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Merchants appraise jade stones at the 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium in the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: AYE THAN**

Jade sector ranked 83rd among 89 countries assessed

An institution that ranks countries rich in natural resources has given failing or poor marks to the governance of Myanmar's gemstone and oil and gas sectors.

The 2017 Resource Governance Index assesses how a

country manages their oil, gas and mining resources in order for all people in a resource-rich country to benefit.

Myanmar's gemstone sector was ranked 83rd among 89 worldwide assessments, scoring 27 of 100 points. Myanmar's

oil and gas sector fared slightly better, ranking 77th among 89 assessments, with a score of 31 of 100 points. The index is produced by the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI).

Results released yesterday said Myanmar suffered from

structural shortcomings and the urgent need for better regulatory oversight, transparency provisions, and revised legislative and fiscal frameworks. The report also pointed out the connection between jade and internal conflicts. **SEE PAGE-3**



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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

National debt, Chinese loan terms discussed at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discussed Myanmar's debts, relations to creditors and deficit spending during its regular session yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The discussion arose out of an official report of the Public Accounts Combined Committee which lays out the government's debt management strategy in 2017.

According to Daw Khin San Hlaing of Pale constituency, Sagaing Region, Myanmar currently has a US\$9 billion debt to various foreign governments and

international finance entities.

"Most of our debts have been described as low-interest loans," said Daw Khin San Hlaing. "In fact, this is not true. Average interest rate of foreign loans 1.85%, being between zero and 4.5% actually. Grace periods for international finance are often up to 10 years. But China, creditor of 44% of our total debt has permitted only a five-year forbearance." U Khin Maung Thi of Loilem constituency said, "Medium-term debt management strategy should follow a ratio

where local and foreign debts and GDP in FY 2016-2017 are related. Compared to ratio of total debts and GDP of FY 2015-2016, that of FY 2016-2017 was found to have decreased. So to maintain low debt, loans should be obtained from international

organizations and foreign governments at low interest."

U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance said, "the Union budget will include Ks5.2 trillion in total loans in FY2017-2018." The deputy minister said that the

Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international finance organizations were assisting Myanmar's government to standardize its debt management.—Myo Myint, Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■



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

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives UPF Representative Myanmar

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Mr. Pasit Sirimalai, Representative Myanmar of Universal Peace Federation (Asia) and members at the Amyotha Hluttaw Building Hall, Nay Pyi Taw, at 1:30 pm yesterday.

During the meeting, they



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker holds talks with Representative Myanmar of Universal Peace Federation. **PHOTO: MNA**

discussed the programme on Launching of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace- Myanmar of Universal Peace Federation.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Thar Aung and officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw office. — Myanmar News Agency ■

US Embassy celebrates 241st Anniversary of Independence Day with ceremony

A ceremony in commemoration of the 241st Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America was held at 7p.m. at the Kempinski Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.

The celebration was opened with the national anthems of Myanmar and the US.

United States Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Scot Marciel and Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe delivered the opening speeches. U Hla Thein Chairman of Union Election Commission, Union Ministers, National Security Advisor to the Union Government U Thaung Tun, Chief of General Staff (Army,



US Embassy's Independence Day Celebration in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

Navy, Air) General Mya Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief (Navy), Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, Minister of State

for Foreign Affairs and Hluttaw representatives and the invited guests attended the event.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Driving over speed limit to be arrested

Ko Moe

According to the traffic police force No 2, motor vehicles which drive over speed limit will be taken action against, with effect from 1 August.

As regards taking action, Police Lt-Col Win Lwin of No 2 traffic police force said, "Plans are being carried out step by step for reducing car accidents which are causing danger to human's life on the nationwide scale.

As the second stage, equipments for examining speed limit will be used for testing speed limit. Starting from August 1, violators will be arrested.

It is learnt that the period from the advent of June to 31st July, across the nation including Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw was designated as the period for educating traffic rules restricting speed limit.

Motor vehicles are allowed to drive at 48 km per hour in down-town area, at 80 km per hour in out-skirting areas, with articulated trucks and vehicles with trailers are allowed to drive at 32 km per hour and at 56 km per hour in sub-urban areas, it is learnt.

Passenger-buses driving

on express ways are allowed to drive at 90 km per hour and family-used sedans are allowed to drive at 100 km per hour. But trucks are allowed to drive at 60 km per hour, it is learnt.

The violators will be fined K 50000 or punished one-month imprisonment or fine & penalty combined. In case a person commits another case in a year, he is required to pay K 100000 as fine or 3-month imprisonment or fine and penalty combined.

As for the national council for protect vehicular and road accidents, arrangements for reducing casualty rate caused by car accidents.

After the first stage plan of making persons onboard fasten with belt, second stage of arresting vehicles which drive over speed limit will be launched. Principles are being laid down by the State to reduce vehicular accidents. The first initiative of fastening safety belt was successful, said Police Lt-Col Win Lwin.

In the year 2016, there occurred 2706 car accidents in Yangon Region, 623 killed and 3410 injured. In 2015, 2729 cases of car accidents happened in Yangon Region, killing 584 and injuring 3688, according to No 2 traffic police force. ■

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials from ambassadors of South Africa and Mexican States

MR. GEOFFREY Quinton Mitchell Doidge, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 2 pm yesterday.

Mr. Nathan Wolf Lustbader, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the United Mexican States to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, also presented his Letter of Credence to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 2:35 pm yesterday.

Present on the occasion were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Thant Sin of the Protocol Department.— Myanmar News Agency ■



President U Htin Kyaw accepts Letter of Credence from Mr. Nathan Wolf Lustbader, the newly-accredited Mexican Ambassador. **PHOTO: MNA**



President U Htin Kyaw accepts Letter of Credence from the newly-accredited South African Ambassador. **PHOTO: MNA**

Jade sector ranked 83rd among . . .

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“Myanmar’s long-running internal conflicts have been partly financed by the gemstone sector in general, and jade in particular. Central to the issues facing Myanmar’s gemstone sector is transparency, the data show, with the government disclosing almost no information related to the licensing process, contracts or the identities of those with ultimate financial interests in trading companies or the sector generally. Gemstone licensing in Myanmar is the second-least transparent of all countries’ licensing systems, with an index score of four of 100 points; only Turkmenistan’s oil and gas sector ranks lower. Due to its opaque set-up, Myanmar Gems Enterprise (MGE) received a score of 16 of 100 points for governance, making it one of the most poorly governed state-owned economic enterprises (SEEs) covered in the study”, according to a statement released yesterday.

But the report also said this was an opportunity to improve the industry.

“The gemstone sector now has the potential to play an important role in the country’s future. Improved transparency throughout the sector, particu-

larly in licensing, ownership, production and revenue data, and improved valuation, taxation and collection of revenues, would be a huge step towards better governance”, according to the statement.

“The findings of the Resource Governance Index re-emphasise the need for Myanmar to get the right the new Gemstone Law currently being discussed in Parliament,” said Maw Htun Aung, NRG’s Myanmar manager.

The Myanmar Gemstone Law of 1995 effectively separated jade and gemstones from the rest of the mining sector, making it easier for a handful of elites to control the sector. In the country’s oil and gas sector, there are also challenges that need to be confronted, the report said.

The Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) scored 35 of 100 points in governance.

“Since MOGE is one of the most important revenue contributors to the state budget, NRG calls for further improvements. For example the oil and gas sector licensing process scores only 24 of 100 points. In terms of revenue contributions, MOGE does not report annually on its finances or operations, representing a serious failing

in oversight. The government has already announced that SEE reform is a priority in its twelve-point economic plan for the country. This plan includes a greater transparency and reporting of finances and taxes to the public, and the restructuring of SEEs to be more competitive and economically viable”, according to the statement released yesterday.

The statement from NRG said the reforms are key for ensuring that Myanmar’s oil and gas wealth benefits the economic development of the country, and can contribute to the peace process.

“In the context of Myanmar’s peace process, resource-rich, conflict-affected regions of the country have called for greater sharing of natural resource revenues and management responsibilities. Governance challenges evidenced by the index results point to a need to improve transparency as the first step toward designing a system that distributes benefits equitably and allows oversight of compliance with the rules,” added Maw Htun Aung.

The results of the Resource Governance Index are available at: www.resourcegovernanceindex.org.—GNLM■



State Counsellor receives the newly accredited Ambassador of the Philippines Mr Eduardo E. Kapunan yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Filipino, Nepalese Ambassadors call on State Counsellor

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received newly accredited Ambassador of the Philippines to Myanmar Mr Eduardo E. Kapunan, Jr. at 10 am and Ambassador of Nepal to Myanmar Mr Bhim K. Udas at 10.45 am yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs respectively.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Rakhine State Chief Minister delivers aid to villagers

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu met with villagers in southern Maungdaw yesterday, delivering aid to the villagers.

At the meeting, the Chief Minister pledged to assist in restoring peace and stability the district which saw instability due to armed attacks last year.

During his visit to Innadin village, he asked the local people to cooperate with the authorities, encouraging them that situation

will return to normal soon. After that, U Nyi Pu and officials went to Kyauk Pandu and Shwe Yin Aye villages and gave the aid to the local people. The State chief minister and members met with administrative officials at the Township General Administration Department in MyinLut Township and discussed about regional peace and stability.— Myint Maung Soe, Aung Kyaw Oo ■

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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.

Myanmar workers can now go to Malaysia

THE Myanmar government will allow Myanmar migrant labourers to return to Malaysia after a six month work suspension by Malaysian authorities, according to Daw Khin Nwe Oo, the deputy director-general of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population's Labour Department.

Myanmar had been sending about 4,000 workers to Malaysia, monthly, until 6 December, when Malaysian Prime Minister Mr. Najib Razak criticized Myanmar's policies in Rakhine.

"The Myanmar ambassador to Malaysia contacted us saying Myanmar workers can now go to Malaysia and work again," said Daw Khin Nwe Oo. "On 27 June, we have sent notifications to the overseas employment agencies giving them the good news that Myanmar workers can now go back to Malaysia. Job offer letters endorsed by the labour attaché are now being received. We will issue permits after we have checked them step by step."

U Kyaw Htin Kyaw, the general secretary of Myanmar Oversea Employment Agencies



Migrant workers from Myanmar work at a construction site in Malaysia. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Federation (MOEAF), has already started sending Myanmar workers to Malaysia.

"We are very happy to send Myanmar workers to abroad. We've already started to send the workers," said U Kyaw Htin Kyaw. "But some people who have already received appointment letters from Malaysia are not sure they can go back to Malaysia because of their family sit-

uations. Over 8,000 labours have already received appointment letters during the suspension period. Currently, we are contacting them."

Myanmar workers will be sent back to Malaysia under the same policy as practiced before. People who want to work in Malaysia have to undergo a blood test. If they pass the blood test, they have to apply for a passport.

Then, they have to send their CV forms and interview with overseas agencies. Selected candidates then attend training courses. Myanmar migrant workers mostly work in Malaysia and Thailand. When Malaysia has suspended receiving them, many Myanmar labourers sought to enter Thailand, according to the oversea employment agencies. — May Thet Hnin ■

Cambodian tourism delegation discusses joint travel industry efforts with Myanmar officials

TOURISM officials from Myanmar and Cambodia met last week at Amazing Bagan Resort in Bagan to discuss opportunities for coordination, according to a 27 June statement from Myanmar's Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

A 10-member delegation of Cambodian government and business officials led by Mr. Hoy Phireak, deputy general direc-

tor of Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism visited Myanmar 26-30 June to meet with a dozen Myanmar officials and business-people.

Attendees discussed coordination of air routes, visa requirements, tourism information exchanges and a joint tourism action plan. The group also agreed to establish joint marketing efforts including



Cambodia and Myanmar held talks over tourism sector. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

pamphlets and digital outreach, joint events and promoting new package tours such as a proposed "Angkor-Bagan, Two Ancient Capitals-One Desti-

nation" tour. The Cambodian delegation will be visit Yangon, Bagan and Mandalay before returning to Cambodia on 30 June. —GNLM ■

Magway black sesame to be exported to Japan and Europe

BLACK sesame cultivated in Magway will be exported to Japan and Europe, according to a press release issued yesterday by the Ministry of Commerce.

In 2016, Japan was the main customer of Magway's black sesame seed industry. Lower quality sesame seeds — crops impacted by use of pesticide residue and high toxicity — are exported mainly to China.

Magway black sesame growers have recently faced a

price decline of about Ks30,000 per 33.33 kg basket. To overcome price challenges sesame growers from Pwintbyu township met with sesame merchants from Japan's Mitsubishi company on 9 June to discuss techniques to improve crop yields and quality. A few years ago, local growers harvested sesame and dried them for only one week before sending them to market. At that time, pesticides were used to rapidly ripen the seeds, which

also reduced its quality and market value.

"Europe has also planned to import Myanmar sesame if it meets the desired quality," said U Tun Oo, a sesame merchant from Mandalay. "Myanmar sesame has often been rejected because of high levels of pesticide residue and high toxicity. Our merchants can ride the sesame of the stones and sands. But we cannot do the same with the pesticides. This depends on the

discretion of the local sesame growers."

Sesame is one of the most common edible oil crops in Myanmar. Currently, 51.3 per cent of all farmland is devoted to edible oil production. Sesame crops cultivate mainly in Magway, Sagaing and Mandalay regions.

About 70 per cent of sesame crops are exported to China. Myanmar sesame exports to 12 countries, amounting to 1 million tonnes annually.—GNLM ■



Fuel pumps are seen at a refilling station in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Yangon fuel prices remain stable despite import price decline

Yangon fuel prices remain steady despite lower import prices since 13 June, according to a report in Myanmar Alin yesterday.

From 13 to 19 June, per liter fuel prices at international port terminals were Ks583 for octane 92, Ks608 for octane 95, Ks594 for diesel and Ks607 for premium diesel while prices at fuel stations in Yangon range from Ks660 to 690 for octane 92, Ks715 to 740 for octane 95, Ks655 to 690 for diesel and Ks675 to 715 for premium

diesel.

Prices at Yangon's fuel stations increased by Ks87 for octane 92, Ks107 for octane 95, Ks71 for diesel and Ks78 for premium diesel compared to original port prices.

Local fuel prices naturally correlate to global petroleum prices, but sharp price increases in Myanmar are buffered by government fuel subsidies which keep prices artificially stable. Dramatic price increases are generally passed on to consumers. Fuel price declines

however, do not always translate to lower prices at the pump as station owners often keep prices high relative to international prices in order to take additional profits.

International investors generally frown on large energy subsidies, as they artificially insulate non-competitive economic actors against market dynamics, while many governments support subsidies as a protectionist measure and an instrument to ensure political stability.—Khin Saing ■

ALI Ministry received opinions and suggestions on ADS (third draft) at workshop

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation held a public comment session at Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) last Tuesday to hear businessmen and experts' opinions and suggestions on the Agricultural Development Strategy.

The draft policy sets a plan to boost yields by 2030 in order to enable Myanmar's agricultural industry to rise above self-sufficiency, compete in the international market and sus-

tain Myanmar's labour force.

The latest strategy draft integrates components of interlocking national economic policies including the Framework on Economic and Social Reform and the National Export Strategy.

"This workshop was expected to bring better opinions and suggestion on the Agricultural Development Strategy," said UMFCCI Vice President U Ye Min Aung during his opening speech. "We welcome to

receive the suggestions from business partners and development organizations in a bid to lay down a firm policy as soon as possible."

Representatives engaged in various agricultural production, microfinance, environmental protection and other sectors attended the workshop.

The fourth draft of the policy is scheduled for release to the public for comment in August, according to the UMFCCI.—GNLM ■

Myanmar-South Africa Chamber of Commerce and Industry to sign MoU for bilateral trade promotion

UNION of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) and the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote bilateral trade, according to a UMFCCI statement released yesterday detailing a meeting Monday between UM-

FCCI President U Zaw Win Min and South African Ambassador to Thailand H.E Mr. Geoffery QM Doidge in Bangkok. During the meeting, H.E Mr. Geoffery QM Doige talked about how the two nations could enhance business cooperation, promote exports to South Africa and boost investment.—GNLM ■

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List of civilian murdered in Maungtaw District (2016 October to 2017 June 27)

No.	Date	Name	Township/Village	Death	Remark
1	5-10-2016	Maung Maung Soe @ YuNaMya	UShalKya Village	1	Died from 12 stab wounds in the home of Kaphartula in the same village.
2	5-10-2016	Mahmat Tharli	UShalKya Village	1	Died from 19 stab wounds
3	14-10-2016	Under Investigation	MyoThuGyi Village	1	A rotting corpse was found 14 stab wounds in a sewer canal near the 14 milepost near Myo-ThuGyi Village
4	17-11-2016	Jamar @ Fawma Husoon	Gawduthara (West)	1	Died from stab wounds to the neck near a basic primary school
5	21-12-2016	Dus Mahmat @ YuNaMya	NgarKhuRa (Middle) Village	1	Answered honestly to reporters' questions. Head missing and stab wounds to both legs.
6	25-12-2016	Rafi	YayThwinKyun Village	1	Died from stab wounds to stomach and neck
7	28-12-2016	SweDuArmi	Linbarkonenar Village	1	Died from stab wounds to the neck, found near a creek.
8	20-1-2017	Sunta Ahmed, Mahmet Shawfi and Mahmet Zubai	DoneKalar Village	3	Padakar New Village Adminstrator Mahmet Nuhr reported their disappearance. All three were found with stab wounds to the head.
9	28-1-2017	Zawkee Ahmed	PyaungPike Village	1	Died from stab wounds to the body near Pazun Lake after withdrawing provisions
10	4-2-2017	Idris	Pazun Lake near Gwa-sone Village	1	Was ambushed and stabbed by 10 men while on his way to a meeting in YaykhatChaung Village
11	21-2-2017	AduSaleem	KyarKaungTaung Village	1	Was killed during violent attacks and the body buried in the enclosure
12	24-2-2017	Mahmet Karsein	Shwezar GoneNar Village	1	On 23 February he was on his way home with a friend after watching a football match when four men led by NuraLaung tied a longyi around his neck and hung him till he died
13	26-2-2017	Htun Thar Maung	KyaukSarTine (Rakhine) Village	1	On 24 February he and his friend, Aung Kyaw Sein, were attacked by 3 assailants near Tar-yayKoneBaung Village. Aung Kyaw Sein suffered stab wounds to his back and Htun Thar Maung was found dead with stab wounds to the neck and back
14	2-3-2017	NuhrKarin	KyeeKanPyin Village	1	On 1 March 2017, 4 masked men kidnapped him and he was found dead in a field near the village
15	5-3-2017	Zarmar Hussein	SinOhPyin Village	1	Was found near MaungGyiTaung Village with multiple stab wounds
16	9-3-2017	Mahmet Sawli	AhtetKweKyoMaw Village, Buthidaung Tsp	1	He was on his way to Kadi (2) village with Head of ten households AbulaShein when six men including Mahmet Innus and AbulaShein attacked with knives and sticks
17	16-3-2017	SoliMulla, ThandarMyar	Punthi (North) Village	2	He disappeared on 15 March after driving cattles to graze and was found dead the next day with stab wounds to the head and neck in a sewer canal near the roadside
18	31-3-2017	Shivali	Myoma Ward, Buthi-daung Township	1	Shival left his house on 21 March to visit his parent in-laws in Migyaung Kaungswe Village and disappeared. His body was found in KalarPanzin creek with wounds all over his body
19	1-4-2017	HamidDullha	Ward (2) Tinmay Village (10)	1	He was asleep in his home when 7 masked men led by a person named Rafi broke into the house and beat and stabbed him to death
20	2-4-2017	AnniwaAshad	MyinLut Village East Ward	1	He was called out of his home by two men and when he did not return, a search party found him dead from stab wounds in a lentil plantation to the east of Ward (5)
21	8-4-2017	Rafi	BogyiChaung Village, Buthidaung Township	1	GuraSudin, age 45, and 3 men attacked Rafi with axes and knives
22	18-4-2017	AmiAli	PhwayYar Village	1	10 masked men dragged him out of his home and attacked him with knives
23	2-5-2017	Mahmet PhwayYaw	MaungGyiTaung Village, Buthidaung Tsp	1	5 masked men kidnapped him and he was found dead from stab wounds near DarpineSayar Village
24	5-5-2017	Mahmet Ahlem	TawinChaung Village	1	The body was found 300 yards to the east of the village. A bullet with the serial code KF-7 was found near the body.
25	5-5-2017	AhraUlla	TawinChaung Village	1	A local gang kidnapped and killed him near MayuValley
26	19-5-2017	NoruSalem	KyaungTaung Village-Tract	1	Around 50 men in black masks and clothes dragged him out of his house and killed him 30 yards from his home
27	28-5-2017	Tahal	Migyaung Kaungswe Village, Buthidaung Tsp	1	He was killed by a gang of men near a bridge in InchaungZay Village
28	29-5-2017	ShaungShuAhlaung @ Kyaw Swe	YayTwinPin Village	1	He was kidnapped by 50 men and was found dead and tied up near Barkhumar Valley
29	4-6-2017	NuhAhmein	YwarthitKay Village	1	He was asleep in his home when 15 unknown men kidnapped him and killed him near Pazun lake.
30	15-6-2017	AbuNarsel	GaungNyar Village	1	When he didn't return from a visit to his friend's house, a search party found him dead from stab wounds near a creek to the east of the village
31	16-6-2017	HarbiZu	Gutapyin Village, Buthidaung Tsp	1	He was ambushed by 5 masked men after returning home from sentry duty and was stabbed
32	24-6-2017	AbuHarshein	KaungTakar Village	1	10 masked men ambushed him in his home and attacked with knives. His son received one stab wounds and his 5-year old daughter received wounds to the head.
33	24-6-2017	APhwayYas	MyoThuGyi Village	1	He was asleep in his home when 3 masked men attacked him with knives. His two sisters and son also received stab wounds
34	24-6-2017	U Aung Kyaw	Tashein Village	1	Four villagers including him went on a turtle search and two of them were kidnapped and killed by a violent gang
35	26-6-2017	Ko Ko Thein	Tashein Village	1	One of the two villagers who went on a turtle search and were kidnapped and killed by a violent gang
Total				38	



Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint holds talks with Norwegian Ambassador in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Information receives Norwegian Ambassador

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint received Ambassador of Norway to Myanmar Mrs Tone Tinnes at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union Minister discussed matters related to the Oslo Forum which he attended recently and current situation in the media sector in Myanmar.

Dr Pe Myint also briefed on reforms of the Ministry of

Information and prospects for amending the Section 66-D and preparations for holding Transition Forum in August. The two sides also exchanged views on cooperation of Norway in the Information and Communication Technology-ICT of the Ministry of Information and efforts for opening small cultural museums housing traditional utensils of the ethnic minorities at libraries.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo meets Czech Ambassador

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo met with Mr. Jaroslav Dolecek, Ambassador of the Czech Republic at the meeting hall of the Union Attorney-General's Office in Nay Pyi Taw at 10:00 am yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related with views on the exchange of experiences of the Czech Republic in the attempts of cooperation

teams of department of rules of law and judicial works led by the Union Attorney-General, and coordination works between respective regions and states. They also discussed to cooperate in economics, law and politics, and assistance of the Czech Republic in Myanmar democratic transitional processes.— Myanmar News Agency ■

China's Ankai to build factory in Myanmar

By Ko Moe

The Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA) said that Chinese automotive manufacturing company Ankai has expressed an interest in building factories to assemble automobiles in Myanmar. YRTA Secretary Dr. Maung Aung said Ankai is interested in purchasing parts from other countries and assembling them in Myanmar.

To reduce traffic in Yangon, the Yangon Region Government

abolished the Ma Hta Tha bus system and replaced it with the YBS system on 16 January this year. The government has purchased city buses from Ankai to use on the new YBS bus routes and has also purchased school buses from Ankai for use in the new school bus system.

Apart from Ankai, Korean company Daewoo, Japanese and Singaporean automotive companies have also expressed an interest to build similar companies in Myanmar. ■

Crop insurance to soon be offered

By Hsu Hnin Lei

Crop insurance, which is of vital importance in agro-centric Myanmar, will soon be available to farmers who must regularly risk floods and other natural disasters that could potentially wipe out their harvest and their income for the season.

A supervision committee on private insurance enterprises announced that private insurance companies established after 2013 will be granted permission to offer new kinds of insurance policies in addition to traditional types of insurance, comparable to international insurance markets. Included in the new types of offerings will be crop insurance, it was learnt.

Crop insurance is common in countries such as the U.S., Russia and Japan, and in regional countries such as India, Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia.

In October 2016, Global World Insurance Company submitted a plan offering crop insurance to the Supervision Committee on Private Insurance Enterprises. With a new government, it has been learnt that new kinds of insurance will be granted with the encouragement of the private sector. Crop insurance, once unavailable, will be launched as a pilot project, it was learnt.

"We had a desire to launch the servicing of crop insurance three years ago. But no one encouraged us, saying that we would make a loss. So we studied how it was managed in other countries and whether there were any company which went bankrupt. We found that state-owned enterprises, joint ventures and government-subsidised companies were operating.



A farmer harvests chillies in Kangyidauk town, Ayeyawady Region. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR**

The main objective of offering crop insurance is to help farmers — 70 per cent of the populace are earning their lives by farming on 16 million acres of land — to upgrade the living standards of farmers and to help grow crops on destroyed farm land due to drought, floods and severe weather. For the government alone, it is difficult to fulfil all these requirements. In the years of the worst weather, if farmers could get compensation from crop insurance, according to their volume of destruction, they need not worry about the current and the following years. And the decrease in production will become less frequent", said U Soe Win Thant, Director of Global World Insurance Company.

U Soe Win Thant said crop insurance will be offered in Yangon Region as a pilot project only for certain crops.

"The risk may be great, so we submitted to launch it in Yangon Region, which is within our reach, as a pilot project for two years. Firstly rice, the staple crop for the country, will be introduced. Premium fees may be Ks5,000 per acre. We need the cooperation of the de-

partments in doing so. It must be carried out based on trust. Compensation can be demanded with the recommendation of respective village administrators and managers of the agricultural department. As for the company, we must appoint experts and professionals. Had we acquired facts and information of the agricultural department and meteorological department, cooperation of authorities concerned and awareness of the people toward insurance, enactment of compulsory law and support of financing, crop insurance will be successful very soon."

Crop insurance has never been available in Myanmar, in large part because it was believed that a profit could not be made, experts said. Insurance experts concluded that it would be beneficial in the long term, especially in Myanmar, a developing country.

With the influx of foreign companies in Myanmar, crop insurance will be vital. Presently 11 private companies are offering 9 kinds of insurance in the country, with other new kinds of insurance to be permitted, it is learnt. ■

PPST to review peace process related with NCA

By Ye Khaung Nyunt

Peace Process Steering Team (PPST) of ethnic armed group kicked off the four-day meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, yesterday, reviewing the peace process issues related with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

In his opening address, Saw Mutu Sae Poe, Chairman

of the Kayin National Union and the leader of the PPST, expressed the commitment of the members of the team to march together to a federal union.

"I want to urge all of you to march to our goal of the Federal Union with coordination and magnanimity," said Saw Mutu Sae Poe.

"We all signed the Deep

Commitment as we realized that we can solve the political dilemma only through the political ways," he added.

He also said that the meeting would discuss the situation which deviated from the path of NCA.

The PPST was formed with eight leaders of the eight signatories to the NCA. ■

Beautifying Our World

Khin Maung Oo

BEAUTY is a thing that everyone likes and wants. At one time a famous poet said “a thing of beauty is a joy forever.” Generally speaking, we decide the extent of beauty of someone or something by their appearance. Even individuals regarded to be beautiful by their friends try to find ways and means to beautify themselves and their possessions like their car or house. Undeniably, beauty gives us pleasure and even happiness. It is heartening to hear the news that these days, voluntary teams comprising children, youths, and energetic adults, are working hand in hand with enthusiastic Yangonians trying to transform their back-alleys into pleasant

resting places or play grounds for their children. As known by all, due to over-population in Yangon, lack of staff in YCDC and because of undisciplined city-dwellers throwing garbage, the present day’s garbage collection system is causing problems for the urban populace, very often during the rainy season and almost every time after a heavy downpour. Compared to rural areas, Yangon can be said to be an unpleasant location for taking a rest, although it is the commercial and financial hub of the country.

In fact, it is none other than the people who are creating Yangon into such a condition. They fail to throw trash at designated times and places. Some people are found to throw dust and their unwanted rubbish into drain-

age ditches. They seem to lack the knowledge that their deeds can block water flow. At such a time when the incumbent government is trying to fulfill the requirements of the people, including children by permitting gardens at communal places for people to take rest and by creating open spaces such as the ones under the over-bridges to become resting places with greenery and comfortable benches we should all join hands to help the government. Under the current situations, innovative avant-garde youths are trying to transform our disgusting back-alleys into children’s playgrounds and miniature gardens. To our great surprise and delight, young children are found to be taking part in these campaigns to beautify our city enthusiastically.

We should not neglect but rather acknowledge and encourage our children’s efforts. Their work highlights that we are wholly responsible for beautifying our places for ever. That is quite right, because these buildings started as clean and pleasurable places to live. But due to lack of maintenance and undisciplined behaviours they soon turned into loathsome dwellings. Disgusting environments make our minds befuddled and confused, or vice versa. On the other hand, pleasant environments will make our minds energized, pure and fresh, as will our pure minds to our environment. Participation of every individual will make our world into a unified and very satisfying and pleasurable planet to live. ■

Towards the Cash Flow Based Lending

KYI THA MAW.

COLLATERAL based lending is still a common practice in the Myanmar Banking Industry despite the fact that experts and trainers have pointed out that this lending technique is antiquated when compared with current good international practice. Here, cash flow based lending has made its way. Now, with the assistance of the German government-owned Development Bank, KfW, it is learnt that, collateralized or even uncollateralized loans up to 100 Million MMK will be lent out to SMEs, which will be implemented by Cooperative Bank.

It has to be noted that uncollateralized lending does not mean a relaxation of the collateral requirement to receive a loan from a bank. It rather means the transformation of the lending methodology from collateral considerations to cash flow based lending. Here, currently the credit decision is made based on value of the collateral in collateralized lending, so it is interesting to see which will be based on for making credit decision in cash flow based lending.

For this purpose business plan is an objective indicator for the anticipated cash flow of the business. Hence, the lending process requires to present a business plan in line with the cash flow based lending technique.

Prerequisites of the bank

Before cash flow based lending can be implemented, a series of preparations on both sides, the credit department of the bank and the SME, have to be carried out reducing the information asymmetry. On the bank side, understanding of business plan and SME finance training need to be systematical-

ly conducted to the loan officers and the other staff of the credit department.

There the question might come up that the business plan is needed to be prepared by the SMEs not the bankers. From my point of view, it is necessary to understand how to prepare the business plan as a banker. This is because once you have experience in business plan preparation, you can make proper judgments of the weaknesses, strengths, viability, credit amount and particularly, the repayment capacity of the business from future cash flow which is the most important criterion for a bank. Thereby, a holistic approach has to be applied, meaning that extensive experience is needed. It has to be stressed that the credit staff should not provide any guidance how to prepare business plan to anyone, which does not comply with ethical standards.

In cash flow based lending, the credit decision is made after careful assessment of the various risks, the different profiles and industrial sectors of the businesses. This methodology is totally different from the traditional lending. Hence, comprehensive SMEs finance training is required in order to calculate the risks correctly and understand the differences of the enterprises. The careful assessment of the risks of the SMEs can only be achieved via a qualitative and quantitative analysis. The quality of the business is reflected by the return on the investment. So it is important to assess both aspects skillfully.

So, once the credit officer has finished a business plan and a SME finance training courses, he/she can make a proper assessment of repayment capacity and the risks involved and can make a balanced recommendation

for the loan amount which is appropriate for the respective borrower.

SMEs and Business Plan

SMEs have inherited risks in general, such as many of them cannot provide collateral, cannot meet capital requirements, provide inaccurate business and financial documents, demonstrate weaknesses in technology application and management or need market information. Even in cash flow based lending, the vital need to submit business plan would become another challenge for the SMEs.

The presentation of a business plan plays a major role in making credit decisions as the expected cash flow is a result of the business plan. All businesses have some future plans and ideas

in their mind to expand their business. However, it is important to be systematic, practical and rational when those flow into a physical business plan.

Some Myanmar banks such as KBZ, SMIDB and YOMA were selected by the Germany based GIZ for the first phase of the pilot project component under the SME finance project from April 2014 to Sept 2016. Long term international consultants were appointed to provide technical assistance to respective banks. Under this project as well, international experts were invited to conduct business plan training under the CEFE (Competency Based Economics through Formation of Entrepreneurs) methodology. Additionally, a training of trainer (TOT) program was conducted in order to continue the training after the finalization of the project and thus to safeguard the sustainability of the results of the project.

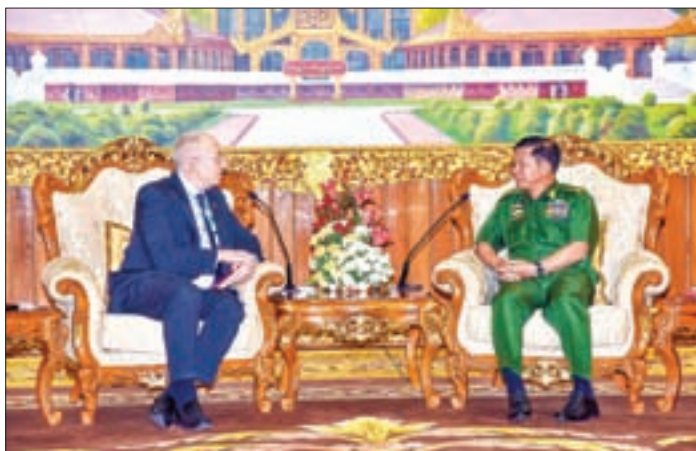
Then, customers from the respective banks were invited to attend a full 5-day training. The participants were needed to prepare a business plan during the training period. According to the training experiences, there is a big difference before and after the training, especially in the areas of the way of thinking, unfold experiences, weaknesses and strengths of the business in addition to increase their awareness for future prospects and risks of their businesses, ways of preparation and the forces in around the SMEs.

The trainings were very beneficial for SMEs and popular among them. In brief, the business plan training promotes technical aspects and raises awareness of the inherited weaknesses of the SMEs.

Cash flow based lending has made its way. Now, with the assistance of the German government-owned Development Bank, KfW, it is learnt that, collateralized or even uncollateralized loans up to 100 Million MMK will be lent out to SMEs, which will be implemented by Cooperative Bank.

Senior General meets New Zealand Ambassador

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received New Zealand Ambassador Mr. Steve Marshall at Bayinnaung guest-house yesterday. In the meeting, they discussed about breeding dairy cattle and producing dairy products, technical assistance



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Ambassador Mr. Steve Marshall. **PHOTO: MNA**

in researching new medicine for malaria and tuberculosis, sending delegations between the two countries' militaries, Myanmar's peace process and landmine clearance operations.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Villager, suspected terrorist subsidizer dead in Maungtaw

A VILLAGER and a man suspected of bankrolling terrorist training are both dead, after the villager's home was attacked in Phweyar Village, Maungtaw.

Mawlawi Umaw Sardec of Bagonenar village, Maungtaw Township, who was suspected of supporting the training of terrorists in Rakhine State, died of a heart attack at Maungtaw hospital Monday night soon after his arrest.

On 17 June, about 10 masked people entered the house of Armiarli, in-charge of the Tat-Oo Creek village-tract in Phweyar Village, Maungtaw Township.

Armiarli was killed after

being stabbed several times. The attackers, some of them armed with guns, ran away when villagers arrived to ward off the attack.

Acting on a tip-off, a suspect, Marmauk Tawyu, was arrested at Bagonenar Village (middle) on Sunday morning. As a result of further investigation, a person named Mawlawi Umaw Sardec, who was allegedly funnelling money to trainees at the terrorist attack training was seized.

They confessed that another man, Sawlein, who is living abroad and is under investigation, was also supporting terrorist training by sending

money to Maungtaw.

While investigating Marmauk Tawyu & Mawlawi Umaw Sardec on Monday, Umaw Sardec had suffered chest pains and collapsed.

He was brought to Maungtaw Hospital and pronounced dead at 11:15pm.

A post-mortem examination revealed that Umaw Sardec died of sudden cardiac arrest, and the case was being investigated by the investigation tribunal formed by the Myanmar Police Force, according to the information committee of the Office of State Counsellor.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Community centre, mobile library opened in Nay Pyi Taw

A COMMUNITY centre and mobile library were opened in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with an opening ceremony at the office building of Pyinmana's Information and Public Relations Department. The community centre and mobile library are a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Information and the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation.

At the opening ceremony, Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Htun, Dr. San Shwe Win, Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw Committee for Health and Sports Development, and Dr. Thant Thaw Kaung, an executive member from the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, cut ribbons to celebrate the opening of the community centre and mobile library and then sprayed scented water on the community centre's sign-board. Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint gave an opening speech and explained the purpose of a mobile library is to directly interact with the public and to provide access of books to villages, wards and

schools that cannot easily access the city library.

He said a community centre is a place for the general public to convene and discuss community matters. Afterwards, U Aung Myin Htun gave a speech and Dr. Thant Thaw Kaung explained how a mobile library works.

Later, the Union Minister gave commemoration certificates to people who donated to the community centre. The Union Minister then inspected the mobile library bus donated by the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation and the community centre. The community centre and mobile library that opened in Pyinmana yesterday is the fifth one to be opened, with others already opened in Kawhmu, Insein, Myaungmya and Natmouk townships. The Daw Khin Kyi Foundation and the Ministry of Information have signed a memorandum to open mobile libraries and community centres in 26 townships in 14 regions and states within five years. The next destination is said to be in Myitkyina.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint visits the community centre at Pyinmana Information and Public Relations Department. **PHOTO: MNA**

Towards the Cash Flow Based Lending

FROM PAGE 8

With the financial and technical assistance from the German government-owned development bank, KfW, CB has opened a new chapter for traditional lending procedures of Myanmar banks by introducing uncollateralized loan. However, both the credit department and the SMEs applicants face different challenges. The banks

can conduct in-house training to improve the credit assessment skills. However, intensive technical support training for SMEs is required in order that they can prepare a realistic business plan.

In a nut shell, cash flow based lending creates improvements to existing conventional lending methods in line with the international practices and

SMEs get the chance to acquire technical and financial assistance. This result is excellent and a breakthrough for the development of the lending process and the SMEs. If this can be implemented successfully, it is beneficial for both, banks and SMEs, in form of a win-win-solution. I would like to encourage to implement this technique in a correct manner.

On the other hand, some organizations which support to cash flow based lending should be in place. CB bank is currently lending up to 20 million MMK loans to SMEs, which have difficulties to provide collateral. Instead, CGI (Credit Guarantee Insurance) from Myanma Insurance is applied which covers the credit risk. So far, 60% of loan is covered under this CGI.

The percentage of coverage should be increased so that the CGI can be widely applied. This scheme is one of the accesses to finance SMEs. If, in addition, a credit rating agency and a credit information bureau will be established, I hope that cash flow based lending will become more active and very beneficial to the Myanmar banking industry and the SMEs. ■

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Real name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).—Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

Putin says St Petersburg international naval show helps promote Russian hardware



Russian President Vladimir Putin . PHOTO: TASS

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent greetings to participants and guests of the 8th International Maritime Defense Show (IMDS) that is opening in St Petersburg on 28 June. The president's telegram was posted on the Kremlin's website on Wednesday.

"For many years, the IMDS has been serving as a venue for business contacts of specialists from various countries

on a wide range of issues of developing military and technical interaction and international cooperation and has been contributing to the promotion of Russian military products on world markets," Putin's telegram reads.

St Petersburg is a recognized centre of domestic shipbuilding, the head of the Russian state stressed.

"The city is famous for its

unique port infrastructure and its reputable scientific and design schools, large industrial enterprises and shipyards.

It is not accidental that this is now the venue for holding one of the most impressive forums in the sphere of armament and naval hardware," the telegram says.

Putin said he was confident that the naval show would evoke the interest of professionals and

numerous guests, and would also provide Russian producers with an opportunity to attract foreign investment and make a book of new and promising orders.

Putin wished the participants and guests of the 8th International Maritime Defence Show fruitful work and all the best. The naval show will be held in St Petersburg on 28 June - 2 July. —Tass ■

WORLD BRIEFS

"Profound implications" if Northern Ireland parties fail to agree deal — Britain

LONDON — There would be "profound and serious" implications if parties in Northern Ireland failed to agree on the creation of a new executive to govern, Britain's minister for the province said on Wednesday.

A power-sharing agreement between Irish nationalists and their pro-British rivals collapsed in January and both sides have missed a series of deadlines to restore the assembly. The latest deadline is for Thursday. "Our focus is on seeing that the executive is restored and I have been clear on not wanting to pre-empt what may happen should that not be the case. —Reuters ■

Kremlin urges international action to combat cyber crime

MOSCOW — Cyber attacks like the one which hit Russia and other countries on Tuesday underline the need for a concerted international action to fight cyber crime, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Wednesday.

Tuesday's cyber attack caused no serious problems at a corporate or state level in Russia, Peskov also told a conference call with reporters. He said the Kremlin had no information about the origin of that attack. —Reuters ■

Canada, European NATO states to raise defence spending by 4.3 pct in 2017

BRUSSELS — European allies of NATO and Canada will increase defence spending by 4.3 per cent in 2017, marking a cumulative \$46 billion jump since cuts stopped in 2014, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Wednesday. "To keep our nations safe, we need to keep working to increase defence spending and fairer burden-sharing across our alliance," Stoltenberg said a day before NATO defence ministers meet in Brussels to discuss greater security expenditure, which US President Donald Trump is pushing for. —Reuters ■

Britain's opposition Labour Party to force vote in parliament on pay cap

LONDON — Britain's opposition Labour Party will force a vote in parliament on Wednesday over a pay cap for public sector employees, the first test of whether Prime Minister Theresa May can muster enough lawmakers to rule.

May's botched gamble on a 8 June snap election lost her Conservative Party its majority

in parliament, leading her to strike a deal on Monday with a small Northern Irish party to ensure she has enough votes to pass legislation in parliament.

May's party won 318 seats in the election so with the support of the Democratic Unionist Party's 10 lawmakers, she has a slender working majority in the 650-seat parliament.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, whose party has 262 lawmakers, said his party would submit an amendment to May's legislative plan in an attempt to end cuts to the police and fire service and to give emergency and public sector workers a pay rise

"Today will be the first vote of the new parliament, as La-

bour puts forward our amendment," Corbyn said in a statement. He added that May "has no majority, no mandate and no plan for our country."

"Labour is ready and waiting to form a government with the policies and the plan to build a country that works for the many, not the few," Corbyn said. —Reuters ■

Trump yet to answer Paris 14 July invite — French spokesman

PARIS — The United States has yet to say whether President Donald Trump will accept an invitation by President Emmanuel Macron to attend France's annual 14 July Bastille day celebrations, government spokesman Christophe Castaner said on Wednesday.

"We confirmed this week the invitation and our services are working on the basis that president trump comes," Castaner told reporters at a weekly news conference. "It's neither confirmed today nor rejected."

Macron's office said on Tuesday it had invited Trump on two occasions to attend the celebrations next month during which the US military will take part to mark 100 years since it joined World War 1. Macron appears to be broadly aligning his foreign policy with US priorities of tackling terrorism while seeking better ties with Russia. However, he publicly clashed with Trump after the latter said he would pull out of a global accord on action to combat climate change.

Diplomats said they saw a potential Trump visit as a way of reaffirming close military ties between the two countries.

The 14 July festivities see thousands of men and women from France's army, navy and air force march down the Champs Elysees avenue in the French capital in the oldest and largest military parade in Western Europe. It commemorates the storming of the Bastille prison by angry crowds in 1789, helping kick off the French Revolution. The Bastille prison, where opponents of the monarchy were kept, was targeted for symbolizing royal rule.

Plans for Trump to visit Britain have yet to be finalised despite an invitation by Prime Minister Theresa May when she met him in Washington in January. That possible visit has met some criticism in Britain, prompting fears of protests, a risk he runs in France too.

"Donald Trump is violent and has no reason for being here," a far-left lawmaker and former French presidential candidate said on Wednesday.

"We will host him with dignity as he is the president of the United States, but no he is not welcome. That's clear," Jean-Luc Melenchon, leader of the France Unbowed movement, told Europe 1 radio.—Reuters ■



Members of the Iraqi Federal Police gesture after returning back from the front line in the Old City of Mosul, Iraq on 28 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Iraqi military says it has retaken two Mosul neighbourhoods from Islamic State

ERBIL, (Iraq) — Iraq's military said on Wednesday it had retaken two more neighbourhoods from Islamic State in Mosul's Old City, bringing it closer to total control of the city.

The army's 16th infantry division captured Hadrat al-Saada and al-Ahmadiyya, northwest of the historic Grand al-Nuri Mosque which the militants destroyed last week. Islamic State still controls the mosque's

grounds and about half of the last territory it runs in the Old City.

Federal police and elite units of the Counter-Terrorism Service have also been fighting inside the district's maze of narrow alleyways since the battle began 10 days ago. The military estimates up to 350 militants are dug in among civilians in wrecked houses and crumbling infrastructure. They are trying to slow the advance of Iraqi forces by laying

booby traps and using suicide bombers and snipers.

Those residents who have escaped say many of the civilians trapped behind Islamic State lines — put at 50,000 by the Iraqi military — are in a desperate situation with little food, water or medicines.

A US-led international coalition is providing air and ground support in the eight-month-old offensive.—Reuters ■

Helicopter attacks Venezuela court, Maduro denounces coup bid

CARACAS — A Venezuelan police helicopter strafed the Supreme Court and a government ministry on Tuesday, escalating the OPEC nation's political crisis in what President Nicolas Maduro called an attack by "terrorists" seeking a coup.

The aircraft fired 15 shots at the Interior Ministry, where scores of people were at a social event, and dropped four grenades on the court, where judges were meeting, officials said.

However, there were no reports of injuries.

"Sooner rather than later, we are going to capture the helicopter and those behind this armed terrorist attack against

the institutions of the country," Maduro said.

"They could have caused dozens of deaths," he said.

The 54-year-old socialist leader has faced three months of protests from opposition leaders who decry him as a dictator who has wrecked a once-prosperous economy. There has been growing dissent too from within government and the security forces.

At least 75 people have died, and hundreds more been injured and arrested, in the anti-government unrest since April.

Demonstrators are demanding general elections, measures to alleviate a brutal economic crisis, freedom for hundreds of

jailed opposition activists, and independence for the opposition-controlled National Assembly legislature.

Maduro says they are seeking a coup against him with the encouragement of a US government eager to gain control of Venezuela's oil reserves, the largest in the world.

Venezuela's government said in a communique the helicopter was stolen by investigative police pilot Oscar Perez, who declared himself in rebellion against Maduro.

Images shared on social and local media appear to show Perez waving a banner from the helicopter reading "Liberty", and

the number "350" in large letters.

The number refers to the constitutional article allowing people the right to oppose an undemocratic government.

A video posted on Perez' Instagram account around the same time showed him standing in front of several hooded armed men, saying an operation was underway to restore democracy.

Perez said in the video he represented a coalition of military, police and civilian officials opposed to the "criminal" government, urged Maduro's resignation and called for general elections. "This fight is ... against the vile government. Against tyranny," he said. Local media

also linked Perez to a 2015 action film, *Suspended Death*, which he co-produced and starred in as an intelligence agent rescuing a kidnapped businessman.

On Tuesday, witnesses reported hearing several detonations in downtown Caracas, where the pro-Maduro Supreme Court, the presidential palace and other key government buildings are located.

Opponents to Maduro view the Interior Ministry as a bastion of repression and also hate the Supreme Court for its string of rulings bolstering the president's power and undermining the opposition-controlled legislature.—Reuters ■



Maritime engines may be further improved by increasing their capacity and efficiency. **PHOTO: TASS**

Pilot model of advanced marine engine to be built in near future

ST PETERSBURG—The design of the fifth-generation marine propulsion will be determined by 2019, whereas the first model may be built in three years, the United Engine Corporation (UEC, part of Rostec) told TASS.

“We expect the design of the fifth-generation marine gas turbine engine to be determined by 2018 - 2019, while the first pilot model may be built in two and a half or three years and will be tested further,” the company reported.

The corporation plans to develop and explore new non-corrosive heat-resistant alloys and a low emission combustion

chamber, as well as conduct other research activities, in order to develop technologies and design the advanced maritime gas turbine engines and propulsion systems.

“Experts from Saturn (part of the UEC) have carried out complex calculation and research activities in order to improve the cycle parameters of the basic gas producer unit that influence the capacity and efficiency of the future maritime engines,” the UEC reported.

Maritime engines may be further improved by increasing their capacity and efficiency, the corporation reiterated. —Tass ■

Yes he can: “Clever boy” Obama returns to Indonesia for family vacation

JAKARTA — From white water rafting in Bali to visiting temples on Java, former US President Barack Obama’s private family holiday is being closely tracked in Indonesia where he spent four years as a child.

Obama was six when he moved to Jakarta after his American mother, Ann Dunham, married an Indonesian man following the end of her marriage to Obama’s Kenyan father.

“I feel proud that my friend became a president,” said Sonni Gondokusumo, 56, a former classmate of Obama at the Menteng 01 state elementary school in Jakarta.

Gondokusumo showed a class photograph of himself standing behind a young Obama, who was wearing a school beret.

“He was a clever boy. Whenever a teacher asked him to solve a problem in front of the class, he could do it,” Gondokusumo told Reuters, adding he hoped to meet the former president again.

Obama remains popular in the world’s most populous Muslim nation and his trip has been splashed across the media during an extended public holiday

to mark the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. The Rakyat Merdeka newspaper carried a headline “Obama loves Indonesia”.

Obama returned for an official visit as president in 2010 with his wife, Michelle, but this time has brought daughters Malia and Sasha as well.

Indonesians are avid social media users and snaps of the former US president walking with his family in rice fields and rafting on Bali’s Ayung River have gone viral.

Obama kicked off the holiday on the island of Bali, where he stayed at the luxurious Four Seasons Resort Bali near the cultural centre of Ubud.

On Wednesday, Obama and his family arrived in the city of Yogyakarta on Java island, and visited the ancient temple of Borobudur.

According to CNN Indonesia, Central Java police deployed 700 officers to secure his visit to Borobudur, a Buddhist temple dating from the 8th and 9th centuries.

Obama is due to meet President Joko Widodo on Friday at the palace in Bogor, south of Jakarta, and visit the capital on Saturday.—Reuters ■

Last chance” Cyprus peace talks open in Swiss Alps

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland — Rival Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders began talks on Wednesday aimed at reuniting the divided island after more than 40 years, needing to overcome prickly issues in what some fear could be the last chance for a settlement.

Each side put forward its position on security and the future role of guarantor countries.

The talks involve the guarantors — Greece, Turkey and Britain — but British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Foreign Minister Alan Duncan left by helicopter before the talks had officially opened to head home for a parliamentary session.

Greek Cypriot leader Nikos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci met in the Swiss Alpine resort of Crans-Montana, joined by UN envoy Espen Barth Eide, senior European Union officials and the foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey.

Eide said on Tuesday that he had expected the foreign ministers to stay this week,

but Johnson and Duncan left on Wednesday morning after taking part in preliminary meetings and a working dinner on Tuesday night.

Britain has a minority government and lawmakers like Johnson and Duncan are needed at home to keep it in power.

“UK support for a settlement of the Cyprus issue remains steadfast and the UK will continue to be represented during the Conference on Cyprus in Switzerland,” a British Foreign Office spokeswoman said.

Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias and Turkey’s Mevlut Cavusoglu stayed on.

Cyprus was split in a Turkish invasion in 1974, triggered by a brief Greek-inspired coup. Turkey supports a breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in northern Cyprus.

The negotiations on the long-running conflict are the best chance, but maybe not the last one, for the estranged sides to get an agreement, Eide said on Tuesday.

The United Nations is seeking a peace deal unit-

ing Cyprus under a federal umbrella and which could also define the future of Europe’s relations with Turkey, a key player in the conflict.

Two issues are vexing: Turkish Cypriot demands for a rotating presidency, and Greek Cypriot demands that Turkey pulls all its 30,000 troops off the island, and renounces its intervention rights.

In a statement, the group “Unite Cyprus Now” welcomed the summit “in what we fear could be the last chance to reunite our island”.

It called on Anastasiades and Akinci “who have made unprecedented progress in the negotiations to find a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, to show the necessary leadership and courage to end the longstanding division — a division that blights our children’s future and limits the enormous potential of our beautiful island”.

The leaders should find “mutually acceptable solutions to the security and guarantees question”, it said. —Reuters ■

China fully capable of delivering 2017 growth goals: premier

DALIAN — Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said on Tuesday that China was fully capable of delivering the year's major growth targets, thanks to steady economic transition.

The Chinese economy has become more stable and sustainable, and has made progress in restructuring and improving efficiency, Li said when addressing the opening of the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2017, or Summer Davos, in Dalian.

The government set the GDP growth target at around 6.5 per cent for the full year, while pledging to pursue better results in actual economic work. In addition, China will keep its consumer price increase at around 3 percent and the registered urban un-



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang addresses the opening ceremony of the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2017, or Summer Davos, in the city of Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province on 27 June, 2017. PHOTO: XINHUA

employment rate within 4.5 per cent. The world's second largest economy posted a forecast-beating

growth rate in the first quarter, with GDP up 6.9 per cent year on year, the quickest increase in 18

months. A number of financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, have upgraded their forecast on China as new impetus is accumulating and the economic re-balance is making headway.

Li attributed the stellar performance to the country's ongoing economic restructuring.

China neither took strong stimulus measures nor followed the old investment-driven and resources-reliant path, but strived to innovate and reform in its drive toward an economic shift to consumption and services, Li said.

Consumption contributed 64.6 per cent of GDP in 2016, while the tertiary sector accounted for 51.6 per cent of the economic growth.—Xinhua ■

Only 1 war-displaced Japanese still living in N Korea: report

BEIJING — North Korea knew of eight war-displaced Japanese people remaining its territory after 2004, but seven of them have already died, a pro-Pyongyang paper said on Wednesday.

The online version of the Choson Sinbo newspaper, published in Japan, said the only one alive is a woman named Ruriko Arai, citing a North Korean official who involved in the investigation of those people following an accord between Pyongyang and Tokyo. It is the first time that North Korea has disclosed the numbers since Pyongyang set up a special team in 2014 to look into the whereabouts of all Japanese nationals, including those suspected of being abducted by its

agents in the 1970s and 1980s. The 84-year-old Arai lives in North Korea's eastern coastal city of Hamhung. When the woman, whose Korean name is Ri Yu Gum, spoke to the Japanese press in April at her home, she expressed hope to visit the grave of her parents in Japan. North Korea announced in February last year it had disbanded the special investigation committee, in response to the Japanese government's decision to impose additional sanctions on Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programs.

The report came out amid a stalemate in talks between Japan and North Korea, which have no diplomatic relations. —Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

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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.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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Ben Affleck's 'The Accountant' is getting a sequel

LOS ANGELES — Warner Bros is planning a sequel to the 2016 hit "The Accountant" with Ben Affleck in talks to return as Christian Wolff.

Original screenwriter Bill Dubuque and director Gavin O'Connor are also in talks to return for the new film, reported Deadline.

The original starred Affleck as the title character, a math sa-

vant with high-functioning autism who works as a forensic accountant and un-cooks the books for unsavory criminal organizations under the glare of law enforcement.

The movie raked in USD 155 million worldwide on a USD 44 million budget.

The sequel will also probably include Jon Bernthal, who played a key role in the original.—PTI ■



Hollywood star Ben Affleck. PHOTO: PTI

My life not controversial enough for a biopic: Shah Rukh Khan

MUMBAI — Shah Rukh Khan's journey to stardom can serve as an inspiration for aspiring actors but the superstar does not believe that his life story can be made into a film as it is "not that controversial".

The 51-year-old actor said if anyone will write his biopic it would be more of a success story than a life journey as people still do not know some of the most interesting things related to him.



"For so many years, people who are closest to me will tell you, I have never let people know the most interesting parts of my life so you will never get a good script unless I write it. Whatever they will make of my life will just be a success story which I think is extremely boring," Shah Rukh said in an interview. Shah Rukh started his journey with television shows like "Fauji" and "Circus" and later made a switch to films with "Deewana". The actor initially played anti hero parts in films such as "Baazigar", "Darr", "Anjaam", but soon went on to become the king of romance courtesy his movies like "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge", "Dil to Pagal Hai" and "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai". From having a fight with Salman Khan in 2008 to the Wankhede brawl, Shah Rukh has had his fair share of controversies, but the actor still believes he has to do something "controversial" to make his biopic interesting enough for the audience.

"If it's not controversial then it will be a boring story. I am telling you success stories are very boring. I would not like anyone to make it but I am not saying I don't want anyone to make a biopic on me but I don't think it's a great subject... Not as yet," he said.—PTI ■

Robert Pattinson offered to do catering to get a movie role



Robert Pattinson. PHOTO: PTI

LONDON — Robert Pattinson has said he offered catering to get a role in "Good Times".

Pattinson said he was desperate to get a part in the Safdie Brothers-directed film, reported Femalefirst.

"I love (their) film 'Heaven Knows What' and I knew right away that I had to try and meet them and hope they'd let me work on their next project. I don't like waiting around for

my agent to call me.

"I like to go after films on my own because I know my own tastes and the kind of films I want to do better than anyone else.

I told the brothers I'd be willing to do anything to work with them, even the catering. They have a very personal style of filmmaking and that's the kind of work that appeals to me," Pattinson said.—PTI ■

'Westworld' boss teases Anthony Hopkins' return

LONDON — Veteran actor Anthony Hopkins may come back in the next season of "Westworld", Jonathan Nolan, the showrunner of the sci-fi thriller has teased.

Nolan, 41, who is the co-creator of the HBO show along with

Lisa Joy, dropped hints the character of Dr Robert Ford played by the "Transformers" star, who might have died in the last episode of the show, may resurface in the next installment, reported DigitalSpy. "I think the sacrifice he makes at the end of the first

season is very real. I think there will be an opportunity to explore a little bit more of the backstory of how this park came to be, a little more of that story.

"We'll see the character's presence will be felt in that sense in terms of filling in a

few more of the gaps about the early history of this place," Nolan said.

Earlier, Hopkins had said he had no idea if he will be making a comeback on the series, whose second season is scheduled to air next year.—PTI ■

Have got my work ethic from mother: Alison Brie

LONDON — "Mad Men" actress Alison Brie says she gets her strong work ethic from her mother. The 34-year-old actress praises her mother for achieving so much in her life that too on her own as she was a "single mom", reported Femalefirst.

"(She was) that working single mom who did it all: working, getting her master's degree, getting my sister and me to school. Definitely that's where I've got my work ethic from," she tells The Guardian Online. Meanwhile, the actress currently stars on the new American series

"Glow", where she plays Ruth Wilder.

Speaking about her latest venture, she says, "Glow" is such a unique animal. It's really unlike contemporary wrestling that is being done today. "On the one side, it's about physicality, feeling comfortable and powerful within yourself, and it's also about discovering your inner warrior and your alter ego; another personality. Especially for the women here, who can be messy and aggressive in ways that women (in real life) so often feel like they can't.—PTI ■



US actress Alison Brie. PHOTO: REUTERS

Two giant pandas explore new home, feast on bamboo at Berlin zoo

BERLIN — Two giant pandas set to become the star attractions at the Berlin zoo are exploring their new living quarters and enjoying their favorite meal of bamboo after arriving from China.

Footage released by the zoo on Tuesday showed Jiao Qing and Meng Meng roaming around what zookeepers call their living room, an indoor area stocked with wooden obstacles for climbing, a bear-sized wooden chair and bamboo to eat.

"Today is of course a

special day - if they didn't feel at home here it would mean we screwed up," zoo-keeper Christian Toll said in the video. There are about 1,800 giant pandas in the wild, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which classifies them as "vulnerable." Rare, picky in their diet, and reluctant breeders, pandas are in demand from zoos worldwide. Germany is to pay China \$1 million annually over 15 years to host the pandas, with most of the money going to China's panda conserva-



Meng Meng and Jiao Qing, two panda bears, arrive at the Berlin airport in Berlin, Germany on 24 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

tion and breeding program. Having already been welcomed by Berlin's mayor and China's ambassador to Germany, the bears face more VIP encounters with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese President Xi Jinping set to visit them during the G20 summit in Hamburg next month. China is known for using the animals as tools for building international relationships — so-called "panda diplomacy" that allows states it seeks closer ties with to host pandas in zoos.—Reuters ■

Japan's oldest sea otter celebrates 21st birthday with "ice cake"

OSAKA — The oldest aquarium-born sea otter in Japan celebrated her 21st birthday Wednesday in an event highlighted by

a colorfully decorated cake made of ice given to her at an Osaka aquarium. The sea otter, Pata, thought to be over 80 years

of age in human terms, was handed the cake at a pool-side by visitors chosen for the event at the Kaiyukan aquarium, where she has spent her whole life.

Pata then moved back to the water and ate the cake while floating. The birthday gift — a special version of an ice block given to her as an everyday treat — had "icing" on top which was shaped like a fish and heart, and featured colors including green, orange, yellow and blue. Visitors at the event also marked the occasion with cheers and photo shoots. Pata is the oldest among 12 sea otters being kept at aquariums in Japan, which had 122 of the northern species in total at the peak in the mid-1990s.—Kyodo News ■



Pata, a sea otter kept at an Osaka aquarium, receives a birthday cake made of ice for her 20th birthday on 28 June, 2017. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Dating app Bumble launches pop-up location in Manhattan

NEW YORK — Bumble, a dating app where women typically initiate the conversation, has created a buzz after launching a pop-up location this month in Manhattan, the first in a series of experiential destinations.

"Bumble is all about making connection with people," said Shaden Abboushi, director of marketing at Bumble.

Abboushi said New York City was an obvious choice for the app's first physical location as many of its 14 million users live in one of the city's five boroughs but she added that the company plans to open other pop-up locations around the country.

"While it's great to be on your phone, and make

connections via the app, we want to create a space and an extension of that where people could come and meet in real life, in person." For the month of June, those eager to experience the pop-up lounge dubbed "BumbleHiveNYC" were asked to show to the bouncer at the door proof of having installed the dating app on their phones.

If they successfully identified themselves as users, they were invited into the modernly decorated, yellow and white space for free to mingle over complimentary drinks and snacks and dance to music provided by live DJs. Most visitors were in their 20s.

"I think it's a great way for people to connect in New York City," said Liz

Marschall, a New York City resident who came to the Hive on a recent Sunday wearing a white tank-top, jean shorts and heels.

"It can be really difficult, living here and meeting people, even at bars, because there are so many people... When you come here, everyone has a really similar interest in mind," she added.

Surrounded by a group of his friends, Alex Camy, who moved to Manhattan's Upper West Side three months ago from New Jersey, said he would give the pop-up location "a 10 out of 10."

"I mean, they provide rose, that's a plus to begin with," Camy said, sporting a bright red jersey.—Reuters ■



Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(29-6-2017 07:00am ~ 30-6-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	A Real Dream of Accidental Gift
07:50	Am	Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Family"
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Lawka Nandar Wildlife Sanctuary and Its Rare Star Tortoises
08:52	Am	Soft Drinks without Vendor
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Myanmar Traditions and Culture Tea
09:53	Am	Graffiti: Portraiture
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Shrinking Footprints
10:51	Am	Lines & Wash Painting

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	The Most Prominent Resort And Residence - Ngapali
07:51	Pm	Sai Ye Kwan
08:03	Pm	News
08:25	Pm	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations- The Making Procedure of Goldsmith
08:42	Pm	Designer Ya Tu
08:52	Pm	Yoghurt Vendor

(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)

(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)



Programme Schedule

(29-6-2017, Thursday)

6:00 Am	◆ Paritta by Hilly Region Minisity Sayadaw	1:00 Am	◆ Myanmar Movie (Part-1)
7:00 Am	◆ Breakfast News	3:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
7:35 Am	◆ NRC Programme	5:05 Pm	◆ NHK Programme "Oberving Newts" (Relative of The Newts)
8:35 Am	◆ SAEAN Spotlight	5:20 Pm	◆ Documentary
9:10 Pm	◆ Documentary	5:30 Pm	◆ Socio Economic Scences
9:55 Pm	◆ Beautiful ASEAN	6:20 Pm	◆ Football Magazine
10:30 Pm	◆ MRTV Worker's Programme	6:35 Pm	◆ Current Affairs
11:00 Pm	◆ Peace Music Festival Talk (Part-3)	7:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
11:40 Am	◆ Real story and Movies	8:00 Pm	◆ News/ International News/ Weather Report
12:30 Am	◆ TV Drama Series	8:35 Pm	◆ Documentary
			◆ TV Drama Series
			◆ Talk on Old Film (Part-3)

Pacquiao wants Horn knockout to lure Mayweather: Roach

BRISBANE — Manny Pacquiao is seeking a dominant win over Australia's Jeff Horn to try and coax Floyd Mayweather Jr into a re-match, the Filipino's long-time trainer Freddie Roach has said.

Pacquiao, who was defeated by American Mayweather in an unanimous points decision in Las Vegas in 2015, will defend his WBO welterweight belt against former schoolteacher and rank outsider Horn in Brisbane on Sunday.

"He wants a re-match with Mayweather," Roach told Sky News of 38-year-old Pacquiao.

"To get Mayweather, you have to look good.

"Against Horn, he's got to look good, he has to be impressive."

Mayweather, who retired in 2015 with an unbeaten record of 49-0, has agreed to come out of retirement for a 12-round fight against mixed martial arts champion Conor McGregor.

Pacquiao has failed to win



Boxers Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines and Australia's Jeff Horn stand together following their official news conference ahead of their WBO welterweight fight in Brisbane, Australia on 28 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

by knockout since a 12th round TKO win over Miguel Cotto in 2009 but Roach said the fighter was primed to cause a stoppage

against 29-year-old Horn, who is undefeated in 17 fights against mostly obscure opponents.

"(Pacquiao) doesn't like to

predict knockouts and so forth but I do," Roach said at a media conference on Wednesday.

"I think it's going to be short

and sweet. If our opponent comes out like he says he's going to, Manny will fire back and I think it's going to be great fight (but) it won't last too long. And someone will get knocked out."

The 'Battle of Brisbane' at Lang Park, a 55,000-seat venue used mainly for professional rugby matches, is the biggest fight in decades 'Down Under', throwing Pacquiao's unheralded opponent Horn into a huge spotlight.

Horn reminded Pacquiao of his 2012 knockout loss to Juan Manuel Marquez and said the Filipino had lost some of the power in his punches. "Ever since that knockout loss against Juan Manuel Marquez, Manny doesn't pull the trigger like he used to when he was on his big run of wins," the 29-year-old told local media. "He's looked good in his last two fights but he hasn't been able to win inside the distance for a long time and I think that's because of the KO loss he suffered against Marquez in 2012."

—Reuters ■

Myanmar trounces Cambodia in U-22 KBZ Bank tourney

THE host team Myanmar U-22 national football squad beat Cambodia by a score of 4-1 on the first day of the KBZ Bank Challenge Cup 2017.

The Myanmar U-22 team primarily used its main players during the match, including Si Thu Aung, Than Paing and Aung Thu.

Myanmar scored the ice-breaker with a slow kick from attacker Aung Thu at the 17-minute mark by passing through the opponents' defenders.

After the first goal, Myanmar began to attack more, with Aung Thu and Than Paing keeping Cambodia defenders busy in the penalty area.

Aung Thu scored the second goal at 41 minutes for Myanmar with a surprise kick directly into the net.

In the second half, Myanmar made some player substitutions in order to conserve stamina and energy, and also to change game tactics.

Cambodia scored at the 46-minute mark with a direct penalty kick from Cambodian player Rechan.

Although they were able to score, Cambodia continued to have trouble penetrating the Myanmar midfielders and defenders.

Employing many different tactics in the second half, Myanmar scored their third goal at 63 minutes by attacker Si Thu Aung and the fourth goal at 66 minutes

by Maung Maung Lwin.

The Myanmar U-22 national football team will next play Hong Kong tonight at 6pm. —Nyi Myat Thawda ■



One of Myanmar player touches the ball directly into the net. **PHOTO: SOE NYUNT**

Soccer great Maldini beaten on pro tennis debut

LONDON — AC Milan and Italy great Paolo Maldini made an inauspicious start to his professional tennis career when he and doubles partner Stefano Landonio were beaten 6-1, 6-1 at the Aspria Tennis Cup on Tuesday.

The 49-year-old and his coach Landonio, 46, received a wildcard for the second tier Challenger Tour event but were thrashed by Poland's Tomasz Bednarek and Dutchman David Pel in their first round match on the Milan clay.

Maldini, widely considered one of the best left backs of all time, played more than 700 matches for AC Milan, winning seven Italian league titles and five European Cups before retiring in 2009. He won 126 caps for Italy. —Reuters ■