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President U Htin Kyaw, who is also the chairman of the National Planning Commission, said yesterday that the National Planning Bill for the six-month transition period for the new fiscal year should maintain the current needs of the people, sustain development and stay within the budget allowed by the government. **PHOTO: MNA**

Plan for bridging fiscal year gap

National Planning bill for six-month transition period before new FY discussed

A National Planning Bill to be used during the six-month period from April to September, which is considered a transitional period for the 2018-2019 financial year that now runs from 1 October to 30 September, should maintain the current needs of the people, sustain

development and stay within the budget allowed by the government, said President U Htin Kyaw yesterday.

The plan is necessary because the fiscal year in Myanmar changed from 1 April to 31 March to 1 October to 30 September for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, creating

a six-month gap.

The President's remarks came at the National Planning Commission meeting 1/2018 at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, convened for the purpose of discussing the bill before it is submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

"The six-month period from April to September is the rainy season. Farmers plant crops in this season in rain-fed fields. Meanwhile, in the industry sector, there is lack of post-harvest businesses in this season. Also, the rainy season causes limitations in the construction sector,"

the President said.

But small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are expected to be developed due to flow of foreign investment, granting loans to SMEs and measures for development of the private sector, he added.

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'BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017'

Awarded by The Banker

Message of greetings sent by President U Htin Kyaw to the Kachin State Day Celebrations Ceremony

Dear esteemed brothers and sisters, national brethren residing in the Kachin State,

Today the 10th January is an auspicious and significant 70th Anniversary of Kachin State Day designated by our ethnic Kachin brothers and sisters. I send my greetings and good wishes for the auspiciousness of the ethnic Kachin brothers and sisters as well as all union nationals residing in the Kachin State.

On 10th January 1948, after gaining Independence, the first meeting of the Kachin State Council was held and to honour the establishment of the Kachin State Government, 10th January was designated as Kachin State Day. From that day onwards we have been celebrating annually and today marks the 70th Anniversary.

The Kachin State comprises 4 districts, 18 townships, and 30 towns and it is also a State which is inhabited by such Kachin racial groups as the Jingphaw, Rawang, Lisu, Lachid, Lhaovo, and Zaiwa; Shan racial groups such as Tailai, Tailay, Tailon, Taisar, Tai Khamti; Burmans and other ethnic racial groups totaling a population of a little more than 16,00,000 who are living together in friendship and cordiality.

Kachin State is rich in precious gems and minerals such as gold and jade and is the home of the one and only snow-capped mountain ranges in the

whole of South-East Asia. It also has very beautiful scenery. Furthermore, it is also the region where the river Ayeyawady, which may be called the life-blood of Myanmar has its source.

Kachin State with such beautiful scenery and abundance of natural resources was unable to enjoy the natural beauty or use the natural resources

Now is the time when there is unprecedented unity between the ethnic nationals, the people, the government, the Tatmadaw, the Hluttaw, political parties, civil society organisations and ethnic armed organisations and the country is on the correct path of development. All organisations need to increase the power of unity with the

foundations and will strive together with the people of Kachin State for the stability and development of the Kachin State. Peace will be established so that it can be enjoyed by our offspring. In constructing the Republic of the Union of Myanmar into a democratic country, it is important for all ethnic national races to participate on an equal basis. The Union Government is spending a lot of expenditures on road transport, education, health and human resources development, getting electricity, social economic development of the people and health care for Kachin State development. Based on the existing unity and basic good principles achieved, I wish to urge all ethnic national brothers and sisters in Kachin State to work collectively in unity and harmony toward a new democratic country.

I am sending this message of greeting with a note that the processes of establishing a peaceful, modern, developed, new democratic country and peace can only succeed if all ethnic national races participate with firm union spirit, true national spirit and in unity with the Union government.

Signed/-
Htin Kyaw
President
(Unofficial Translation)

Based on the existing unity and basic good principles achieved, I wish to urge all ethnic national brothers and sisters in Kachin State to work collectively in unity and harmony toward a new democratic country.

effectively for development purpose due to armed conflicts. Only when there is peace, stability and rule of law in the region can the development works be implemented. All the ethnic national races living in Kachin State have known the taste of peace and they are also yearning for peace. Gaining peace is also the biggest desire of the entire people.

people so that the walk down this path is not deviated.

At this time Myanmar is holding the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong for the establishment of a true Democratic Federal Republic.

Today, the nation is conducting peace processes and holding the 21st Century Panglong Conference and had attained and grasped good and firm

Vice President U Myint Swe arrives in Cambodia

A DELEGATION led by Vice President U Myint Swe arrived in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, yesterday to attend the 2nd Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) summit meeting.

The 2nd Mekong – Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Leaders' Meeting on 10 January. Cambodia and China will co-chair the meeting, which will review progress and activities of the Member States since the 1st MLC Leaders' Meeting on 1 March 2016. The meeting will also envision the direction of the MLC's future activities.

U Myint Swe and party were seen off at Nay Pyi Taw Airport by Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win, Union Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Maj-Gen Than Htut, U Kyaw Myo and officials from the Chinese Embassy and the Cambodian Embassy to Myanmar.

The Vice President is accompanied by U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for Inter-

national Cooperation, and other officials.

They were welcomed at Siem Reap airport by Siem Reap Deputy Governor Mr. Tea Seyha, a member of province council Mr. Eung Hoeun, Myanmar Ambassador to Cambodia U Myint Soe and officials from the Myanmar embassy.

The Vice President and party then made a visit to the Angkor Wat Temple, one of the largest temples in this region. It has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1992.

U Myint Swe then went to the Bayon temple, which is the second most popular destination in Cambodia after the Angkor Wat. The Vice President flew back to Phnom Penh yesterday evening.

They received a Guard of Honour on arrival at the airport by Mr. Sun Chanthol, Minister for Public Works and Transport and officials. He also visited Ta Prohm Temple in Phnom Penh.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Vice President U Myint Swe looks around the Ta Prohm Temple in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

Finance Commission meets in Nay Pyi Taw

A meeting of the Finance Commission meeting was held yesterday morning at the Presidential Palace.

The meeting was attended by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Finance Commission Vice-Chairman Vice-President U Henry Van Thio, secretary Union Minister U Kyaw Win, members Union Attorney General, Union Auditor General, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, states and regions Chief Ministers.

“The present 1/2018 meeting of the Finance Commission is to discuss and adopt the Budget Estimate for 2018 April to September of the Union and Bill on 2018 Budget of the Union”, the President said.

Section 221 of 2008 Constitution requires that the Union Government draft a Union Budget Bill based on the annual Union budget, after coordinating with the Financial Commission, and submit it for approval to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. As per this section, the Financial Commission is to support the Budget Estimate for 2018 April to September of the Union submitted by the Government to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The fiscal year in Myanmar was originally designated to be from 1 April to 31 March, but for fiscal year 2018-2019, it will be changed to 1 October to 30 September. That is why the budget estimate of departments and organisations for the six-month transition period of 1 April to 30 September 2018 is now being drawn up separately.

Spending frameworks according to the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework for union-level



President U Htin Kyaw delivers the speech at the meeting of the Finance Commission 1/2018 at the Presidential Palace. **PHOTO: MNA**

departments and organisations were not set as the budget for 1 April to 30 September 2018 is for a six-month period only. Respective departments and organisations were instead asked to draw up a six-month estimate of income and expenditures, and these departments and organisations had submitted budgets accordingly. Assessment in stages of the budget was based on the corrected budget of the first six months of fiscal year 2017-2018 budget.

In the ordinary expenditure of appointing new staff, the request for expenditure should be only for the actual number of new staff that will be appointed in the coming year's first six months. Maintenance expenditure requested for machineries, vehicles and buildings should also be for the maintenance works that can be completed in the six months period.

In the capital expenditure portion, ongoing construction works and works that can be completed during the six months period is to be requested. It is to be noted that in the six-month budget period only the first two months are in the summertime while the remaining four months will be in the rainy season. It is not possible to complete new works in this period and thus there shouldn't be requests for new works during this period. Expenditure requests to purchase machinery during this six-month period should be for those that can be purchased within this period. Machinery purchases should be in local currency and use of foreign currency should be reduced as much as possible.

The Union Government will not use macroeconomic indicators and indexes to fulfil the deficits of states and regions and

will set 50 per cent of the deficit amount of fiscal year 2017-2018. States/Regions governments should use these funds for the benefit of the people and must follow the instructions and tender rules in a transparent manner in conducting construction and purchasing works.

Implementation period for the six-month budget is short and expenditures should be spent based on income. Expenditures are to be spent efficiently during the six months period to prevent waste. Only then will the expenditure GDP ratio be maintained. While the private sector is being supported for the country's economic development, the government sector needs to lay down financial policies that will support economic development with full collection of tax and income from state economic organisations. Expenditures should be spent as a priority on

increasing and supporting manufacturing and services.

Acquired foreign aid and loans should be spent effectively for the people. If foreign aid and loans are allocated without having sufficient time to spend it during the six-month period, there'll be unspent expenditures that will have to be refunded.

The Budget Estimate for 2018 April to September of the Union and Bill on the 2018 Budget of the Union are urged to be discussed and adopted said the President.

Finance Commission Vice-Chairman Vice-President U Henry Van Thio said the Union fulfillment is Ks853.79 billion and the budget submitted by states and regions had a total income of Ks376.74 billion and a total expenditure of Ks1.23 trillion, making for a deficit of Ks853.79 billion.

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National Planning bill for six-month transition period before new FY discussed

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“In the National Planning for the six-month period, it is found that the country's GDP is expected to see 7.2 per cent growth in the six month period from April to September in 2018 since transportation, hotels and tourism and financial services are expected to see progress,” he said.

Though the country's economy has not accelerated, the economic growth of the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year is expected to reach 6.8 per cent due to favourable weather in the time of harvest,

flow of foreign investment, increasing production of SMEs, better transportation and tourism services, communications, financial services and other services.

“The aims of planning for the six-month period should focus on the projects which are urgently needed to be implemented for the people and for the projects which are considered essential for the National Planning of the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year,” said the President.

Speaking at the meeting, State Counsellor Daw Aung

San Suu Kyi called for stronger linkages between the Union Government and regional/ state governments for making the projects a success.

“Just more than 6 per cent to 7 per cent growth for our country is not enough for Myanmar, which is just on track for development,” said the State Counsellor.

She also highlighted the lack of progress in the agriculture sector, putting the blame on problems related with land rights.

“Without seeing satisfactory solutions to the land rights

issues in the agriculture sector on which 70 per cent of the country's population are relying, we cannot say that the development of the country is adequate,” she added.

She also called for innovation for the market-oriented economic system in terms of penetrating foreign markets and establishing a market for local products in attempts to overcome the challenges for trade deficit.

She also called on regional and state governments for taking political and economic

approaches to their projects in order to make the projects a success.

The State Counsellor also called for stepping up efforts for disaster preparedness as the country was suffering the impacts of climate change.

“Before implementation, all projects should be viewed on whether they would benefit the emergence of a Democratic Federal Republic, because we are marching towards a Democratic Federal Republic,” said the State Counsellor. — Myanmar News Agency

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Workers sort fish at a cold storage factory. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

Government subsidies help enhance livestock sector

AS a result of the medium-term loan plan provided by the government at a low interest rate, the livestock sector this year is likely to improve, U Win Kyaing, secretary of Myanmar Fishery Federation, told Myawady Daily.

"We cannot make profits without investment. Small in-

vestments might slow the development of businesses. The government provided Ks700 billion for the loan plan," he said.

The government announced it will provide a loan of some Ks700 billion under the medium-term plan at a low interest rate to the agriculture, livestock and small and medium

enterprise sectors.

Foreigners are not allowed to invest 100 per cent in Myanmar's livestock sector.

Three livestock zones are planned to be set up in the Yangon Region. These zones will include cold storages and advanced packaging machines for the fisheries, according to

a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

The current fiscal year witnessed foreign direct investments worth \$16.7 million in the livestock and fisheries sector, according to the statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.—GNLM ■

Over 1,600 tonnes of honey exported to foreign countries

Some 1,642 metric tonnes of honey, with an estimated value of US\$2.47 million, have been shipped to foreign markets to date, according to the Apiculture Enterprise.

In the last nine months of the current fiscal year (FY), My-

anmar exported nearly 260 metric tonnes to America and 200 tonnes to Canada. The export volume was up by 200 tonnes against last FY. Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Viet Nam, Thailand and China bought honey from Myanmar, which is now

trying to penetrate the European Union market. Myanmar's honey has considerable value in the international market.

China buys Myanmar's honey for use in traditional medicines and food, owing to its high medicinal value. Beekeeping

enterprises are mostly found in the Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions and the Shan State. There are some 80,000 hives in the Mandalay Region and some 150,000 hives across the country, according to the Apiculture Enterprise.—Htet Myat ■

Businessmen demand screening of wheat imports

Wheat imported into the country does not have the Phyto Certificate or the Food and Drug Administration's approval, according to a report in the Myanma Alin.

To protect domestic wheat flour enterprises, the concerned authorities intend to scrutinise

import licences. While importers get easy and direct access to the domestic market, local manufacturers are facing difficulties, said local wheat producers.

Some local wheat factories have been forced to shut down operations as their flour

cannot compete with the imported product. In addition to the quality of locally produced wheat flour, the financial hardships of local small and medium enterprises are also causing the suspension of businesses.

Wheat imports require ap-

provals from the relevant department.

Previously, feed was being produced with the use of corn as raw materials, whereas feed manufacturers are now substituting raw corn with imported wheat, as it is cheaper.—Myat Thu (AMIA) ■

Chin State elephant foot yams fail to meet foreign demand

The elephant foot yam, also known as the whitesport Giant Arum, which is largely grown in the Chin State in Myanmar, failed to meet foreign demand because of the crop's inferior quality this year.

"Agricultural experts from Japan visited Myanmar and found the quality of elephant foot yams in Myanmar was better than those in Indonesia. Therefore, Japan bought as many elephant foot yams as Myanmar could supply. Japan prefers to buy the dry elephant foot yam variety. However, the quality of elephant

foot yams has declined because the local farmers are still using traditional methods of storage," said U Ma Nar Lein, an elephant foot yam trader from Pan Awe Village, Mindat Township.

"Currently, Japan has permitted 240 metric tonnes of elephant foot yam imports from Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka. If the number crosses 240 metric tonnes, Japan will collect US\$29 per kilogram as tax," he added. Elephant foot yams are found across Chin State, but the Mindat and Kanpetlet townships produce the highest quality



Elephant foot yam. PHOTO: ZO HAY HSAR

fruit. The yams are then sent to Mandalay and Muse. India, South Korea, China, the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan regularly buy elephant foot yam powder. Therefore, the value-added powder is

manufactured by the locals of the Mindat township.

There are three types of elephant foot yams: white, yellow and red. Yellow and red are popular export items to China

and Japan. Elephant foot yams grow naturally in Chin State but are now cultivated systematically as they have become a cash crop with foreign demand.— Zo Hay Hsar ■

Myanmar eyes border trade worth US\$640 million through Chinshwehaw gate

Border trade through Chinshwehaw is expected to reach US\$640 million this fiscal year, according to a recent report in the Myanma Alin. This will include \$620 million in exports and \$20 million in imports. The main export items

are pulses, corn, sesame, rice, rubber, livestock, sugar and bamboo, whereas seasoning powder, fertilisers, construction tools, consumer goods and food products are being imported.

Chinshwehaw is the second

largest checkpoint among the Sino-Myanmar gates. To bolster border trade, the limit on the import quota set by China must be raised. China does not impose a quota limit on the import of green grams, peanuts and sesame but

imposes it on rice, corn, rubber and sugar.

China has set a quota limit of 100,000 tonnes on the import of rice. This limit is low compared to the actual import volume, said U Sai Kyaw, secretary of Mandalay

Region Rice Merchants Association.

The trade value last fiscal year reached more than \$573 million, including \$515 million in exports and \$57 million in imports.—Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

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Foreign passengers seen at Yangon Railways Station. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

Foreign passengers using circular railway double this year

THE number of foreign passengers using circular train services has increased two-fold in the current fiscal year (FY) after the fares were reduced, according to the Myanmar Railways (MR).

In 2015, MR collected US\$1 from foreigners for using the Yangon circular train services. However, foreigners

now pay the same fare as the locals, said U Zaw Lwin, traffic general manager of Division 7 of Myanmar Railways.

Earlier, the train fare was Ks200 for all distances, but now, the shorter distances cost Ks100 for 15 miles, while the entire trip costs Ks200.

In 2016-2017 FY, between 3,500 and 4,000 foreign pas-

sengers used the Yangon circular train services per month. In 2017-2018 FY, the number of foreign passengers increased to more than 8,000 per month.

Currently, nine circular trains are plying daily for 215 rounds for the convenience of both local and foreign passengers.—GNLM ■

Agricultural department encourages Sterculia gum cultivation

THE Mogaung Township Agricultural Department is encouraging local cultivators and land owners to grow Sterculia gum to create job opportunities and earn foreign income.

“There are many fallow and virgin lands in Mogaung Township, as well as other townships. I want to encourage them to grow Sterculia gum, which requires less capital. Some 250 to 300 Sterculia gum plants can be grown per acre. A three- or four-year-old Sterculia urens tree produces one or two tical of Sterculia gum per day. Therefore, we should be growing Sterculia gum on a commercial scale,” said U Sein Lwin, an official at the Mogaung Township Agricultural Department.

Sterculia gum is a medi-

um-sized deciduous tree with horizontally spreading branches. It grows to a height between 50 feet and 90 feet and has a circumference between 6 feet and 10 feet. It can thrive in any region.

Sterculia gum is in great demand from neighbouring countries. Currently, the price of Myanmar’s Sterculia gum is between Ks60,000 and Ks110,000 per viss.

The gum is used as an ingredient in snacks and cosmetics and by the pharmaceutical and industrial sectors. The gum is also used in traditional medicines. Currently, the agricultural department is cultivating the gum in the Pin Baw region, Mogaung Township, as a pilot project.—Min Min Oo ■

Melon prices continue to decline in Muse border trade zone

MELON prices continued to decline at the Muse border trade zone, although the roads were opened again after days of bad weather, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

A few days ago, the road on the Chinese side was covered with snow, which led to a decline in the demand for melons and, consequently, their price.

Although the roads are oper-

ational today, the prices keep on falling, said U Kyaw Min, a melon trader. Moreover, the quality of sweet melons has also been affected by the untimely rainfall across the country.

Taiwan watermelons cost between 2,000 and 3,500 yuan per tonne and seedless watermelons between 2,600 and 3,100 yuan, while melons are priced between 1,000 and 3,000 yuan.—GNLM ■

Experts suspect ancient buildings found in Wundwin are from Innwa and early Konebaung era

BRICKS that were discovered near the Samone River close to Nabegone Village in Mandalay Region’s Wundwin Township might be the foundation of a religious building from the Innwa and early Konebaung era because they are not similar to the bricks found from the Pyu era, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Mandalay Branch).

The bricks were exposed and subsequently found due to water erosion from the Samone River in November last year, and people predicted that the old buildings might be a fortress from the Pyu period.

Officials from the Department of Archaeology went and checked the region on 8 December and said the building might be from Innwa and early Konebaung era.

Ancient bone. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

“When we went to check, we found arch bricks that were used for building the top of a pagoda and the size of the arch brick and the foundation brick are not the same size of the bricks found from the Pyu era. Most of the bricks we found

are used in Innwa and early Konebaung era.

That’s why we think that it might be a religious building from Innwa and Konebaung era,” said an archaeology official from the department.

When the bank of Samone

River was collapsed, bones were first found at the wall of the river bank. Then the brickwork was discovered under the bones. The bricks are one foot long and eight inches wide, and the bricks are in square and triangle shapes, locals said.

“The area where the rows

of brick came out is an area where Ywar Haung Gone village once existed, and a pagoda south of the river was toppled and destroyed in the past,” said U San Yin, a villager from Nabegone Village.—Min Htet Aung (Sub-printing House) ■

Ancient building found in Wundwin are from Innwa and early Konebaung era. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

Foreign Head of State sends felicitations to President U Htin Kyaw

The following is message of felicitations from Foreign Head of State / Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw, on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia Your Excellency,

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar's Independence, I wish to convey to you and the people of Myanmar my warmest wishes, together with those of the Australian Government and people.

Following Myanmar's historic elec-

tions in 2015, our two countries have increased our bilateral engagement.

Senior Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for international Development and the Pacific, visited in March 2017 for the inaugural Australia-Myanmar Strategic Dialogue, and to lead the Third High-Level Consultations on Development Cooperator. We welcomed Myanmar Parliamentarians to Australia in July and November, and reciprocated with visits to Myanmar by Australian Parliamentarians on a number of occasions over the past year.

We appreciate Myanmar's support as Australia's ASEAN Country Coordinator, and we work closely together on diverse regional issues. We thank Myanmar for hosting the ASEAN-Australia Forum in March 2017, and look forward to the visit of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March 2018.

Australia supports Myanmar's democratic reform process. A stable and prosperous Myanmar, which embraces the diversity of all its people, upholds democratic principles and

respects universal human rights, will benefit the people of Myanmar and the region.

As a close regional partner, we will continue to work with Myanmar through a challenging period of reform and transition. Our development assistance program will support basic education, the peace process, governance and economic growth.

May I express my confidence that the friendly relations between our two countries will continue to prosper in the coming year.

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State / Government sent to State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From H.E Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel Dear Madam Minister,

I extend warm congratulations to you and the people of Myanmar on the occasion of your 70th Independence Day, May the coming year be marked by greater stability, prosperity and peace.

Israel is proud of its strong partnership with Myanmar, forged over the past seven decades. Throughout the years, the friendship between our two peoples has been reinforced through numerous

high-level visits in both countries and increasing cooperation in a variety of areas, including agriculture, education and healthcare.

The hundreds of trainees from Myanmar in Israel help bolster our people-to-people contacts, as do the many Israeli tourists drawn to Myanmar's breathtaking landscapes, rich culture and archaeological treasures.

I reiterate my invitation for you to visit Israel at your earliest convenience. It will be my pleasure to welcome you to Jerusalem and discuss how we can expand our partnership even further.

On behalf of the people and government of Israel, I wish you memorable and enjoyable Independence Day celebrations.

From Honourable Alan Peter S. Cayetano Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines Excellency,

The Filipino people join me in conveying my sincerest felicitations to Your Excellency on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the

Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Anchored on our common and firm resolve to work toward greater development and progress, I am confident that our cooperation in various fields of shared interest will continue to significantly contribute to the warm friendship between our countries and peoples.

I assure Your Excellency of my continued support for meaningful endeavors that will mutually benefit our peoples and strengthen our countries' ties.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.■

Ministry of Border Affairs, GRET sign MoU

THE Ministry of Border Affairs and Groupe de Recherches et d'Exchanges Technologiques (GRET) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for a three-year project on food sufficiency, development of livelihoods and effective management of natural resources in the meeting hall of the Ministry of Border Affairs yesterday afternoon. The signing ceremony was attended by Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Than Htut, GRET Country Representative Daw Myint Su and other officials.

Lt-Gen Ye Aung delivered a speech, while Daw Myint Su explained the MoU.

Next, Progress of Border Areas and National Races Department Director General U Ye Naing and Daw Myint Su signed the MoU. According to the MoU, the Ministry of Border Affairs, the progress of border areas and national races department and GRET will cooperate on the project in Haka, Falam, Tiddim, Tonzang, and Thantlang townships in the northern Chin State and Paletwa township in the southern Chin State. —Myanmar News Agency ■



A signing ceremony of MoU between Ministry of Border Affairs and GRET held in progress. **PHOTO: MNA**

Upgrade major driving force of the national economy

The Union Government is making preparations for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises. The advanced countries always start small industrial enterprises as their first-ever initiatives, thence changing into medium and larger enterprises step by step. Therefore, making efforts for the development of SMEs can be regarded to be the initiative for the development of the national economy.

The small and medium-sized enterprises make up 99 per cent of Myanmar's economic force. Vice-President U Myint Swe, Chairman of the Working Committee for the Development of SMEs stated in his speech, "Being the major driving force of the national economy, policies and objectives are required to be laid down for the development of SMEs. The development of human resources, technology and infra-structures, the acquisition of financial resources, better markets and favorable economic environment, cultivation of innovation spirit and

search for reasonable revenues, taxes and strengthened rules, regulations and procedures are to be brought about."

Accordingly, difficulties frequently encountered by local entrepreneurs, such as requirements of technical assistance and start-up capital for investment, acquisition of land plots at reasonable prices and streamlining of procedures and relaxation of restrictions imposed by respective ministries and simplification of bank procedures for obtaining loans are likely to be implemented in the near future. Development of SMEs can bring about creation of job opportunities for the people, increase of incomes, high rise of internal consumption, smooth and regular flow of monetary circulation in the country, alleviation of poverty and increased accumulation of national revenue.

Under the current situation, local SMEs are facing the loss of their internal markets due to lack of capacity to compete

with neighboring countries in the sectors of production and service industries. Some are said to be threatened concerning market shares. Our local industries which produce products designed only for local markets went bankrupt because of the systematic attack of foreign industries. These foreign industries exported their products with attractive design and reasonable prices into our Myanmar market after making a careful study of the local market conditions. Moreover, illegal smuggling of horticultural produce into the country is also threatening the agriculture sector.

As for the SMEs entrepreneurs, they can improve the performance of their individual economic enterprises as well as contribute to the development of the national economy by making their SMEs develop into big ones, while lifting up their capacities for long-lasting survival through their innovations and collective strength.

Smokeless Industry Which Will Promptly Fulfill National Deficit

By Khin Maung Htay
[Education]

BEING a country in the ASEAN region, Myanmar has an area of 261228 square miles, consisting of the national population of over 50 million. The country with landslides of great beauty is surrounded by mountains, islands and coastal areas. Likewise the neighboring countries, it abounds with cultural heritages and religious edifices. It has many ancient pagodas, stupas, shrines and monasteries. Yet, sorrowfully enough, such a beautiful and pleasant country is found to have been in miserable states in fetching the national income from the sector of hotel and tourism industry, compared to that of the regional countries.

This made me glance at the parts of the performances being carried out by the State Government. Tourism industry is in fact the 3rd biggest smokeless industry of the nation. For the multi-sector development the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism is leading to implement the tasks. Major project for tourism industry [2013-2018] will be adopted as the road map on the development of tourism industries. For all departments and organizations to join in the campaign "Policy on participation of social societies in Myanmar tourism industry," had already been laid down.

National strength

"Sustainable Tourism a Tool for Development," is the theme for this year. With a view to sustainable development implementations are being made in the following 5 sectors.

1. economic sector - to become a developed economic sector
2. social sector - to create job opportunities with favorable conditions and to bring about giving authority to the local populace
3. natural environment - to control climate changes and to conserve natural environment
4. cultural sector - to safeguard material and

non-material cultural heritage cultures

5. peace sector - to essentially bring about peace for the national progress

In fact, aims, objectives and policies the government is practically implementing are excellent. Yet, compared to regional countries, income from tourism industry of Myanmar's hotel and tourism industry stood next to last, followed by Brunei and Laos, according to the statistics in 2016, fetching \$ 1.6 billion. Even Cambodia fetched US \$ 3 billion in that period. Thailand stood first, fetching US \$ 44.6 billion. Why did not Myanmar hotel and tourism industry succeed? It wholly depends upon the facts concerning to which extent aims and policies can be successfully implemented and how much studies can be made into the bottom level.

Being fond of travelling the author did go about in Shan State and in Central Myanmar frequently. I myself welcomed the Visit Myanmar Year held in 1996, making trips occasionally in my leisure hours until now. Very recently, I paid a visit to Bagan, Nyaung-U and Poppa regions during the October School Holidays, after a long hiatus of several years. And, unexpectedly I got to Ngwe-Saung beach on the Full-Moon Day of Tazaungmone. Not long before,

some of my close friends returned from Malaysia and Thailand, sharing their knowledge of foreign trips to me. While enjoying vicarious knowledge I am itching to make suggestions about Myanmar tourism.

Higher prices

To put it in detail, as regards local tourism there will take a few pages. To briefly say about it, extension of roads cannot be made yet even in the frequently visited trips such as Ngwe-Saung and Chaung-Tha. Due to rough ground and narrow roads it takes too much time to get to the destinations. There are not enough lodging houses and hotels there. Hotels take too much prices for lodging but cannot give satisfactory services. Due to unavailability of rental of double-room, I myself had to hire a family room for 4 persons for one lakh kyats per day. In the immediate vicinity of the beach, sanitation was unsatisfactory. Eateries and restaurants are also demanding too much prices for cuisines they serve. In Nyaung-U some famous restaurants run short of food for guests, so they rush to food-stalls opened along roadside, after 8 pm.

Sea-breeze to breathe in

As for the visitors who stay for a night at the hotel nearby the

beach, they can enjoy breathing in the sea breeze. Although speed-boats, cycles and horses are available, it is too expensive to hire them. No foreigners apart from local visitors hire them for enjoyment from riding. In the day-time electricity is unavailable. Entertainment programs are not seen made. Failing that, unnecessary occurrences can happen.

Street food stalls

According to my colleagues who recently returned from foreign trips to Bangkok and Malaysia, their stock reply to my enquiries is "Totally different in everything." Thailand's tourism fetched foreign income so much so that for their good services and their foods' cheap prices and delicacy. The city abounds with street food stall. Hotels are also elite. The Emerald Pagoda is daily over-crowded with pilgrims all day long. Entertainment programmes are ubiquitous, taking a lot of people's money. Everywhere we go in that country they take money from us whereas in our country every traveller can go about any places just paying the fees for the entrance into the zone.

Abundance of beautiful beaches

Along the 1800-mile-long coast there are beaches of great beauty.

But, its amounts are only a few. Easily accessible beaches such as Ngapali, Chaungtha, Kanthar-yar, Ngwesaung and Setse are well-known. Due to efforts of local people some beaches and islands became known to the public in a few years ago. For example Goringyi island was targeted to implement as a hotel zone as for the department, due to the local people's effort. In addition, there are many wonderful and beautiful islands in Dawei. Recently-known island is the Macked Island, where even sea mariners can call at the island. It has many characteristics. Travellers can go up by snooke-ling. There are nature-like bungalows. Also are Done Island, Done Waterfall, Natthameehla island, Hnaphethla island, Natthamee Yedwin island, Lay Island, Smart island, Hgnetthike island and Pearl island to visit.

Ancient cultural heritage in abundance

Visitors coming to Myanmar are not solely focusing on ancient cultural heritages. Some visit here to enjoy natural beauties of Myanmar; mountains, islands and beaches. Some people want to go up to hilly regions, with some just for merry-making. Some come here to study religious or cultural traditions. Myanmar has myriads of gifts of nature.



PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKHTILA)

Also are pleasant cities on hilly regions, mountain ranges of cool weather and pleasant views in Myanmar. Ancient cultural and religious heritages are ubiquities of the nation.

Though being abundant of excellent beaches and beaches of good scenery, the government itself cannot find out them, as if being left neglected despite that there are sources which can get foreign exchanges. The lack of desires to pay a repeated visit to Myanmar in the minds of many visitors are in fact attributed many reasons—inefficiency of infrastructures and electricity, poor service, expensiveness and inconvenience of transport. As a result amounts of tourists did not increase as expected. They came to pay a visit to our country just as a mere visit here as they had never been to Myanmar. Until now, Myanmar tourism industry cannot yet persuade visitors to frequently come to Myanmar.

We have abundance of natural gifts

For the visitors who had come to Myanmar for the first time, they generally will not be satisfied with the trips because of the above-said inconveniences. So long as these weak points cannot be repaired, Myanmar hotel and tourism industry will still be seasonal industry likewise the local ones, rather than survival in the long run. Natural landslides of great beauty, mountains, rivers, creeks, springs, lakes, islands, beauty beaches, ancient cultural heritages are plentiful in the country, being the invaluable natural gifts. Without the skillful management of these resources, our country cannot keep up with even the country with the only largest religious monument Angkor Wat in earning the foreign income. In case hotel and tourism industries can be more developed with greater efforts it will be no problem for solving the national deficit or the foreign debts, not even if it did not keep up with the Thailand's income from tourism industry— US \$ 44.6 billion.

Translated by
Khin Maung Oo

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President's Office
Order 1/2018

8th Waning of Pyatho, 1379 ME
9th January, 2018

Resignation of Ayeyawady Region Chief
Minister approved

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 264 (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 52 (a) of Region or State Government Law, Mahn Jonny, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister has been permitted to resign of his own volition from the position of Regional Chief Minister.

Sd/ Htin Kyaw
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President's Office
Order 2/2018

8th Waning of Pyatho, 1379 ME
9th January, 2018

Resignation of Ayeyawady Region
Minister approved

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 264 (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 52 (b) of Region or State Government Law, U Ba Hein, Ayeyawady Region Minister for Agriculture, Livestock Breeding, Resources and Environmental Conservation, has been permitted to resign of his own volition from the position of Regional Minister.

Sd/ Htin Kyaw
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

POEM

Nemesis

I remember
how my heart bled to see
small silver patches that appeared on the pages
of the magazines of those days,
that, as I gently scratched out, turned out to reveal
Names! Names!
Minthuwan, and Tin Moe, and ...

And I wonder
where they are gone,
the hands that had done
such a mean act of smearing.
The revered names remain revered as ever,
while those smearing hands have already got
their names smeared in black ink, never to be revealed
on the pages of history.

Zaw Tun

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw joint committee discusses accounting bill

A Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee met yesterday morning to discuss an accounting bill sent by the President with a note.

The meeting, held in the second-floor meeting room, D Block, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, was attended by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw deputy speaker, Joint Bill Committee and Public Accounts Joint Committee Chairman U Aye

Tha Aung; deputy chairmen, secretaries and members of the Joint Bill Committee and Public Accounts Joint Committee; Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission members; and officials from the Ministry of Planning and Finance, Union Attorney General office, Union Auditor General office and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw office. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission releases statement on Terrorist Attacks

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission released a Statement regarding the ARSA terrorist attacks in Maungdaw yesterday. Following is the full text of the statement.

Statement by the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission No. (1/2018)

1. It is learned from the news that the ARSA terrorists attacked the vehicle carrying members of the security force with explosive device and small arms from the hillock of North West of Kyein Chaung village in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State around 10:00 am

on 5 January 2018 and a driver and two members of security force were wounded.

2. Such attack may not only affect the process of stability, security, prevalence of law and order and development in Rakhine State but also seriously hinder the arrangements for the repatriation of returnees, who left homes due to terrorist attacks in August,

to the places they had resided. In addition, it may also affect the regional development undertaken by the Government and the UEHRD process.

3. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission strongly condemns such attack by the ARSA terrorists.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Central committee, work committees hold coordinating meeting to discuss second Hluttaw seventh regular session

THE central committee and work committees held a coordinating meeting yesterday afternoon for the successful organisation of the second Hluttaw seventh regular session.

At the meeting, held at the Hluttaw Building Zabuthiri Hall, Mahn Win Khaing Than, a patron of the 2018 Hluttaw meetings organising central committee; the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker; and the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker announced the second Hluttaw seventh regular session will be held on 15 January.

At the next Hluttaw meeting, the adoption of the budget estimate for the Union from April to September 2018, the bill on the 2018 Budget of the Union



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint discusses for second Hluttaw seventh regular session at the coordinating meeting. PHOTO: MNA

and Union Tax Bill, as well as other priority Hluttaw works will be discussed. Regular sessions were successfully held in the past with the cooperation of the responsible officials and

organisations. The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker expected that security and other important issues would be organised as efficiently as in past Hluttaw meetings.

Next, the Hluttaw meetings organising central committee patron and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint thanked all the ministries that had cooperated with the Hluttaw to hold the previous Hluttaw regular sessions. He also recognised the Hluttaw security arrangements made by the relevant ministerial departments and organisations. He then thanked the (union) ministers, as well as the deputy ministers and officials of the attending departments and organisations, and noted that the mutual understanding with Hluttaw was a good tradition.

Later, the attending Union ministers, Nay Pyi Taw council chairman, deputy ministers

and officials explained the arrangements being made by the related committees, while the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker coordinated and commented on the discussion, and then delivered a concluding speech.

The meeting was attended by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speakers, the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat, union ministers, the Nay Pyi Taw council chairman, deputy ministers, related committee secretaries and officials from each of the Hluttaw offices. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hosts dinner in honour of Chief of Defence Force of Singapore Armed Forces

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Tatmadaw commander-in-chief, hosted a dinner in honour of Lt-Gen Perry Lim, chief of the Defence Force of the Singapore Armed Forces, at Nay Pyi Taw Park Royal Hotel yesterday evening. At the dinner, the Tatmadaw commander-in-chief delivered a welcome speech, while the chief of the Defence Force of the Singapore Armed Forces gave a speech of thanks. They then had dinner together with the other attendees. The Myawady Music Band, under the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare, entertained the dinner guests with songs and dances. —MNA ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers an opening speech at the dinner in honour of Chief of Defence Force of Singapore Armed Forces. PHOTO: MNA

Chair of Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee meets members of Connect to Everyone Association

CHAIR of the Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee U Tun Aung, alias U Tun Tun Hein, received members of the Connect to Everyone Association in the hall of the Hluttaw Building

(I-2), Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday afternoon. During the meeting, they discussed matters related to farmland rules, the contracts act and other registration processes.—MNA ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Finance Commission meets in Nay Pyi Taw

FROM PAGE-3

Assessments were made on the expenditures for the six months and a total of Ks34.713 billion was reduced from the states and regions expenditures. After this reduction, the states and regions had a total income of Ks376.743 billion and a total expenditure of 1,195.82 billion, making for a deficit of Ks819.077 billion, said the Vice President.

Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win, Secretary of the Finance Commission, explained the Budget Estimate for 2018 April to September of the Union and Bill on 2018 Budget of the Union. Finance Commission members Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, states and regions chief ministers then explained about the tax collection, income, expenditure and deficits of the respective

states and regions.

In his concluding speech, Chairman of Finance Commission President U Htin Kyaw said the benefits gained from re-designating the financial year is far beyond the expenses incurred and is believed to enable the economic development of the country.

Union-level departments and organisations need to coordinate with states and regions governments so that there are no duplications in the expenditures requested at the union level and states and regions level.

In making investments for basic infrastructure development of the country, union-level departments and organisations and states and regions governments need to draw up and implement projects that are in line with the 12 economic policies laid out by the union

and the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals.

The government needs to make expenditures for the benefit of the people, and at the same time, try to increase income. There is a need to increase income through production and services as well as in collecting tax and other incomes. All the while, expenses on education, health and other expenses like electricity, road and telecommunication, agriculture, livestock breeding and basic infrastructure need to be spent for the benefit of the people.

Works in finance should be conducted according to prescribed rules and regulations as well as financial management regulations and must be transparent and ready for auditing at any time, said the President. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Muse border trade up by \$198 million this FY

Trade through the Muse border gate, which is the largest trading gateway among Myanmar's border gates, reached more than US\$4.1 billion in the first nine months of the current fiscal year (FY), according to the Commerce Ministry.

Between April 1 and December 29 this FY, the Sino-Myanmar border trade at the Muse, Lwe-jel, Chinshwehaw, Kankiketee and Kengtung gates reached \$4.76 billion, which is \$167 million more than its value during the same period last FY.

Of the five checkpoints between Myanmar and China, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung have shown a slight decrease in trade.

As of October this FY, bilateral trade value with Myanmar's main partner China via the sea route



Trucks are seen near the 105-Mile Muse Border Trade Zone in northern Shan State. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

and border gates reached \$6.3 billion, including an estimated \$2.83 billion in exports and \$3.5 billion in imports.

China's trade with Myanmar is second to only its regional trade. Myanmar's border trade with China performed better than its trade via sea.

Further, Myanmar's exports to the most pop-

ulous country, China, surpassed its imports. Rice, various kinds of peas, sesame seeds, corn, vegetables and fruits, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, minerals and animal products are exported to China, whereas machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer products and electronic tools flow into Myanmar.—Mon Mon



Speaker U Win Myint (Right) and Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than (Left) chair the meeting of Myanmar Parliamentary Union (MPU). **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar Parliamentary Union meeting (1/2018) held in Nay Pyi Taw

A meeting organised by the Myanmar Parliamentary Union (MPU) was held at the Zabuthiri Hall of Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, during which the effectiveness of the hluttaws and the relationship between federal and regional parliaments was discussed.

"There are many issues which can be addressed between the union-level Hluttaws and Regions/States level Hluttaws.

That's why we are holding the meeting in line with the regulations of Myanmar Parliamentary Union (MPU).

Myanmar Parliamen-

tary Union (MPU) has been formed for two years, and we also need suggestions made by the respective persons and advice which can be made for the progress of the matters within the short period. Moreover, It is important for the officials concerned to abide by the rules and regulation prescribed by the Hluttaws", said Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than in his opening speech.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint added that "This meeting is being held for the first time in 2018, and it is advisable to review the weaknesses and strengths of the hluttaws by using the required standards and

norms. Hluttaws should be balanced to serve as a check and the role of the judicial sector is of great important in the process of democratisation."

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung then clarified the decisions made in the Hluttaw meetings, and the procedures of the amending rules.

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Ti Khun Myat discussed the Hluttaw issues which are most often encountered in the process, and Director General of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office, U Kyaw Soe explained the formation and situations of the related sectors. —Myanmar News Agency

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT OF BRIDGE Invitation for Bids

Date: 12th January, 2018

Loan Agreement No.: MY-P15

IFP No: MYA/MOC/EWEC/PACKAGE1/PQ

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency toward the cost of the East-West Economic Corridor Improvement Project. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this Loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract resulting from the bidding for which this prequalification is conducted.
2. The Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction, Myanmar intends to prequalify contractors and/or firms for Package-1, Construction of Gyaing Kawkareik Bridge.
3. It is expected that Invitation for Bids will be made in the beginning of April 2018.
4. Prequalification will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Applicants from eligible source countries (All countries and areas), as defined in the Loan Agreement.
5. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the office of Director General, Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction from 10:00 hrs. to 14:00 hrs. on working days till 13th February, 2018.
6. A complete set of the Prequalification Documents may be purchased by interested Applicant(s) on the submission of a written Application to the address above and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of 500 USD.
7. Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, delivered to the address above by 26th February 2018, and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for East West Economic Corridor Improvement Project (EWEC) for Package-1, Construction of Gyaing Kawkareik Bridge.

U Shwe Lay

Director General

Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction

Building No.11, Nay Pyi Taw, MYANMAR

+95-67-407069, +95-67-407514

Email: mrshwelay@gmail.com, bridgesection.moc1@gmail.com



Italy's former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Berlusconi says Italy cannot leave euro, Northern League agrees

ROME — Silvio Berlusconi said on Tuesday that Italy must not leave the euro and that his main ally going into March's election, the Northern League, agrees that quitting the currency would be unsustainable for the economy.

The League's leader, Matteo Salvini, has given mixed signals about the euro — which many Italians blame for the moribund state of their economy. He ridiculed the idea of a referendum proposed by the rival 5-Star movement, but as late as last week pledged to rectify the “error” of the single currency.

Berlusconi — who hopes to lead the centre-right back to power in March — said the common currency should be continued to be handled in the manner that European Central Bank head

Mario Draghi has done.

“Salvini is no longer of the idea that we should leave the euro,” Berlusconi said. “He has understood that it would be unsustainable for our economy.”

Berlusconi's centre-right Forza Italia party, the Northern League and a second far-right party, Brothers of Italy, look set to win the 4 March election but with less than an absolute majority.

Hostility to the euro is a prominent issue in campaigning for the election and the prospect that anti-establishment parties could try to pull the country out of the single currency has rattled financial markets. Berlusconi and others say the euro was introduced to Italy with too high of an exchange rate to the old Italian lira. —Reuters ■

Booming Indian cities look to bike sharing to put brakes on congestion

MUMBAI— A handful of Indian cities are gearing up to launch bike-sharing systems to ease traffic congestion and deadly air pollution, as urban populations surge and vehicles clog the streets.

Bike sharing systems in the southern city of Mysuru and the central city of Bhopal, both launched last June, have met with a tremendous response, officials say.

About half a dozen more cities, including Bengaluru, Pune and Bhubaneswar, are now drawing up similar plans, according to the World Resources Institute (WRI), a Washington DC-based research organisation.

“Bike sharing is a viable option for Indian cities — we just need good quality

bikes, dedicated lanes and a system that is efficient,” said Chandramauli Shukla, chief executive of Bhopal Smart City Corporation.

The corporation implements the federally-funded Smart Cities programme to improve services like internet connectivity and public transport in 100 cities across India.

With rising incomes and a large young population, passenger vehicle ownership in India has nearly tripled in the last decade, government data shows. Gridlock has become common and transit systems struggle to keep pace. Vehicle emissions account for almost a third of air pollution in India, which has nearly half the world's 20 most polluted cities, according to the World Health

Organization.

Some 2.5 million people in the country die every year due to pollution.

Mysuru, close to the technology hub of Bengaluru, was the first to introduce a bike-sharing programme, with the state's chief minister riding a yellow Trin Trin bike at the launch.

Registered users can borrow any of 450 bikes from 48 docking stations for a nominal fee.

In Bhopal, users can register on their smartphones and unlock one of 500 bikes from 60 docking stations. The city now has 11 kilometres (6.8 miles) of dedicated bike lanes, according to WRI, which provided technical expertise to the Bhopal Municipal Corporation on the

bike-sharing system.

More than 25,000 people registered in the first few months, half of them women, said Amit Bhatt, director of transport at WRI India.

“In India, people look down on those who bike. So we had to show this is cool, with good quality bikes and a mobile app to register and unlock bikes” he said.

“But the main priority is safety, with dedicated bike lanes. That has encouraged people to give it a go,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Officials must be careful not to repeat the mistakes of China, where unchecked growth of bike-sharing firms led to piles of discarded bikes clogging sidewalks, Bhatt added. —Reuters ■

Thousands in California flee homes ahead of possible mudslides

LOS ANGELES — Thousands of Southern Californians fled their homes on Monday as a powerful rain storm that could cause flash floods and trigger mudslides soaked steep slopes where a series of intense wildfires burned off vegetation last month. Heavy downpours that could produce more than 1 inch (2.5 cm) of rain per hour were expected through Tuesday evening, forcing officials to order

or advise Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles county residents who live near where wildfires burned to evacuate their homes.

“Recent burn areas will be especially vulnerable where dangerous mud and debris flows are possible,” the National Weather Service said in a statement.

Several December wildfires, included a blaze known as the Thomas Fire

which was the largest in the state's history, burned away vegetation that holds the soil in place and baked a waxy layer into the earth that prevents water from sinking deeply into the ground.

About 30,000 residents were under evacuation orders or advisories on Monday, ABC news reported.

“I'm just tired. I can't seem to get my life kick-started,” Teri Lebow,

whose Montecito, California was damaged by the wildfires, told the Los Angeles Times.

The storm system was expected to produce 4 inches to 7 inches (10 to 18 cm) in the foothills and mountains with 9 inches (23 cm) in isolated areas. Three inches (7 cm) to two feet (61 cm) of snow was also forecast for higher elevations, the National Weather Service said. —Reuters ■

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports for the supply of Medicine & Medical Products of Nuclear Medicine Departments in (2017-2018) Budget Year and for the supply of Medical Equipments for Yangon Children Hospital and Women & Children Hospital (Monywar) by Donation of Government of Republic of India.

Tender documents are available during office hours at the Procurement and Supply Division. Department of Medical Services, office No.(4), Ministry of Health and Sports Commencing from (15.1.2018).

Sealed bids are to be submitted to the office, not later than (30.1.2018) 15:00 hour, after which no bid will be accepted. No telegraph/telex proposal will be accepted.

For detail information please contact the Phone No.067-3411510, 067-3411544, Procurement and Supply Division Office, Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports.

Procurement and Supply Division
Ministry of Health and Sports

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (003)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (003) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V CSC XIN HAI V- 1715

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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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Devotees try to reach the unbalanced image of the Black Nazarene during an annual procession at Luneta grandstand, Metro Manila, Philippines on 9 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Christ statue procession in Philippines draws throngs of devotees

MANILA — Hundreds of thousands of devotees in the Philippines, many of them barefooted, joined a chaotic procession on Tuesday that featured a black statue of Jesus Christ, one of the biggest annual festivals in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

The faithful gathered in downtown Manila to follow a carriage bearing the statue called the Black Nazarene, believed to have healing powers, in a parade that began at dawn and may last until evening or even longer.

Some of them jostled and climbed onto the carriage as it was pushed and pulled by dozens of men holding ropes, while the crowd waved towels and handkerchiefs in a sign of praise to the kneeling life-sized image that carried a cross on one shoulder.

Processions and other religious rites were also held elsewhere in the country of 105 million people to celebrate the feast.

Citing police estimates, media said this year's festivities may draw 17 million devotees

nationwide, some seeking healing for illnesses and forgiveness for sins and others offering thanks for blessings.

Rogelio Lim said all his wishes had come true since he became a Black Nazarene devotee in 1977.

"My child is now a medicine graduate," he told Reuters. "I have been spared diseases. I have been blessed with a house. Everything we wished for. A good job. Everything. This is why I am here, to thank Him."

The Philippine Red Cross said it had assisted

more than 700 devotees who were feeling unwell, or suffered injuries amid the parade's growing crowds, many of whom clamoured to reach towards the icon.

Alvin Carlos said he felt stronger after touching the Black Nazarene.

"Rain or shine, I gained the strength to continue because of my strong faith in Him," he said.

More than 4,000 police and soldiers were deployed to ensure the Manila procession would be peaceful, said Oscar Albayalde, the capital's police chief.—Reuters ■

Thai FM confirms former PM Yingluck in London

BANGKOK — The foreign minister of Thailand confirmed on Tuesday that fugitive former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra is in Britain.

At the Government House where he attended a weekly cabinet meeting, Don Pramudwinai, the Thai foreign minister, said he has been informed since last September by the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Yingluck is in London.

Whether or not Yingluck may have already

filed a request for political asylum in Britain was not reported by the British authorities to Thailand as yet, according to the minister.

Don said Yingluck might probably use a foreign country's passport to travel to Britain and elsewhere in the world since her Thailand passports were earlier revoked.

Don didn't give any comments on whether Thailand will seek Yingluck's extradition.

He also declined to answer whether the Thai

government will lodge an objection on the British government if Yingluck applied for political asylum there, saying the issue will not affect the Thailand-Britain relations.

The Pheu Thai Party led by the former premier recently unveiled that Yingluck has sought asylum in Britain.

The party said if Yingluck was granted political asylum there, she would be issued a passport or travel document which can be used for five years.

Legal experts said if Yingluck could provide full proof that she was politically persecuted, the British government would consider to approve the asylum. They said a detailed address in Britain is needed when applying for asylum.

Yingluck was widely rumored to go shopping in London during the New Year holiday and a picture of her posing alongside an unidentified woman has gone viral in social media.—Xinhua ■

2nd LMC summit to bring great benefits to countries along Lancang-Mekong River: Cambodian PM

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen said on Tuesday that the upcoming second Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) leaders' meeting will bring great benefits to the six countries along the Lancang-Mekong River.

"This meeting will bring a lot of development projects to the countries along the Mekong River, which connects to the Lancang River in China," he wrote on his Facebook page.

The prime minister said it was a pride for

Cambodia to host such an important summit and lauded the country's peace and political stability.

Hun Sen and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang will co-chair the second LMC leaders' meeting in Phnom Penh on 10 January, according to a Cambodian foreign ministry statement.

The meeting will also bring together Lao Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, and Myanmar Vice President Myint Swe.—Xinhua ■

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT OF BRIDGE Invitation for Bids

Date: 9th January, 2018

EDCF Loan Agreement No.: MYA-10

Contract Title: Korea-Myanmar Friendship (Dala) Bridge Construction Project

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Construction has received a Loan from the Export-Import Bank of Korea from the resources of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Republic of Korea in the amount of 137,833,000 in US Dollars toward the cost of the Korea-Myanmar Friendship (Dala) Bridge Construction Project (hereinafter referred to as the "Project") and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for which this Invitation for Bids is issued.

2. The Project Executing Agency now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction of the Korea-Myanmar Friendship (Dala) Bridge;

- Cable Stayed Bridge: 690m
- Dala Approach Bridge: 601m
- Yangon Approach Bridge: 576m
- Ramp A: 467m, Ramp B: 526m

3. Bidding will be conducted through Competitive Bidding (CB) among Korean companies and that the single-stage, two-envelope procedures specified in the [Guideline for Procurement under EDCF Loans](#), and is open to all eligible bidders that meet the following minimum qualification criteria.

- (i) General construction experience in Bridge and Road field for 5 years.
- (ii) Specific experience in construction: satisfy the minimum requirement of having built cable-stayed bridges including access bridges and access road with main spans of 260 meters or more, with a value of at least 80 million US Dollars that are completed.
- (iii) A minimum average construction turnover of 100 million US Dollars for the last 3 years.
- (iv) Average Net Worth for last three years (2014, 2015, and 2016) and Net Worth in 2016 shall be positive.

The Bidder must also show that it has the personnel for key positions, key equipment and financial resources in terms of his latest years with working capital and lines of credit to meet the requirements of the contract bid and other current work commitments, as given in detail in the bidding documents.

In case of JV, refer to the qualification requirement specified in the bidding documents.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Department of Bridge under the Ministry of Construction and inspect the bidding documents at the address below from 10:00 A.M., 9th January, 2018 to 14:00 P.M., 9th February, 2018 (Myanmar Local Time).

5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of 1000 US Dollars. The payment will be made by cash.

The document will be delivered directly to the Bidders from the Department of Bridge's office;

Attention: U Shwe Lay, Director General, Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction.

U Kyaw Kaung Cho, Chief Engineer

Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction

Telephone: +95 67 407069, +95 67 407465

+95 67 407514 (International Relation and Legal Sub Division)

6. Bids must be submitted to the address below at or before 10:00 A.M., 23rd February, 2018. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 3,000,000 US Dollars. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the address below at 10:30 A.M., 23rd February, 2018 (Myanmar Local Time).

7. The Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of Bids.

8. The address referred to above is:

Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction

U Shwe Lay, Director General

Building No. 11, Naypyitaw, Myanmar

Telephone: +95 67 407069

Facsimile: +95 67 407 514

‘The Greatest Showman’ swings to top of Billboard 200 chart

LOS ANGELES — The soundtrack for circus musical “The Greatest Showman” climbed its way to the top of the US weekly Billboard 200 album chart on Monday, leaving offerings from Ed Sheeran and Taylor Swift as the runner-ups.

“The Greatest Showman” soundtrack, which features songs by the cast including Hugh Jackman, Zac Efron and Zendaya, sold another 106,000 total album units in the week ending on 4 January, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

The soundtrack’s lead song, “This Is Me,” won the Golden Globe award for best original song in a motion picture on

Sunday. The 20th Century Fox film, about circus entertainer PT Barnum, has grossed \$150 million worldwide since its 20 December release.

Sheeran’s “Divide” album remained at No 2 for a second week with sales of 67,000 units, while his single “Perfect” featuring Beyoncé held steady at No 1 on the Digital Songs chart with another 109,000 copies sold.

Swift’s “Reputation” album, which opened 2018 at the top of the Billboard 200 chart last week, dropped to No 3 with 48,000 units sold.

No new entries made the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart this week. —Reuters ■



Benj Pasek and Justin Paul hold the awards they won for Best Original Song - Motion Picture for “This Is Me” from the film “The Greatest Showman,” at the 75th Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, California, US on 7 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Chris Hemsworth open to play Thor post ‘Avengers 4’

LOS ANGELES — Actor Chris Hemsworth has said that if given an opportunity, he would love to keep on playing superhero Thor in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The 34-year-old actor will be next seen in “Avengers: Infinity War”, alongside other MCU veterans, such as Chris Evans, Robert Downey Jr, Scarlett Johansson, Mark Ruffalo and Jeremy Renner. “Avengers 4” will mark the final outing for Hemsworth as Thor. “If I had the opportunity to do it again, I think I’d love to. I also think there’s an appetite for it now, or there’s a far greater range of possibilities of where he can go now, what he can do, just because we’ve kind of broke the mould a bit,” Hemsworth told IGN.

“I’ve just, literally two days ago, finished ‘Avengers 4’ and

that’s my contract - my pre-existing contract is done now, so it’s kind of like ‘wow, that’s it,’” he added.

Hemsworth, who last appeared in the Taika Waititi-directed “Thor: Ragnarok”, said he has rediscovered his passion for the role. “Two or three films ago I was like ‘okay, a couple more’. I was enjoying it but I was like... I felt a little restricted. And after this last experience with Taika, and actually these last two ‘Avengers’, I feel like we’ve reinvented that character a number of times — even in these next two, he evolves again, and you don’t get that opportunity often in a franchise. “So I definitely feel a renewed sense of excitement and enthusiasm, and more so than ever, I think,” Hemsworth said.—PTI ■



Chris Hemsworth.
PHOTO: PTI

‘Roseanne’ star says revived show reflects Trump’s America

PASADENA, California — The March revival of hit 1990s television comedy “Roseanne” will show how a politically divided, working-class American family grapples with daily life and challenges after the election of US President Donald Trump, the show’s stars said on Monday.

Walt Disney Co’s ABC broadcast network is bringing back “Roseanne,” starring Roseanne Barr and John Goodman, for nine episodes starting on 27 March.

In the new episodes, the titular Roseanne, played by Barr, is now a grandmother who voted for Trump and at times clashes with family members and friends with opposing views, the show’s cast and producers said at a Television Critics Association event.

The original “Roseanne” aired from 1988 to 1997 and was the most-watched show on US television in 1989 and 1990. It featured a blue-collar family, the Conners, with overweight parents struggling to get by in the fictional town of Lanford, Illinois.

The series was praised for its realistic portrayal of a working-class family in the United States, and Barr said she wanted the revival to also present a true-to-life portrait of a country in which half the voters



Actress Roseanne Barr. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

chose Trump.

“It was the working-class people who elected Trump,” Barr said. “I felt that was very real and something that needed to be discussed.”

Barr herself has spoken in support of Trump, but the show’s producers said the series does not advocate a political stance.

“There is no agenda on anybody’s part but to get honest feelings out there within a family that’s relateable,” executive producer Bruce Helford said.

Many original cast members returned for the revival including Goodman, who plays Roseanne’s husband Dan, and Sara Gilbert,

who portrays daughter Darlene.

Gilbert said the new episodes show a family “that is divided by politics but still filled with love.”

The revival will also deal with topical issues such as opioid addiction and access to health-care, Helford said.

Michael Fishman, who plays Roseanne’s son DJ, said the show lets the characters debate important issues in a way that does not always happen in today’s real-life society.

“We have the conversation about why we don’t agree,” Fishman said. “That dialogue is kind of missing.”—Reuters ■



Ancient finding in Peru sheds light on desert society — archaeologist

LIMA — Archaeologists have discovered two chambers used for political ceremonies on Peru's desert coast more than 1,500 years ago that had previously only been glimpsed in the illustrations of the ancient Moche people, an archaeologist said on Monday.

The finding, at the ruins of the Limon archaeological complex in the region of Lambayeque, will provide key clues to understanding the Moche's political life before the desert society's sudden decline, said lead archaeologist Walter Alva.

One room features two thrones where a powerful leader and guest likely enjoyed elaborate feasts, said Alva. The other has a circular podium, possibly for making announcements.

The events that took place in the chambers were so important they had been featured repeatedly on Moche ceramics, Alva said. "These scenes had been depicted in the iconography of the Moche world but we had never been lucky enough to physically find where they took place," he said. "It's a very important finding."

The Moche, one of several

complex societies that thrived in Peru long before the rise of the Incan empire, ruled over a vast swath of coastal desert from 100 to 700 AD, thanks to irrigation canals they built to grow crops in desert valleys. The Moche are known for their elaborate gold work and sculptures featuring a wide variety of sexual acts.

Many researchers believe a disastrous climate event, such as the El Nino phenomena that still triggers severe flooding in northern Peru, probably led to the collapse of Moche society.

Alva said construction on part of the recently unearthed chambers appears to have halted abruptly in the 5th century. The rooms were believed to have been used only by the elite, and paintings of fish and sea lions can be seen on the walls.

Women are believed to have held political and religious positions in Moche society. Last year, Peruvian officials and archaeologists unveiled a replica of the face of an ancient female Moche ruler, the Lady of Cao, whose elaborately tattooed body had been buried with weapons and gold objects.

—Reuters ■

Rock N Roll Journey for Emperor fans

Rocker Zaw Win Htut and Emperor's Rock N Roll Journey concert will be held on January 20 in the Rose Garden hotel in Yangon.

"Whenever Zaw Win Htut holds a concert, we first all gather at our Emperor Fan Club, then go together to watch it. We all want to watch his one man show. That's why we organized the concert. Tickets will be sold

from our Emperor Fan Facebook page to make it convenient for fans across Myanmar to get tickets," said the organizer of the concert.

The intention of holding the concert is for online fans to meet each other in person.

"They want to listen to his old songs and latest songs," he said.

In the past he usually plans

to play 30 songs in concert, but he ends up playing more.

"If he sings about 60 songs at this concert, the show will be last till 3 or 4 AM. He said he was going to sing the songs from his latest album titled Journey 1 also," the organizer said.

The name of the concert "Rock N Roll Journey" is after the name of his latest album, he added.—Ko Linn ■

Asia's largest toys fair opens in Hong Kong with latest innovative products

HONG KONG — The Hong Kong Toys & Games Fair, the largest of its kind in Asia and second largest in the world, opened on Monday at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, with over 2,000 global exhibitors showcasing a broad selection of the latest innovative products.

The fair, organized by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) every year, features this year about 2,100 exhibitors from 45 countries and regions.

Besides six group pavilions showcasing the latest toys and games from around the world, the fair also includes a Brand Name Gallery that features more than 240 renowned brands from 18 countries and regions, a Smart-Tech Toys zone that gathers a myriad of innovative toys and games incorporating the latest AR/VR/MR technologies and mobile applications,

a Kidult World that showcases toys for grown-ups, as well as a Pet Toys zone.

The Hong Kong Toys & Games Fair was held concurrently with the Hong Kong Baby Products Fair and the Hong Kong International Stationery Fair. The three events will last for four days and feature more than 2,940 global exhibitors in total.

HKTDC said it has organized more than 120 buying missions from 65 countries and regions, inviting some 9,000 buyers from about 6,200 companies to visit and source at the three fairs.

HKTDC Acting Executive Director Benjamin Chau said the three fairs present a diverse lineup of innovative products, including educational toys that inspire fun learning, toys and baby products that incorporate smart technologies, as well as eco-friendly stationery items that showcase creative designs, meeting the various sourcing

needs of global buyers.

"These spectacular fairs provide a platform in the coming four days for international suppliers and buyers to do busi-

ness," Philip Yung, permanent secretary for commerce and economic development of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, said at

the opening ceremony, "Outside this exhibition hall, Hong Kong provides an effective platform for the wider business community."

—Xinhua ■



People visit the 44th Hong Kong Toys and Games Fair in Hong Kong, south China on 8 January, 2018. The 4-day event started at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center on Monday. PHOTO: XINHUA

Ex-Eagle Murray gets winner for Seagulls with VAR quiet

BRIGHTON, Britain — An 87th minute goal from substitute Glenn Murray gave Brighton & Hove Albion a 2-1 win over Crystal Palace in the FA Cup third round on Monday in the first competitive English game to feature use of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR).

The new technology did not get used for any reviews during the game which took place without any real controversy apart from some questions over former Palace striker Murray's goal.

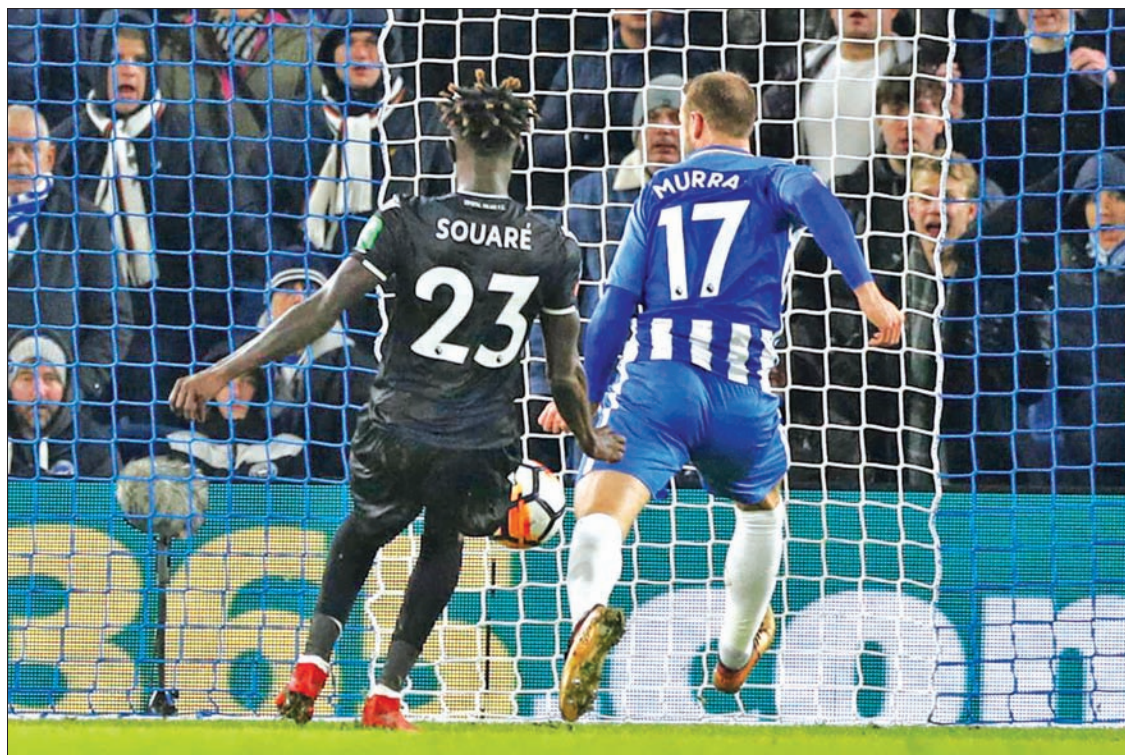
Brighton took the lead in the 25th minute when Argentine full-back Ezequiel Schelotto fed Dale Stephens and the midfielder's low right foot drive beat Palace keeper Wayne Hennessey who will be disappointed he did not

save at his near post.

Bakary Sako, who had been the main threat for Palace throughout, pulled the London side level when he took advantage of space outside the Brighton box and hammered home a fierce drive.

Sam Baldock hit the post for Brighton and Beram Kayal blasted over from a promising position as the home side pushed for a winner but it was the experienced Murray who sank Palace's hopes of earning a replay.

A looping header goalwards from Uwe Hunemeier was touched over the line by Murray's knee and despite some appeals for handball there was no use of the review system. Television replays suggested the



Brighton's Glenn Murray scores their second goal during the FA Cup Third Round match between Brighton & Hove Albion and Crystal Palace at The American Express Community Stadium in Brighton, Britain on 8 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

goal was legal.

VAR involves two video assistant referees watching the on-pitch action remotely and then drawing the match referee's attention to officiating mistakes.

The VAR system has already been used in several leagues including the Bundesliga and Italy's Serie A and could feature in this year's World Cup in Russia in June and July.

Soccer's law-making body IFAB is expected to decide next March whether to allow video assistant referees to become part of the game on a permanent basis. — Reuters ■

South Australian state upgrades facilities in bid to host world-class tennis events

CANBERRA — South Australian authorities have announced an ambitious 150 million Australian dollar (about 117 million USD) plan to bring world-class tennis back to the state.

The proposal would see 150 million Australian dollars spent on upgrading Adelaide's Memorial Drive tennis center which would include increased capacity for spectators and a retractable roof being added to the venue.

Australia's federal government has committed 10 million dollars to the project with Tennis South Australia CEO Seven Baldas now working to secure the remaining funding.

"We have been working with all levels of government to ensure that this project has the support it needs throughout the project," Baldas said in a media release on Monday evening.

"All of our research has shown that it will build

upon the already significant economic benefits sporting events contribute to our state and will help attract more events to the Riverbank," Baldas added.

Craig Tiley, CEO of Tennis Australia, said that another world-class tennis venue in Australia could only be a positive for the sport.

"South Australia has a rich tennis history and the state has produced some of our country's biggest names in the sport," Tiley said.

"There is a need for a 21st Century facility that can be filled with new, fresh content... we believe that with facilities such as these...Adelaide can gain international prominence on the global tennis calendar," Tiley added.

Adelaide hosted the Australian Open 14 times between its inception in 1905, when it was known as the Australasian Championships. It permanently moved to Melbourne in 1972.—Reuters ■



File photo taken in November 2010 shows Japanese canoeist Yasuhiro Suzuki competing at the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Sprinter spiked rival's drink, causing positive drug test

TOKYO—One of Japan's top sprint canoeists has been banned from competition for eight years for spiking his rival's drink with a prohibited substance, causing him to fail a doping test, the Japan Anti-Doping Agency said on Tuesday.

The incident took place at the national canoe sprint championship last September in Komatsu, Ishikawa Prefecture, where the perpetrator, 32-year-old Yasuhiro Suzuki, and the victim,

25-year-old Seiji Komatsu, were both competing, according to the Japan Canoe Federation.

The two had been considered among the top prospects to represent Japan at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and were teammates at last year's canoe sprint world championships in the Czech Republic, where Suzuki finished 24th in the men's K1 5000 meters. Komatsu was a member of the K4 500m crew which reached the semi-finals.

An investigation by the canoe federation found that Suzuki drugged his rival for Olympic team selection in order to cause his disqualification.

After Komatsu tested positive, Suzuki admitted putting a muscle-building supplement containing a banned substance in his drink. JADA handed down the eight-year ban. Komatsu had his disqualification and temporary ban for failing the test overturned.—Kyodo News ■