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ELECTED GOVERNMENT MARKS TWO YEARS IN OFFICE



A priority task for the nation

Rule of law along with reform of the judiciary sector is a priority task for the nation as well as an important task for national stability and development.

Excerpt from a speech made by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the Conference on Justice Sector Coordinating for Rule of Law in Myanmar International Convention Center-II in Nay Pyi Taw on 7 March 2018.

State Counsellor receives Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received a delegation led by Mr. Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and former Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region, at the Presidential Palace Hall for Envoys in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to education, rural region devel-

opment, travel, movies, investment, trade and cooperation.

Also present at the meeting, along with the State Counsellor, were Union Ministers Dr. Than Myint, U Ohn Maung and U Kyaw Tin; Deputy Minister U Set Aung and other officials, while Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Hong Liang accompanied the Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.—Myanmar News Agency ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Mr. Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Live broadcast today of President U Win Myint taking oath of office, delivering inaugural speech in Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses national budget

THE 21st-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The MPs discussed the review (5/2018) by the Public Accounts Joint Committee on the report by the office of the Auditor General of the Union on the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's development fund for the 2016-2017 financial year (FY).

Auditor General of the Union U Maw Than replied to the MPs' questions on the policies, managerial process and the auditor general's office work on the report.

Concerning the unused funds, the Auditor General said the Kachin State government had returned Ks4.9 million on 23 March 2018, which was to be used for constructing a pre-primary school in Sunpwarbun Township in Kachin State, but the project did not go through. In the Yangon Region, a retaining wall was constructed in



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Twantay Township on 13 March according to the plan, he added.

U Oo Htun Maung of Ponnagyun Constituency suggested that township auditors should conduct field checks to determine the status of ongoing projects. The

Auditor General replied that field checks cannot be conducted in distant or remote areas and in areas without security, and thus checks are conducted with photographic evidence. Otherwise, township auditors are instructed to conduct

field checks.

The Auditor General said the Central Development Committee will continue its work according to the Development Fund Law but will simultaneously review which townships need higher budgets

and allot funds accordingly, instead of allotting Ks100 million to each township equally.

The Auditor General said it is important for everyone to follow the permitted businesses in the 2017-2018 FY and budget rules and regulations as well. He said some 18 townships had submitted project completion reports but one of them had submitted alterations to their original project plans. He said these townships need to re-submit the reports detailing the alterations, in accordance with the Development Fund Law.

U Bo Gyi of Chauk Constituency then motioned for the Hluttaw to approve the (5/2018) review by the Public Accounts Joint Committee. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw had approved the review.

The 22nd-day meeting of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue on 30 March.—Thura Zaw ■

Pyithu Hluttaw

Journalism, cinema, state-owned media discussed at Pyithu Hluttaw



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

PLANS are being made to open schools that will produce international-level journalists, one of several issues discussed at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The plans were revealed in reply to questions raised by Daw Thandar of Einme constituency. In answering her first question on plans to open a journalism school, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun replied that long-term

and short-term plans are being drawn up to open a journalism school that will produce international-level journalists. The Myanmar Journalism Institute and Myanmar Media Development Center that are already established in Myanmar are co-operating with the effort, added the Deputy Minister.

Responding to the second question on whether there is a plan for the Myanmar Press Council to issue identity cards to journalists, the Deputy Minister replied that it is not a practical work for Myanmar Press Council to do this. The Myanmar Press Council only endorses the member cards and reporter cards issued by state recognised news media organisations – Myanmar Journalists Association (MJA), Myanmar Journalist Network (MJN), Myanmar Journalist Union (MJU), Myanmar Women's Journalist Society (MWJS), Burma News International (BNI) and Myanmar Foreign Correspondents Club.

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Amyotha Hluttaw

Seventh regular session of second Amyotha Hluttaw concludes

THE seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw held its 33rd-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning.

At the meeting, the Amyotha Hluttaw Public Accounts Committee, Hluttaw Rights Committee, International Relations, Inter-Parliamentary Friendship and Cooperation Committee, Mineral, Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee, local and international non-governmental organisations and the local and overseas Labour Affairs Committee submitted their committee-wise work reports and obtained the approval of the Hluttaw.

Similarly, the Amyotha Hluttaw Education Promotion Committee, Public Complaints Committee, Health, Sports and Culture Committee, Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery Development Committee, Ethnic Affairs Committee, and Women and Children's Rights Committee also submitted committee-wise work reports and obtained the approval of the Hluttaw.



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

Next, the government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee's report on questions and motions raised during the second Amyotha Hluttaw's sixth regular session was discussed by U Hla San of Magway Region constituency (1), Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Latt of Bago Region constituency (3), Dr. Khun Win Thauang of Kachin State constituency (11), U Khin Myo Win of Taninthayi Region constituency (12), U Aung Thein of Bago Region constituency (12), U Zaw Hein of Taninthayi

Region constituency (7) and U Than Soe, also known as Than Soe (Economic), of Yangon Region constituency (4).

Later, the Amyotha Hluttaw government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee Chairman U Thein Swe tabled a motion to the Hluttaw to accept the report and obtained the acceptance of the Hluttaw.

Following this, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than delivered a speech to the Hluttaw outlining the works done during the seventh regular session of the Hluttaw.

The Amyotha Hluttaw speaker said the MPs will now return to their respective constituencies, meet with constituents and implement their wishes and will.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker concluded by wishing the MPs a safe trip home, urging them to serve their country and constituents sincerely.

After his speech, the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker announced the successful completion of the seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw.—Aung Ye Thwin ■

Live broadcast today of President U Win Myint taking oath of office, delivering inaugural speech in Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

On 30 March 2018, elected President U Win Myint will take the oath of office in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will then deliver an inaugural speech. The swearing-in ceremony and the President's inaugural speech will be broadcast live 9.55 a.m. onwards on Myanma Radio and Television (MRTV), MRTV Hluttaw Channel, MITV, MNTV, Sky Net Up to Date, Myanma Radio, MOI Webportal Myanmar Facebook, MRTV Facebook and Myanmar Digital News Facebook. — Myanmar News Agency

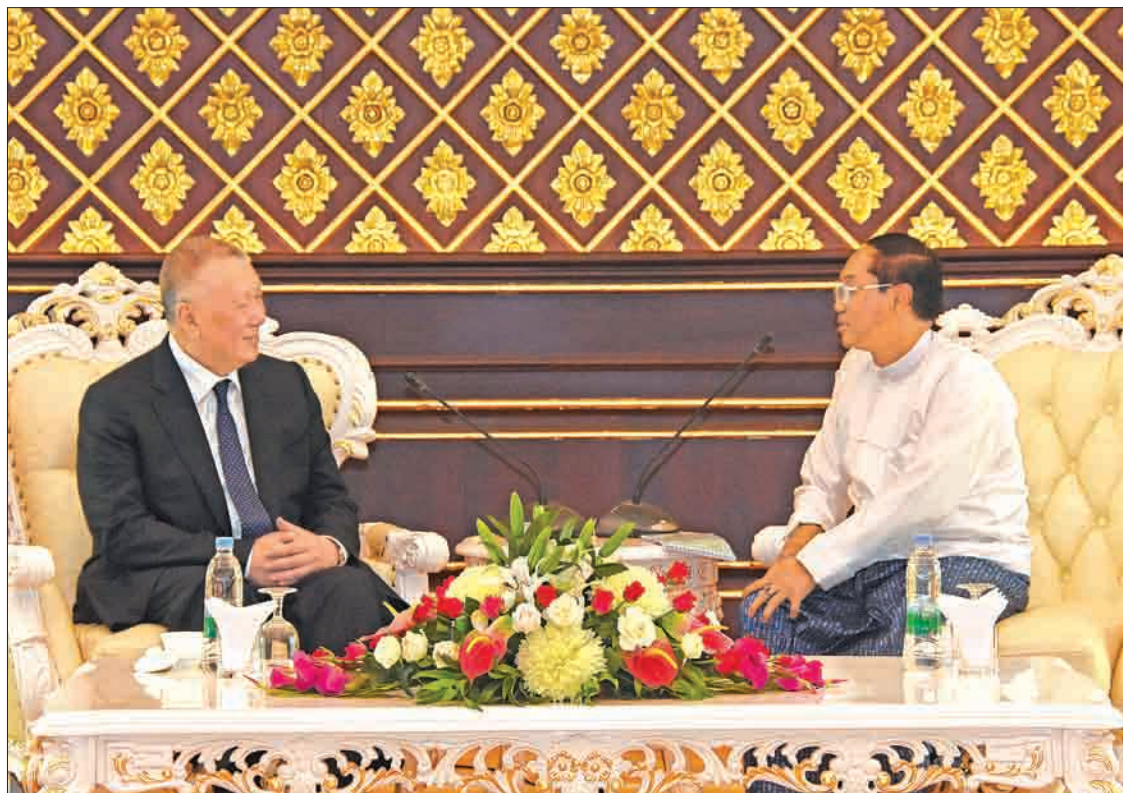
Local reporters arrive in Sittway

WITH the aim of gathering news from Maungdaw in Rakhine State, a group of 14 reporters arrived in Sittway yesterday evening.

The group included reporters from various media houses, including Sky Net, MRTV-4, Myanmar Times, Mizzima, Irrawaddy, Eleven, The Voice, Frontier Myanmar, Hot News, Myanmar Press Photo Agency, MRTV, MITV and MNA.—Kyaw Thu Htet ■



Vice President U Myint Swe receives Vice-Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference



Vice President U Myint Swe holds talks with Mr. Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

VICE President U Myint Swe received a delegation led by Mr. Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and former Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region, at Shwe San Ein Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the Macau Special Administrative Region's increasing trade and investment in Myanmar, human resources development, cultural exchanges and increasing cooperation in the travel sector.

After the meeting, the Vice President hosted a luncheon for

Mr. Edmund Ho Hau Wah and his party at the hotel.

Also present at the meeting and luncheon were Union Ministers Dr. Than Myint, U Ohn Maung and U Kyaw Tin; Deputy Minister U Set Aung; Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang; and other officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Third meeting of Rakhine implementation committee held

The 3/2018 meeting of the Implementation Committee on the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday.

At the meeting, Dr. Win Myat Aye, Chairman of the Implementation Committee and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, said there were details in the Advisory Commission's recommendations that can be implemented immediately and others that will take time and planning before implementation. He said the first process was to receive the returnees and help them resettle in their hometowns. He said the committee was also working on the socio-development of the returnees, which will require the cooperation of all the committees involved. He said the



Dr Win Myat Aye and U Nyi Pu attend the third meeting of the Impelmentation Committee on the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

reception process will be implemented by the newly formed committee, which will in turn report to the Central Committee for Implementing Peace and Development in Rakhine State. He said the committee

will accept help from the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine and facilitate the other committees formed by the Rakhine State government, such as the Com-

mittee for Clearing Burned Lands and Resettlement in Maungdaw District.

Next, Co-Chairperson and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu said the matter of security needs to be considered

alongside the implementation process. He said the committee would work swiftly to close the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and allow news gathering teams to visit the area as soon as possible. He said discussions were on to quickly revoke Section 144, which imposes a curfew, from the affected areas, and it had been revoked in Yathedaung already.

This was followed by Committee Secretary and Deputy Minister of Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut, Joint-Secretary and Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung, and other committee members from the ministries concerned discussing the ongoing processes, and finding solutions to existing problems, to which the Chairman and Co-chairman gave advice as necessary.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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

MR's locomotive factory expected to be completely operational in late 2018

UNION Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung held a meeting with the Permanent Secretary, Managing Director and officials from Myanma Railways and CRRC Dalian Company Limited at a locomotive factory in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

The Union Minister was briefed about the historical background of locomotive plants, in Myanmar and the emergence and completion of the Nay Pyi Taw locomotive factory by Project Engineer U Myint Naing. Construction of the locomotive factory is about 93 per cent complete and a new locomotive began to be assembled on 26 March, it should be complete at the end of June.

Myanma Railways began construction of a factory



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung inspects the construction of a locomotive factory in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

in Nay Pyi Taw to build new coaches and to assemble locomotives on 1st June 2015 and the whole project is slated for completion in late December this year.

The factory which consists

of 14 buildings was constructed on 18 acres of land.

The factory will assemble and manufacture electric diesel coaches with a capacity of 2,000 horsepower which will be equipped with a computer

controlled system in cooperation with CRRC Dalian Co., Ltd from China. Upon completion of the whole project, the factory will be able to produce 20 electric diesel coaches annually.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Crop insurance to be offered in Magway Region this year

THE Global World Insurance Company, a private insurer, will offer crop insurance services to growers in the Magway Region for the first time this year, according to Myawady Daily's Thursday edition.

This follows a recent meeting on the implementation of crop insurance in the Magway Region between the regional government and the company.

The company previously

arranged to offer this kind of insurance to growers starting this June. However, it postponed its plan until the end of this year, targeting agribusiness operators in Pwintbyu, Aunglan and other townships.

Farmers who regularly risk floods and other natural disasters actually need crop insurance, which is of vital importance in agro-centric Myanmar.

Crop insurance is common in countries such as the

United States, Russia and Japan, and in regional countries such as India, Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia.

Among the various types of insurance, fire insurance is the best seller in the country, representing 40 per cent of the total earnings, followed by comprehensive motor insurance, marine insurance and life insurance, according to Myanma Insurance, the state-owned insurance enterprise.—GNLM ■

300-bed speciality hospital to be built in Yangon this year

A PROJECT to build a new 300-bed speciality hospital will be implemented in Yangon this year, and it is expected to be completed in early 2021, according to a report in Myawady Daily on Thursday. The project will be carried out with the 8.661-billion Japanese yen aid provided by the Japan government, as well as the Ks42 billion provided by the Myanmar government, according to the Department of Medical Services, operating under the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The new hospital will be constructed near University of Nursing (Yangon) and New Yangon General Hospital in Lanmadaw Township. The project area is located in front of the 500-bed hospital. The new facility will include departments for cardiovascular medicine, cardiovascular surgery, neurology and neurosurgery.

The government is making continuous efforts to offer better medical care to the general public, by joining hands with its development partners to enhance the country's health sector, through the improvement of medical education, healthcare facilities and services.—GNLM ■

German wood conservation experts help conserve U Bein Bridge

WOOD conservation experts from Germany examined the strength, resistance, stability, lifespan and durability of U Bein Bridge's pillars.

The examination has been conducted by Conservation Project Manager Mr. Karl Kleineberg, Wood Specialist Mr. Peter, Wood Conservation student Mrs. Tine from Germany and Dr. Zarchi Min, Professor

from Mandalay Technological University on 27 March.

"Experts use techniques for drilling holes in teak pillars in order to test durability, lifespan and damage of the bridge and whether the pillars were naturally grown or not.

It will take a week for examination of the bridge," she added.

The findings and examina-

tions will be submitted to Mandalay's Regional government.

Situated 11 kilometers south of Mandalay, the unique U Bein Bridge is a beautiful 1.2 kilometer-long structure built from over 1,000 teak pillars and is said to be the longest bridge of its type in the world.

U Bein Bridge was built over 160 years ago.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Mineral exports increase by \$750 million since last April

THE export value of mineral products before the end of this fiscal year (FY) exceeded US\$1.7 billion, recording an increase of \$750 million compared with last FY, the Commerce Ministry reported.

The total export value of mineral products from last April through this March included \$762 million through public sector exports and \$938 million through the private sector. Government exports of the same products increased by \$308 million, while private sector exports rose by \$442 million this

FY. During this period, Myanmar also exported some \$12.147 billion worth of agricultural products, animal and marine products, forest products and manufacturing goods, among others.

According to the annual figures issued by the commerce ministry, the value of mineral exports was \$897 million in the 2011-12 FY, \$399 million in the 2012-13 FY, \$1.339 billion in the 2013-14 FY, \$1.498 billion in the 2014-15 FY, \$968 million in the 2015-16 FY, and \$1.010 billion in the 2016-17 FY. —Shwe Khine ■



Rough ruby gemstones. Mineral exports exceeded US\$ 1.7 billion compared with last FY. PHOTO: MNA

Border trade exports via Muse increase by \$300 million this FY

THE value of goods exported through Muse, a major trading point between Myanmar and China, in the current fiscal year (FY) increased by US\$300 million against last FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Since last April, the total value of trade via the Muse border gate reached \$5.48 billion, including \$1.611 billion in imports and \$3.868 billion in exports.

This time last FY, the border trade value at the Muse

trade camp amounted to \$5.179 billion, including \$3.628 billion in exports and \$1.551 billion in imports.

Myanmar conducts border trade with China mainly through Muse, Lwejel, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung.

Of these, the Muse border sees the largest volume and value in terms of border trade.

Myanmar chiefly exports agricultural products, fishery products, mining products,

forest products and industrial goods. It imports personal goods, industrial raw materials, construction equipment, automobiles and capital goods from China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Germany, France and Hong Kong.

According to the ministry's official statistics, the value of trade across all borders in the last 350 days reached \$7.942 billion, registering an increase of \$515 million compared with last FY. —Khine Khant ■

Myanmar-France bilateral trade tops \$234 million in current FY

THE value of bilateral trade between Myanmar and France topped US\$234 million this fiscal year (FY), including \$170 million in imports, which was greater than the value of exports, according to the monthly statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

Between last April and this January, Myanmar's exports to France reached \$64.086 million. In January alone, bilateral exports were

valued at \$5.903 million.

France predominately imports vegetables, certain roots and tubers, clothing accessories, textile products, charcoal, pearls and wood from Myanmar. Its exports include machinery, mechanical appliances, plastic products, pharmaceutical products, glassware, paper and paperboard.

The ministry's official figures show the trade between the two countries totalled \$176

million last FY. The bilateral trade was \$110 million in the 2015-2016 FY, \$61 million in the 2014-2015 FY, \$36 million in the 2013-2014 FY, \$48 million in the 2012-2013 FY and \$81 million in the 2011-2012 FY.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), France's investment in Myanmar reached \$7.34 million through 14 projects in the current FY. —Swe Nyein ■

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- Market Place by City Mart (Junction City)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, received Hong Liang, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar, at the Bayintnaung guest house in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the process of repatriation of

displaced persons from the Buthedaung-Maungdaw region, the role of China in supporting Myanmar at the United Nations, the status of acceptance of international aid for the development of Rakhine State, and security cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh police forces.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets with Chinese Ambassador Hong Liang at Bayintnaung guest house in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Journalism, cinema, state-owned media discussed at Pyithu Hluttaw

FROM PAGE 2

It also endorses the reporter identity cards issued by press media, broadcasting media and online media registered in copyright and registration division of Ministry of Information. The responsibility to issue identity and reporter cards lie in these entities and Myanmar Press Council is responsible to manage these entities so that they conduct matters ethically, said the Deputy Minister.

Cinema

In regards to a question by Daw Mar Mar Khine of Thaton constituency on action to be taken against 70 cinemas that were sold to private concerns with an agreement to operate the theatres but to date haven't done so, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun said a total of 136 cinemas were sold to the private sector, of which 94 were agreed to be operated as a cinema. Previously, movies where shown in cinemas under a film system, but when films become scarce, movie production declined down to less than 10 movies being produced per year. For the Myanmar motion picture sector to develop, it needs to change over to a digital system, and the Ministry of Information began to drive cinemas to convert to Digital Cinema Package (DCP) starting in 2013.

Of the 94 cinemas that had to be operated as cinemas, only 14 had converted to digital system as of 13 December 2017 and five more will be converted by mid-2018, resulting in 75 cinemas that still need to be converted. While legal actions are being taken against cinemas who fail to operate as per the agreement, support is being provided to in-

terested private businesses that want to convert to a digital system in cooperation with companies and entities that are working for motion picture sector development.

Access to news

On the question of public's right of access to news raised by Daw Aye Mya Mya Myo of Kyauktan constituency, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun said a list of spokespersons for each ministry were being published and was posted on the Ministry of Information web portal www.moi.gov.mm. And for the ease of people who need to contact departments and organisations, information (office works and procedures) are to be displayed prominently in the offices and also posted on internet and social media websites.

The Ministry of Information has also opened a Call Center Hotline (1883) to distribute information obtained, office procedures, work processes of other ministries, weather reports and special occurrences.

Furthermore, in order to inform the public in a democratic society about the works of the three pillars of the government by the news media, talks on increasing cooperation between the four pillars were being arranged to be conducted in Nay Pyi Taw and states and regions in coordination with the Myanmar Press Council. Arrangements are also being made to enact the Right to Information Law, explained the Deputy Minister.

Privately owned newspapers

Answering a question by U Myint Lwin of Twantay constitu-

ency on plans to support private newspapers, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun said with the rapid progress in communication technology, online media is rapidly developing, while the print media sector declines. Since about 2018, well known global newspapers as well as many print newspapers were being totally transformed into online newspapers or the online and print newspapers were being published together.

The main reason for print media's continued existence is selling newspapers and declining revenue from advertisement. The work scope limitation of adver-

State-owned newspapers

State-owned newspapers are state-owned enterprises operated with state funds and could not be run at a loss. If faced with possibilities of economic losses, methods like joint ventures will have to be adopted. State-owned newspapers could not be operated with the sole aim of making a profit, but also need to provide information and news at a cheap price. It is because of this that the newspapers were being sold at less than the printing cost by offsetting the expense with the income from advertisements. In developing countries, state-owned

from the three pillars were assigned so that news media can contact them. Publishing of advertisement pages in Kyemon and Myanmar Alinn newspaper in cooperation with private advertisement companies was stopped starting from 1 June 2016 so that private newspapers and journals could do it. News of union and state-level persons as well as departmental news and photos were also shared in a timely manner on websites so that private newspapers have the same information at the same time as the state-owned newspapers.

Arrangements for travel and accommodation for local private media was also provided in the same way as it was provided to international media. Arrangements are also made so that all have access to news. Even when there is a limitation due to location or time, arrangements are made so that all are given fair chances to attend such occasions alternatively.

The Ministry of Information recognises that the government needs to do much to meet the requirements of the private newspapers to publish freely and is doing all it can. State-owned newspapers inform the works of the government to the people and it also informs the people of news about ethnic nationals and low-interest news that people ought to know. This is the aim of the state-owned newspapers, and it is not competing with private newspapers. By standing apart in such a way, the state-owned newspapers left an opening for private newspaper to flourish, explained the Deputy Minister.—Aye Aye Thant (Myanmar News Agency) ■

The Ministry of Information recognises that the government needs to do much to meet the requirements of the private newspapers to publish freely and is doing all it can.

tisement revenues being diverted from print media to online media like broadcast and digital is also the reason. The government is learnt to be preparing to abolish the withholding tax so as to ease the burden on print newspapers from duties, commercial tax and income tax. As this can only be done with all relevant departments and ministries, the Ministry of Information could not do it alone. State-owned newspapers are not exempt and are paying taxes and duties in the same way as private newspapers, explained the Deputy Minister.

newspapers have the responsibility to be a bridge between the government and the people and to provide news to the people at a cheap price.

For reporters from private media to obtain departmental news conveniently and quickly, starting from 2016, discussions between the three pillars and the news media were conducted together with Myanmar Press Council all over the country. This was seen to have supported the ease in understanding one another as well as in contacting to obtain news. Spokespersons

Foreign heads of state send congratulations messages to President U Win Myint

FOREIGN heads of state sent congratulations messages to U Win Myint, who was elected as the President on Wednesday.

Mr Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India, expressed his warmest greetings and good wishes on the occasion of election of U Win Myint as the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

“India and Myanmar enjoy close friendship that has stood the test of time. Our two countries are working together to expand our mutually beneficial cooperation in a number of areas,” said Mr Ram Nath Kovind.

The president said Myanmar is also an important partner in various development cooperation initiatives that India has undertaken in recent years.

President Mr Ram Nath Kovind also assured that India stands ready to work with your Government to assist the newly elected President U Win Myint in realizing Myanmar’s national priorities at a time when Myanmar is engaged in a significant political and economic transition.

He also extended to U Win Myint his congratulations and best wishes.

Mr Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, extended their warmest congratulations to U Win Myint in their own names, on behalf of the State, Government and

people of Viet Nam.

“Your appointment as President reflects the people of Myanmar’s high regard for Your efforts and contributions to the country. We believe that Myanmar will attain greater achievements in socio-economic development, prosperity and national reconciliation,” they said in the message.

We look forward to working closely with You and the Government of Myanmar to strengthen the traditional friendship and the Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership in bilateral, multi-lateral and ASEAN frameworks.

They wish U Win Myint great health, happiness and success in his high capacity.

Mr Md. Abdul Hamid, President of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, sent the congratulation message to U Win Myint on the occasion of the latter’s being elected as the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

“This reflects your contribution to your country and great confidence that the people of Myanmar have reposed in you,” said Mr Md. Abdul Hamid.

“Both Bangladesh and Myanmar have the potential to contribute significantly to the development of not only our two countries but also to the region,” he said, “I believe our joint efforts will help to make this region a better place and fulfill the aspirations of our two peoples.”

He also expressed his hope that U Win Myint’s election as the President would further

consolidate the process of realizing long cherished aspirations of Myanmar for greater peace, stability and development.

He wished President U Win Myint and through him to the people of Myanmar a very peaceful and prosperous future.

Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, said in her message that it is a pleasure to congratulate U Win Myint on his election as the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

“This must be a recognition to your dedicated service to your party as well as to the nation, especially as the former Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw,” she said in her message.

“We hope that under your leadership, Myanmar will create further momentum in bringing about long-awaited political and economic reforms in an inclusive manner so that all her people enjoy benefits of democracy and development,” said Mrs. Sheikh Hasina.

She continued to say that she firmly believed that as immediate neighbour the two countries’ social and economic complementarities and shared history will continue to inspire the two countries to prosper together despite many challenges.

“I would like to assure you that Bangladesh stands ready to extend due cooperation to realize true potentials of our two countries,” said Mrs. Sheikh Hasina.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Senior General sends congratulatory message to newly elected President

Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing sent a message of congratulations to Myanmar’s new President U Win Myint, who was elected on Wednesday at the Presidential Election of

the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 7th regular session.

In his message, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing extended warm congratulations and best wishes.—Myanmar News Agency ■

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Appointment of Permanent Secretary

THE Union Government has appointed Director-General U Lwin Oo, Office of the Amyotha Hluttaw, as Permanent Secretary of the same office.—Myanmar News Agency ■

PRESS RELEASE

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Nikoloz Apkhazava as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with residence in Kuala Lumpur.

Mr. Nikoloz Apkhazava was born on 6 July 1971 in Zugdidi, Georgia. In 1993, he obtained a diploma in International Law from Faculty of International Law and International Relations, Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University in Georgia. From 1998 to 2003, he studied at Graduate School of International and Business Law and Social Sciences of Yokohama National University in Japan and earned Master of International and Business Law and Doctor of Laws (L.L.D). From July to October 1993, Mr. Nikoloz Apkhazava served as a Leading Specialist at State Constitutional Commission, Parliament of Georgia in Tbilisi. He also served as Legal Advisor to business firms and organizations. From October 2008 to December 2011, he served as Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of Georgia in Japan. From January 2012 to February 2017, he served as the Ambassador of Georgia to the Republic of Korea. Since April 2017, he has been serving as Ambassador of Georgia to Malaysia.

He is married. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Chairperson of constitutional tribunal receives Executive Director of Open Society Justice Initiative

U MYO NYUNT, Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union received Mr James A. Goldston, Executive Director of Open Society Justice Initiative, at the meeting hall of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed matters related to the constitutional tribunal’s affairs, the empowerment of legal quality, hu-



Chairperson U Myo Nyunt poses documentary photo together with Open Society Justice Initiative executive director and other officials in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

man rights issues, prevalence of rules of law and enhancement in the quality of research officers of the constitutional tribunal office. Also present at the meeting

were members of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union Daw Hla Myo Nwe and U Kyaw San and the director-general. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Isolated rain or thundershowers likely in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi regions

ISOLATED rain or thundershowers may occur in the Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, and Kachin, Shan, Chin and Kayah states. The degree of certainty is 80 per cent, while the weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states, as it will be partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay, and 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, Yangon and neighbouring areas for today is partly cloudy. Seas will be slight in Myanmar’s waters. The wave height will be some 2-4 feet off and along the Myanmar coast.—GNLM ■

Switch to organic farming to produce safer food

TODAY, people of the world demand food that is safe to eat. In the past, countries focused only on sufficient food production.

But the time has come to practice methods that take climate change into account in order to produce safe food and to improve the livelihoods of farmers.

Myanmar has prospects for regaining its past status as the top rice export country. The agriculture sector continues to play a large part in development of the country.

Myanmar's rice exports this fiscal year was more than 3 million tons, the most in over 70 years. The government has pledged to support the farmers and urged them to pass the integrity and value of agriculture on to their children.

Meanwhile, our country's farmers and stakeholders are turning to organic farming, as the world is moving towards healthier organic crops.

The change in the global agriculture sector has brought opportunities to our farmers, their children and stakeholders.

If young people embrace agricultural opportunities, we can overcome challenges such as the shortage of farm labour that is occurring in developed countries, where youths from rural areas walk away from farms to take jobs in cities.

To boost the agricultural sector with safe crops, the country has to tackle the challenges of erratic weather, capacity and technical know-how to produce value-added products and dependence on foreign market demand.

The issue of high transportation costs, which causes problems in the supply chain, is another challenge.

To help our agriculture sector, the most important thing should do is doing research on climate change and we must change our country's weaknesses in performing research for the new system of agriculture.

It is very important to do research on a new system of agriculture which is based on climate change.

For our agricultural produce, we will have to set the target of meeting the international standard in terms of safety and nutrition in the future whether we want to do it or not.

The time has come for us to improve our food standards so as to meet ASEAN standards and compete successfully in foreign markets.

Today, experts from agricultural departments are disseminating knowledge about organic farming to local farmers as part of efforts for promoting sustainable agricultural methods in the country.

Growers need to practice organic methods based on climate change following the instructions of agricultural experts to produce safe, quality food and fruits to penetrate more markets. ■

Growers need to practice organic methods based on climate change following the instructions of agricultural experts to produce safe, quality food and fruits to penetrate more markets.

Popa Geo Park

MaungTha(Archaeology)

as a top priority.

TO lessen many natural disasters including global warming, and to protect the environment and conserve forests and wildlife, measures are being taken with the creations of many garden cities across the country.

Myanmar Geoscience Association has tried to create a Geo Park near the Mount Popa where there are many lush forests, wildlife and biodiversity. With emergence of the Geo Park, lush forests, national resources and associated existence of biodiversity education and preservation are regularly maintained for sustainable development. So said geologist U Than Tun and the secretary of Myanmar Geoscience Association.

The creations of Geo Parks in Khakaborazi national park in Kachin State, PutaO, Hukawny Valley, Indawgyi, Twinn Mountain in Sagaing Region, Mount Zwekabin in Kayin State and the Lampi island Marine National Park in Taninthayi Region are planned. But Myanmar Geoscience Association has given the Mount Popa in Mandalay Region

The history of Mount Popa

Mount Popa is situated in Kyaukpadaung Township and lies at the northern edge of the Bago Range, 31 miles away to Bagan and 37 miles away from the Ayeyawady River.

According to map descriptions, the location of Mount Popa lies at 20. 52'N and 90.14'E. The history of Mount Popa is greatly associated with worshipping. It is also known as an enjoyable place for Mahagiri brother and sister who are easily seen in every Myanmar household. After all, Mount Popa is a lush spot in Myanmar dry zone which has produced a lot of alchemists. According to Myanmar legends, Myanmar people have worshipped the statutes of Maung Tintay and his sister since AD 904.

Since the king of Pyu Min Hti Min, Bagan kings have initiated a climbing festival annually and Mount Popa has been regarded as a sacred site. Nat-worshipping in Myanmar has started in Bagan Era and

Mahagiri worshipping is the earliest in the history of

Nat-worshipping. Nat-worshipping was believed to have continued up until Yadanabon Period. It continued to exist even when King Anawrahta brought Theravada Buddhism to Bagan. Almost in every Myanmar household, there are the statutes of Min Mahagirinats; Mount Popa is famous for personalities such as Bow Bow Aung and Bo Min Gaung who practice many ways of escaping from sufferings.

Popa as it is

There are two parts in Popa mountains: Mount Popa and Taung Kalat which slopes towards the west; The Taung Kalat is belived to be a part resulting from volcanic eruptions. Mount Popa is 4981 feet above the sea level; Taung Kalat is 2417 feet high and named after its shape like a small circular tray with a stem.

The Taung Kalat has a lot of pagodas , religious edifices and nat-figures and shrines for nats. The pilgrims climb along the stairways joyfully from the base to the top. The rungs of 777 along the stairways were built by Great Hermit U Khanti;

but now 43 rungs were added in order for the pilgrims to climb to the top comfortably.

The emergence of Mount Popa from the ground was estimated by geologists some 15 million years ago. The crater is somewhat like a circular tray which tilts towards the west, letting the climbers to believe the east and south sides are a litter higher.

That is why when one observes from the west side, one can see two peaks; from the north side, one peak can be seen. Mount Popa is surrounded by many mountain spurs.

Mount Popa was believed to be an active volcano by geologists some 250,000 years ago; eruptions left main one dead. The crater is about a mile wide with a trench in 2625 feet deep down. During a period of explosions a lava flow spread to the north; evidences of lava are easily seen these days. Anyathian culture flourished in early stone age in Chauk, Yennanchaung and Nyaung-U regions in Myanmar. According to historian Dr. Than Tun, the eastern bank of the Ayeyawady was the present day Mount Popa a million years ago. Again Amer-



The rocky volcanic plug of Mt. Popa. **PHOTO: CHAN THA (MEIKHTILA)**

ican archaeologist Dr. Movius predicted Popa region used to be dwelled by stone-age inhabitants. They used these rocks as weapons. At the same time fossils are found in Singaung and Sin-un regions.

Stone-age dwellers were afraid of the sun, volcanoes and mountains and so Mount Popa was regarded as a sacred place. When languages came into existence, Mahagiri(big mountain In Pali) emerged as a solitary peak, thereby leading to a story of Min Mahagiri. According to a palace history, a loud explosion occurred in the middle of the Ayeyawady, creating a big lake in the region of Po-U-Maung; two rivers of Samon and Samyeik flowed; Mount Popa emerged out of the ground and the water near Seiketra went dry. Pyi cities like Seriktra, Beikthano and Hanlinn flourished very far away from Mount Popa and their records were hidden in Mount Popa. Cities collapsed leading to the emergence of Bagan Era, with Popa with playing an important role in history books. There are no connection of descriptions between Mount Popa and Bagan Era.

Popa Geo Park

Besides holidaying, Mount-Popa could become an attraction for researchers on archaeology, geology, history, botany and forestry. Geological survey on rock formations, biodiversity

survey on monkeys, birds and butterflies and researchers on medicinal plants are bound to visit Mount Popa for study tours. Mount Popa garden, with a square miles of 49.63 wide, was established in 1983. It has a plantation of 350 kinds of medicinal plants. 70 species of birds, 10 kinds of mammals including monkeys and wild cats and many other kinds of birds and plants are found to be roaming and flourishing.

At the foot of Mount Popamonkeys,boas, deer and mouse deer are found grazing. Hill stations are built by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation in the crater in which one can go down to the depth of 2800 feet. To the east of Mount Popa lies Meikhtilar and Mahlaing townships; to the west Nyaung-U and Chauk townships; to the south Natmauk Township; to the north borders with TaungthaTwonship. From these towns, easy transportation is available to Mount Popa.

Popa region is famous for tourists and academics, both domestic and abroad. If Popa Geo Park is established to the standard of national levels, it would be not only beneficial for conservation of the environment and biodiversity but also for the livelihood of local inhabitants. ■

Translated by Arakan Sein

Ending neglected tropical diseases

Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director

Achieving the sustainable development agenda means ending all neglected tropical diseases

THE WHO South-East Asia Region is healthier than ever: Polio has been vanquished. Maternal and neonatal tetanus has been eliminated. And after decades of struggle, the HIV, TB and malaria epidemics have been halted and reversed. They will be ended altogether in coming years.

Amid these stunning achievements, region-wide progress against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) stands out. As the name suggests, NTDs – including leprosy, trachoma, lymphatic filariasis and kala-azar – take their most severe toll on the poor and marginalised, communities whose political influence is limited and health needs often overlooked.

High-level political buy-in has changed that dynamic, and with it the NTD burden. India is now yaws-free. Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand have eliminated lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem. Nepal is in the process of validating the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem and maintained the elimination target for kala-azar for more than three consecutive years. By the end of 2017, 100 per cent of sub-districts in Bangladesh and 90 per cent of blocks in India had done the same. As a whole, the region remains responsible for the world's largest preventive chemotherapy campaign.

Progress must continue. Though the region has eliminated leprosy as a public health problem, the disease continues to circulate among vulnerable communities, accounting for more than 60 per cent of leprosy-caused grade 2 disabilities worldwide. And though several member countries have eliminated lymphatic filariasis, its burden continues to haunt communities in remote and hard-to-reach areas elsewhere. Region-wide, 53 per cent of all people require mass drug administration to stay free of the disfiguring disease.

Though each NTD has its own clinical, environmental and biosocial components, the core principles of our strategy – outlined in WHO's Roadmap to overcome the impact of NTDs – are critical to success, and should be marshalled to decisive effect.

First, national ownership and buy-in must continue, and where necessary be fortified. The ongoing strength of national NTD programmes is crucial to maintaining momentum and overcoming persistent difficulties, whether related to the depth and quality of surveillance or the stubborn endurance of stigma and discrimination. Stable domestic funding for national programmes is central to this outcome, as is high-level focus on key targets and accelerated progress. Region-wide, country-level commitment to addressing NTDs has for many years been impressive.

Second, as progress continues, member countries must ensure programming is both dynamic and flexible. That means pursuing large-scale campaigns such as mass drug administration where appropriate, but also (and at the same time) strengthening NTD-related services at the primary level to secure long-term gains. It also means working creatively across sectors: Agro-engineers, for example, have much to offer in the battle against schistosomiasis. Where appropriate they should be sought out and engaged. Similarly, vector control programmes can have immediate and substantial impact on disease transmission in NTD-affected areas.

Finally, member countries should invest in and take full advantage of innovations in research and technology. The effective use of rapid diagnostics, for example, can facilitate swift and accurate diagnosis of a range of NTDs, at the same time as helping health workers reach large and often underserved populations. That will not only increase treatment (and in the case of leprosy and lymphatic filariasis, forestall deformity and disability), but will also decrease disease transmission. As part of efforts to use technology more effectively, IT infrastructure should be integrated with existing surveillance systems, allowing programme managers to gather, analyse and act on real-time data and course-correct as and where necessary. ■

Muse traders hope to regain bank accounts

By May Thet Hnin

On 23 March, China closed 217 bank accounts of sugar traders, currency exchangers, businessmen, and merchants selling beans, maize, and sesame in Muse in northern Shan State.

This has resulted in a significant decrease in trade at the Muse border gate, and traders are urging for their accounts to be reopened as soon as possible. U Min Thein, a sugar and rice trader who had his account frozen, told reporters that the Chinese authorities said the accounts were closed as they are suspected to have links to drugs and narcotics trading.

"Those of us who've had their accounts frozen are borrowing other people's accounts to do

business transactions. Naturally, they refuse to lend you their accounts after one too many times, so we need our accounts back to do any steady business," he said.

The Chinese authorities have not disclosed how long they will keep the bank accounts frozen. All the traders can do for now is submit notices to the District General Administrator Department, the Department for Border Trade Administration, the Department for Promoting Trade, and the China-Myanmar Relations Office.

The Muse trade zone mainly deals in rice and maize, followed by sugar and beans, and since the accounts have been frozen, trade has dropped by a third of its original run, said U Min Thein.

"The sellers are a bit calm

and surveying the situation, so there hasn't been an adverse impact yet," he said.

U Chan Thar Oo, Vice President of the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre, said this situation has had the least impact on rice trade. "It's the new season for rice, so we have an excessive supply that exceeds demand and thus the market is slow. It's not necessarily because the accounts were frozen," he said.

The Chinese government levies a high tax on foreign imports and has strict regulations on quality control. Muse traders have urged the Myanmar government to negotiate with the Chinese to lessen these rules. Investigations of frozen bank accounts can take from one month to six months. ■



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo holds talks with Mr James A. Goldston, Executive Director of the Open Society Justice Initiative, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Attorney-General receives Executive Director of Open Society Justice Initiative

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received Mr James A. Goldston, Executive Director of the Open Society Justice Initiative, at the Union Attorney-General's office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to

the rule of law and the judiciary sector, upgrading the capacity of law offices, setting up of law officers, the code of conduct and judiciary standards, human resource development and cooperation between international organisations.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Mogok celebrates 800th anniversary



By Khaing Sat Wai

A commemoration of the 800th anniversary of Mogok kicked off yesterday with ceremonial celebrations, many of them centred on rubies, for which the region is famous.

The celebration is aimed to promote the gems and tourism industry of Mogok, which is also known as Ruby Land, to advertise the culture of ethnic people living in harmony in the same area, to pass the good heritage of the Ruby Land to the next generation of the city and to create jobs in the tourism sector.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung and regional cabinet members attended the opening ceremony. In his opening address, the Chief Minister expressed

thanks to local ethnic peoples and the people from Mogok who are settling in other areas for their united efforts for holding the celebration.

Organisers of the event hope that foreign tourists will visit the anniversary celebration and share their experiences with friends and families in their own countries.

At the commemoration, sports competitions, music entertainment and festivities will be included. Burmese, Lisu, Shan and Palaung ethnic people reside in Mogok, which produces world-famous rubies and other precious gemstones. In addition, Mogok is surrounded by a large number of mountains and it has a temperate climate. The city has many historical temples and pagodas. ■



Facing outcry over data breach, Facebook again overhauls privacy settings

WASHINGTON — Facebook on Wednesday launched a fresh effort to quell the firestorm over the hijacking of personal data, once again unveiling new privacy tools and settings to give users more control over how their information is shared.

The new features follow fierce criticism of the social network giant after it was revealed that the personal data of tens of millions of users was harvested by a British firm linked to Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

The company acknowledged that it needed to "do more to keep people informed," but said the changes have been "in the works for some time."

"We've heard loud and clear that privacy settings and other important tools are too hard to find," chief privacy officer Erin Egan and deputy general counsel Ashlie Beringer said in a blog post.



The new features follow fierce criticism after it was revealed millions of Facebook users' personal data was harvested by a British firm linked to Donald Trump's 2016 campaign. **PHOTO: AFP**

"We're taking additional steps in the coming weeks to put people more in control of their privacy."

The updates include easier access to Facebook's user settings and tools to easily search for, download and delete personal data stored on the site used by

two billion people.

Facebook said a new privacy shortcuts menu will allow users to quickly increase account security, manage who can see their information and activity on the site, and control advertisements they see.

Facebook's terms of service

and data policy are being updated to improve transparency about how the site collects and uses information, according to Beringer and Egan.

The social network said it is also shutting down 'Partner Categories,' a feature which enables more precise targeting of ads by combining information from Facebook with data aggregated by outside companies such as Experian and Acxiom.

"This product enables third-party data providers to offer their targeting directly on Facebook," product marketing director Graham Mudd said in a statement posted online.

"While this is common industry practice, we believe this step, winding down over the next six months, will help improve people's privacy on Facebook."

Earlier this month, whistleblower Christopher Wylie revealed political consulting com-

pany Cambridge Analytica had obtained profiles on 50 million Facebook users via an academic researcher's personality prediction app.

The app was downloaded by 270,000 people, but also scooped up their friends' data without consent — as was possible under Facebook's rules at the time.

Lukewarm praise

Yet some analysts said Facebook and its chief Mark Zuckerberg have made similar promises in the past.

"Zuck promised easier, better privacy controls 'in the coming weeks' eight years ago," Zeynep Tufekci, a University of North Carolina professor who studies social media, said on Twitter.

"The solution isn't shifting the burden to the user because the problem is the negative externalities of the business model." —AFP ■

A bridge so far: China's controversial megaproject

HONG KONG — Touted as an engineering wonder, the world's longest sea bridge, which connects Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China, includes a snaking road crossing and an underwater tunnel and reportedly uses enough steel to build 60 Eiffel Towers.

Nine years after construction began on the 55-kilometre (34-mile) crossing, a preview organised by the Chinese government this week offered a first peek into the megaproject.

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Nine years after construction began on the 55-kilometre (34-mile) crossing, a preview organised by the Chinese government this week offered a first

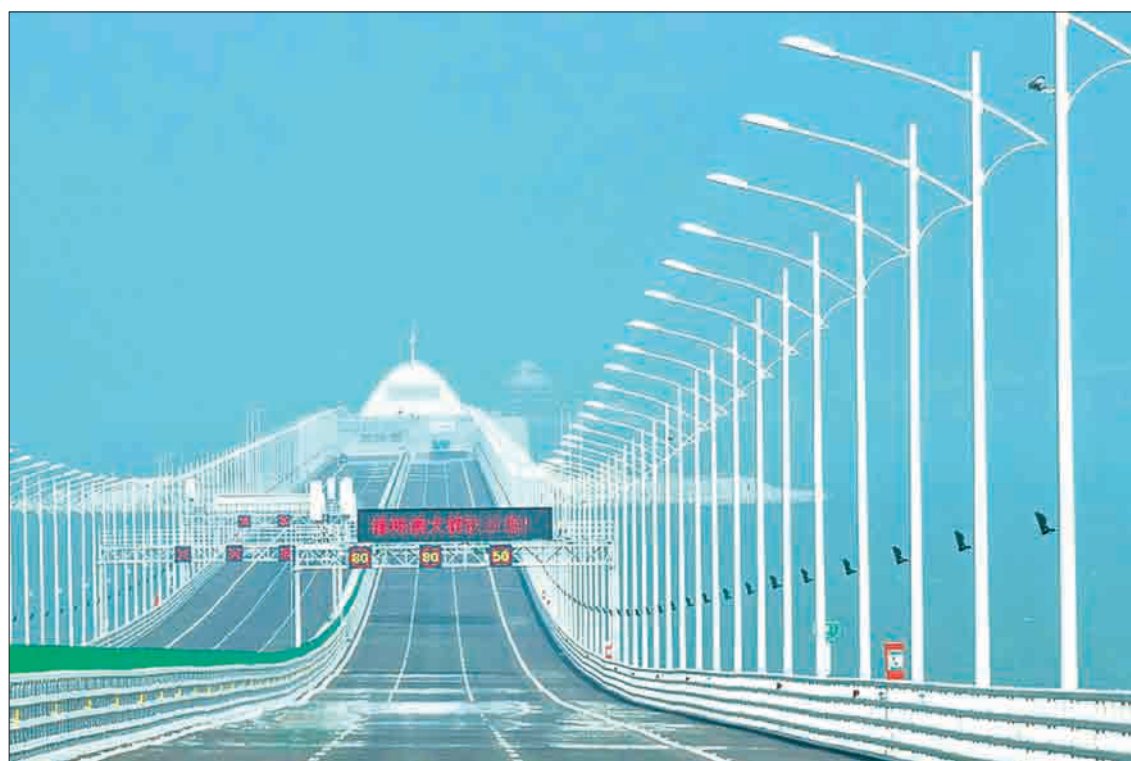
peek into the megaproject.

The bridge will link Hong Kong to the southern Chinese city of Zhuhai and the gambling enclave of Macau, cutting across the waters of the Pearl River Estuary. Although the opening date has not been confirmed, officials expect the bridge to be in use for 120 years and say it will boost business by cutting travel time by 60 per cent.

The 420,000 tonnes of steel used for the project represent 60 times the amount used in the Eiffel Tower, China's official Xinhua news agency said.

Although the opening date has not been confirmed, officials expect the bridge to be in use for 120 years and say it will boost business by cutting travel time by 60 per cent.

The 420,000 tonnes of steel used for the project represent 60 times the amount used in the Eiffel Tower, China's official Xinhua news agency said.



A bridge to somewhere: The project linking Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China is 55 kilometres long and contains enough steel to build 60 Eiffel Towers. **PHOTO: AFP**

Gao Xinglin, the bridge's project planning manager, said the construction of the 6.7-kilometre underwater tunnel gave him sleepless nights.

"There were many nights where I couldn't fall asleep, because there were too many difficulties during the construction," Gao told reporters Wednesday.

"Linking the 80,000-tonne pipes under the sea with water-

tight technology was the most challenging," he added.

The total price tag for the project, which includes artificial islands, linked roads and new border-crossing facilities, is unclear but some estimates run to over 100 billion yuan (\$15.1 billion), leading critics to slam it as a costly white elephant.

Opponents in Hong Kong say the project is part of Beijing's

drive to tighten its grip on the semi-autonomous city.

Dogged by delays, budget overruns, accusations of corruption and the deaths of construction workers, the bridge failed to open by the end of 2017 as hoped.

There have also been safety concerns after 19 lab workers were charged over faking concrete test reports, with one man jailed last December. —AFP ■

Egypt's Sisi wins second term with 92% of vote: state media

CAIRO — Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has been reelected for a second term with 92 per cent of the vote, preliminary results showed on Thursday, but turnout of just 40 per cent dented his push for popular legitimacy.

Some 23 million of the 60 million registered voters turned out during the three days of polling that ended Wednesday, state-owned newspapers Al-Ahram and Akhbar el-Youm, and the official MENA news agency reported.

According to Al-Ahram, in addition to the 23 million who cast valid votes, two million spoiled their ballot papers, inserting the names of candidates who were not among the only two approved.

Sisi's sole challenger was the little-known Moussa Mostafa Moussa,

himself a supporter of the president, who registered immediately before the close date for applications, saving the election from being a one-horse race.

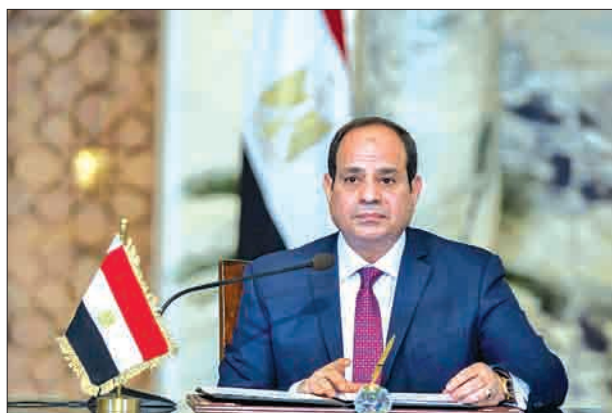
Other, more heavyweight would-be challengers were all sidelined, detained or pulled out.

Sisi, who as army chief ousted Egypt's first freely elected president — Islamist Mohamed Morsi — after mass street protests in 2013, won his first term in 2014 with 96.9 per cent of the vote.

Turnout down on 2014

Turnout of 47 per cent in that year's election was sharply higher than this year's 40 per cent despite appeals from Prime Minister Sherif Ismail for voters to fulfil their patriotic duty.

Boycotters who can-



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has been reelected for a second term with 92 per cent of the vote, state media says citing preliminary results. **PHOTO: AFP**

not show good reason for not going to the polls could face a fine of up to 500 Egyptian pounds (22 euros), the electoral commission has warned.

At a news conference, election commission official, Mahmud al-Sherif, said there had been no violations of Egypt's election law. Opposition groups had called for a boycott of this

week's vote which they labelled a facade.

There were no presidential debates and Sisi himself did not appear at any official campaign events, although he spoke at a number of ceremonies.

In an interview days ahead of the vote, Sisi said he had wished there were more candidates, denying any role in sidelining them.

At a speech before the vote he also called for a high turnout.

"I need you because the journey is not over," Sisi told a mostly female audience. "I need every lady and mother and sister, please, I need the entire world to see us in the street" voting.

Morsi's removal had ushered in a deadly crackdown that killed and jailed hundreds of Islamists. The initial crackdown on Morsi's supporters expanded to include liberal and leftist secular activists. A jihadist insurgency since has killed hundreds of policemen and civilians. Sisi gave the armed forces and police a three-month deadline in November to wipe out the Islamic State group in its Sinai Peninsula stronghold.

The deadline has since been extended, and

on February 9 the armed forces launched their most comprehensive campaign yet to end the five-year-old jihadist insurgency.

But attacks by the jihadists have continued. On Saturday, two policemen were killed in a car bomb targeting the provincial head of security for the Mediterranean city of Alexandria. The security chief was unharmed.

Egyptian cities, especially Cairo, have been flooded with banners showing Sisi and messages of support from business owners. Posters vowing support for Moussa, 65, are rarely seen.

While still popular, Sisi has embarked on tough economic reforms that have been welcomed by foreign investors but dented his popularity at home.—AFP ■

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Loan/Credit No. : EDCF-MYA-7

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received Loan from the Export-Import Bank of Korea from the resources of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Republic of Korea for the Design, Supply and Installation for 500kV Taungoo-Kamanat Transmission Line.
2. The Project Executing Agency now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for **Design, Supply and Installation for 500kV Taungoo-Kamanat Transmission Line on turnkey basis**. The eligible bidders shall be Korea Company by the EDCF Guide Lines.
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the tender Office or the Website (<http://www.moee.gov.mm>) in the head office of below address and inspect the bidding documents during office hour exclusive of public holidays.
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested Bidder on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of non - refundable fee of **US\$ 1,000**.
5. Bids must be delivered to the address below between **13:00 to 14:00 (Local Time) on 18th May, 2018**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than one million one hundred thousand US Dollars (USD 1,100,000). Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the address below after 14:00 (Local Time) on 18th May, 2018. Address: Meeting Room, Material Planning Department, Department of Power Transmission and System Control, Building No.27, MOEE, Nay Pyi Taw.

Tender Committee
Department of Power Transmission and System Control
Ministry of Electricity and Energy, office No.27,
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Telephone : 067- 3410282, 3410209

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. (0234-561W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. (0234-561W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-3-2018 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 ARCA VOY. NO. (1813)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ARCA VOY. NO. (1813) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/TMT 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
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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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Two Koreas agree to hold summit on 27 April

SEOUL—The two Koreas on Thursday set a date for a rare inter-Korean summit, following a high-level meeting that was held days after the nuclear-armed North's leader Kim Jong Un made his international debut with a surprise trip to China.

"According to the will of both leaders, the South and North agreed to hold the '2018 South-North summit' on 27 April at the South's Peace House in Panmunjom," said a joint press statement, read out in turn by both delegations' leaders.

The meeting between Kim Jong Un, leader of nuclear-armed North Korea, and the South's President Moon Jae-in will be only the third of its kind, and will be followed by landmark talks with US President Donald Trump which could come as early as May.

The venue will make Kim the first North Korean leader to set foot in the South since the end of the Korean War — although according to Pyongyang's official accounts, during the conflict his grandfather and predecessor Kim Il Sung went several times to Seoul, which twice fell to his forces.



Cho (C) crosses the border line to attend talks held on the northern side of the truce village of Panmunjom. PHOTO: AFP

The two sides did not settle on the summit agenda at Thursday's meeting in the Unification Pavilion on Panmunjom's northern side, but the South's delegation leader Cho Myoung-gyon told reporters they agreed Kim and Moon should be able to hold "frank discussions on all matters".

That would include the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, Cho said.

The leader of Pyongyang's delegation Ri Son Gwon added: "What the people want is our agen-

da." Another round of working-level talks next Wednesday will discuss issues including protocol and security.

Next month's meeting comes after previous inter-Korean summits in Pyongyang in 2000 and 2007, since when the North has made extensive progress in its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

It has been subjected to multiple rounds of sanctions by the UN Security Council, US, South and others as a result,

and tensions in the region have soared, with Kim and Trump engaging in a fiery war of words last year.

But a rapid rapprochement on the peninsula was kicked off by the Winter Olympics in the South and events have moved quickly since then, with a flurry of official visits between the two Koreas.

An advance team of Southern performers headed north on Thursday ahead of K-pop concerts in Pyongyang.

Kim-Xi meeting
Beijing welcomed

Thursday's developments, with foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang saying improved relations between the Koreas "will help promote regional peace and stability".

"We believe it serves their mutual interests as well as the regional situation," he added. China's top diplomat, State Councillor Yang Jiechi, arrived in Seoul Thursday to brief Moon and other officials on Kim's secretive visit to Beijing this week to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping for the first time.

It was the North Korean leader's first overseas trip since inheriting power following the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in 2011.

China has long been the North's key diplomatic defender and provider of trade and aid, but relations have been strained by Pyongyang's weapons programmes, with Beijing showing a new willingness to implement UN sanctions against it.

Even so the two leaders hailed their nations' historic ties, with Xi accepting Kim's invitation to visit Pyongyang, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

"There is no question

that my first foreign visit would be to the Chinese capital," it quoted Kim as saying, calling it a "noble obligation".

Kim pledged that he was "committed to denuclearisation" on the Korean peninsula, according to China's Xinhua news agency — but added this would depend on South Korea and the US taking what he called "progressive and synchronous measures for the realisation of peace".

Analysts say both sides had reason to hold the meeting — Pyongyang to secure Beijing's backing and support, and China to protect its interests in what it considers its backyard. Robert Kelly, a professor at Pusan National University in South Korea, said: "Xi would not grant this meeting unless the Chinese were genuinely concerned about the summits to come and wanted some kind of role to play."

The South's Joong Ang Daily newspaper said in an editorial Thursday that the meeting "makes the situation more complicated because Xi stepped into the negotiation all of a sudden".

"China will not simply look on," it added.—AFP ■

Chinese tourists to Viet Nam surge 42.9 pct in Q1

HANOI —Viet Nam received nearly 1.4 million Chinese visitors in the first quarter of this year, or roughly 32.3 per cent of the total international arrivals, seeing a year-on-year rise of 42.9 per cent, the country's General Statistics Office said on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Viet Nam welcomed a total of more than 4.2 million international arrivals, up 30.9 per cent on-year, with the highest growth of 69

per cent in the number of visitors from South Korea, followed by China, up 42.9 per cent, and Finland, up 36.9 per cent.

Of the international arrivals between January and March, roughly 3.4 million came to Viet Nam by air, up 27.9 per cent; 719,900 by road, up 53.6 per cent; and 119,800 by sea, up 6.9 per cent.

Meanwhile, nearly 3.2 million visitors were from Asia, up 37.6 per

cent; 645,800 from Europe, up 15.4 per cent; 276,200 from the Americas, mainly from the United States, up 11.5 per cent; 119,100 from Oceania, up 14.1 per cent, and 11,100 from Africa, up 25.7 per cent.

Viet Nam plans to receive 16-17 million foreign visitors and 78 million domestic ones, and gain tourism revenues of 27.5 billion US dollars in 2018, according to the Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism.—Xinhua ■

Hotline Ph: 09-74424114

Ministry of Construction
Department of Rural Road Development
Invitation for Open Tender

1.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a grant from Federal Republic of Germany (KfW Bank) through its Department of Rural Road Development (DRRD) under Ministry of Construction towards the cost of Rural Road Rehabilitation Programme (RRRP) in Kalay township.

2.

The DRRD invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the following separated Bridge work contracts;

	Contract	Description	Location
1	Lot 1 (ShaeGji Bridge)	– Standard Concrete Bridge; single carriageway of 6 Meter width. – Total length is 150 Meter.	Kalay township of Sagaing Region.
2	Lot 2 (Nat ta khar Bridge)	– Standard Concrete Bridge; single carriageway of 6 Meter width. – Total length is 130 Meter.	Kalay township of Sagaing Region.

3.

Procurement will be conducted through International Competitive Bidding Procedures and under the laws and regulations governing public procurement within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and following the KfW Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and Associated Services in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries (KfW procurement guidelines-August 2016).

4.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 2pm, May 15, 2018

5.

This invitation is open to all bidders and bidders have the option to Bid for any one or both lots.

6.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information complete bidding document from:
Rural Road Rehabilitation Programme (RRRP),
Department of Rural Road Development, Ministry of Construction ,
Northern of (200)Bedded Hospital , Yan Aung (2) Quarter, Pinyinana, Myanmar,
Phone:+95 67 24821, Email:ruralroad.drrd@gmail.com , rbbdrd@gmail.com

PYONGYANG — Top K-pop girlband Red Velvet will be the star turn at a historic concert in Pyongyang this weekend, in a country where entertainment is usually state-sponsored and served with a big dollop of propaganda.

With performances on Sunday and Tuesday, the outfit sashay onto territory more normally occupied by North Korean's own mega girl group, the Moranbong band.

In the peninsula's own Battle of the Bands, here's how the two match up:

K-pop or Kim-pop

Red Velvet: Upbeat electro, disco, R&B and syrupy ballads. Hits include "Ice Cream Cake" and "Peek-A-Boo". Lyrics mostly deal with romance and heartbreak, although "Red Flavour" is a paean to the delights of strawberries and summer.

Sample lyric: "Follow me like you're under a spell/ Everyone's cheering, soon you'll be Ooh ooh".

Moranbong: Fast-paced patriotic pop, mostly lauding Kim Jong Un or socialist ideals. Synthesizers, electric guitars and violins combine for hits including "Mother's Birthday" — about the ruling party —

and "We Call Him Our Father", but they occasionally bust out a Korean language version of "My Way".

Sample lyric: "Drawn by affection, we call him father without constraint/We live only with our faith in him/Oh Comrade Kim Jong Un."

Suit up and dance

Red Velvet: High-voltage, fast-paced dances performed in perfect sync with seamless formation changes. The five sport a giddy mix of colourful, girlish clothing and sexy, revealing out-

fits tailor-made by an army of stylists or from high-end luxury brands.

Style: Sultry sex kitten mixed with girl-next-door.

Moranbong: Moderate shoulder shifting, arm swinging and rhythmic foot movements evocative of 1960s Western girl groups. Unlikely to set pulses racing in the South, but still radical by North Korean standards. Signature outfits include white military uniforms matched with miniskirts.

Style: Strict disciplinarian with a hint of naughty

Thin, red line (up)

Red Velvet: Like almost all K-pop bands, the five members are survivors of a years-long selection process that begins with young teenagers chosen for their looks — slim with flawless complexions — and star potential. Hopefuls are coached in singing, dancing and foreign language, with regular cuts for those who do not make the grade.

Moranbong: The 10 members were reputedly hand-picked by Swiss-educated leader Kim based on their looks, singing and musical talents — many are

known to play multiple instruments. Family background and — perhaps most importantly — loyalty to the ruling party were also said to be factors.

Gossip, girls?

Red Velvet: In line with K-pop orthodoxy, members must steer clear of romantic entanglements and — despite their sometimes suggestive performances — are expected to project almost-virginal public images.

Politics are also generally a no-no — member Irene has been in hot water with some fans after saying she read a top-selling book about feminism. Moranbong: News about the band is tightly controlled by the secretive regime and in the absence of a tabloid news culture little is known about the private lives of the 20-some-things.

South Korean media previously reported that founding member Hyun Song Wol — rumoured to be a one-time girlfriend of leader Kim — had been executed by firing squad after appearing in a pornographic film.

However, she was later found to be very much alive and well, and popped up in the South on a Winter Olympics-related trip earlier this year. —AFP ■

K-pop v Kim-pop: Battle of the bands, Korean style



Red Velvet, and the little boys smile: The top K-pop girlband will be in Pyongyang this weekend where their performance could set a few hearts racing. PHOTO: AFP

This boy is on fire: Viet Nam drag queens electrify Hanoi

HANOI — Makeup artist by day, cross-dresser by night, Betty is among a vanguard of Vietnamese drag queens shaking up Hanoi's nightlife — and social norms — in a city where such performances remain little known.

In a lime green barely-there mesh dress and towering silver heels, the 22-year-old hopes to bring drag into the mainstream with regular performances in Hanoi, a conservative capital better known for its colonial charm than men in sequined minis.

"If we dare to be pi-

oneers, soon this art will be accepted in Viet Nam," Betty told AFP before a show Saturday that stirred up crowds with renditions of hits by Whitney Houston and Alicia Keys. The drag night started as a weekly viewing party for the hit TV series "RuPaul's Drag Race" and quickly transformed into a show of its own — drawing a handful of men in drag to the stage for punchy lip-sync performances.

Organiser Tamah Lake said it's the only event of its kind in Hanoi.

"It's brought it more

into the open... I think it's becoming slightly more mainstream and slightly more well-known," said Lake, not herself a drag queen, who works as a teacher during the week.

The drag queens who turn out for her Saturday night parties say they have few places to perform in a city where cross-dressing is almost unheard of, unlike in the West where starlets like RuPaul — the drag queen mother — have helped to popularise it.

"In Viet Nam there are drag queens that have been active for a long time

but have not been acknowledged. This show helps more people know about our art," said Betty, who started the five-member drag group "Victeam" in Haiphong, east of Hanoi.

Communist Viet Nam is seen as relatively progressive on LGBT issues — the one-party state decriminalised gay marriage celebrations in 2015, although it stopped short of full legal recognition for same-sex unions — and the government is currently drafting a transgender law to allow legal gender changes. —AFP ■

Passed away peacefully to ALMIGHTY ALLAH
Al-Haj Molvi Sayed Moeinuddin Hasan (a)
U Aung Naing Oo BE (Mechanical YIT) Master of
Aerospace Technology (U.K)
(45 years)

Al-Haj Molvi Sayed Moeinuddin Hasan (a) U Aung Naing Oo, only beloved son of late Al-Haj Mufti Hafiz Sayed Noorul Azim (a) Sayagyi U Than Shwe and Hajima Haseena Begam (a) Daw Hla Hla Aye of No137 Bogalayzay Lan Botathaung Township Yangon; Son-in-Law of Al-Haj Ebrahim Esoof Ka Ka (a) U Ba Yee and Hajima Hajara Kotwal of Pyinmana; beloved husband of Hajima Rabiya (a) Daw Khin Mar Yee; Elder brother of Hajima Mehtaab Saeida (a) Daw Ohn Mar Than and Al-Haj GoGo (a) U Zaw Naing Myint (Shah Brothers Group of Companies) Nephew of late Dr. Azim; beloved father of Sana, Ahmed Shah, Mozammil and Monarwar; peacefully returned to ALMIGHTY-ALLAH at London on Tuesday 27th of March 2018- 8th of Rajab 1439.

Bereaved Family.

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Contact:

Movie theaters cash in as Hollywood turns to God

HOLLYWOOD — Marilyn Monroe famously invoked a Hollywood “where they’ll pay you \$1,000 for a kiss and 50 cents for your soul” — but these days it’s as likely to be the other way around.

Religion is reclaiming cinema for sacred purposes at a rate never seen in history, with faith-based movies exploding from an obscure cottage industry last century into a multi-billion-dollar business.

“You can add faith-based movies to the list of genres that you can count on as box office, as much as you can count on any genre. But these movies have to come from an authentic place,” comScore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian told AFP.

“You can’t just suddenly have executives in board rooms saying, ‘Faith-based movies are big right now so let’s do



Actor Jim Caviezel (L) appears in “Paul, Apostle of Christ,” while Dennis Quaid (R) stars in “I Can Only Imagine” — two faith-based films that made it into the box office top 10.

PHOTO: AFP

one.’ You have to come from an authentic place. Those in the faith-based community will know if it’s not the real deal.”

For most of the US film industry’s short history it has turned out a few religious films a year, but

the end of the 1990s saw a sudden boom, and by 2006 theaters were showing four or five new releases a month.

The relatively recent upsurge is down to smaller distributors who have “really cracked the code” on

what religious audiences want, says Dergarabedian, often eschewing the epic Biblical dramas for modern, contemporary stories.

A staple of the weekly menu of releases now, faith-based filmmaking

accounts for two of the weekend’s top ten movies at the domestic box office.

“I Can Only Imagine,” starring Dennis Quaid, amassed \$17.1 million in its opening weekend — by far the biggest debut for a film from Roadside Attractions — and has earned an impressive \$38.1 million from its first two weeks in theaters.

‘Whisper-acting’

Dergarabedian describes its surprise performance as one of the box office stories of the year, alongside the five-week chart-topping run of Marvel’s “Black Panther.”

“Therein lies the rub with faith-based movies. They are marginalized because they aren’t on the radar or they are somehow dismissed as being not part of mainstream Hollywood fare,” he told AFP.

The current number

eight film, “Paul, Apostle of Christ,” stars James Faulkner in the titular role alongside Jim Caviezel, who played Jesus in Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ” (2004).

The actor is in talks to revive his role in a sequel of “Passion,” the most lucrative faith-based movie of all time, with a global box office exceeding \$600 million against a \$30 million budget.

“I wasn’t politicking for the role because nobody knew it was happening,” Caviezel said of the 2004 original at a recent conference of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

“Mel Gibson wants me to play Jesus Christ, he wants the guy with the initials of JC who just happens to be 33 years of age to play Jesus Christ. Is that a coincidence? I don’t think so.”—AFP ■

Vietnam Airlines - Summer Schedule from 25 March to 27 October 2018

Yangon - Hanoi	VN 956	Daily	18:55 - 21:15
Yangon - Ho Chi Minh City	VN 942	Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun	12:10 - 15:00
Hanoi - Yangon	VN 957	Daily	16:35 - 18:00
Ho Chi Minh City - Yangon	VN 943	Tue, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun	09:35 - 11:10

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What, no sledging? Disgraced Australia to copy Black Caps

JOHANNESBURG — For years Australia's cricketers have mocked New Zealand's no-sledging policy, now they plan to adopt it in a belated bid to repair their own battered reputation.

Australian coach Darren "Boof" Lehmann cited the Black Caps' approach when asked how his team needed to change its approach in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa which led to year-long bans for Steve Smith and David Warner, while Cameron Bancroft got nine months.

"The thing for me would be if we take a leaf out of someone like say New Zealand's book, the way they play and respect the opposition," he told reporters in Johannesburg.

It is a major turnaround for the Australians and Lehmann in particular, who has previously described his priorities as "win, win, win". With his long-term future in doubt as Cricket Australia examines the team culture he encouraged, a chastened Lehmann said: "We've got to make sure we're respecting the game and its traditions."

'Overpaid prima donnas'

New Zealand decided to scrap sledging in 2013 after their own crisis of confidence, when they were skittled for 45 against South Africa at Newlands.

While that embarrassment was far less serious than the cheating attempted by Lehmann's Australia at the same ground five years later, the capitulation prompted a backlash among long-suffering New Zealand cricket fans.



Fair play? Steve Smith shakes hands with New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum as David Warner looks on after a one-day international in Hamilton in 2016. **PHOTO: AFP**

Newly-appointed captain Brendon McCullum promised change and was as good as his word, acknowledging his players were seen as "overpaid, under-delivering prima donnas".

With his tattoos and swagger, McCullum appeared to be the New Zealand player most likely to adopt a hard-nosed Australian approach of baiting and belittling opponents.

Instead, he surprised many by setting out to revive the Black Caps' sense of sportsmanship and nurture his players' love of the game.

"One of the things that we decided we had to change was the public perception of us as people, not just on the cricket

field but off it as well," he later said. "The changes... endeared us to our public and let's hope that continues for a long time."

It was a move that left the Lehmann-coached Australians distinctly unimpressed, best illustrated by their behaviour during the 2015 World Cup final.

New Zealand had beaten Australia in the group stages but did not rub their opponents' faces in it, leaving wicketkeeper Brad Haddin non-plussed.

"They were that nice to us in New Zealand and we were that uncomfortable," he said after Australia's seven-wicket victory.

"I said: 'I'm not playing cricket like this. If we get another crack at these guys in the final I'm

letting everything (out)'."

'They deserved it'

Haddin adopted the role of lead attack dog in the final as Australia gave New Zealand's batsmen a series of ugly send-offs, including a sneering farewell for Daniel Vettori in his final international appearance.

"You know what? They deserved it," he said. It was not just Haddin who took exception to the New Zealanders' approach. Steve Smith and David Warner also made it known they had no time for such niceties.

McCullum received a curt "mind your own business" when he pointed out some of Smith's behaviour appeared petulant

while he revelled in his win-at-all-costs attitude.

"You're not playing for the spirit of cricket award, are you?" he said in response to criticism from McCullum.

"You're playing for a series and for us that's what our goal is — to win the series. Our goal is to be number one in all formats and we're always going to fight for that." England captain Joe Root said that there was a marked difference between playing against New Zealand and in Australia during the recent acrimonious Ashes series.

"In terms of atmosphere on the field there might not be as much said verbally when you play against New Zealand," Root said Thursday on the eve of the second Test against the Black Caps in Hamilton. "They go about things very much in their own way but you know you're up against a side that are desperate to win. But you still get a sense that they're playing good hard cricket."

"I'm not saying Australia don't bring that to the table when you play against them, but it is a different atmosphere in my experience." Mickey Arthur, who was sacked as coach to make way for Lehmann, said Thursday he was "bitterly disappointed watching the Australian cricket team over the last few years."

"The behaviour has been boorish and arrogant," he wrote on www.playersvoice.com.au.

Whether his successor Lehmann is the right person to oversee a change in Australia's toxic team culture remains to be seen.—AFP ■

Eight teams fight for semi-final spots in MFF Futsal tourney

AFTER having survived the knockout matches played recently at Thuwunna Indoor Stadium in Yangon, the remaining eight teams will now have to struggle for spots in the semifinal stage of the MFF Futsal Open Cup 2018.

In the quarter-final matches, Myanmar Imperial College (MIC) Futsal team will play against GV Athletic, while Titans XII will meet Shwe Myawady, UM will face the VUC futsal team and RDZ will play Best Friends.

The quarter-final matches

will be played on 31 March at the same stadium in Yangon.

The tourney began with 50 teams from across Myanmar, and loyal fans have expressed their support and appreciation for the efforts of the teams.

"My favourite team is the UM futsal team because of their stable playing style and fast moves. But I will support all the teams, as all are good enough to reach the semi-final stage", said Zin Ko Ko Thet, a fan from Toungoo.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Draw is enough in match against Magwe says: GFA Head Coach U Tha Kyaw

WEEK-9 matches of the MPT Myanmar National League 2018 will resume after a postponement due to the participation of the Myanmar national football team in the AFC Asian Cup Qualification.

GFA FC will play against Magwe today at 4 pm with hopes for only a tie game, according to the GFA coach.

In the last year's meeting, GFA won a match and drew another against Magwe.

"It is right that our team gains very good results at meeting with Magwe in the last year's MNL."

But this year's Magwe is not last year's one. The team is much stronger. They have even beat the two best teams, Yangon United and Yadanabon FC, this season.

The players' spirit are utmost and we have to play against Magwe respectfully. Even a draw is enough for us", said U Tha Kyaw, head coach

of the GFA FC.

In this year's MNL season, GFA has performed poorly, earning four points after one win, one draw and five losses, putting them in 11th place, while Magwe FC is in second place by virtue of earning 17 points after 5 wins, 2 draws and one loss.

The match between Magwe and GFA will be broadcast live on MRTV Sport.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■