



■ **NATIONAL**
President visits
National Reconciliation
and Peace Centre
► **PAGE 3**

■ **NATIONAL**
UN rights envoy
meets with union
ministers separately
► **PAGE 3**



■ **LOCAL BUSINESS**
Foreign countries
propose to become
agricultural partners
► **PAGE 5**

Vol. III, No. 278, 7th Waning of Pyatho 1378 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Thursday, 19 January 2017

UN rights envoy, Maungtaw Commission discuss alleged abuse in northern Rakhine

VICE President U Myint Swe, Chairman of the Investigation Commission on Maungtaw, held talks with Ms. Yanghee Lee, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, over alleged rapes and allegations of human rights abuses in northern Rakhine by security forces.

At the meeting held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, the Vice President clarified the formation of the investigation commission, which is comprised of experienced scholars from varied fields, adding that during the fact-finding field trips to conflict areas, members of the commission took individual as well as group responsibility.

The chairman of the commission also noted that the violent attacks of 9 October and 12 and 13 November were different from previous conflicts in the state, as the most recent attacks targeted security forces in an attempt to damage the sovereignty of the country.

The commission carried out its tasks of investigating and finding out the background situation and uncovering the details behind the violent attacks and alleged human rights abuses. The commission is making an assessment and giving recommendations to prevent such incidents again in the future. The Investigation Commission on Maungtaw released its interim report on 3 January and is in the process of finishing its final report.

Ms. Yanghee Lee expressed her thanks to the chairman of the commission and discussed information she received on alleged human rights abuses.

Also present at the meeting were commission members U Aung Kyi, U Tun Myat, Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, U Nyunt Swe, U Thar Nyan, Daw Kyaing Ngai Man, U Saw Thalay Saw, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win, U Aung Naing and Secretary of the Commission U Zaw Myint Pe.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President U Myint Swe, right, holds talks with Ms. Yanghee Lee, left, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: AUNG SHINE OO



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, right, welcomes Ms. Yanghee Lee yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor, UN human rights envoy hold talks

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with Ms. Yanghee Lee, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, over the peace-making process, efforts for promoting human rights, the situation in Kachin and northern Shan states, which saw armed

conflicts recently, and promoting the sending of humanitarian aid to the areas.

At the meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, Ms Yanghee Lee strongly denounced the violent attacks on border outposts in northern Rakhine

in November and October and openly discussed with the State Counsellor the allegations of human right abuses by security forces in northern Rakhine during area clearance operations and increasing humanitarian aid to the state.—*Myanmar News Agency*



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Vice-President U Myint Swe addresses 17th Anniversary of Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference

Vice-President U Myint Swe addressed the opening ceremony of the 17th anniversary of Myanmar traditional medicine practitioners' conference held at the Myanmar International Convention Center 2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, reminding attendees that Myanmar needs to keep up with ASEAN standards, as Myanmar traditional medicine has been included in the agenda under negotiation to enter the ASEAN economic circle.

"It is necessary to make an effort to keep up with pharmaceutical know-how, which pharmaceuticals work, how they are preserved and how to effectively use them. Simultaneously, it is urgently necessary to systematically research workable traditional medicines and know-how so that they can be proved effective and workable. With Myanmar traditional

medicine, there are several important factors — revival of extinct Myanmar traditional medicines and pharmacy, eternal survival of the Myanmar traditional pharmacy and implementation of systematic research works on Myanmar traditional medicines so that Myanmar's younger generations can be well educated on traditional medicine, up to reaching the level of standing tall in the midst of other countries. Today, the world's health and medical realm rely more and more on herbal medicines rather than chemical drugs. Departments of traditional medicine are performing research work on Myanmar traditional medicines more than ever and modernising techniques by linking with foreign universities. It is of great importance to discover workable herbs in Myanmar, to systematically breed herbs and produce for utili-



Vice President U Myint Swe visits booth showcasing traditional medicine at 17th Anniversary Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference. PHOTO: MNA

sation and to develop production by the process of Good Manufacturing Practices."

Afterward, Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister, read out a congratulatory message sent from

the president to the 17th anniversary of Myanmar traditional practitioners' conference. The Vice-President and party posed for documentary photos together with invited guests, inspecting the

traditional medicine displays exhibited in the hall.

That evening, the Vice-President attended the dinner party held at the MICC 2. — Myanmar News Agency

National-Level Political Dialogue for Ethnic Groups (Kayin) begins

THE first-day meeting of the National Level Political Dialogue for Ethnic Groups (Kayin) was held at the Thiri Hpaam Hotel in Hpa-an, Kayin State, yesterday morning.

The ceremony to open the dialogue was opened with the playing of drums and water buffalo horns in accordance with the Kayin tradition before participants saluted the national flag.

Afterwards, Chief Minister of Kayin State Daw Nan Khin Htwe Myint, Chairman of Karen National Union Saw Mutu Sae Po, Vice Chairman of the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre Dr Tin Myo Win, Commander of Southeast Command Maj-Gen Myo Win, Secretary of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee/Panglog Conference (UPDJC/PC) U Khin Zaw Oo delivered opening speeches be-

fore Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sandharvada preached for peace and for the success of the dialogues.

Afterwards, chairman of the dialogue Phado Mann Nyien Maung made a speech and read messages sent by chief ministers of Kachin, Kayah, Rakhine, Shan states and the KPP party.

During the discussion, political papers were read out by representatives of the Karen National Union (KNU), the KNU/Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), the Karen Unity and Peace Committee (KUPC) and the KNU/KNLA.

Member of the Union Peace Commission Dr Aung Tun Thet discussed economic matters, and the meeting concluded with remarks by the chairman. —IPRD

Villager shot dead in Hpakant Township

A village from Hsankhar Village in Lonkhin Village-tract, Hpakant Township was shot dead yesterday while he was in his home.

Two men on a motorbike arrived at the home of Bo Toe, a jade stone trader, while he was

cleaning jade stones and shot him two times in the head after the victim declined to go with them.

The body of the victim was brought to the Lonkhin Station Hospital and the local police station is investigating the case. — Myanmar News Agency

Chairman of Union Civil Service Board receives World Bank's Senior Official



Dr Win Thein, chairman of Union Civil Service Board holds talks with Mr. Zubair Khurshid Bhatti, Senior Public Sector Specialist from the World Bank. PHOTO: MNA

Mr. Zubair Khurshid Bhatti, Senior Public Sector Specialist from the World Bank, called on Dr Win Thein, chairman of Union Civil Service Board, at the guest room of the Office of UCSSB on Wednesday afternoon.

In the meeting, various matters — World Bank's cooper-

ative program with UCSSB in refreshing office staff, a US\$ 50 million scholarship award program, short-term training courses for leadership and management at permanent secretary level, current activities for training in national civil service universities and inclusion of the Board's assess-

ment and suggestions over the research work over Civil Service Pay, Compensation and Human Resources Management were discussed.

Present at the meeting were the chairman, member U Win Maw and responsible officials. — Myanmar News Agency

Arrangements for holding regular meetings of 2nd Hluttaw discussed

A coordination meeting between the central committee and working committees on holding regular meetings of the Second Hluttaw took place yesterday at Zabuthiri Hall in the parliamentary compound.

Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Thar Aung,

also the chairman of the central committee, called for buying audio-visual aids and inspection into the current audio-visual system for the meeting in order to ensure there will be no breakdowns or technical difficulties. Before the regular session of the meeting on 29 January, a workshop on drafting plans and scrutinising budgets will be held,

according to U Ti Khun Myant, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw and deputy chairman of the central committee.

Participants of the meeting discussed reformation of the central committee and the work committee and arrangements for holding the parliamentary meetings. — Myanmar News Agency

Vice-President U Henry Van Thio inspects agricultural farms in Mandalay

VICE-President U Henry Van Thio inspected vineyards which have been cultivated on a large scale in Sehteik Village, Yamethin Township, in Mandalay Region on Wednesday morning, accompanied by Dr Aung Thu, Union Minister, Deputy Ministers Maj-General Aung Soe and U Kyaw Myo.

The Vice-President and party were told about planting seeds and the necessity of stems being grown in the yard, the steps involved in the growing of grape plants, the average yield per acre and the proportion of cost and income by responsible personnel and vineyard owners.

U Henry Van Thio stressed the need for domestic production to be substituted for imported goods in consultation with professional viticulture experts so as to increase the income for vine growers and for the country to get more benefits.

Upon arrival at the No. 8

textile factory in Shwedat Area, Yamethin, the Vice-President was told about production and sales by month in the 2016-2017 financial year, the factory's expected results and other matters by U Myint Soe, in-charge of the factory.

When the Vice-President arrived at the plantation of Yesin 1 Hybrid-Sunflower seeds on Yamethin street near Pyidaungsu Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay Expressway, he was informed about situations at the sunflower plantation by responsible officials.

U Naing Kyi Win, director-general of the department of agricultural research, explained his corn plantation research work to the Vice-President at the Yard of Agricultural Research. Later in the day, the Vice-President and party inspected the Sartarkei rice mill, which produces 200 tonnes of rice per day.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice-President U Henry Van Thio visits vineyard in Sehteik Village, Yamethin Township. PHOTO: MNA

President visits National Reconciliation and Peace Centre



President U Htin Kyaw inspects National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw visited the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, inspecting the preparations for conducting the Peace Process Orientation Course and for holding the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong.

Upon arrival at the NRPC, the President was welcomed by Union ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe and Dr Pe Myint, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Myo Aung, Deputy Ministers U Min

Thu and U Khin Maung Tin.

At the meeting hall of the NRPC, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin reported on the tasks of NRPC, arrangements for opening the Peace Process Orientation Course and holding the 21st Century Panglong.

Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe also reported on arrangements for holding the national-level political dialogues under the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, arrangements for

accommodations for trainers and trainees of the Peace Process Orientation Course and funds for the NRPC.

After hearing the reports, the President expressed his commitment to peace and his wish to achieve success in the peace making process as soon as possible.

He also pledged to make his utmost efforts for peace and thanked those who are participating in the peace-making process.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Union Minister for Information receives Japan Parliamentary Vice Minister

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint held talks yesterday with Ms Megumi Kaneko, Japan Parliamentary Vice Minister in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, over Japan's technical assistance to Myanmar Radio and Television and to the development of

libraries and child literature in Myanmar.

At the meeting held at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw, they also discussed matters related to ways for broadcasting Japan-Myanmar joint programmes, such as tasks being undertaken by the Shanti Volun-

teer Association (SVA) for development of libraries and child literature in Myanmar and measures for the Voice Tra Application Software being carried out by the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT) of Japan.—*Myanmar News Agency*

UN rights envoy meets with union ministers separately

MS Yanghee Lee, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, met separately with Union ministers U Thein Swe, Lt General Sein Win, Lt General Ye Aung, Dr Win Myat Aye and Dr Myo Thein Gyi at their respective Ministries in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In meeting with U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population, Ms Yanghee Lee discussed migrant workers, legal actions between employers and employees, co-operative activities between the Ministry and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the releasing information on the

census and nationalisation in Rakhine State.

Ms Yanghee Lee discussed conflicts and the peace process in Rakhine State, Kachin State and Shan State, human rights, affairs of displaced people and clearance work of planted bombs in meeting with Lt Gen Sein Win, Union Minister for Defence.

In meeting with Lt Gen Ye Aung, Union Minister for Border Affairs, humanitarian aid to both Buddhist and Muslim communities in Maungdaw, Rakhine State, displaced people in Kachin and Shan States, implementing peace process in the country and human rights were discussed.

Ms Yanghee Lee also discussed the importance of preparedness for natural disasters and people's participation for lessening the impact of disasters in meeting with Dr Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

The Education Ministry's current activities for educational development in the country, provision of subsidies to basic education schools in Rakhine State and activities for increasing access to learning education were discussed in the meeting with Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Education.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Ms Yanghee Lee holds talks with Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Workshop concerning natural resources held in Yangon

A two-day natural resources workshop was held on 16 and 17 January at Green Hill Hotel in Yangon with the participation of the ethnic political parties UNA and NBF and elected political parties to discuss matters regarding policy, property management and impact of the extraction of natural resources such as jade and natural gas.

The meeting was held to seek advice on the natural resources policy research paper (draft) which is being written in Kachin and Rakhine states by the research team of the Ethnic National Affairs Center (ENAC).

National-level political dialogues will be held in Kayin State, Taninthayi and Nay Pyi Taw prior to the upcoming second meeting of Union Peace Conference – the 21st Century Panglong, which will be held in February. Kayin ethnic groups held a dialogue on political, economic, social, land and natural resources on 12th January and the final discussion will be made on 18th, 19th and 20th January in a bid to reach consensus, with 700 Kayin ethnic people being invited. This dialogue is being supervised by a Kayin political party and three Kayin ethnic armed groups, with the assistance of the Kayin state

government.

“This discussion hopes to yield benefits to the Panglong Conference, which will be held every six months. We encourage other ethnic groups to hold dialogues continuously in order to listen to weak and strong points to effectuate the development of the ethnic people, with an aim to move forward in the peace process,” Mahn Aung Pyi Soe, the vice chairperson of Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party said at the discussion.

“The dialogues were held from different viewpoints and the facts produced from the discussion will be embodied into the natural resources policy re-

search (draft). The dialogues will be ongoing to discuss the matters concerning the natural resources on the basis of the suggestions and opinions from the government and ethnic people,” said Sai Nyunt Lwin, the general secretary of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD).

“This two-day-workshop has been held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in the presence of civil society organisations (CSOs) and ethnic armed groups that are currently staying outside of the country. Now, the dialogues will proceed with the internal political parties. Myanmar’s government is making efforts to

establish a federal union based on democracy, involving power sharing, resource sharing and revenue sharing. We’re making preparations for the Panglong Conference, and the facts from the discussion might not be submitted as there might be wider discussions with the CSOs,” he added.

“Jade is extracted in Kayin State. Systematic exploration is required to contribute to the country. The constitution will be drawn up in compliance with the opinion from the Union to practice the Federal Democratic System,” said Dr. Manan Tu Ja from the Kachin State Democracy Party.—*Ye Khaung Nyunt*

Number of circular trains to increase



Commuters are struggling to ride a circular train at Yangon Railway Station. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

THE number of circular trains will be increased for the convenience of passengers during the time when passengers are becoming accustomed to the new YBS bus lines, said the traffic manager from Division 7 of Myanmar Railways.

Currently, over 80,000 peo-

ple are using the circular trains in Yangon daily.

But the number of passengers taking circular trains has increased by over 16,000 beginning from 16 January. Myanmar Railways now has three more trains for the six routes from Yangon to Toe Kyaung Galay

and from Insein to Yangon.

Myanmar Railways is upgrading the rail roads for the passengers to travel more conveniently with the circular trains.

Normally, Myanmar Railways has 23 trains that make 215 round trips daily.—*200*

About 11,442 houses will be solar powered in August

KAYIN State rural department will supply solar power starting from the end of January until August, 2017 to 11,442 houses from 143 villages in five townships of Kayin State, it is learnt.

“There are three types of solar power systems- 30Watts, 45Watts and 60 Watts. The meter charges for 30 Watts will be Ks 300,000 while those for 45 Watts and 60 Watts will be Ks 380,000 and Ks 420,000 respec-

tively,” said U Nay Oo, the head of Kayin State rural development department.

“We will sell the solar power on an instalment basis. We have to make a down payment of 10 per cent — Ks 30,000 for 30 Watts, Ks 50,000 for 45 Watts and Ks 70,000 for 60 Watts. Then, we must pay the rest in two instalments. Currently, there are already over 100 houses that have paid the second instalment.

They must pay the rest when the power line reaches the village,” he added. Twenty-three villagers from Hpa-an, 11 from Hlaingbwe, 73 from Kawkkareik, 29 from Kya-in-Seikkyi and seven villagers from Thandaunggyi townships are on the list to buy solar power in Kayin State. The religious edifices, schools and rural health centres do not need to pay the money for their electricity.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Customs check point reopened in Hsenwi

AN old customs check point which has been closed for 5 years was reopened in Hsenwi township, Shan State (North) on Sunday.

The customs check point has been closed since 16 January, 2012 by the Ministry of Planning and Finance. The local residents want the authorities to fix an awareness promotion period before the reopening of the check point.

“There should always be an education period before taking action. If you look at other departments, for example, the Road Transport Administration

Department always prescribed an education period before taking action. Other departments also prescribe the awareness period to launch a new project. So, I want the authorities to prescribe an awareness period before they reopen the check point,” said U Sai Lon Aye, a driver. Reopening of the check point was aimed at increasing the government’s revenue and preventing smuggling.

The old customs check point was reopened on 16 January, 2017, expecting of boost in the trading sector, it is learnt.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Crime NEWS

ICE and stimulants seized

POLICE from Myawady Myoma searched a house owned by Mann Aung Phyo at Moe Makha Monastery Lane, Ward 4 in Myawady on Tuesday.

Police found Yan Paing Tun, Ma Malar Htwe and a Thai man called Naing York in the house, but the host Mann Aung Phyo and his wife Ma Shwe Zin were outside. Police seized 4,002 stimulant tablets and 1.0056 kilos of crystal meth, also known as ice, from

the house.

Likewise, an anti-narcotic suppression squad from Taunggyi searched a motorcycle driven by Maung Toke on Kyauktalone-Pinlaung Road near Konethein village in Shwe Naung Township on Tuesday and found 5,630 stimulant tablets. Police have taken action against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Yan Paing Tun, Ma Malar Htwe and a Thai man called Naing York with drugs. PHOTO: MPF

LOCAL Business

Foreign countries propose to become agricultural partners



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

FOREIGN countries have put forward the practice of the Profit and Loss Sharing System in order to cooperate with Myanmar farmers in agribusiness, said an official from Myanmar Rice Federation.

Japan, China, China (Taipei), Singapore and Brunei

proposed to cooperate with the farmers and a law concerning this system is needed to be formulated, he added.

Those companies which want to join hands with local farmers under the Profit and Loss Sharing System in agricul-

tural production have to support pedigree paddy seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, agricultural equipment and modern techniques. This system means that companies have to purchase the rice at the prevailing price at the harvest time, it is learnt.—200

Nissan & Tan Chong begin vehicle assembly in Myanmar

NISSAN Motor Co., Ltd. and Tan Chong Motor (Myanmar) Co., Ltd (TCMM) began assembling cars for the first time in Myanmar with the iconic Nissan sedan, the New Sunny.

Nissan and TCMM made a strong commitment to Myanmar market which includes

strong product line up and local production capabilities. Today's event is a key milestone in the ongoing expansion plans for Nissan and its partner TCMM.

This locally assembled New Nissan Sunny will be offered at an introductory price starting from 206 lakhs for a

limited period and will be available at all Nissan showrooms or roadshows across the country.

The first generation of Nissan Sunny was introduced in 1966 and for over 50 years; now in its 10th generation, has sold more than 20 million units globally. The New Nissan Sunny retains Sunny's original DNA of "luxurious and well balance family sedan" from generation past; and boasts fuel efficiency, performance, comfort, convenience, advanced technology, safety, luxury and driving pleasure.

The New Sunny will be available in a choice of four colours and three grades.

Earlier in February 2016, Nissan and Tan Chong executives joined Bago government officials to sign a land lease agreement with representatives of the country's Bago Region.—GNLM



A press conference of launching new Nissan Sunny held in Yangon on 18 January 2017. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Vegetable wholesale market to be built

A VEGETABLE wholesale market, including the laboratories to specify the quality of the products, will be built in cooperation with South Korea, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

This market will be built with the aim of attaining a reasonable price for the growers because the farmers are offered lower than market price by bro-

kers when there is stock left over at the depot.

The site for the new market is yet to be chosen. No region or state has been specified, either. The wholesale market will include laboratories to specify the quality of the commodities, which sometimes is in dispute when price negotiations take place, said U Myo Tint Tun, the deputy permanent secretary

of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

The ministry will find a site for the market and laboratories, and South Korea will take responsibility for construction, it is learnt.

To eliminate the price manipulation, the wholesale market plans to operate in collaboration with South Korea, it is learnt.—200

Sembcorp Myingyan project powers inks build-operate-transfer agreement with Ministry of Electric Power & Energy

SEMBCORP Industries (Sembcorp) signed a build-operate-transfer (BOT) agreement with the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy of Myanmar (MOEE), for its upcoming 255-megawatt Sembcorp Myingyan gas-fired power plant in Mandalay yesterday.

The agreement between Sembcorp Myingyan Power Company and MOEE was signed by Tan Cheng Guan, Sembcorp Industries' Executive Vice President & Head, Group Business Development & Commercial, and U Htein Lwin, Permanent Secretary at MOEE. Under the agreement, Sembcorp Myingyan Power Company will build and operate the power plant for 22 years, after which the facility will be transferred to the Myanmar government.

The BOT agreement comes

after the signing of a long-term power purchase agreement in March 2016, for the sale of the plant's entire power output to Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE), the successor entity to Myanmar Electric Power (MEPE) pursuant to reorganization within MOEE.

The total project cost of the Sembcorp Myingyan Power Project is approximately US\$300 million.

Commenting on the signing, Sembcorp Group President & CEO Tan Kin Fei said, "we are confident that we will be able to deliver this facility on time. This will help to meet the growing need for power particularly in Mandalay, support the nation's progress and improve the quality of life for the Myanmar people."—GNLM



U Htein Lwin, Permanent Secretary at MOEE and Tan Cheng Guan from Sembcorp Industries sign the BOT agreement. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Trading from Amara Investment Securities to start on 20th Jan at YSX

STOCK trading of Amara Investment Securities Co., Ltd (AIS) will commence on 20 January through the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX), according to an announcement by the bourse.

YSX granted trading qualification to several securities companies — Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre Co., Ltd, KBZ Stirling Coleman Securities Co., Ltd, CB Securities Ltd, AYA Trust Securities Co., Ltd, KTZ Ruby Hill Securities Co., Ltd and Amara Investment Securities Co.,

Ltd.

Currently the three listed companies on YSX -- First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH) and Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) -- are trading shares. First Private Bank (FPB) will start its stock trading on 20th January. A total of 15,289 shares worth Ks94,010,100 were traded at YSX on 18th January, with the share prices of Ks14,000 for FMI, Ks4,400 for MTSH and Ks9,100 for MCB.—Ko Htet



People look at the electronic board showing the stock exchange rate in Yangon Stock Exchange on 6 January 2017. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Abe, Pacific island nations chart mutually beneficial cooperation

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met on Wednesday with representatives of Pacific Islands nations, for talks focused on pursuing mutually beneficial cooperation.

“I want to work hand-in-hand with you in the fields of development, climate change and UN Security Council reform,” Abe told the group of leaders, foreign ministers and other officials from the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting bloc.

Samoa Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi indicated the Pacific island nations share Japan’s regional security and environmental concerns.

“We will continue to support each other on the international front to ensure that we adhere to the principles of international law and that we continue to maintain peace, secu-



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (standing) addresses a meeting of representatives of the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting bloc at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on 18 January, 2017.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

city and prosperity in our region, as well as guarantee robust stewardship and management of the oceans we share,” Tuilaepa said.

And Lorin Robert, foreign affairs secretary

of the Federated States of Micronesia, spoke of the need for multilateral dialogue.

In a portion of the meeting open to the media, Abe asked the island nations to work with Japan toward the success of the eighth PALM summit, or PALM8, to be held in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, in May next year.

PALM consists of Japan, the United States and 15 Pacific nations including Australia and New Zealand. The group that Abe met on Wednesday included a delegate from each of the 15 nations and a representative of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

Members of the delegation attended an interim ministerial meeting in Tokyo the previous day as part of the preparations for PALM8, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.—Kyodo News

Philippines' Duterte says won't declare martial law, but can if wants to

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday appeared to rule out declaring martial law, but said he could do so if he wished, and anyone questioning his justification should “shut up” and stay out of his business.

The former prosecutor has threatened several times to invoke military rule to help his war on drugs and said he had the power to declare martial law, even though narcotics did not meet conditions required by the constitution.

The mercurial leader has been criticised by opponents for acting in an authoritarian way and for showing willingness to circumvent the constitution. Some have ridiculed him for his contradicting remarks on whether he intends to pursue martial law.

“I will not declare martial law, and if I declare martial law, I will not make noise,” he said in a speech on Wednesday.

“And if you ask ‘what is the basis?’, you son of

a bitch, it’s none of your business. Just shut up, all of you.”

The constitution states martial law can only be declared in the event of invasion or rebellion, when public safety requires it.

Congress can revoke a president’s declaration, as can the Supreme Court, but there is no scenario in the constitution outlining which of the two institutions would prevail should they disagree.

“Who decides now? Supreme Court says ‘no’, Congress says ‘yes’, who decides? The sitting president - me,” he said.

“For me, it is not found in the constitution, it is not written there. But if I feel as a president that I have to preserve my country, I will declare martial law.”

He also said the military felt the security climate did not warrant martial law. “The military is correct, there is no compelling reason really.”

Legal issues aside, Duterte’s comments offer

little clarity about why he is discussing martial law at a time when his approval ratings are high, political opposition is muted, and the government is touting success in its crackdown on drugs.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar on Sunday criticised media for reporting Duterte’s statements on martial law and for headlines that “sow panic and confusion”. He called that “the height of journalistic irresponsibility”.

The presidential palace press corps hit back on Wednesday urging the government to stop chiding journalists.

“We are disturbed and appalled by the propensity of the officials of this administration to blame the media whenever the inflammatory statements of the president stir controversy or draw flak,” the media group said in a statement.

“We hope that such behaviour is not an attempt to discredit or undermine the media.” —Reuters

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

Cambodia PM files fresh lawsuit against opposition leader

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen filed a \$1-million defamation lawsuit against opposition leader Sam Rainsy on Wednesday, keeping up pressure ahead of elections.

Political tension has been growing in the Southeast Asian country ahead of local elections this year and a general election next year, in which Hun Sen’s three-decade grip on power will be challenged.

Sam Rainsy lives in exile in France and was sentenced in absentia last month

to five years in prison for posting a fake government pledge to dissolve the border with Viet Nam.

The latest lawsuit against Sam Rainsy, in the Phnom Penh Municipal Court, accuses him of defamation over claims made in France that the prime minister bribed an activist to break up the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party.

“What Sam Rainsy did was an act of distorting truth, affecting the prime minister’s reputation,” said Ky Tech, Hun Sen’s lawyer.

Responding to the accusation, Rainsy said on Twitter he welcomed lawsuits with Cambodia’s “kangaroo court”.

“Its discussion means more publicity for Hun Sen’s shameful acts,” he said.

The activist, Thy Sovantha, also filed a suit against Rainsy for saying she had taken money from Hun Sen. Opposition politicians accuse the authorities of intimidation ahead of the elections.

In the 2013 general

election, the CNRP won 55 seats in the National Assembly, leaving Hun Sen’s Cambodian People’s Party with 68 in the 123-seat assembly.

The latest lawsuits were a sign of the ruling party’s concern over its election prospects, said Miguel Chanco, regional lead analyst of the Economist Intelligence Unit.

“The government is using every tool in the box to discredit and suppress the opposition,” Chanco said. —Reuters

Malaysian court revives clemency option for jailed leader Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia’s jailed opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim scored a minor legal victory on Wednesday, as a court ruled that he can proceed with his bid to challenge the rejection of his petition for a royal pardon.

Anwar is seen as the biggest political threat to Prime Minister Najib Razak, who has been buffeted by allegations of graft and mismanagement mostly related to a multi-billion dollar scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

Anwar, a former deputy prime minister, has served nearly two years of a five-year sentence after the country’s highest court upheld a sodomy conviction in February 2015, a charge the charismatic leader and his supporters say was trumped up.

The Court of Appeal ruled on Wednesday that Anwar can ask the Federal Court to determine if he has the constitutional right to legally challenge the Pardons Board’s decision to reject his petition.

A date for the case to be

heard in Federal Court has yet to be set.

Clemency is the only option left for Anwar, 69, to get out of prison and clear his name.

“I’m here for the big fight,” Anwar told reporters in court before being whisked away by prison officers following the ruling.

Anwar’s family requested a royal pardon shortly after his 2015 conviction. But it was rejected that year by the Pardons Board, which advises the king on candidates for clemency.

Last December, Anwar exhausted his final legal option for an acquittal after the apex court unanimously ruled that his application for a review of his conviction was without merit.

Anwar is widely expected to be released by mid-2018, as Malaysia grants a one-third reduction of jail terms for good behaviour. His prison term ends in 2020.

But the conviction disqualifies him from political office and from contesting the next election that must be held by 2018.—Reuters

Samsung chief questioned behind closed doors in arrest warrant hearing

SEOUL — A South Korean judge questioned Samsung Group leader Jay Y Lee behind closed doors on Wednesday to decide whether he should be arrested over his alleged role in a corruption scandal that led parliament to impeach President Park Geun-hye.

Lee, 48, in dark overcoat and purple necktie, did not answer questions from reporters as he left the Seoul Central District Court after the nearly four-hour hearing and headed by car to a detention centre to await his fate.

One of the five attorneys representing Lee struck a positive tone, saying the legal team had argued its case sufficiently.

“We are confident the court will make a wise decision,” attorney Song Wu-cheol told reporters.

The special prosecutor’s office on Monday said it would seek a warrant to arrest the third-generation leader of the country’s largest conglomerate on suspicion of bribery, embezzlement and perjury.

Lee, who has been the de facto leader of South Korea’s biggest conglomerate since his father Lee Kun-hee was incapacitated by a 2014 heart attack, was questioned last week for 22 straight hours at the prosecutor’s office in Seoul.

He has denied wrongdoing.

Park, 64, was impeached last month by parliament over the influence-peddling scandal, a decision that if upheld by the Constitutional Court will see her become the country’s first democratically-elected leader forced from office early.

Park, who remains in office but stripped of her powers while the court decides her fate, has denied wrongdoing.

The judge may not announce his decision on the arrest warrant for Lee until after midnight, a court official told Reuters on Tuesday. The court ordered Lee to be held at the Seoul Detention Centre, a half-hour drive away, while it reviews the warrant request.

The special prosecutor has accused Lee of paying bribes totalling 43 billion won (\$36.70 million) to organisations linked to Choi Soon-sil, a friend of the president who is at the centre of the scandal, to secure the 2015 merger of two affiliates and cement his control of the family business.



Samsung Group chief, Jay Y Lee, leaves after attending a court hearing to review a detention warrant request against him at the Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, South Korea, on 18 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Earlier this week, the special prosecutor indicted the chairman of the National Pension Service (NPS), the world’s third-largest pension fund, on charges of abuse of power and giving false testimony.

NPS chairman Moon Hyung-pyo was arrested in December after acknowledging ordering it to support the controversial \$8 billion merger in 2015 of the two Samsung Group affiliates while heading the health ministry, which oversees the NPS.—Reuters



A demonstrator in support of China looks at a group of supporters of Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen during a stop-over after her visit to Latin America in Burlingame, California, US, on 14 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

China urges US to bar Taiwan delegation from Trump inauguration

BEIJING/TAIPEI — The United States should not allow a delegation from Taiwan to attend US President-elect Donald Trump’s inauguration, China’s Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday, raising a new bone of contention in Beijing’s relations with the incoming government.

Trump broke with decades of precedent last month by taking a congratulatory telephone call from Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, and he has also said the “One China” policy was up for negotiation, a position Beijing strongly rejected.

A Taiwan delegation, led by former premier and ex-ruling party leader Yu Shyi-kun, and including a Taiwan national security adviser and some lawmakers, will attend Friday’s inauguration, Taiwan’s Foreign Ministry said this week.

It is typical for Taiwan to send a delegation to US presidential inaugurations.

A spokesman for Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen’s office said no meetings were scheduled

with the new Trump administration while the delegation was there for the event.

China considers Taiwan a breakaway province, with no right to have any kind of diplomatic relations with other countries.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China was opposed to Taiwan using any excuse to send people to the United States to “engage in activities to interfere in or damage China-US ties”.

“We again urge the relevant side in the United States not to allow the Taiwan authority to send a so-called delegation to the United States to attend the presidential inauguration and not have any form of official contact with Taiwan,” Hua told a regular news briefing.

“China’s position has already accurately and unmistakably been given to the US administration and Trump’s team.”

China’s ambassador to the United States, Cui Tiankai, will attend the inauguration on its be-

half, she added.

Defeated Nationalist forces fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with the Communists.

China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control, and proudly democratic Taiwan has shown no interest in wanting to be run by Beijing.

China is deeply suspicious of Taiwan’s Tsai, whom it suspects of wanting to push for the island’s formal independence, a red line for China.

Tsai, who visited the US this month while traveling to and from Central America, says she wants to maintain peace with China.

The administration of President Barack Obama has repeatedly reinforced the US commitment to the “one China” policy, under which Washington acknowledges China’s position of sovereignty over Taiwan, since Trump’s call with the Taiwanese leader.

Trump is to be sworn into office on Friday.—Reuters

Indonesia can do business with “pragmatic” Trump, says minister

JAKARTA — Indonesia, the country with the world’s biggest Muslim population, can do business with a “pragmatic” US President-elect Donald Trump, a senior minister close to President Joko Widodo said on Wednesday.

Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs Luhut Pandjaitan said outgoing President Barack Obama’s “ideological” foreign policy had intensified differences between countries.

“President Trump is a pragmatist who is likely to adopt a

non-ideological and non-confrontational approach to a diverse political world,” Pandjaitan said in an opinion piece published in Singapore’s Straits Times newspaper.

As well as being close to Widodo — the two were business partners before entering politics — Pandjaitan plays an important role in formulating foreign policy, including in the South China Sea, where China and the United States are vying for influence.

His comments come after China has reacted negatively to

comments from Trump and some of his Cabinet appointees about Taiwan, US adherence to the “one-China” policy and China’s occupation of islands and shoals in disputed waters in the South China Sea.

In the most expansive assessment of Trump from a senior Indonesian government member, Pandjaitan said the New York real estate mogul’s business background would enable him to strike deals with countries without judging the “colour of their political skin”.

“What matters is what they bring to the table,” he wrote.

Pandjaitan said this approach would benefit Indonesia, as would the complementary nature of the Indonesian and US economies and Trump’s vow to wipe out Islamic State, which has inspired at least eight militant plots in Indonesia in the past 18 months.

Like Trump, Widodo was an outsider who had been labelled a “populist”, he added.

“That word is a loaded term used by the liberal intelligentsia to describe those who have had

the audacity to rise to power outside its gilded, guarded gates.”

Pandjaitan said the policies of the outgoing US administration had had unintended consequences.

“Under President Barack Obama, America’s ideological desire to remould the world, including Europe, in America’s image helped precipitate the crisis in Ukraine that ended with Russia annexing Crimea. Its pivot to the Asia-Pacific concluded with China ignoring international law in the South China Sea.”—Reuters

Opinion

Write for us

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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.

System of paying bus fare by I-Pay Card and our moral bankruptcy

Khin Maung Oo

WE will suffer a disease, an illness or pain so long as we have mind and body. Whatever it is, any kind of such sufferings annoy us. Once they affect us, we need to consult with a medical doctor. Instead, if we take a cheap medicine from a road side drug shop, unnecessary side effects can result. These medicines may reduce our pain, but it is brief. In fact, drug shop sales persons are not skilled physicians. These days, drug shops are ubiquitous across the nation, especially in cities like Yangon. These are registered shops but unregistered brand medicines have occupied the shelves of many shops. The worst thing is that some people rush to road side betel-quid selling kiosks for purchasing the medicines they want. Sometime in the past, many people lost their lives in the hands of charlatans, bogus doctors and fake drugs. Due to poor management of the administrative

machinery, bribery and corruption are still everywhere on the move. Many are still reluctant to abandon their bad habits. Now, we have a government we ourselves chose. We believe in the integrity and good intention of our government. Our country had been deprived of our natural resources when the incumbent government took office. The present government has many things to do in the years ahead. In fact, these result from bad legacies left by former regimes. The State Counselor once said that we need not worry about deprivation of mineral resources as long as able and energetic human resources exist. It is quite right in saying so. Some are willing to change their minds but they are not yet ready to do so, whereas some are unwilling to give up their deep-rooted habits as they are profiting from such bad habits. Some are finding and will find faults with every move the govern-

ment makes although they know very well that the majority of Myanmar citizens support the government. Yet, the government we love and support will be moving on its way towards a federal democratic Union, making no aggressive responses to pessimistic criticisms. Youths, ebullient adults and those wishing to change came to take part in the government's initiatives. This is as if they had declared themselves that they would contribute their manual labour in nation building. They all want their country to develop like Japan and Singapore. Our Myanmar youths admire the Japanese people for their discipline and hard work. Japan which had risen like a phoenix from the ashes of the Second World War is a good example to follow in many respects.

Now, the government is changing the country step by step, hand in hand with youths and the people. Now, the new YBS (Yangon Bus Service) is

gaining success. In the near future, the system of bus fares will be changed, substituted by paying bus fare by I-Pay Card or something. At that time, buses will no longer need conductors onboard. In outward appearance, the system seems to be simple. Under the present situation, there can be a lot of budget wastage from the government and bus owners. Only if the new system is successful will the government be able to collect taxes exactly as expected. And doubts existing between employers and employees will vanish automatically. Yet, there is one condition that jobs need to be created for bus conductors. We firmly believe that the government has already planned for it. Provided that there is no room for corrupt people to engage in corrupt practices, moral bankruptcy will be healed with the support of the people of Myanmar and the leadership of the government.

The noblest Religious Titles presented by the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the eminent Buddhist monks, nuns and laypersons at home and abroad for their utmost efforts for carrying out the purification, perpetuation, propagation and promotion of the Buddha Sasana (the Teachings of the Omniscient Buddha) throughout the world

Ba Sein (Religious Affairs)

IN order to carefully preserve the noblest task for purification, perpetuation, propagation and promotion of the Buddha Sasana (the Teachings of the Omniscient Buddha) at home and abroad, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar always attaches great importance to the implementation of this noblest task.

In this regard, we all Buddhists throughout the country are very pleased and greatly honored to learn that the President Office of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued the Notification No.1/2017 regarding presenting religious titles on the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar which falls on the 4th January 2017.

According to the Notification No.1/2017 of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the respective religious titles have been

presented as follows to internal and international outstanding Buddhist monks, Buddhist nuns and laypersons who earnestly carried out this noblest task for purification, perpetuation, propagation and promotion of the Buddha Sasana at home and abroad.

Religious titles for distinctively fulfilling two Dhuras (duties), Gantha Dhura (duty of learning and teaching of the Pitaka Scriptures) and Vipassana Dhura (duty of engaging in meditation)

- (a) Abhidhajamaharatthaguru title to five eminent Mahatheras (Chief monks)
- (b) Aggamahapandita title to thirteen eminent Mahatheras
- (c) Dhamakahtika Bahujanahitadhara title to two eminent monks
- (d) Aggama Mahagantavacakapandita title to fifteen eminent monks
- (e) Mahaganthavacakapandita title to eighteen eminent monks and three eminent

- nuns.
- (f) Ganthavacakapandita title to sixteen eminent monks and three eminent nuns

Religious titles for excellent missionary works on Buddhism

Both internal and international outstanding Buddhist monks, nuns and laypersons who distinctively carried out this noblest task of the excellent missionary works on Buddhism at home and abroad have been presented these religious titles as follows.

- (a) Abhidhaja-aggamahasadhammajotika title to four eminent Mahatheras (Chief monks)
- (b) Aggamahasaddhammajotikadhaja title to thirty-two eminent monks including five eminent monks from abroad, one from Thailand, one from Bangladesh, one from Cambodia, one from Nepal and one from the Republic of Korea.

- (c) Mahasaddhammajotikadhaja title to twenty-two eminent chief monks.
- (d) Sadhammajotikadhaja title to twenty-six eminent monks, three eminent nuns and one person from abroad, the Republic of Korea.
- (e) Aggamahakammathanacariya title to four eminent monks including one from abroad, Thailand.
- (f) Mahakammathanacariya title to six eminent monks
- (g) Kammathanacariya title to three eminent monks.

Religious titles for excellent missionary works on Buddhism (only for laypersons)

The outstanding laypersons who generously donated and provided the four requisites for this noblest task of excellent works on Buddhism at home and abroad have been presented the respective religious titles as follows. It is learnt that these religious titles have been presented since 1990.

For male

- (a) Sirisudhammanijotadhara title to one layperson
- (b) Sudhammanijotadhara title to six laypersons

For Female

- (a) Sirisudhamma Theingi title to one layperson
- (b) Sihasudhamma Theingi title to five laypersons
- (c) Sudhamma Theingi title to fifteen laypersons

It is further learnt that the great grand religious titles presentation ceremony will be held at the precinct of the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the Fullmoon of Tabaung 1378 ME (on 12th March, 2017). The religious — title recipients at home and from abroad will be officially invited to attend this very auspicious ceremony to receive their respective religious titles which will be presented by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for the year of 2017.

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Htin Kyaw

The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State / Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw, on the occasion of the 69th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 4 January.

From H.E. Mr. Hamad Bin Eissa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain Kingdom Excellency,

We are pleased as you are celebration the National day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to extend in my name and on behalf of the kingdom of Bahrain people our greetings, congratulations and best wishes on this national occasion.

Once again we are pleased to avail our self of this opportunity to express to your highness our wishes of health and to your people and country of continued progress and prosperity under your wise leadership.

Accept our deepest respect and consideration.

From H.E. Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana Excellency,

On the joyous occasion of the 69th National day of the Union of Myanmar, I have the greatest pleasure in extending on behalf of the government and people of the Republic of Ghana and in my own name, warm felicitations to Your Excellency, the government and people of Myanmar.

It is my expectation that coming years would provide opportunities for us to further strengthen the cordial ties between our two nations at both bilateral and multi-

lateral for the mutual benefit of our peoples.

Accept, Your Excellency, my sincerest wishes for your good health and the continued prosperity of the people of Myanmar.

From H.E. General Michel Aoun, President of the Lebanese Republic Your Excellency,

In my own name and on behalf of the people of Lebanon, I would like to convey to your Excellency, on the occasion of the National Day, my sincere congratulations as well as my best wishes of happiness and success to Your Excellency and prosperity to the people of Myanmar.

Exchange of notes on ODA loans signed between Japan and Myanmar

JAPANESE Ambassador Mr. Tateshi HIGUCHI, and Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win,

signed Exchange of Notes for five ODA Loan Projects, which amount to approx. 93.97 billion Yen (approx. US\$ 824 million)

yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

According to the agreement, the five projects include Regional Development Project for Poverty Reduction Phase II with Japanese Yen 23,979 million, approx. US\$ 210 million, Yangon-Mandalay Railway Improvement Project Phase I (II) with Japanese Yen 25,000 million, approx. US\$ 219 million, Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project (Phase II) (I) with Japanese Yen 25,000 million, approx. US\$ 219 million, Power Distribution System Improvement Project in Major Cities with Japanese Yen 4,856 million, approx. US\$ 43 million and Agriculture and Rural Development Two Step Loan Project with Japanese Yen 15,135 million, approx. US\$ 133 million.

All five projects are supplied with the conditions of (1) 0.01% interest rate per annum, (2) forty years of repayment period (including ten years of grace period) and (3) untied procurement.—GNLM



Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win and Japanese Ambassador Mr. Tateshi HIGUCHI exchange notes after signing the ODA loans agreement. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Nawngkhio bypass road to be constructed across Gothteik Creek

A bypass road including a bridge across Gothteik Creek will be built in Nawngkhio Township in northern Shan State, according to the Nawngkhio Township development committee.

“We will start the construction of the road and the bridge at Kyaunk Kyan village at the entrance to Nawngkhio Township. The road will be nine miles long. We had an agreement with the village residents to construct the road and the bridge on 72 acres of farmland. We will ne-

gotiate again soon with the local residents to measure the land for construction. We will be granted the compensation soon,” said Chairman of Nawngkhio Township development committee U Myint Maung Maung.

The bridge across Gothteik Creek will be constructed parallel with the world famous Gothteik Bridge on Mandalay-Lashio rail road in Nawngkhio so that vehicles will be able to travel across the bridge anytime.

“After construction, the

transportation will be smooth for us in Nawngkhio. But we need to be paid reasonable amount of compensation for our farmland. Now, an acre of farm land is worth Ks 20 lakh to 50 lakh, according to the prevailing prices,” said local U Soe Myint.

“Currently, we are being faced with traffic jams near Gothteik on the Mandalay-Lashio Union Road because the up traffic and the down traffic have to use the road on an alternate basis.”—Myitmakha News Agency

Ammunition seized near Mongko

THE Tatmadaw seized ammunition in Monko in north-eastern Shan State yesterday during an area clearance operation.

The troops found nine grenades, one mine and one mortar

round of RPG hidden in a bush about two miles south-west of Haymoelo Village.

Following the finding, the troops conducted further area clearance operations.—Myanmar News Agency

Police arrest YBS bus conductors

THE police have detained and charged a conductor who punched two passengers at the Sawbwargyigone bus stop yesterday morning.

The fisticuffs occurred when U Min Htike, 47, an aluminum worker, and his wife Daw Khin Mya Hnit, a hawker, asked for their change from the conductor, who was not responsible for collecting the fare. The conductor got angry and cursed them, leading to a quarrel that culminated with the conductor punching both passengers, police said.

Regional Hluttaw representatives, officials of the YCDC, police and volunteers

were helping passengers at the bus stop. They learnt about the fight a few minutes later and had the conductor arrested along with another conductor involved in the attack. The bus was allowed to go on to avoid unnecessary trouble for passengers already aboard.

The two passengers received medical treatment at Insein Hospital.

Police have charged the conductors according to the law as they failed to change their mentality despite the bus system already being reformed, according to Hluttaw representative U Thar Aung.—Min Thit (MNA)



Police and volunteers manage to detain the conductor at the Sawbwargyigone bus stop. PHOTO: NAW JUU JUU



Joe Biden, Vice President of the United States speaks at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland on 18 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Biden calls Russia biggest threat to international order

DAVOS, (Switzerland) — US Vice President Joe Biden, in his last major speech before leaving office, described Russia on Wednesday as the biggest threat to the international liberal order and said Washington must work with Europe to stand up to Vladimir Putin.

Biden was speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos two days before the inauguration of Donald Trump as US president.

Trump has sent conciliatory signals to Putin and seemed to encourage the disintegration of the European Union by praising Britain's decision to leave the bloc and predicting that more countries could bolt.

Biden pushed back forcefully against Trump's message, warning hundreds of leaders, CEOs and bankers gathered in a vast conference hall in the Swiss

Alps resort town that Putin was likely to try to influence a series of elections in Europe this year, as it is accused of doing in the recent US vote.

"Under President Putin, Russia is working with every tool available to them to whittle away at the edges of the European project, test the fault lines of western nations and return to a politics defined by spheres of influence," Biden said.

"With many countries in Europe slated to hold elections this year, we should expect further attempts by Russia to meddle in the democratic process. It will occur again, I promise you. And again the purpose is clear: to collapse the liberal international order," Biden added.

He did not address Trump directly, but warned of a "dangerous willingness to revert to political small-mindedness" in

politics and said that "dangerous autocrats and demagogues" had tried to capitalise on people's fears throughout history.

Biden called Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which states that an attack on one member of the transatlantic military alliance is considered an attack on all, a "sacred obligation".

Trump has called NATO "obsolete" and raised doubts about whether he would respect Article 5, stirring deep unease in Europe.

"Defending the liberal international order requires that we resist the forces of European disintegration and maintain our longstanding insistence on a Europe, whole, free and peaceful," said Biden.

"It means fighting for the European Union, one of the most vibrant and consequential institutions on earth," he added.—*Reuters*

US Secret Service settles race discrimination case with black agents

WASHINGTON — The US Secret Service has agreed to pay \$24 million to settle a 17-year-old federal lawsuit filed by a group of black agents who accused the agency of racial discrimination in its employment practices.

The agreement settles a protracted legal battle that began in 2000 when 10 black agents filed a lawsuit in a Washington DC federal court, claiming the Secret Service had violated the civil rights of black agents for decades while ignoring their complaints, court records showed.

"Had the matter gone to trial, it would have required that we re-live things long past, just at a time when the Secret Service is on the mend," Secretary of

Homeland Security Jeh Johnson said in a statement. "This settlement is also, simply, the right thing to do."

The 10 agents accused the Secret Service of racial discrimination in how it selected agents for promotions. They also claimed the agency conducted unfair hiring, assignment and transfer practices while fostering a racially hostile workplace, court documents showed.

A group of more than 100 agents joined the lawsuit over time, the Washington Post reported. Under the resolution, the Secret Service could pay as much as \$300,000 each to the agents who originally sued the agency.

"At long last ... black Secret

Service agents will not be constrained by the glass ceiling that held back so many for so long," Jennifer Klar, a lawyer for the agents, told the newspaper.

The Secret Service admitted no wrongdoing, but agreed to reform its employment and promotion practices, the complaint process for employees and how it keeps records, the agreement said.

The agency, charged with protecting the president and his family, has dealt with a lengthy list of problems during the past few years, including a prostitution scandal in Colombia and a high-profile security lapse when a man jumped the fence surrounding the White House complex and ran into the mansion armed with a knife.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

US, Mexico, Cuba ready to sign "Doughnut Hole" deal in Gulf waters

MEXICO CITY — The United States, Mexico and Cuba are ready to sign an agreement determining the territorial water limits in the Eastern Gap of the Gulf of Mexico, three diplomatic officials familiar with the matter said on Tuesday. The talks on the agreement concluded at the end of 2016 after trilateral discussions began mid-last year, and the plan is to sign the accord before US President-elect Donald Trump takes office on 20 January, the three officials said.

One of the three, who were speaking on condition of anonymity, said the deal could be signed on Wednesday.

Believed to be rich in oil and gas deposits, the Eastern Gap is known as a Doughnut Hole, where jurisdictions overlap.—*Reuters*

Hong Kong has "no room" for independence from China — HK leader

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's chief executive said on Wednesday in his annual policy blueprint that the city couldn't become independent or separate from China.

Addressing recent growing calls from activists for Hong Kong to become independent from China, Leung Chun-ying told the city's legislature that "there is no room for independence or any kind of separation" from China. Leung was delivering his final policy address before he steps down after a five-year tenure leading the financial hub.

Hong Kong, a former British colony, returned to Chinese rule in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" arrangement granting the city a high degree of autonomy.—*Reuters*

Russia says extends Snowden's residency permit 'by a couple of years'

MOSCOW — Former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden has been given leave to remain in Russia for another couple of years, a spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry said.

"Snowden's residency in Russia has just been extended by another couple of years," the spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, said in a post on Facebook.—*Reuters*

France says Mali army camp explosion is major "symbolic attack"

PARIS — France's interior minister described Wednesday's deadly car bomb explosion at an army camp in Gao, northern Mali, as a "major and highly symbolic attack" in an area visited days ago by French President Francois Hollande.

The comment came from Interior Minister Bruno Le Roux, who spoke to reporters shortly after news of the explosion with a provisional death toll of 25.

France sent troops to Mali at the request of the government there in early 2013 to prevent an advance by Islamist rebels on the capital Bamako.—*Reuters*

Vucic, Leuthard meet in Davos

DAVOS — Serbian PM Aleksandar Vucic met in Davos on Tuesday with Swiss President Doris Leuthard to discuss bilateral ties, ways of boosting Swiss investments in Serbia and Swiss support for a dual education system in Serbia.

Serbia attaches great significance to improving the cooperation between the two countries in all areas, in particular in the economy and education, Vucic said.—*Tanjung*

5.3-magnitude earthquake hits central Italy

ROME — A strong earthquake hit central Italy on Wednesday morning. The quake carried a magnitude of 5.3 on the Richter scale, and first struck at about 10:25 am local time (0925 GMT) in the province of L'Aquila in the Abruzzo region, Italy's National Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (INGV) stated. It was registered at a relatively shallow depth of 9 km, the INGV added. No casualties or damages were immediately reported. Yet, the tremor was felt in the nearby central regions, and as far as in the Italian capital, which lies some 110 kilometres to the west. The major highway connecting Rome to the affected areas was temporarily closed to verify its conditions, the managing society said.

Since August 2016, the central areas in the Lazio, Marche, and Abruzzo regions have been hit by three major quakes, which totally left some 300 people dead and several thousands displaced.—*Xinhua*

Istanbul nightclub attacker says was directed by Islamic State

ISTANBUL — An Uzbek gunman who killed 39 people in an Istanbul nightclub on New Year's Day told police he had to change target at the last minute to avoid heavy security and acted with direct orders from Islamic State in Syria, a newspaper said on Wednesday.

The gunman, named by the authorities on Tuesday as Abdulgadir Masharipov, had initially been told to attack the area around the central Taksim square and said his instructions came from Raqqa, a Syrian stronghold of Islamic State, the *Hurriyet* newspaper cited him as saying in police testimony.

"I came to Taksim on New Year's Eve but the security measures were intense. It was not possible to carry out the attack," he was quoted as saying.

"I was given instructions to search for a new target in the area. I toured the coast at around 10 pm with a cab," he said, referring to Istanbul's Bosphorus shore where the Reina nightclub is located.

"Reina looked suitable for the attack. There didn't seem to be



The door of a hideout where the alleged attacker of Reina nightclub was caught. PHOTO: REUTERS

many security measures."

Hurriyet did not say how it obtained the testimony and Reuters was not immediately able to

verify the report.

Masharipov was caught in a police raid late on Monday in Esenyurt, a suburb on Istanbul's

western outskirts, following a two-week manhunt. He was captured with an Iraqi man and three women from Africa, one of them

from Egypt.

On 1 January, he shot his way into the exclusive nightclub and opened fire on New Year's revelers with an automatic rifle, throwing stun grenades to allow himself to reload and shooting the wounded on the ground.

Islamic State claimed responsibility the next day, saying the attack was revenge for Turkish military involvement in Syria. Turkish troops entered Syria last August to push Islamic State away from the border and halt Kurdish militia advances.

Like many cities around the world on New Year's Eve, Istanbul had taken additional security measures, deploying 25,000 police officers to try to thwart attacks after a year of bombings by Islamic State and Kurdish militants.

Istanbul Governor Vasip Sahin said on Tuesday that Masharipov had admitted his guilt and that his fingerprints matched those at the scene. Sahin described him as well-educated, able to speak four languages, and said he had received training in Afghanistan. —Reuters

Arab Israeli and policeman killed in suspected car ramming attack in southern Israel

JERUSALEM — Police in Israel said an Arab Israeli on Wednesday rammed his car into a group of policemen in the southern Negev region, killing one before being shot dead, though a rights activist who was present disputed it was an attack.

Police said the violence sparked a riot in the village of Umm al-Hiran, where an oper-

ation was underway to demolish Bedouin dwellings deemed by a court as having been built illegally on state-owned land.

Police spokeswoman Merav Lapidot said the suspect was a local teacher who "surged towards the forces intending to kill" and that riots erupted after he was shot.

But human rights activist Michal Haramati, who had

come to Umm al-Hiran to observe the demolitions, said she witnessed the event and that the driver was not heading towards police when he was shot.

"Suddenly the car started to go down the hill, without control, absolutely," she told Reuters in English. "The driver was obviously dead by the time that he lost control this way. That's when he hit the cops."

Most of Israel's Bedouin, who predominate in the desert area that accounts for two-thirds of Israel's territory, are nomadic tribes which have wandered across the Middle East from Biblical times. Arab citizens make up about 20 per cent of Israel's population of eight million, and 200,000 of them are Bedouin.

Bedouin leaders in Negev say Israel has long discriminated against their communities, denying them public funds and services. Half of Israeli Bedouin population live in towns and villages recognised as formal communities by the government. Others live rough, in tents and shacks on patches of desert.

Israeli forces have been particularly wary of car ramming attacks since a wave of Palestinian street assaults began in October 2015.

On 8 January, four Israeli soldiers were killed in Jerusalem by a Palestinian who drove his truck into them.

In all, 37 Israelis and two visiting Americans have been killed in the past 15 months, while at least 232 Palestinians have been killed in violence in Israel, the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the same period.

Israel says that at least 158 of them were assailants while others died during clashes and protests. —Reuters



Arab Israelis clash with Israeli riot policemen in Umm Al-Hiran, a Bedouin village in Israel's southern Negev Desert, on 18 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Suicide blast kills 33 at north Mali military camp

GAO (Mali) — At least 33 people were killed and dozens injured on Wednesday when a suicide bomber detonated a vehicle packed with explosives near a military camp in Mali's northern city of Gao, witnesses and a United Nations peacekeeping source said.

A Reuters reporter who arrived at the camp soon after the blast, which occurred at about 9 am (0900 GMT), said he saw dozens of bodies lying on the ground alongside the wounded.

Ambulances rushed to the scene as helicopters circled overhead.

"It's terrible," Gao resident Kader Touré said. "The attack happened while they were having an assembly. I've just left the hospital where there were bodies ripped to pieces and bodies piled up."

The army put the provisional toll at 25 but a source in the UN MINUSMA peacekeeping force said at least 33 were killed.

The camp was home to government soldiers and members of various rival armed groups which jointly patrol Mali's restive desert north in line with a UN-brokered peace accord.

A French-led military intervention in 2013 drove back Islamist militants, including al Qaeda-linked groups, which had seized northern Mali a year earlier. —Reuters

Unsolved problems hang over Hong Kong leader's last policy address

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's leader on Wednesday delivered his last annual policy statement before stepping down, addressing longstanding problems including high property prices and stalled political reform though providing no substantial new measures to tackle them.

Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying took office in 2012 pledging to make housing more affordable, and to bring greater democracy to the city of 7.2 million, issues that had also stymied his predecessors.

Home prices have bucked repeated cooling measures, including a hefty new sales tax in November, to rise ever higher, putting prices on a par with those in New York and London.

Political reforms have stalled amid growing worries among democracy activists about mainland interference that they see threatening the city's autonomy.

Demands for fully democratic city elections triggered Hong Kong's most tumultuous protests for decades in late 2014 but Beijing refused to make any concessions. Leung said surging property prices posed the "gravest potential hazard" to society and he reiterated a need to increase the supply of land, including through reclamation and expanding new towns.

"If the government and the community do not resolve to expedite the identification of land for housing production, the housing problem will remain a tough nut to crack," Leung said.

Only seven percent of city land is zoned for housing and the average price per square foot of city flats is about HK\$10,700 (\$1,380), spawning a boom in ever smaller "mini" flats no bigger than a car parking space. In the next decade, 460,000 housing units are expected to be built, he said.—Reuters



Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying sits behind security guards before his policy address at the Legislative Council in Hong Kong, China on 18 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Pakistan will not free doctor who helped US find bin Laden

ISLAMABAD — A jailed Pakistani doctor believed to have helped the CIA hunt down al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden will be neither released nor handed to the United States, Pakistan's law minister has told legislators, media reported on Wednesday.

Dr Shakil Afridi, hailed as a hero by US officials, was arrested after US forces killed bin Laden in May 2011 in a secret raid in a northern Pakistani town that plunged relations between the uneasy strategic partners to a new low.

Pakistan has accused the doctor of running a fake vaccination campaign in which he collected DNA samples to help the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) confirm bin Laden's identity.

Afridi was arrested soon after the bin Laden raid and charged with having ties to militant Islamists, which he denied.

"The law is taking its course and Afridi is having full opportunity of a fair trial," the Daily Times news-



Newspaper headlines and clippings are posted on a wall inside a staff office at the White House in Washington on 2 May, 2011, the morning after US President Barack Obama announced the death of Osama bin Laden. PHOTO: REUTERS

paper quoted Law Minister Zahid Hamid as telling the upper house, in response to a lawmaker's query about reports of a possible release.

"Afridi worked against the law and our national interest, and the Pakistan government has repeatedly been telling the United States that under our law he committed a crime and

was facing the law."

In 2012, Afridi was sentenced to 33 years in prison after being convicted of being a member of militant group Lashkar-e-Islam.

That conviction was overturned in 2013, but Afridi was then charged with murder, relating to the death of a patient eight years earlier. He remains in

jail awaiting trial.

Many Pakistanis were infuriated by the US raid to grab bin Laden in the military garrison town of Abbottabad, just a two-hour drive from Islamabad, the capital.

Pakistani officials describe bin Laden's long presence in Abbottabad as a security lapse and reject any suggestion that members of the military or intelligence services were complicit in hiding him.

Last May, Pakistan's foreign ministry angrily criticised US President-elect Donald Trump for saying he could get Pakistan to free Afridi "within two minutes".

Pakistan joined the US war on militancy after the 11 September, 2001, attacks on the United States.

But US officials often describe Islamabad as an unreliable partner that has sheltered the Afghan Taliban leadership and demand tougher action against militant groups based along its border with Afghanistan.—Reuters

Australia says suspended MH370 search could resume in future

SYDNEY— Australia said on Wednesday it was not ruling out a future underwater search for a missing Malaysia Airlines passenger jet as families of those on board criticised the decision to suspend the hunt after three fruitless years.

The location of Flight MH370 has become one of the world's greatest aviation mysteries since the plane, a Boeing 777, disappeared in 2014 en route to Beijing from the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur with 239 people on board.

"I don't rule out a future underwater search by any stretch," Australian Trans-

port Minister Darren Chester told reporters in Melbourne, a day after Australia, Malaysia and China called off the search in the southern Indian Ocean. The search cost about A\$200 million (\$150 million), mostly paid by Malaysia, and had already been extended twice. But the three countries involved have been reluctant to keep looking without new evidence about the plane's final resting place.

A recommendation from investigators last month to look to the north of the 120,000 sq km (46,000 sq mile) area that has been the focus of search efforts

was rejected by Australia and Malaysia as too imprecise.

Chester said cost had not been the determining factor to halt the search, but he said restarting it would require "credible new information which leads to a specific location".

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Wednesday expressed "deep regret" that the plane had not been found, but reaffirmed the agreement between Malaysia, Australia and China to stop looking. Boeing (BA.N) did not immediately respond to requests for comment.—Reuters

China says hopes for "win-win" deal between Britain, EU

BEIJING — China's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday it hoped Britain and the European Union could reach a "win-win" agreement on Britain's departure from the bloc, after Prime Minister Theresa May said it would quit the EU single market when it left. May promised to seek the greatest possible access to European markets but said Britain would aim to establish its own free trade deals with countries far beyond Europe, and rein in immigration from the continent. Prior to last year's Brexit vote, China had not directly stated an opinion, viewing it as an internal matter and saying only that it wanted to see a strong and stable Europe.

Diplomatic sources, however, said that was coded support for the defeated "remain" camp, as the bloc, now China's largest trading partner, will lose around a sixth of its economic output and an important supporter of free trade in the EU.—Reuters

INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER (1/2017) [TENDER NO. MPPE / MOGAS / T / 1 (2016 — 2017)]

- Open Tender is invited for the Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, Ministry of Electricity and Energy for the supply of Mogas (92-RON) UNL (94,000 ± 10% Barrels)
- Tender Closing Date & Time - 30 - 1 - 2017, 12:00 Hrs
- Tender Opening Date & Time - 30 - 1 - 2017, 13:00 Hrs
- Delivery Time - 27th February 2017 to 2nd March 2017.
- Tender documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during our office hours commencing 19 - 1 - 2017 on payment of Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyats 100,000.) per set.
- Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

Contact Phone No.
067-411487/411486/411280

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Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-080(16-17)	Spares for 3300V Water / Oil Pumps Motors (19) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-081(16-17)	Gas Supply Accessories (8) Items	US\$
(3)	DMP/L-023(16-17)	Hydraulic Oil Light (H.O.L) (1) Lot	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 6-2-2017, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 17TH January, 2017 at the Finance Department , Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph. +95 67 - 411206 / 411274

Oldest gorilla in captivity dies in Ohio at 60 years old

CLEVELAND — The first gorilla born in captivity, who went on to become the oldest known member of her species, has died at the age of 60, officials at the Columbus, Ohio, zoo that served as her home said on Tuesday.

Colo, a Western lowland gorilla, was found dead on Tuesday morning in her enclosure, the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium said in a statement. She had been born at the same property on 22 December, 1956 and five years passed before another gorilla was born in captivity in the United States, the zoo said.

The zoo celebrated her 60th birthday less than a month ago weeks after a malignant tumor was removed from under her arm on 3 December. She was the oldest gorilla on record and exceeded her normal life expectancy by more than two decades, said Patty Peters, a zoo spokeswoman.

There had been no sign that Colo was unwell as



Colo, the oldest gorilla born in captivity, looks over a cake during her 58th birthday at Columbus Zoo in Columbus, Ohio, US on 22 December, 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

some 13,000 visited the zoo on Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Peters said in a phone interview.

"There were lines of people. She interacted with guests all day," Peters said. Colo, whose name

was a play on Columbus, was the mother of three, grandmother of 16, great grandmother of 12 and had

three great-great offspring. Her oldest, Emmy, was the first second-generation gorilla born in a zoo and her

grandchild, Cora, was the first third-generation gorilla born in captivity.

Gorillas, typically found in lowland and mountain tropical rainforests in central Africa, are the world's largest primates, the mammalian group that includes lemurs, monkeys, apes and humans. Adult males reach up to about 440 pounds (200 kg).

There are approximately 350 gorillas of all species in accredited zoos across the United States and an estimated 150,000 to 250,000 Western lowland gorillas left in the world, the zoo said in a statement. Gorillas are listed as endangered due to loss of habitat, poaching, and susceptibility to diseases.

Colo will be cremated and her ashes buried at an undisclosed location at the Columbus Zoo. Results of the necropsy to further define the cause of death are expected in approximately four weeks.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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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.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

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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.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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AGENT FOR: M/S WONGSAMUT OCEAN SHIPPING CO LTD.

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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.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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Shakira urges Davos elite to nurture future leaders

DAVOS, Switzerland — Music star Shakira urged world and business leaders at the opening ceremony of the World Economic Forum on Monday to support efforts to feed, educate and care for underprivileged children.

"Today's babies will drive tomorrow's business. Their capacity to contribute will shape tomorrow's societies, will solve tomorrow's problems," the Colombian recording star, who is also a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador devoted to early childhood development, said in an im-

passioned speech.

Shakira, who was given a Crystal Award in Davos for her humanitarian work, is the founder of the Pies Descalzos Foundation, which works to provide underprivileged children in Colombia with access to quality education.

"In this room there are some of the most powerful people in the world, and definitely I'm convinced you know what it means to be ahead of the curve," she added.

"We need to apply the brains

and strategies of business and the assets and human resources and talents of your companies to do social good and to solve social problems."

The World Economic Forum also gave awards to violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, who runs a foundation providing scholarships for young musicians, and actor Forest Whitaker, who has worked as a global advocate for peace, focusing on empowering youth as leaders and entrepreneurs in communities touched by violence and poverty.—Reuters



Colombian singer Shakira. PHOTO: REUTERS

Simon Rattle offers up musical 'tapas bar' for first season in London



Conductor Simon Rattle takes part in the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games at the Olympic Stadium on 27 July, 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Conductor Simon Rattle unveiled what he described as a musical "tapas bar" on Tuesday as he presented an eclectic program for his first season with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO).

Rattle, the outgoing chief conductor of the prestigious Berliner Philharmoniker, will take up his new role as music director of the LSO in September and will be running both orchestras concurrently for the 2017-2018 season.

"I'm doing the insane thing for one year that I promised I would never do in my life, run two orchestras at the same time," Rattle told a news conference in London. "I hope the season is like a tapas bar of the type of things I have in mind," he said of his plans for the LSO. The season will range from challenging contemporary works and new commissions by young composers to old favorites by the likes of Edward Elgar, Leonard Bernstein, Claude Debussy, Dmitri Shostakovich and Ludwig van Beethoven.

The season will culminate with a performance of German modernist Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Gruppen", a work for 120

musicians divided into three orchestras, in the monumental Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern gallery, a former power station.

An instantly recognizable figure with his shock of white curls, Rattle, 61, is one of the biggest names in classical music.

He has worked with the LSO many times as a guest conductor. They reached an audience of hundreds of millions when they performed Vangelis' "Chariots of Fire" during the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics with comedy character Mr Bean.

Rattle brings star power to the 113-year-old LSO as it tries to get a proposed new concert hall off the ground. The project is costed at 278 million pounds (\$345 million), a daunting sum at a time of government budget austerity and economic uncertainty.

The orchestra is currently based at the Barbican Centre, which is considered by music lovers to have too small a stage and flawed acoustics. "It's very clear that we can do a lot of wonderful work in the Barbican, but it's also clear that there's about 20 percent of the repertoire that we can't," Rattle said.—Reuters

African-born actor in Hungary: 'People just see me as a migrant'

BUDAPEST — Marcelo Cake-Baly came to study in Hungary from wartorn Guinea-Bissau in 1976, and has been working as a tram driver in Budapest for over a decade despite being a trained economist.

Now, at the age of 58, his life has taken a new turn. He has made his acting debut in a Hungarian movie about the life of an African refugee who settles in Budapest to work as a security guard in a shopping center.

The film, "The Citizen", shows the difficulties of integration in Hungarian society through a tormented love story. The main character, Wilson, applies for citizenship and falls in love with a history and language teacher who tries to prepare him for the tough citizenship exam.

Director Roland Vranik's feature film will be shown in cinemas on 26 January — at a time when Hungary has barely any refugees left, after its right-wing government raised a fence on the southern border and imposed tough laws to

keep out a wave of migrants.

Vranik and Hungarian writer Ivan Szabo crafted their script in 2012, aiming to show how Africans in Budapest put down roots. They started to shoot the movie in 2015, just as Hungary became a transit route for hundreds of thousands of migrants fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and Africa.

"What we think does not matter for them: they just need a safe place and clean water. They just need days when nobody tries to kill them," Vranik said.

He said "mass psychosis" took hold when Europeans became scared of the wave of migrants. But Vranik remains optimistic: he believes people are still ready to help those in need and says his film is "completely timeless and also spaceless."

"It can be anywhere in Europe," he said.

Cake-Baly obtained Hungarian citizenship in the mid-1990s and has lived in the country for four decades. But the migration

crisis had an impact on him.

"In my thoughts ... I feel I am Hungarian, but in the street I look African. It is not written on me ... that I have a Hungarian family, I work here, I am a tax-paying citizen," he said.

"People just see me as a migrant."

He recalls his university years in the early 1980s as happy ones, when he faced no discrimination.

But he lost his job as an economist shortly before communism collapsed in 1989. After trying his luck studying in Belgium for three years, he returned to Hungary and eventually found work on Budapest's trams.

He said the migration crisis had divided European societies and made life harder for immigrants.

He asked a young man at a tram stop recently not to smoke, as it was forbidden.

"He told me he was at home, and I was a migrant ... and I should have drowned in the sea," Cake-Baly recalled.—Reuters



Cake-Baly Marcelo (R) and Arghavan Shekari (C), two main cast members of the Hungarian movie 'The Citizen,' pose for a photo with the film's director, Roland Vranik, in Budapest, Hungary on 17 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

US to help Egypt restore hundreds of pharaonic era coffins

CAIRO — Egypt will restore hundreds of coffins dating back thousands of years to the time of the pharaohs as part of a joint American-Egyptian project to document and preserve one of the world's oldest civilizations, a director of the project said on Tuesday.

The conservation effort, funded by a United States grant, will restore over 600 wooden coffins that date to various eras of ancient Egypt and which

are currently being stored at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

"There has been no other project like this worldwide with this number of coffins being documented or restored," said head of the museum's restoration department Momen Othman.

Egypt was awarded the conservation grant, worth \$130,000, in December 2015.

That project is part of a larger US-Egypt treaty

signed in 2016 to curtail illicit trafficking of the country's rich cultural heritage.

Antiquities theft flourished in Egypt in the chaotic years that immediately followed its 2011 uprising, with an indeterminate amount of heritage stolen from museums, mosques, storage facilities, and illegal excavations.

Global interest in Egypt's pharaonic era remains high. The hunt for the resting place of the lost Queen Nefertiti grabbed

international headlines in 2015, though the search has yet to bear fruit.

The gilded ancient relics and resting sites of the pharaohs were once the cornerstone of a thriving tourism sector, a vital source of foreign currency that has suffered near endless setbacks since the uprising that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak in 2011.

The Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, a United States program founded at the turn

of the century, has been responsible for the conservation and restoration of countless ancient sites, museums, and artifacts around the world.

The fund previously helped Egypt conserve a mausoleum in historic Cairo and an ancient temple in Upper Egypt.

"One of the main goals of the project is to ensure that the (Egyptian) museum has a full inventory of the objects and understands their conservation needs,

so that the coffins can be made available for research by scholars but also for the public," Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation Program Director Martin Perschler said.

"It means that in the long run more people here in Egypt and people from around the world will have the opportunity to discover and appreciate the full range of heritage and of history within this single collection of coffins," he said.—Reuters

Juuso the bear makes artistic debut at Finnish gallery

HELSINKI — Artists usually like to attend the opening of their exhibitions but the painter of the works that went on display at a gallery in Helsinki on Tuesday preferred to carry on hibernating.

The artist behind the exhibition entitled "Strong and soft touches" is a 423-kilogram (930 pound) brown bear named Juuso who uses his body, especially his paws, as paintbrushes.

"We just leave paint for him, some plywood and paper ... If we ask him to do it, he doesn't do anything. He does all the work in his own time, when he's alone, sitting and moving his legs on the paper," said Pasi Jantti, one of his keepers.

Juuso, who is 17 years old, favours blue and red, the keeper said, adding that the paints used posed no health risk to the bear.

His keepers discovered Juuso's artistic bent one day while painting some facilities at Kuusa-

mo animal centre in northern Finland where he has been living since being orphaned as a cub.

"Juuso got some paint in his paws and started to make marks with them. We noticed that he liked it," Jantti said.

The centre raised about 8,000 euros (\$8,500) by selling 15 paintings produced by Juuso. The exhibition now opening at the Rupla gallery in Helsinki features 11 pieces of original work and some prints and are

priced from 50 to 4,000 euros.

Some of the paintings still feature bits of Juuso's fur.

Funds raised from the exhibition will be used to make a documentary about bears.—Reuters



Pasi Jantti a keeper of a bear called Juuso points on the painting at the gallery in Helsinki, Finland on 17 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Springsteen tribute band pulls out of Trump inauguration bash

WASHINGTON — A Bruce Springsteen tribute band bowed to pressure on Monday and backed out of performing at a gala on the evening before Donald Trump's inauguration, saying it was doing so out of respect for the New Jersey rocker, a vocal critic of the president-elect.

The B-Street Band, which has performed covers of Springsteen and his E Street Band since the 1980s, dropped plans to perform at Thursday's Garden State Inaugural Gala in Washington after receiving a storm of emails both criticizing and praising the appearance.

"Our decision is based SOLELY on the respect and gratitude we have for Bruce and the E Street Band," the band said in a statement released to Backstreets.com, a Springsteen fanzine.

The 67-year-old New Jersey native, known for such hits as "Thunder Road" and "Born in the USA," has repeatedly voiced anger and disdain for Trump, calling the Republican maverick a "moron" in a September interview with Rolling Stone magazine.

Springsteen also appeared at a rally for Hillary Clinton, Trump's Democratic opponent, just before the 8 November election.

Springsteen had not commented in public

about the B-Street Band's planned performance. But E Street Band member Stevie Van Zandt said in a Twitter message: "Nice guys. Met them. I wouldn't say right or wrong. Up to them. But it's naive to think one can separate Art and Politics. Art IS Politics."

The B-Street Band performed at the 2009 and 2013 Garden State Inaugural Galas, which are sponsored by the New Jersey State Society.

In 2013 the band signed a contract to perform at this year's gala.

Trump, a New York real estate developer, won with a populist platform that included promises to build a wall along the Mexican border, restrict immigration from Muslim countries and dismantle President Barack Obama's signature healthcare law.

The B-Street Band's move came two days after Broadway star Jennifer Holliday dropped plans to sing at an inaugural concert, citing an online article that cast the performance as a "betrayal" of her gay and lesbian fans.

Nancy Fatemi, New Jersey State Society executive director, said organizers had been swamped by requests from other groups wanting to take the B-Street Band's place.

"We've actually already selected one, but we're not ready to announce it," she said.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(19-1-2017 07:00am ~ 20-1-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Yoga & Health
07:47	Am	Elephant Catching and Scaring Trip Mile Stone 26
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Travelogue to the coastal region (Myeik - Kawthoung) Part-2
08:42	Am	Gemstone Sculptor
08:55	Am	Black Gold (P - II)
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Products of Myanmar — Pottery Business
09:44	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: Nipa Plam
10:03	Am	News

10:26	AmChanges
10:42	Am	Tigers, Lions and The Guardians
10:53	Am	Inspiration

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	To The Land Of Countless Temples - Bagan Trip (EP-2)
07:47	Pm	Natural Lake: Fish Breeding Business
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-1) The Culture Of Pennant Pillar
08:40	Pm	Will you feed the pigeons?
08:46	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Zay Yar Aye

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

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

Federer wobbles but roars back to reach third round

MELBOURNE — Roger Federer dug himself out of a late slump to fend off American qualifier Noah Rubin 7-5, 6-3, 7-6(3) on Wednesday and enjoy a confidence-building win on the way to the third round of the Australian Open.

On the comeback trail after six months out of the game, a clinical Federer cruised through the opening two sets but fell into a hole in the third against the plucky world number 200.

Federer needed to save two set points on serve at 5-2 down and then came roaring back to



Switzerland's Roger Federer celebrates after winning his Men's singles second round match against Noah Rubin of the US in Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia on 18 January, 2017 . PHOTO: REUTERS

take Rubin to a tiebreak.

The Swiss master, seeded 17th, raced to three match points at 6-3 and closed it out on the first with a crunching forehand

that Rubin could only parry high and wide.

Federer plays 10th seed Tomas Berdych in the next round.—Reuters

Man City's Kolarov refuses to give up title hopes

LONDON — Manchester City still have a chance of winning the Premier League title this season, defender Aleksandar Kolarov said, despite Pep Guardiola's men sliding 10 points behind leaders Chelsea after 21 games.

City slipped to fifth position after Sunday's 4-0 thrashing at Everton but will hope to get back to winning ways when they host second-placed Tottenham Hotspur this weekend.

"I still think the title race

will go to the very last day and we have to make sure we're involved," Kolarov told the club website (www.mancity.com).

"We just need to turn more games into wins because we've dominated some matches but not ended up winning," he said.

"Every game is tough in the Premier League whether they are at the top or the bottom. Guardiola wants us to be 100 per cent professional in everything we do — if we want to win things,

every small detail is important."

Kolarov also voiced his support for the under-fire manager.

"For all the players it is a great pleasure to play under him because he's the best coach in the football at the moment," Kolarov added.

"As players we can improve and we need to win more games but we are just at the beginning of a journey and I think we'll get better and better." —Reuters

China foreign talent curb gets mixed response from clubs

BEIJING — China's decision to tighten rules over the number of overseas players amid concerns of over-spending on foreign talents has drawn mixed response from the clubs affected by the move.

Teams in the country's top leagues would be limited to fielding a maximum of three foreign players per game for the 2017 season, down from the current five, China's Football Association said in a statement on Monday.

Shanghai SIPG coach Andre Villas-Boas has questioned the timing of the move with the Chinese Super League kicking off on 7 March.

"This decision should have been made after the season, or with a certain buffer," the Portuguese coach told reporters during his team's training camp in Qatar. "Such a huge change shouldn't be announced about a month before the new season.

"Most of the clubs' team-building plans have been in accordance with the previous rules. That's when everyone gets caught off guard," added the former Chelsea manager.

Brazil's Oscar and Argentine Carlos Tevez made

big-money moves to China over the last month with Shanghai SIPG's deal to sign Oscar from English Premier League club Chelsea said to make him the highest-paid player in the world.

The spending drive prompted fierce criticism from officials and local media, with Xinhua saying earlier this month that clubs were "burning money" on overpaid foreign talent and neglecting the development of domestic players. Su Yuhui, president of newly-promoted Tianjin Quanjian, said the abrupt move would have a negative impact on the standard of the game.

"And it will disarray many club's pre-season arrangements, and even cause economic losses," Su told Tianjin Sports TV.

Clubs would still be able to register five foreign players in their overall squad, the Chinese FA said, but the new rule would mean not all could be used in any one game, a potential disincentive to loading a squad with international imports. Teams would also have to include two younger domestic players born in or after 1994 in their match day squad, of whom one would have to start the game. —Reuters

Ibrahimovic 'invaluable' for Man United youngsters, says Rashford



LONDON — The experience of playing and practising with Zlatan Ibrahimovic has proved invaluable for the young

Manchester United players who should make the most of the charismatic striker's presence at Old Trafford, according to team mate Marcus Rashford.

Ibrahimovic, who joined on a free transfer in July, has had a flying start to his United career and, with 14 Premier League goals, the 35-year-old is the joint-top scorer, along with Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez and Chelsea's Diego Costa.

"For the young players to see his character and the way he approaches every game is invaluable. Some players can't bring that when they move clubs," Rashford told British media.

"We have to try to learn from him while he is here and take what we can from his game."

The 19-year-old also praised the influence of captain Wayne Rooney.

"Zlatan and Rooney are the two that stand out. I grew up watching Rooney play week in, week out at Old Trafford, so those are the two that you look at and try to emulate," he added.

United are sixth in the league, 12 points behind leaders Chelsea after 21 games, and they travel to face ninth-placed Stoke City on Saturday. —Reuters

Manchester United's Zlatan Ibrahimovic celebrates scoring their first goal during the match against Liverpool at Old Trafford on 15 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS