liz Taylor,” she joked, who went up the aisle eight times.

“I’ve been married to the same man for the last 40 years,” Karina protested, referring to her fourth husband, the American director Dennis Berry of “Stargate” and “Highlander” fame.

But it was with her first, Jean-Luc Godard, that Karina helped turn cinema on its head.

Now 77, the Danish-born Sixties icon is having something of a comeback. Her 1973 film “Vivre ensemble” (Live Together) is back in cinemas, winning praise from the critics as a “little gem”.

And she has a new album out, fittingly called “I am an Adventurer.”

“I never expected this, it’s amazing,” she said, not having made a film in a decade or recorded a song for even longer.

Sitting at a restaurant table in the once bohemian Saint Germain des Pres on Paris’ Left Bank, Karina is as striking and elfin as ever; her kholed blue eyes burning out from under a felt hat.

It was around the corner at the Deux Magots cafe, then the hangout of Sartre, de Beauvoir and Camus, where Karina was discovered 60 years ago, a 17-year-old waif in full flight from a troubled childhood.

- Renamed by Coco Chanel -

It was also where she became Anna Karina.



Danish-French actress Anna Karina poses during a photo session in Paris, on 2 March, 2018. She is revelling in a comeback at the age of 77. **PHOTO: AFP**

One day after modelling for a magazine “this extraordinary woman asked me, ‘What’s your name, darling?’ ‘Hanne Karin Bayer,’ I said.” “No, no,” the woman replied, “you will be called Anna Karina.” The woman was Coco Chanel, the founder of the fashion house that still bears her name. And so began an incredible career as a model, actor, singer, director and muse.

Godard spotted her while he was walking on the Champs Elysees. She was hard to miss.

As the poster girl for Palmolive soap as well as one of its rivals, her face stared down from billboards on both sides of the grand Paris avenue.

He offered her a nude scene in “Breathless”, his first and most famous film, but she refused.

They were already a couple when, at barely 21, she won best actress at the Berlin film festival for his “A Woman is a Woman” in 1961.—AFP

Lionel Richie honored at Hollywood handprints ceremony

HOLLYWOOD — Four-time Grammy winner Lionel Richie cemented his legacy in Hollywood Wednesday, plunging his feet and hands into a wet paving slab at the forecourt of the iconic TCL Chinese Theatre.

The 68-year-old R&B singer, a former front man for Motown legends The Commodores, has sold more than 100 million records over a career spanning six decades.

“This is almost beyond the childhood dream,” Richie told AFP at the ceremony on Hollywood Boulevard, a time-honored tradition launched in the 1920s.

“When I first came to this town, the Holiday Inn was back there, right behind me, and the first thing I did was ran out the room, came downstairs and put my feet in all the hands and feet on the ground. Now, my hands and feet are going into this thing, it’s almost beyond belief.”

Late night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel, fresh off his Oscars hosting duties, presented the ceremony while veteran actor Samuel L. Jackson was on hand to support Richie, who told the crowd the honor was an “out of body experience.”

Lionel Brockman Richie Jr. was born on 20 June, 1949 and raised on the private, historically black Tuskegee Institute university campus in Alabama, where his family had worked for generations.

A high school tennis star,

he accepted a scholarship to study at the institute but dropped out and seriously considered becoming a priest for a while.

He formed a series of bands and, while still at college in 1968, joined aspiring Motown group The Commodores, playing saxophone and singing.

He went on to write some of his most enduring songs for the group, including “Still,” “Sail On,” “Easy” and “Three Times a Lady,” which earned a 1979 American Music Award and a People’s Choice Award.

- Motown hits -

He later wrote “Lady” for Kenny Rogers and had a huge hit alongside Diana Ross with “Endless Love,” which became the most successful single in Motown history, topping the US charts for nine weeks.

Alongside Michael Jackson and Prince, he was one of the most successful male solo artists of the 1980s, with a run of 13

consecutive top ten hits in the US Billboard charts, five of them number ones. He scored a major hit with “All Night Long,” and won an Oscar for “Say You, Say Me,” written for the film “White Nights.” His Grammys include the 1985 Song of the Year prize for “We Are the World,” co-written with Jackson.

Richie managed a nine-year streak of writing at least one number one single a year -- a feat matched only by Irving Berlin -- enjoying much of his success internationally, with a particularly strong following in the Arab world.

But his run came to an end in 1987 and Richie took some time out, coming back in the 1990s, with mixed results.

Despite the runaway success of “Hello,” Richie has said he came to resent being classified as a balladeer and chose simply to follow his artistic senses.—AFP



Lionel Ritchie and girlfriend Lisa Parisi at his Hand and Footprints ceremony at the TCL Theater in Hollywood, California; the 68-year-old R&B singer has sold more than 100 million records over a career spanning six decades. **PHOTO: AFP**

Cranberries to release album despite O’Riordan death



Singer Dolores O’Riordan of Irish band The Cranberries, shown performing during a festival in Cognac, France, in 2016, had already recorded vocals for a new album before her death in January 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON - Irish rockers The Cranberries said Wednesday they would go ahead with a new album despite the sudden death of singer Dolores O’Riordan in January.

The surviving three members of The Cranberries said that O’Riordan had already recorded vocals for a new album, which the band now hopes to finish and release in early 2019.

The Cranberries said that they also would move forward with a 25th anniversary reissue this year of their debut album, “Everyone Else is Doing it, So Why Can’t We?,” after putting

work on hold following O’Riordan’s death.

“After much consideration we have decided to finish what we started,” the band wrote on Facebook.

“We thought about it and decided that as this is something that we started as a band, with Dolores, we should push ahead and finish it.”

The 1993 album proved to be an international success led by “Linger,” a wistful song about a first kiss.

The reissued edition will be remastered and feature previously unreleased material from

the era, the band said.

O’Riordan was found dead in a London hotel on 15 January at age 46. A full inquest into her death is set for 3 April, although authorities are not treating her death as suspicious.

With a voice that merged florid traditional Celtic singing with the ferocity of punk rock, O’Riordan defined the sound of The Cranberries whose major hits also included the politically charged “Zombie.”

The Cranberries last released an album of new material, “Roses,” in 2012 after a gap of more than a decade. _ AFP

‘The Remix’ will inspire a lot of younger people: DJ Nucleya

MUMBAI — DJ Nucleya, who will be co-judging “The Remix”, said the show will serve as an inspiration to the youth who is eager to pursue their musical ambitions.

“The Remix”, which also has singer Sunidhi Chauhan and music composer Amit Trivedi as co-judges, is India’s first ever digital reality show.

“Nowadays people are re-

ally interested in exactly what producers and DJ’s do. There’s a level of interest that has not been there before. I think it’s really great that there are now shows like ‘The Remix’ that shed light on the roles of producers and precisely how DJ’s work.

“I think it will inspire a lot of younger people, especially from smaller towns across India, who are very interested in learning

more about this side of music,” Nucleya said in a statement.

The show will be hosted by actor Karan Tacker. It will have 10 teams each, comprising a singer and music producer, create their own unique sound of music and compete against each other.

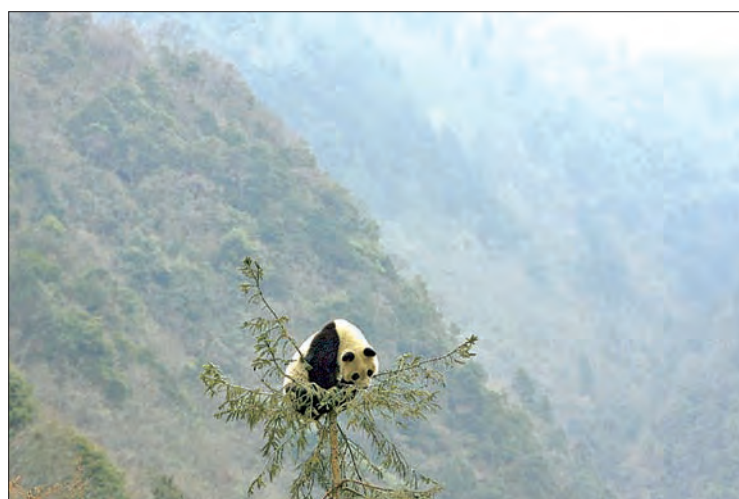
“The Remix” will be launched on Amazon Prime Video on 9 March.—PTI ■

China plans panda park that will dwarf Yellowstone

SICHUAN — China will create a bastion for giant pandas three times the size of Yellowstone National Park to link up and encourage breeding among existing wild populations of the notoriously slow-reproducing animal, state media reported Thursday.

At least 10 billion yuan (\$1.6 billion) has been secured over the next five years for construction of the Giant Panda National Park in mountainous southwestern China for the nation’s favourite creature, the China Daily reported.

Plans for the park — which would cover 27,134 square kilometres (10,476 square miles) — were first put forward early last year by the ruling Communist Party and the State Council, China’s cabinet, the paper said. Yellowstone, established in 1872 as the first US national park, spans 8,983 square kilometres. The Chinese park plans are aimed at enabling wild pandas that are currently isolated in several different areas of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces to mingle



The Chinese park plans are aimed at enabling wild pandas that are currently isolated in several different areas of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces to mingle and hopefully breed. **PHOTO: AFP**

and hopefully breed. Giant pandas have a notoriously low reproductive rate, a key factor — along with habitat loss — in their status as “vulnerable” on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) Red List of threatened species. More than 80 per cent of the world’s wild pandas live in Sichuan, with the rest in Shaanxi and Gansu.

The funding was secured via an agreement signed Tuesday by the Bank of China and the Sichuan provincial Department of Forestry, the paper said. The bank is to secure the financing by 2023, to go toward poverty alleviation among people living in the remote area and necessary infrastructure and other construction for the park.—AFP ■



Hollywood actor Rebel Wilson spent more than Aus\$1.3 million (US\$1.1 million) to win Australia’s largest defamation payout and she is now chasing publisher Bauer to pay those costs as well. **PHOTO: AFP**

Rebel Wilson seeks legal fees after record Australia payout

HOLLYWOOD — Hollywood actress Rebel Wilson spent more than Aus\$1.3 million (US\$1.1 million) to win Australia’s largest defamation payout, it was revealed Thursday, and she is now chasing publisher Bauer to pay those costs as well.

The “Pitch Perfect” star was awarded Aus\$4.5 million in damages against the group last September over articles claiming she lied about her age and background to further her career.

The allegations were made in Woman’s Day, Australian Women’s Weekly and OK Magazine in 2015, which Wilson said damaged her reputation. She won the case and vowed to give the payout to charity.

Bauer are appealing and have been backed by some of the country’s leading media organisations who argue the size of the settlement set a dangerous precedent.

A day after she tweeted “Girls just wanna have funds,”

Wilson’s lawyers appeared in the Victorian Supreme Court in a battle over the fees.

It heard that experts engaged by lawyers for both Wilson and Bauer had estimated the actress would be entitled to recover between Aus\$1.1 million and Aus\$1.3 million, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported.

Wilson’s barrister Renee Enbom said it effectively meant they were quibbling over Aus\$200,000. “It’s \$200,000, that’s what we’re fighting about,” she said, according to the broadcaster, in urging the judge to make an order on costs rather than it going to a dedicated costs court, which would potentially delay the payment.

Justice John Dixon reserved his decision. The court earlier heard that Wilson had offered to settle the case for Aus\$200,000 before it went to trial, with most of her legal costs coming from solicitor’s fees preparing her case.—AFP ■

Venus hopes to one day experience motherhood

LOS ANGELES — Venus Williams says she hopes to one day follow in the footsteps of her younger sister Serena and experience motherhood.

“I hope I can do that if I ever get there,” said the 37-year-old Venus on Wednesday.

“She does everything for the baby. Other than that she stays the same.

“If it happens then I have a

good example to follow.”

This week marks the return of Serena to the WTA Tour a little under 190 days since the birth of baby Alexis.

Both sisters are competing in the WTA Indian Wells tournament and they landed in the same portion of the draw meaning they could face each other in the third round.

Serena, 36, will need to get

through her first round match against 53rd ranked Zarina Diyas and the 29th-seeded Kiki Bertens.

The eighth-seeded Venus has a bye through the first round and will face either qualifier Monica Niculescu or Sorana Cirstea in the second round.

Venus and Serena are more accustomed to meeting in the finals of tournaments. If Venus

had any idea she and Serena could meet so early in the Indian Wells draw, she wasn’t letting on.

“I haven’t analyzed it at all,” Venus said of the field. “If I keep playing hopefully I can win.”

Venus reached the Wimbledon final last year where she lost to champion Garbine Muguruza 7-5, 6-0.

She also made the final of the Australian Open and the

quarterfinals in Rome and at this tournament.

Venus grew up just a couple hour’s drive away in the south central Los Angeles suburb of Compton.

“This tournament means a lot to me,” she said of Indian Wells. “I don’t get to play a lot in the States anymore.

“I am a California and a Florida girl.”—AFP ■

Yangon draws Zwekapin United in MNL U-19 tourney

IN a MPT Myanmar National League U-19 tourney, Yangon United battled Zwekapin United to a 1-1 draw with a late score by Yangon star Yan Paing Phyto at Salin Stadium in Yangon yesterday. Both teams played energetically from the kickoff with good passing and smart tactics. Zwekapin had some chances to score, but the opportunities were thwarted by the defence of Yangon's defenders and goalie.

The first half ended in a scoreless tie.

In the second half, the momentum shifted back and forth between the two teams as they

took turns attacking.

But at the 46 minute mark, just after the restart of the match, Zwekapin's Wai Yan made the opening goal for his team.

The remained 1-0 lead for Zwekapin until the last minute of the match in ordinary time. But during extra time, Yangon got the equaliser at the 93-minute mark with a score by Yangon's Yan Paing Phyto. Yangon United stands in 9th place with the points 6 from 6 matches (1 win, 3 draws and 2 losses), while Zwekapin is in the fifth place with 9 points from 6 matches (2 wins, 3 draws and one loss).—KyawZin Lin ■



Yangon's youth player headbutts the ball in yesterday's MNL U-19 tourney at Salin Stadium. **PHOTO:YUFC**

Defiant Pochettino proud of Spurs despite Juve collapse

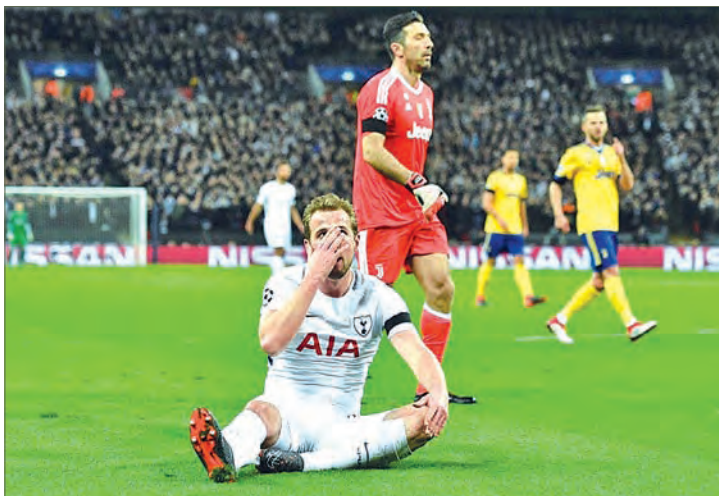
LONDON — Mauricio Pochettino insisted Tottenham had nothing to be ashamed of after three minutes of madness ended their Champions League challenge in a painful 2-1 defeat against Juventus.

Tottenham were on course to reach the quarter-finals for the first time since 2011 when Son Heung-Min rewarded their first-half dominance with the opening goal at Wembley on Wednesday.

After the first leg finished 2-2, Son's strike put Pochettino's side ahead on aggregate, but Juventus completely flipped the script in the second leg of the last-16 tie with a stirring second-half fightback.

Gonzalo Higuain punished poor Tottenham marking to steer in Juventus's equaliser and Paulo Dybala bagged the winner three minutes later with a cool finish after splitting the hosts' poorly-executed offside trap.

It was a bitter blow for Tottenham and the loss raised fresh questions about their ability to win major trophies under Pochettino. But, yet to land any silverware with the north Londoners, Pochettino bristled at suggestions Tottenham aren't



Tottenham's Harry Kane holds his head in his hands after a chance goes begging against Juventus. **PHOTO:AFP**

mentally strong enough to win on the big occasions.

"All this talk is rubbish. At the end it is win or lose. When you assess the game, I think only Tottenham was better for more than 70 minutes," he said.

"If Harry (Kane) scored at the end or we scored twice in the first half, maybe we are talking differently. 'I'm happy with my players. We did everything to try to win.

"It was not a lack of experience, not a lack of concentration. How many chances did we concede? 'We conceded three

chances and they scored twice. We had a lot of chances and only scored one. 'We can talk about a lot of situations, but sometimes you need some luck to win.'

Pochettino 'still 'a dreamer'

Pochettino had spoken passionately this week about his dream of making Tottenham one of the best sides in England and Europe.

And even surrendering the lead against the Italian champions couldn't dissuade the Argentine from his belief Tottenham

are on the brink of joining Europe's superpowers.

"I feel very proud, we dominated overall against a very good team like Juventus," he said.

"In the two games we were much better, but at this level the tie went to Juventus in three minutes. 'I'm disappointed of course but the quality of the team was very good. We showed massive maturity. I'm relaxed and happy.

"I'm still a dreamer. When you compete in the Champions League with these clubs you can win or lose. Football is not a nightmare for me." Meanwhile, Juventus boss Massimiliano Allegri claimed he never lost faith his side could fight back despite their lethargic first half. "The guys put in a fantastic performance. Even at 1-0 down we had a good reaction," he said.

"We had created chances in the first half, so we were confident we could get one goal back and kick on from there.

"You are going to find games that are difficult. We did suffer a lot but that's normal in football.

"It's fantastic to win a game at Wembley, a temple of football."—AFP ■

MNL matches in March postponed for national team AFC qualification

THE Myanmar national football team will be taking part in the last rounds of AFC Qualification in this month, so the MPT Myanmar National League (MNL) will postpone its matches in March except for the match between Myawady FC and Sagaing United, which will be held on 11 March. In 2019 AFC Qualification, the Myanmar national team will play against Kyrgyzstan on 22 March and Macau on 27 March.

As most members of the national play in the MNL, and qualification for the AFC tourney is very important for the country's dignity in football, it was decided that the matches be postponed this month, according to an MNL official. The MNL matches will restart on 30 March, he added.

"The match postponement plan is very good for our national team, as players will not be tired in the 2019 AFC Qualification and we are hoping for the best result for our national team", said Khun Kyaw Zeyya, a Myanmar football fan from Yangon. —Kyaw Zin Lin ■