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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

State Counsellor holds talks with Advisory Board for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received H.E. Prof. Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State and its members at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 3:00 pm on 22 January 2018. During

the meeting, matters relating to the implementation of the recommendations on Rakhine State recommended by Kofi Annan's Commission and the work plan of the Advisory Board were discussed.

This was the first meeting of the Advisory Board with the State Counsellor since its inception.

The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by former UN Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan released its final report with 88 recommendations in August 2017. The Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State comprising representatives from the relevant Ministries headed by the Union

Minister for the Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has been implementing the recommendations. The Advisory Board was formed with nationals, regional and international experts on 14 December 2017 in order to support the work of the Implementation Committee.

The State Counsellor also

hosted a dinner in honour of Chairman Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai and members of Advisory Board at Shwe San Ain Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.

Also present at the meeting were Union Ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe, U Thaung Tun, Dr Win Myat Aye and U Kyaw Tin and officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■



'BEST BANK IN MYANMAR'

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Pyithu Hluttaw discusses investment opportunities, farmer loans

Myo Myint,
Hmwe Kyu Zin

Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency has submitted a motion urging the government to create investment opportunities for the development of labour intensive industries.

She made the request during the fourth-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw held yesterday.

While submitting her motion, Daw Cho Cho said Myanmar had the advantage of being a strategic country situated between two major global economic powers, and its natural resources and human resources, in terms of youth population, were an added strength for countries interested in investing in Myanmar.

Investments flowing into the least developed regions will help create job opportunities, raise the living standards, and reduce poverty and socio-economic disparity, besides ensuring sustainable development, she added.

For the regions to develop in tandem, good economic and investment environments must be created by setting up, support-

ing and implementing a trade and investment policy that is appropriate for ethnic nationals, systematically and effectively, noted Daw Cho Cho.

The motion was supported by U Tun Tun of Pwintbyu constituency and the Hluttaw decided to accept and debate the motion. An announcement was made requesting Hluttaw representatives to enrol their names for discussion before 4 pm on 23 January, 2018.

Next, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Htun responded to a question raised by U Zaw Min Thein of Laymyethna constituency on a plan to collect town entry fees in more appropriate ways. He said that in coordination with the governments of the states, Rakhine and Kayah states were no longer collecting town entry fees. The Kachin State government is issuing an instruction to stop the collection of the town entry fee, while the Taninthayi region government will stop collecting it in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The remaining states and regions have no plans to stop collecting it, stated U Aung Myin Htun.



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

Later, U Khin Cho of Hlaing-bwe Township raised a question on the plan to adjust the daily training allowance fees to a rate that is in accordance with the current market prices, as government employees going for training courses away from their assigned duty station were being paid only Ks500 per day under the travelling allowance law.

Replying to question, Ministry of Finance and Planning Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win said a daily allowance limit had been set at Ks1,700 per day from 2014, but the training allowance was still Ks500 per day. Currently, the daily allowance during the travel period is Ks3,000 per

day. It has been observed that there is a need to adjust the allowance rates for government employees attending long-term training courses away from their duty station, and the rate should be the same for all departments, said the deputy minister.

The Ministry of Finance and Planning will first review the rates and will arrange to propose them to the government after obtaining comments from the concerned departments and organisations, said the deputy minister. Replying to a question raised by U Thein Tun of Kyaunggon constituency on the effectiveness of JICA two-step loans for small-scale farmers, Deputy Minister U

Maung Maung Win said Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank has been providing JICA two-step loans countrywide from the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Farmers who want to obtain these loans must apply to the township's Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank, and after an assessment by the bank is made in stages, those eligible will be provided the loans by the township branch banks.

Individual farmers who own up to 50 acres can apply for a maximum loan amount of Ks50 million, while farmers' associations and groups can apply for a maximum loan amount of Ks500 million. This loan is not for farming expenses but to support the transition to mechanised farming and is not based on a per acre rate but rather on an assessment of whether the loan applicant is within the rules and criteria set for the loan, and an appropriate amount has been loaned, said the deputy minister.

The interest rate of 8 per cent is a fair rate, and this interest rate supports the country's money circulation system, added the deputy minister.

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Amyotha Hluttaw discusses child care, English teaching

Aye Aye Thant,
Myo Thu Hein

IN the 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 7th regular session fourth day meeting held yesterday morning in Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall, a bill and a motion was discussed.

A bill to amend the Early Child Care and Development Law was first debated by Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Latt of Bago Region constituency 3, Daw Ei Ei Pyone of Ayeyawady Region constituency 8, U Soe Thein @ U Maung Soe of Taninthayi Region constituency 10 and Naw Hla Hla Soe of Yangon Region constituency 10.

A motion tabled by Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency 11 urging the government to change the curriculum, teaching and examination system of English starting from grade 9 into 4 skills—reading, writing, speaking, listening system was then debated by Hluttaw representatives.

U Hla San of Magway Region constituency 1 supported the motion and said possibility of success were observed in the currently conducted speaking and listening skill lessons in KG (kin-

dergarten) and KG+1 Grade 1. As they went on to higher grades and upon reaching Grade 9 and beyond until they complete the basic education, it is to be thought out whether there is a possibility of success.

The role of the teachers will become important. If the teachers are not well versed in the teaching methods and systems, only bright students will be able to learn well. Therefore teachers need to be trained so that they can teach future generation of Myanmar to be on the level of not only ASEAN but the world as well.

As English is becoming a bridge in the communication sector, technology sector, education sector and research sector, the motion is fully supported, said U Hla San. U Chit Htwe of Magway Region constituency 3 said the motion is related to KG+12 (2016-2021) national education strategic plan where KG, Grade 1 and Grade 2 will begin on 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively and Myanmar curriculum committee is said to complete the curriculum to Grade 12 by 2022.

The new curriculum will



Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

include the English curriculum of the proposed motion such as teaching system and assessment system (examination) that is according to the four skills assessment system. Therefore, the motion is believed to be the same as the national education strategic plan that is being implemented.

Tatmadaw representative Major Khin Maung Cho next discussed about modern teaching method widely used being teaching by activity, sight and sound. Teaching and learning were done throughout the history of human being and teachers can teach to students according to their level and age only when they them-

selves are trained.

He added that there is no short cut in education and a result could not be achieved in a short while. To be skillful in four skills depend upon the skilled persons leading the Ministry of Education, parents, teachers and students.

U Min Oo of Bago constituency 6, U Zon Hle Htan of Chin State constituency 4 and U Khin Win of Magway Region constituency 2 also discussed the motion.

In discussing the motion, Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi said primary education is the basic foundation of the entire education system and for primary teachers to have

experience and to be of better quality, skill requirements and appointment system of primary, middle and high school teachers need to be modified. Grade 1 English language text book for education year 2017-2018 is prepared for the development of four skills.

Curriculum is drawn so that in the teaching of English subject, four skills are taught with participatory method and interactive method. In education year 2022-2023, Grade 1 to Grade 12 will be teaching under a new curriculum that is based on four skills said the Union Minister.

The Union Minister proposed to put the motion on record but Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency 11 who tabled the motion requested for Hluttaw decision's to approve the motion. The motion was put to the vote, and there were 96 votes for and 102 against the motion, with 1 abstentions.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced that the motion will be put on record. 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 7th regular session fifth day meeting will be held in 23 January it is learnt. ■

Locals in Rakhine State receive free dental care

DENTISTS from the Myanmar Dental Association has provided medical care to local people Rakhine State.

The medical team comprising of 20 dentists from the association and three local dentists launched their services in Sittway yesterday, providing care to the local people.

So far, more than 150 patients have registered to receive care in Sittway in, according to Shwe Garunar Foundation which jointly conducted the third mobile dental care programme with the association.

The team will provide care to people in Yathedaung Township on 23 January, in Pauktaw on 24 January, in Ponnagyun on 25 January, in Kyauktaw on 26th January and Myebon on 27 January.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of

Health and Sports will provide healthcare services at camps that will start scrutinising and accepting displaced persons from 23 January, under an agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh, according to Director General Dr Tha Tun Kyaw of the Public Health Department, according to Dr. Thar Tun Kyaw, Director-General of the Public Health Department.

The director general said the ministry had already finalised its healthcare programme that will be provided at the repatriation camps. The repatriation programme involves officials of the department and its partners, such as the WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNOPS of the UN. These officials have arrived here to introduce management functions.— Tin Tun (IPRD) ■



in
Picture

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi hosts dinner in honour of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State on 23 January, 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY (NEWS ON PAGE-1)**

FDI likely to exceed target of \$6 billion this FY

FOREIGN direct investment (FDI) inflows into the country may possibly exceed the target of US\$6 billion for the current fiscal year within two months, according to a report in Myawady Daily last Sunday.

Investments worth \$5.2 billion have already been made in the country so far, and it is likely to exceed the expected amount, U Than Aung Kyaw, vice director-general of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, told Myawady Daily.

Some 185 enterprises were approved and endorsed by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC), as of mid January, with estimated capital of \$4.27 million. However, the FDI inflow reached more than \$4.95 million with additional capital.

Under the special economic zones law, an FDI of \$280 million flowed into Thilawa Special Economic Zone this FY. The MIC has targeted FDI of \$6 billion yearly until 2020. Singapore made the largest investments in the country, while a few other foreign companies were found to have made their investments through Singapore. — GNLM ■

Anti-corruption head declares war on bribery, malfeasance

U AUNG KYI, the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, yesterday described corruption as “our common enemy” and said a two-year plan was being formulated to systematically rid the country of bribery, immorality and malpractice.

His remarks came at an event yesterday morning at the paper reading ceremony at the Park Royal Hotel in Yangon.

The paper reading on anti-corruption was jointly organized by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with the title of “Promote Integrity to Counter Corruption”.

“To combat corruption is like waging a war, which will need an all-inclusive approach with long-term plans”, U Aung Kyi said yesterday.

The war against corruption will start with educational efforts to change the attitude towards bribery and malpractice, especially among young people, he said.

“We are making many systematic plans such as giving educative lessons, uplifting morality and making preventive measures across the country. Moreover, a 2018 work-plan is being conducted in order to

carry out this plan systematically. It is a fact that we cannot get fruitful results without determination and high morality in the long run”, U Aung Kyi said.

To detest and reject corruption and eliminate it from society is one of the goals of the plan, he said

“Not only our commission, but also governmental departments cannot fight corruption alone, which is why we need co-operation and inclusiveness in order to compel and eliminate it once and for all”.

The cooperation will be among all level of organizations



Economist Dr Aung Tun Thet. **PHOTO: MNA**

and age groups, U Aung Kyi said. Included in this effort will be closer scrutiny and action on complaint letters within the rules and regulations.

“As a result, I believe we

can make great progress in handling this issue within a period of two months”, he said.

“We should bear in our mind that bribery is a crime which should not be tolerated in our country.

It is our duty to point out the weakness and to combat this malpractice with a conscientious spirit”.

The commission’s aim, he said, is to lift the moral standards of citizens while they are still young. “Corruption should be regarded as our common enemy, which we must try to wipe out in our society”, he said. — Ye Ye Myint and Nandar Win ■



Participants pose for a documentary photo at the paper reading on anti-corruption jointly organised by the Anti-Corruption Commission and UNODC. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

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Buddha's footprints and Mann Shwesettaw pagoda festival opened yesterday

THE ceremony for the lower and upper footprints in Mann Shwesettaw and the 2585 session of pagoda's festival were opened at the gateway of a special bridge at the lower footprint on the 5th waxing of Tabodwe, Sunday morning.

The patron Sayadaw of the Region, the Magway Chief Minister Dr. Aung Moe Nyo and Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Min Oo opened the ceremony. The festival is scheduled from 21 January to 17 April.

Pilgrims can visit Mann Shwesettaw all year round because the bridge, named Hlaytin on the three mile road has been completely built, with the help of donations from people. The opening ceremony was crowded with guests from different places—Myanmar Digital News ■



Opening ceremony of Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival held in Minbu Township, Magway Region. The festival of Mann Shwesettaw Pagoda takes place every summer. **PHOTO: THAN NAING OO (NGAPHE)**

900 star tortoises set free into Shwesettaw wildlife sanctuary

HUNDREDS of Burmese star tortoises, which are an endangered species, were re-introduced into the wild on 19 January, according to the WCS Myanmar.

A total of 900 star tortoises, which were successful breeding in captivity, were set free into the Shwesettaw wildlife sanctuary.

The captive-bred tortois-

es are from three different places; 150 tortoises from the Minsontaung wildlife sanctuary in Natogyi Township, 650 tortoises from Lawkanandar wildlife sanctuary in Bagan and 100 tortoises from Shwesettaw wildlife sanctuary in Minbu Township.

They were set free together into the forests with the intention of breeding a stronger

generation of the rare species.

"The endangered tortoises that we seized from smugglers were kept in a fenced in area in order to conduct a captive breeding program. The main intention is to set them free in their native habitat when they reach four or five years old," said Dr. Kalyar, director of the Turtle Survival Alliance.

The tortoises play a very

important role in their habitats, trees are grown from the feces the tortoises produce, she said.

For the last two years, 150 star tortoises were re-introduced into the Shwesettaw wildlife sanctuary for the first time ever in Myanmar, and 97 per cent of them are still alive now. —Myanmar Digital News ■

Discussion on night market and Naung Yar Lake conducted in Loikaw

A discussion that included the opening of a night market in Loikaw and construction projects that were undertaken to make Naung Yar Lake clean and beautiful was carried out at the hall of Kayah State Government yesterday morning.

An official from Township Municipal Association clarified

the measures that have been administered for equipping two fountain lights around the Naung Yar Lake, a drainage system that has been systematically managed without destroying the natural beauty of the Lake, a water supply system for vendors to use at the night market and car park-

ing facilities visitors and the vendors.

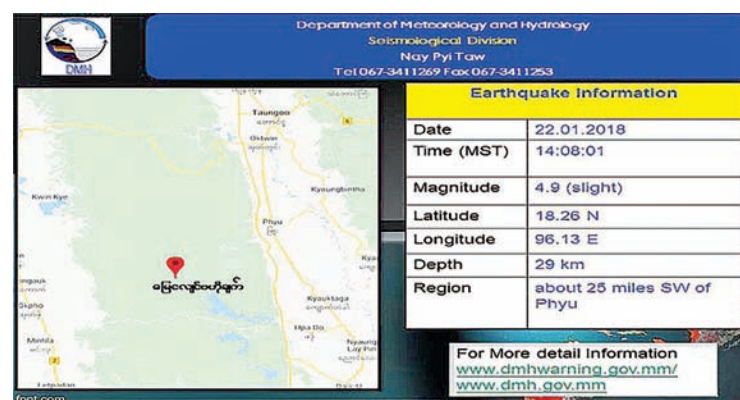
Afterwards, the State Minister U L Phaung Sho pointed out that the projects will proceed in the best way possible and not to be a burden for the public; in addition to reaching the target of completion in a timely fashion. The opening of

Naung Yar Lake's night market and the ceremony for upgrading Nanmalkhone Village-tract in Demawso and Loilinlay Village-tract in Loikaw to the status of town, this will coincide with the commemoration of Union Day which falls on 12 February.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Earthquake of magnitude 4.9 rocks Bago Region's Phyu Township

NO casualties were reported following a slight earthquake registering 4.9 on the Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar about 25 miles southwest of Phyu, latitude 18.26 °N, longitude 96.13 °E, depth 29 kilometers about 95 miles north

of Kaba-Aye seismological observatory was recorded at 2:08 pm yesterday, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology. Myanmar has had 28 earthquakes during the period from 1 to 22 January.—Myanmar Digital News ■



Pigeon pea farmers face losses due to low price, high production

PIGEON pea prices have declined in the country's markets, except Yangon, following fresh supply from the main producing regions of Sagaing and Mandalay, according to a report in Myanmar Alinn yesterday.

The farmers are facing losses, as they are not able to cover the cultivation costs.

A basket of pigeon peas fetches slightly more than Ks13,000 if the peas are pure. The inferior pea variety brings in only Ks10,000, while the cultivation cost is above Ks100,000. When the price declines, farmers cannot cover the harvesting cost, U Aung Aung, a farmer from Kyaukpadaung Township, told Myanmar Alinn. An acre produces only 10 baskets of pigeon peas. Some 75 to 90 baskets enter the depots in the towns daily. Freshly produced pigeon peas fetch Ks13,000 to Ks13,500 per basket, whereas the prices of old stock range from Ks11,000 to Ks11,600 per basket.



Farmers harvest pea on a farm in Mandalay Region. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY) targeted cultivating pigeon peas on more than 550,000 acres in the Sagaing Region. However, the pigeon pea farmlands surpassed the target. Pigeon peas are primarily cultivated in Kanbalu District on more than 150,000 acres, followed by Monywa District with 130,000 acres.

Pigeon pea exports earned US\$159 million in the 2015-2016 FY. With the demand for pigeon peas from India plunging, only

\$91 million was received as income from pigeon pea exports in the current FY.

The restriction on the import of pulses in India drove the pigeon pea prices down. The government will control the purchasing cost of pigeon peas with an allocated fund of Ks15 billion, if the price of a tonne of pigeon peas drops below Ks300,000, which is less than the cultivation cost, according to the Commerce Ministry. — Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

KBZ tops list of tax payers for six consecutive years

THE Internal Revenue Department announced yesterday that Kanbawza Bank (KBZ) had topped the list of corporate tax payers in the 2016-2017 fiscal year (FY).

KBZ paid more than Ks28 billion in tax during the year, making it the largest income tax payer for six consecutive years.

According to data published by the Finance and Planning Ministry's internal revenue department, KBZ paid more than Ks6 billion in the 2011-2012 FY, Ks10 billion in the 2012-2013 FY, Ks17 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, Ks22 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, and Ks23 billion in the 2015-2016 FY.

Meanwhile, KBZ paid the state Ks32 billion in prepaid tax for the 2017-2018 FY and is paying Ks38 billion for the 2018-2019 FY.

KBZ Bank offers its services nationwide, with more than 1,000 ATM machines and employing more than 20,000 employees, in accordance with the guidance of the Central Bank of Myanmar. The bank has also opened representative offices in Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

The bank has won local and international awards from global financial institutions, including Financial Times, Euromoney, World Finance, Asian Banking and Finance, Asia Money, Finance Asia and Business Initiative Directors.

It has also spent more than Ks138 billion so far on its nationwide philanthropic works, including education, health, regional development and disaster preparedness, through its KBZ Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation. —Thura Lwin (Eco)■

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Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu discusses matters relating to riots in Yathedaung and Mrauk U in Rakhine with state ministers, CSOs and officials. **PHOTO: MNA**

Rakhine State CM meets ministers and state level departments, town elders, CSOs and media

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu met with state ministers, state level departments, town elders, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the media at Rakhine State government office meeting hall and discussed about events

in Yathedaung and Mrauk U towns in Rakhine State.

At the meeting Chief Minister U Nyi Pu said legal action will be taken against related persons in the Yathedaung and Mrauk U towns events and all are urged to cooperate for state

stability and development.

Meeting attendees then discussed and provided suggestion followed by state government secretary U Tin Maung Swe explaining about the Mrauk U event. — Win Mon Soe (IPRD) ■

Opening ceremony of extension school building donated by Republic of Korea

AN opening ceremony of an extension school building donated by Seok Sung Scholarship Foundation, Republic of Korea was held yesterday morning at Basic Education High School No. 3, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region.

At first, the extension school building was opened when Thanlyin Township Yangon Region Hluttaw representative U Nay Lin Aung, Yangon Region Head of Education office director (planning and finance) Daw Myint Myint Than, Township Head of Education U Thet Sein, headmistress Daw Nwe Ni Aye and donors cut the ceremonial ribbon. Next, Seok Sung Scholarship Foundation Chairman Mr. Cho Young Keun and member Mr. Choi Yoon Hee delivered speeches and then hand-



An opening ceremony of extension school takes place in Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

ed over to Township Head of Education the documents related to the extension school building. Afterwards, District Education Office Assistant Director Daw Thin Thin Myat and school trustee chairman U Aung Min

Tun gave speeches of appreciation. The extension school building opened was a 60x30 ft. two classrooms building and is the fourth building that had been donated it is learnt. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw discusses investment...

FROM PAGE-2

JICA two step-loans were started in February 2017, and some 53 farmers from Nay Pyi Taw council and the four regions of Bago, Mandalay, Sagaing and Ayeyawady were provided with a total loan amount of Ks1,859.13 million, stated the deputy minister. The deputy minister concluded

that the aims of JICA two-step loans were to transform traditional farming into mechanised farming, increase the production rate and provide financial support for balanced development in the rural and urban areas.

Questions raised by Dr. U Aung Khin of Pyin Oo Lwin constituency on opening a child

day-care centre in Pyin Oo Lwin Town and by U Aung Kyaw Zan of Pauktaw constituency on plans to construct three cyclone shelters in Pauktaw Township were then answered by Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye. Meanwhile, questions raised by U Sai Ngaung Hsiang Hein of

Maukmai constituency on the plan for a waste disposal and collection system country-wide and by U Kyaw Min Hlaing of Ottarathiri constituency on the plan to prevent embankment erosion and inundation of farm lands near Taungnyo Creek, Nattaung Creek and Tagunding Creek were answered by Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Htun.

U Maung Maung Win also responded to questions raised by U

Kan Myint of Thayet constituency on the plan to construct a new bank building for Thayet District bank, which is now operating out of an old and dangerous building, and by Daw Nan Moe of Mongton constituency on the plan to open a Myanmar Economic Bank branch in Mongton Township. During the day's meeting, a total of nine questions were raised and a motion related to foreign investment was submitted. ■

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 Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis
President of Romania
Dear Mr. President,**

On the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Union of Myanmar, I would like to convey my sincerest congratulations along with my best wishes of good health, happiness and prosperity, to you and to the Myanmar people.

I take this opportunity to express my confidence that the relations between Romania and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will continue to strengthen and diversify to the benefit of our nations.

Dear Mr. President I take this opportunity to reiterate the assurances of my highest consideration.

Foreign Head of State sends felicitations to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The following is message of felicitations from Foreign Head 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 Mr. Teodor Melescanu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania
Dear Minister,**

It is with great pleasure that I convey my warm congratulations on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. I would like to address to you and to the friendly people of Myanmar my sincere wishes of peace and prosperity, as well as success in the complex process of democratic transformation and development.

I take this festive opportunity to express my confidence that our traditional ties will continue to strengthen and diversify to the benefit of our nations.

Please accept, dear Minister, the expression of my highest consideration.

Anti-corruption is the duty of every citizen: Chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission

Interview: Yi Yi Myint,
Nanda Win
PHOTO: YE HTUT

Following is the interview with the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission and experts at the paper reading ceremony in Yangon yesterday.

U Aung Kyi, Chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission

First, we aimed at keeping in touch with other CSOs in order to work hand in hand together. There are many steps which need to be adopted to combat Corruption. All the commission members arrived here to present their papers and we want to put some of the facts which are useful in our scheme. It is just like collecting data and we will analyze all the facts after the discussion. We could make great progress in our commission compared to the outcomes of previous years. It is mainly due to making the process easier than ever. We take all the complaints into careful consideration, and respond it rapidly. The corruption is a cause of poverty in a country. All citizens desire to eliminate the corruption. We are making efforts to satisfy the people and to fulfill their demands as much as we can. I would like to urge all our citizens not to neglect and forgive the act of taking bribery. We do need to operate with all of you to combat these malpractices together. Anti-corruption is the duty of every citizen.

Prof. Dr. Aung Tun Thet, an economist



U Aung Kyi, Chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission

I would like to urge all the businessmen not to involve in the corruption. There are three stages which are the State level, the private sector and CSOs. All of them need avoiding these malpractices. Everyone should change their mindset and perform these tasks dutifully. We need to make concerted efforts to wipe out this corruption in our society. Taking bribery depends on individuals and it needs to tackle with one by one. Any amount of money can be regarded as bribery. It is important for the government, government servants and businessmen to cooperate together to wipe out this practice.

These events are a step toward eradicating corruption in Myanmar

U Khin Maung Nyo (economist)

Our country is now in the democracy transition. In going



Prof. Dr. Aung Tun Thet, an economist

toward democracy, there are good as well as bad things. There are many ways to control bad deeds. This is the good thing. However, there are also many ways in which bad things can be done. Simply going down a democracy path wouldn't reduce corruption automatically. There are two ways. First is stick and carrot. Another is to make the habits better. These are the things that I'll discuss. Commission will listen to what civil society organisations say here. As organisations from all regions come, it is expected that what is happening in these regions will be known. This event is a step toward eradicating corruption in Myanmar. Suggestions will be collected here. It'll be the next step. I'm saying this especially for the government employees. On one part, we'll have to fulfill their requirements and on the other part, we'll have to raise their integrity. Another



U Khin Maung Nyo (economist)

thing is we need methods that can prevent corruption as well as organisations. All of these need to be done.

People are seen to cooperate in corruption eradication

U Han Nyunt (Anti-corruption Commission member)

The title of today's talk is "Promote integrity to prevent corruption." Corruption can be eradicated only when the people's integrities are raised. It couldn't be done solely by Anti-Corruption Commission or a single responsible organisation. That is why anti-corruption law includes cooperating with the people and educating the people. The law especially includes the commission and the people to cooperate based on the knowledge gained. It can be seen that the people are cooperating to eradicate corruption. We need to have basic knowledge in order to cooper-



U Han Nyunt (Anti-corruption Commission member)

ate. As knowledge, experience and skills increases, integrity can be maintained. There must be knowledge and experience in order to maintain integrity. That is why (all need to know) what sort of ways and means there are to eradicate corruption. Need to know the plans, aims, future works. Nowadays, state-run daily newspapers are publishing about amendments in the anti-corruption law. The amendments are to raise the integrity of the people, add in requirements, removes the weaknesses and flaws in the law. The people's wishes and wills are being pursued. Our commission alone couldn't do the corruption eradication work. We need to cooperate with the people. We need the help and information from the people for this work to be successful. That is why I'm inviting the people to cooperate, participate, suggest and help. ■
(Unofficial translation)

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun meets IPRD officials

DEPUTY Minister U Aung Hla Tun met with officials of states', regions' and districts' Information and Public Relations Departments (IPRDs) yesterday afternoon at the Ministry of Information office, Nay Pyi Taw, and urged them to develop the right to obtain information during the transition period to a democracy and raise the image of the country on the international stage.

At the meeting, the deputy minister said the level of interest in the country was high for various reasons. The

country is facing many challenges during its transition period, and while the government-owned media has been ineffective in promoting the country's image on the international stage, the private newspapers have been in existence for only three to five years. Thus, the country's image is in the hands of the international media, he noted.

"We need to increase access to information and speed up the flow of information systematically, and our ministry plays a major

role in this," said the deputy minister.

Next, officials from states', regions' and districts' IPRDs explained about acquiring and reporting on regional news and the difficulties faced, while IPRD Director-General U Ye Naing reported on a plan to conduct training sessions on news writing, reporting, law, rules and ethics to improve the flow of correct information. The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the deputy minister. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Director-General U Ye Naing reports on the plans to conduct training sessions at the meeting with Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

New initiatives for anti-corruption

VERY recently, a township judge, a township judicial officer and a higher grade pleader were sued for their involvement in a case, in which they took several million kyats of bribes from the defendant arrested under the Myanmar Forest Act, for returning the car seized as the evidence of the case to its owner, without confiscating it as national revenue. Those who have been entrusted to dispense justice are absconding without facing trial, it was said. Here, we must consider how long and how far they will escape the long arm of the law. Therefore we need to take a good lesson from this event for anyone who breaks the law for personal benefits, and misuse of power and authority will have to face punishment in accordance with the law.

Corruption can severely damage the dignity and image of every individual involved as well as the national image and the dignity of its citizens.

Most of the Myanmar citizens believe that bribery and corruption is firmly deep-rooted everywhere in the nation—ranging from the bottom level taking meager amounts of money up to the higher levels taking billion of kyats. All over the world the corruption perception index is an indication of how the whole world looks at a certain country. Eradication of bribery and corruption to perfection must be said to be our national goal. It is now learnt that the anti-corruption law [draft-fourth amendment] had been publicized for the public to study and give suggestions. In the draft, old sections which hindered the former commission from performing its duties properly have been substituted with new sections. According to the assumptions and conclusions from the public, the newly formed anti-corruption commission will be able to perform its duties more actively and effectively.

Corruption can severely damage the dignity and image of every individual involved as well as the national image and the dignity of its citizens. In a country where corruption is firmly deep-rooted, there will be a whole slew of scourges and evil effects such as lowering the character of its people, lack of rule of law, loss of natural resources, inability to get out of the vicious cycle of poverty, wastage of national revenues, being in the least-developed status and so on. Therefore, we warmly welcome the new initiatives of the Anti-Corruption Commission whole heartedly. ■

Online-Orientated Jobs Popular With Today's Youths

By Khin Yadanar

BUSYING himself all day long with the photos and video files taken along the trip, a lad will get wages equivalent to US \$ 50 just by posting about the experiences with these photos attached, online. He is a blogger named Ko Phyo Wai Win who is writing itinerary reviews and introductory remarks on commodities online. He recounted, “Our start-up investment for the job is our technical know-how. We had to make photos more attractive and we had to present stories about our trips for readers to become more interested in what we want to say. These days, people would not like to read much any longer, so we had to present about the trips, short to the point. Occasionally, some companies sponsored us for trips whereas some companies commissioned us to introduce their commodities with customers. We had to write reviews on commodities. Sometimes, we had to write about organizations and institutions. Nowadays, it is a very popular job.”

It can be said to be a self-employed job. Simultaneously, youths are more becoming interested in the job as they have an access to get extra-income from part-time jobs while working household chores or studying. In global countries as well, people chose this jobs as extra income sources, to cover household expenses or tuition fees.

Ko Maung Maung Myo, a blogger who is sharing knowledge on technology said, “Some have thought that it is a very easy way to earn by writing online. In fact, we found it difficult frequently. I have got 4 web pages of my own, through which I earn money. It is not the authorized selling depot, but it is beneficial for me as well as my customers. I tried my best by writing what I enthusiastically want to write, so as to attract my customers. With the increasing amounts of readers, customers are coming automatically.”

Popularity of drawing pictures, sale of songs and pho-



tographic industry through online had reached for more than one-year period, becoming an online market. Sharing between fan pages also can fetch extra incomes, it was learnt. Ko Ye Htut, a third-year university student majoring in English recounted, “In the past, there used to be kind of selling games, just for fun. Later, music and lyrics had been sold out, and it worked to considerable extent, apart from some difficulties. Out of being unable to have ours patented, we had to be satisfied with meager amounts. At present, due to lack of official restrictions for online businesses, there are many advantages and disadvantages in running the task.”

According to the operators running businesses, time of decision to launch the private business is of great importance and it will be much beneficial by preparing in advance, since before launching. Ko Phyo Wai Win disclosed, “I invest time in my job, travelling twice a week. I collected cameras and recorder for my trips. I had to look for facts beforehand, concerning what I must write. For example, if a kind of flower will be an attraction of the region I will go, I would have read it thoroughly. In tak-

ing photos or shooting a video, I had to think much as to how I will present the flower so as to attract my audience,” adding Ko Phyo Wai Win that those desirous of finding start-up capitals for setting up their private businesses can contact with Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association, Myanmar Entrepreneurship Association and other organizations for monetary aids as well as for helpful advices.

These helps can be obtained by submitting to banks and other small loan disbursement organizations to implement new ideas on setting up business. Ko Maung Maung Myo explained in detail, “In the past, it was difficult to get start-up capitals needed for setting up a business. Now, it is getting easier than before. But, there are still some restrictions left to be reduced. Compared to previous conditions, acquisition of loans, interest rates and mortgage systems are found to be more convenient these days. There are many institutions which will help. Economic plan for the business needs to be submitted, together with application forms. Provided that submitted plans are reasonable and excellent for implementation, availability of loans is possible.

through online markets.”

Ko Maung Maung Myo pointed out, “If we start writing blogs or reviews or something, there will be others who will follow us. If they have same ideas like us, very often they are likely to supersede us. At that time we need to think about when we will retreat or when we will change our way. This is a challenge for youths from online jobs.”

Online blogger named “Ko Myet Hlyaw,” also recounted, “There are many youths who gained success from online initiatives while writing reviews or remixing music, posting humorous writings, composing music and lyrics and drawing pictures. Once, a young girl became very famous by writing reviews. But as she excessively prioritized her own profits, supports from her customers faded away gradually, thus disappearing from online job finally.

According to the International Labor Organization, vocational skills are of great importance for youths in developing countries, and 60 percent of all jobs can be easily accomplished provided that each and every one of youths will have mastered in their specialized subject.

“It is the best job for those without startup capitals for private business to earn money from online jobs. But, in our country there are still weakness and difficulties such as rightful ways and means, legal requirements and disciplines for them. Here in Myanmar, we cannot auction a kind of music of our own creation. We cannot yet penetrate into the international monetary market. Payment system for the music we sold out is still very weak, as it is. Only if leading individuals or organizations will emerge will latent online businessmen of great promise appear. For the time being, persons who can make attractive presentations with stylish writings are earning money ranging from US \$ 20 to 300. It is of great importance for youths to effectively use online pages,” asserted by Ko Phyo Wai Win. ■

*Translated by
Khin Maung Oo*

English language teaching in educational institutions

By Hla Maung (Arakan Sein)

I was delighted to hear that English teaching was discussed at the Amyotha Hluttaw on 17 January with a motion put forward by Daw Htu May of Rakhine Constituency(11) and several Hluttaw members took part in the discussion on teaching and learning in schools and colleges across the country. Need to say, the Government has put much emphasis on English language study with Dr Than Win of Mandalay Constituency(1) pointing out the acquisition of English in communicating with international community since it has already become the global lingua franca.

History of English

English is the third-most-spoken language by number of native speakers after Chinese Mandarin(935 million) and Spanish(390 million). Even if with a relatively smaller number of 365 million speakers, it is the official language in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and Singapore. It is co-official language of the United Nations, of the European Union and of many other world and international organizations. It is the official language or one of the official languages in almost 60 sovereign states.

Why has English become an immensely popular language in the world?

There is no doubt that the history of the British Empire has added to the spread of English. Furthermore, the United Kingdom and the United States have historically been powerful in commerce, government, science and diplomacy. In addition to the simplicity of inflections, English has two other basic characteristics: flexibility of function and openness of vocabulary. It has a vast vocabulary, counting how many words it has is impossible.

Openness of vocabulary implies both free admission of words from other languages and ready creation of compounds and derivatives. English adopts or adapts any word needed to name new object or to denote some new process. Words from many other languages has entered English in this way. The debt of English is large. Some loaned words which have entered English are mentioned below:

Spanish(armada, guerrilla, tornado); Russian(tsar, duma, vodka); Portuguese(-flamingo, marmalade, veranda); Hindi(guru, pandit, mantra); Chinese(tea, sampan, typhoon); Japanese(shogun, judo, tsunami); and Australian(kangaroo, wallaby, boomerang).

History of Myanmar Language

Myanmar language came into existence about a thousand years ago, according to Dr Tun Tint, a prominent member of Myanmar Language Commission. Myanmar is a country with proud literary and cultural traditions; it has borrowed words from Pali and Sanskrit since advent of con-

tact with those languages. By 15th century a rich tradition of historical and religious poetry had developed; prose works did not become important until the late 19th century. As Myanmar is considered a major cultural and religious centre of Buddhism, monastic schools flourished before the British colonial rule. In those days, the rate of male literacy in Myanmar was said to be higher than the England of that day. During colonial rule, monastic orders fell into disarray and Myanmar declined as English became the language of social advancement.

In passing, I would like to highlight that roundtable talks were held at the Diamond Jubilee Hall on 19 December, 2017 under the sponsorship of Department of Indigenous Languages, Ministry of Education by inviting 183 faculty members from colleges, institutes and universities from across the country. The aims are set for promotion of Myanmar language and knowledge-sharing passing down to future generations. In addition, discussions on teaching and learning of English were also included; U Thi-Ha, retired Professor of English, Institute of Education and currently a leading member of Myan-Eng Dictionary compilation in Myanmar Language Commission, dealt with the subject extensively pointing out importance of qualifications of teaching staff and their teaching methods as well as developing four skills—reading, listening, speaking and writing. He handled the queries raised by many academics who showed keen interest in English teaching and learning.

Dr Than Win of Mandalay Constituency(1) pointed out that the current teaching methods lack proper teaching in listening and speaking. He also emphasized on teaching aids and types of questions to be updated.

If I am allowed to share my experience, acquisition of a language is not an easy task, be it Myanmar or English; it is a life-long process. Writing is not acquired through simple exposure to others speaking the language, but must be taught. Writing follows certain prescriptive rules of grammar, usage and the style.

The Ministry of Education will have to carry out all the tasks of teaching and learning of English in schools, institutes, colleges and universities. We have to emulate how English has evolved into international communicative language. Everything must be taken into consideration concerning with teaching and learning covering the four skills and contrasts between Myanmar and English.

In conclusion, the Ministry of Education will have to lay down guidelines on teaching and learning of English in educational institutions, squarely balancing on teaching vocabulary, grammar and test on listening and speaking skills. As I am not an educationist, I won't go into all the details; suffice it to say that the news report on discussions of English teaching at the Amyotha Hluttaw is warmly welcomed and wishing it to be successful in the near future. ■

Rex Tillerson visits new US embassy in London that Trump criticised

LONDON — Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited the new \$1 billion (£719 million) US embassy in London on Monday, just days after his boss Donald Trump criticised the move to new diplomatic premises as part of a bad deal agreed by the administration of Barack Obama.

Trump earlier this month cancelled a trip to London to open the new embassy, saying he did not want to endorse a bad deal agreed by the Obama administration to sell the old one for “peanuts”. Tillerson was greeted by US Ambassador Woody Johnson as workmen finished planting shrubs in the grounds of the new embassy. America’s top diplomat then met some of the marines who are stationed at the embassy.

“The embassy actually, is gonna really work,” US Ambassador Johnson said ahead of Tillerson’s arrival.

Asked when there would

be a ribbon cutting ceremony, Ambassador Johnson said: “At some point we’re going to do it, but there’s no urgency to that. We’ll do it when the time is right.”

The decision to move the US Embassy from its current Grosvenor Square location in the exclusive Mayfair area of London and to a site on the south bank of the Thames was agreed in 2008 under the presidency of George W Bush.

The American flag was this month removed from Grosvenor Square where the US embassy has been based since 1938 with the area known as “Little America” during World War Two, when the square also housed the military headquarters of General Dwight D Eisenhower. The new embassy is a veritable fortress set back at least 100 feet (30 metres) from surrounding buildings — mostly newly-erected high-rise residential blocks- and incorpo-



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Woody Johnson, US ambassador to Britain stand outside the new US embassy in London on 22 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

rating living quarters for US Marines permanently stationed inside. The \$1 billion construc-

tion was funded by the sale of other properties in London. —Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Russia says US actions in Syria either a provocation or ill-informed

MOSCOW — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Monday that US actions in Syria were either a “deliberate provocation” or indicated Washington lacked an understanding of the situation there, RIA news agency quoted Lavrov as saying. The United States on Sunday urged North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally Turkey to “exercise restraint” and limit its military operations in northwestern Syria, where Turkish forces are attacking a US-backed Kurdish militia they aim to sweep from the border. —Reuters ■

Turkey’s Erdogan says has deal with Russia, will not step back from Afrin operation

ANKARA — President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that Turkey had an agreement with Russia regarding its military operation against a US-backed Kurdish militia in Syria’s Afrin region and that Ankara would not take a step back from the operation. In a speech in the capital Ankara, Erdogan said Turkey would take control of Afrin, as it had done in the Syrian towns of Jarablus, al-Rai and al-Bab, and that Syrians would be able to return home. —Reuters ■

US-backed SDF says may send reinforcements to Syria’s Afrin

BEIRUT — The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said on Monday it was studying the possibility of sending reinforcements to the Afrin region of northwestern Syria to help fend off a Turkish attack. “We are in the framework of looking at the possibility of sending more military forces to Afrin,” SDF spokesman Kino Gabriel said in a televised news conference, calling for international efforts to halt the Turkish attack. —Reuters ■

Germany’s SPD wants Merkel to sweeten coalition deal

BERLIN — Germany’s Social Democrats (SPD) on Monday demanded concessions on immigration and healthcare from Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservatives in looming coalition talks that the centre-left party voted for at the weekend.

At an SPD congress where divisions over the proposed alliance were laid bare, 56 per cent of delegates voted on Sunday to start formal negotiations on the basis of a blueprint agreed earlier this month.

That was a narrower margin than many analysts had predicted and put pressure on SPD leaders to refine the initial agreement to appease reluctant members.

Merkel, SPD leader Martin Schulz and the leader of Merkel’s CSU Bavarian allies, Horst Seehofer, will meet on Monday and the full talks may start as early as Tuesday. “I think the conservatives have understood that the SPD must be convinced,” SPD General Secretary Lars Klingbeil told public broadcaster ARD.

He said the SPD wanted to add a “hardship provision” to an agreement on immigration



Germany’s Social Democratic Party (SPD) leader Martin Schulz and SPD parliamentary group leader Andrea Nahles attend a parliamentary group meeting in Berlin, Germany on 22 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

that limits to 1,000 a month the number of people who can join accepted refugees in Germany under family reunion rules.

He also hoped for a compromise on the single “citizen’s insurance” that the SPD wants to replace Germany’s private and public healthcare systems with, a measure opposed by the conservatives.

Some fear that if SPD leaders fail to deliver on such key issues, the party’s rank-and-file might reject a final deal — on which Schulz plans to ballot all

443,000 of its members.

Eyeing a fourth term as chancellor, Merkel wants the SPD to agree to a re-run of the ‘grand coalition’ that has governed Europe’s economic powerhouse since 2013. She said she looked forward to intensive talks on forming a stable government and her priorities were preserving Germany’s economic strength and ensuring social justice and security.

The SPD vote will be welcomed by investors and Germany’s partners who worry that

policymaking, both at home and in Europe, may become hamstrung by a political deadlock that is about to enter its fifth month.

Schulz, whose leadership was on the line on Sunday, said the vote handed him a “duty to fight for all those who had voted against”. “Let us now concretely improve the lives of people in the country,” he tweeted on Sunday evening. The SPD’s parliamentary leader Andrea Nahles said she would negotiate “until the other side squeals”.

But Volker Bouffier, a lawmaker of Merkel’s Christian Democrats (CDU), said any major changes to the coalition blueprint in the formal talks should be ruled out.

“Coalition negotiations between the CDU/CSU and the SPD need to start quickly,” he told daily Bild. “The result of the exploratory talks stands. The key issues can no longer be called into question.”

Merkel has made clear that the blueprint will form the basis of negotiations but that many questions have yet to be clarified in detail. —Reuters ■

Afghan officials search for answers to deadly hotel attack

KABUL — Afghan security officials met on Monday to draw up a response to a deadly attack on Kabul's Hotel Intercontinental that exposed once again how vulnerable the capital remains to militant assaults.

Even in a city long inured to violence, the attack by gunmen dressed in army uniforms has caused shock, with questions raised about how they were able to penetrate security at one of the most prominent landmarks in Kabul.

The smoke-blackened hotel, on a hill overlooking the city, remained blocked off on Monday and even the final casualty toll from the attack, which began on Saturday night and was claimed by Taliban insurgents, remains unclear. Officially, the government says at least 19 people were killed but people in the security system say the real figure is certainly above 30 and probably many more. The Taliban are seeking to re-impose Islamic rule after their 2001 ouster at the hands of US-led troops.

Many of the victims were Ukrainian air crew of Kam Air and their deaths may raise questions over the willingness of foreign technical specialists to continue to work for Afghan



Smoke rises from the Intercontinental Hotel during an attack in Kabul, Afghanistan on 21 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

companies who cannot provide the high levels of security provided by the United Nations or foreign embassies.

Airlines provide a vital link between major cities in a country where travel by road is often dangerous and unreliable.

"Many Ukrainian air technicians work in Afghanistan and

all those killed worked for the Afghan airline Kam Air and lived in the Intercontinental Hotel," Ukraine's Ambassador to Afghanistan, Viktor Nikityuk, who is based in neighbouring Tajikistan, told Ukrainian television.

He confirmed that seven Ukrainians had been killed and said a consular official would be

visiting Kabul to organise repatriation of their bodies.

Many details of what happened in the attack, which began at around 9 pm on Saturday, remain unclear and interest is likely to focus on the private security company which took over protection duties three weeks ago.

According to a security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, the five gunmen got through an initial checkpoint on the approach road to the hotel before reaching a second checkpoint close to a car park near the hotel entrance.

At that point, the official said they appeared to have shot the checkpoint guards and made their way around the back of the building and into the kitchen before beginning the attack.

Once inside, they went through the ground and first floors, opening fire on staff and guests before moving quickly to the upper levels of the six-floor building. Hassibullah, who was working in the hotel bakery, said he ran upstairs to a fifth-floor room and barricaded himself in with around 12 people, including guests, when the firing started. He survived a jump to the ground, suffering two broken legs, a broken back and internal injuries. Speaking from a hospital bed, he said the attackers began firing into the door, which the guests had blocked with piled-up furniture when the lights went out and he took his only chance.

"The only thing I could do was open the window and jump out," he said. —Reuters ■

Turkey detains 24 people over social media comments on Syria, ministry says

ISTANBUL — Turkish police have detained 24 people for allegedly "spreading terrorist propaganda" on social media related to Ankara's military operation against Kurdish fighters in northern Syria, the interior ministry said on Monday.

Turkey launched "Operation Olive Branch" over the weekend, pushing into the Afrin region to dislodge the US-backed Syrian Kurdish YPG and opening a new front in the seven-year-old Syrian civil war. Turkey considers the YPG a terrorist organization and an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decades-old insurgency in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast.

President Tayyip Erdogan has overseen a sweeping crackdown since a failed coup in 2016 that critics say has unjustly targeted pro-Kurdish politicians.

Leaders of Turkey's largest pro-Kurdish party, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), are in jail on terrorism charges, which they deny. The interior ministry did not give details on the arrests. However, state-run Anadolu news agency earlier said prosecutors in the south-eastern city of Diyarbakir had issued arrest warrants for 17 people who shared material "to provoke citizens of Kurdish origin and encourage them to go into the streets". Police seized a pump-action rifle, a pistol and ammunition in related raids in Diyarbakir, Anadolu said. The moves come after Turkish police used pepper gas to disperse pro-Kurdish protesters in Ankara and Istanbul on Sunday, detaining at least 12 people.

Authorities were also investigating social media posts about the military operation allegedly made by two HDP law-

makers, including a post from the party's spokesman, Ayhan Bilgen, Anadolu said.

It said Bilgen was being investigated for allegedly stirring enmity and hatred for tweeting that Ankara's attack on Afrin could lead to civil war. "An operation by Turkey against Afrin, without there being an attack from there, will lead the country towards civil war if it is successful and will lay the groundwork for a coup if it is unsuccessful," he said on Twitter on 13 January. Erdogan on Sunday warned supporters of the HDP, parliament's third-largest party, not to demonstrate against the military operation, saying security forces would be "on their necks" if they did. More than 50,000 people have been arrested since the failed coup in July 2016, and 150,000 have been sacked or suspended from their jobs. —Reuters ■

Israel arrests eight Palestinians in West Bank: Palestinian sources

RAMALLAH — Israeli forces have arrested eight Palestinians during an overnight arrest campaign in the West Bank, Palestinian sources said on Monday.

A lawmaker was among the arrested for several hours and was later released.

Palestinian parliament member and former Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Minister Omar Abdelrazeq, who belongs to Islamic Hamas movement, was arrested from his home in Salfit city north of the West Bank.

Abdelrazeq was released from Israeli jails

two months ago. Palestinian sources close to the Hamas leader said this overnight arrest came for interrogation.

Currently, Israel withholds 10 Palestinian lawmakers in Israeli jails, most of whom are under administrative detention.

Administrative detention allows Israeli authorities to detain prisoners without trial. It is usually based on secret information that cannot be accessed by either the detainees or lawyers. The detention could last for six months and can be renewed for unlimited times. —Xinhua ■



US Vice President Mike Pence (C) stands next to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) during a formal reception ceremony at the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem on 22 January, 2018. REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun

Pence, in Jerusalem, says honoured to be in 'Israel's capital'

JERUSALEM — US Vice President Mike Pence pointedly referred to Jerusalem as Israel's capital on Monday as he met the country's leader, further vexing Palestinians who have already snubbed his visit over a US policy shift towards the holy city.

President Donald Trump last month acknowledged Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and said he would move the US embassy there — dismayed Palestinians who claim the eastern part of the city and angering Arab states across the region.

Pence, who is part-way through an official visit to the Middle East, said in Egypt on Saturday and again in Jordan on Sunday that Washington would support a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians if they both agreed to it.

On Monday he said he was honoured to be "in Israel's capital, Jerusalem" at the start of talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Echoing that sentiment, Netanyahu told the vice president. "This is the first time that I stand here

where both leaders can say those three words: 'Israel's capital Jerusalem.'"

Pence said Trump's declaration, which most of America's main allies beyond the Middle East have also criticised, provided new opportunities for Israeli-Palestinian peace. "I also am here hopeful that we are at the dawn of a new era of renewed discussions to achieve a peaceful resolution to the decades-long conflict that has affected this region," Pence said. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who has called the

declaration a "slap in the face", left for an overseas visit before the vice president's arrival. "The American recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the occupation are illegitimate. The American administration must not contribute to escalating the situation further," said Nabil Abu Rdainah, a spokesman for Abbas, after Pence's remarks. Palestinians want East Jerusalem, including the walled Old City with its holy sites, as capital of their own future state.— Reuters ■

Russia tests robotic strike vehicle in conditions close to real combat

MOSCOW — The Soratnik automated fighting vehicle has undergone trials in conditions close to a real combat at temperatures of over 30 degrees Celsius, the press office of the Kalashnikov defence manufacturer told TASS on Friday.

The Kalashnikov Group is the developer of the Soratnik unmanned strike vehicle.

A video posted by media outlets showed a Soratnik combat vehicle moving along the sea coast and firing weapons against targets. One of the videos posted on the YouTube says the Soratnik has been tested in Syria. "The Soratnik automated fighting vehicle has been tested in conditions maximally close to a real combat environment.

These trials confirmed the vehicle's characteristics and proved the possibility of using the robotic system at air temperatures of over 30

degrees Celsius," the Kalashnikov Group said.

The scientific potential created in the process of developing the Soratnik robotic vehicle and the results of its trials will lay the basis for perspective robotized fighting systems, the defense manufacturer said.

Soratnik unmanned strike vehicle

The Soratnik armored tracked vehicle is designed to conduct reconnaissance and transmit data, patrol and protect territories and important facilities, carry out mine clearance and clear obstacles. The Soratnik operates in three control modes and its weight does not exceed 7 tonnes.

The robotic system can develop a speed of up to 40 km/h. The vehicle can operate within a radius of 10 km in a remote control mode and clear visibility.—Tass ■



The vehicle's tracked platform can carry 7.62 mm and 12.7 mm machine guns. PHOTO: TASS

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WARSAW VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SEAL PEARL VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SEAL PEARL VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of BSW where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SHIBA VOY. NO.()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SHIBA VOY. NO.() are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S LAND & SEA LOGISTICS
Phone No: 2301185

Abe seeks constitutional reform, better China ties in Diet speech

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged political parties to promote debate on revising Japan's pacifist Constitution, his long-held political goal, as parliament convened a 150-day ordinary session on Monday.

In his policy speech on the first day of the regular session, Abe also expressed a desire to improve bilateral ties with China, while stressing Japan's commitment to standing firm against North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development ambitions.

Labor reform and free education, both promised by his ruling Liberal Democratic Party during the campaign for the House of Representatives election last October, were also key issues in his address.

Abe, who doubles as the LDP president, told a party meeting in the morning that constitutional amendment is the party's platform since its establishment in 1955. "It is high time for us to realize it. Let us fulfill our responsibility," he said.

In his Diet address, the prime minister said, "We will be creating our nation, looking ahead 50 years or 100 years. It is the Constitution that narrates the shape and ideal form" of the country.

He urged political



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe delivers a policy speech during a plenary session of the House of Representatives in Tokyo on 22 January, 2018, the first day of the year's ordinary parliamentary session. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

parties to put forward concrete plans and advance debate to move toward realizing a first-ever amendment to the Constitution, which took effect in 1947.

LDP Secretary General Toshihiro Nikai said Saturday the party could present its amendment proposal in March at its convention, saying, "It is an option to put it forth in the form of an interim report." Constitutional amendments require the support of at least two-thirds of lawmakers in both the upper and lower

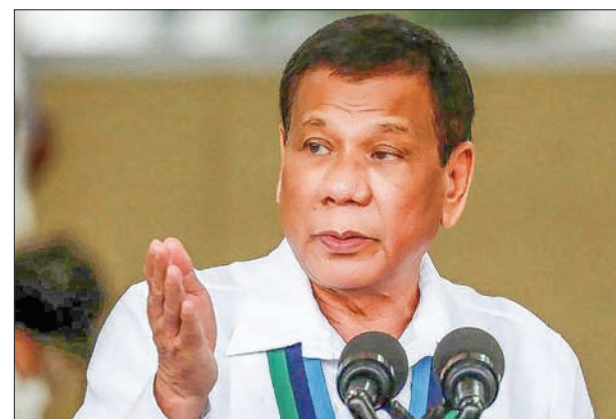
houses and approval by a majority of voters in a national referendum.

As this year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of a peace and friendship treaty between Japan and China, Abe vowed to realize reciprocal visits by him and Chinese President Xi Jinping "as soon as possible" and to host a trilateral summit also involving South Korea. Describing the two neighboring Asian countries as "inseparable," Abe said Japan "will seek to meet

the expectations of the international community by developing friendly relations (with China) in a stable manner."

Abe also said Japan will cooperate with Beijing to meet growing demand for building infrastructure in Asia, bearing in mind Xi's "One Belt, One Road" cross-border infrastructure initiative.

On the security front, Abe pledged to bolster Japan's defence capability, including the introduction of the land-based Aegis Ashore missile defence system, and review its defense program guidelines as the country faces the threat of North Korea's nuclear and missile ambitions. "It is no exaggeration to say that we are facing the severest security environment in the postwar era," Abe said, referring to the North Korean crisis. He vowed to advance "resolute diplomacy" in order to get Pyongyang to change its policies. Spurred by an increase in defence spending as well as ballooning welfare costs, the draft budget for fiscal 2018 hit a record-high 97.71 trillion yen (\$883 billion). The government is seeking early passage of the annual budget and an extra 2.71 trillion yen supplementary budget for this fiscal year through March.—Kyodo News ■



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

'Shoot me' if I become a dictator: Philippine leader tells troops to protect constitution

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday instructed the army and police to shoot him if he became a dictator and stayed on beyond his term, a scenario his foes are warning against, amid moves by his loyalists to change the constitution.

The firebrand leader sought to dispel speculation he had ordered loyalists in Congress to change the constitution to introduce a federal system that would let him stay in power beyond 2022, when his single term ends. "If I overstay and wanted to become a dictator, shoot me, I am not joking," Duterte told soldiers during an army base visit, adding that security forces should not allow anybody to mess with the constitution.

"It is your job to protect the constitution and to protect the people. Remember, it is your solemn duty," Duterte has advocated federalism to tackle inequality, empower prov-

inces and recognise the country's diverse makeup.

Last week, his lower house allies voted to convene a constituent assembly to revise the charter by May this year, scrapping mid-term elections next year and extending the terms of all elected officials.

Constitutional reform has been a divisive issue, with critics accusing lawmakers of trying to prolong their stay in office, or of seeking a way for the hugely popular Duterte to cling to power beyond the end of his term.

Opponents warn it could lead to a repeat of the oppressive rule of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, saying they are troubled by Duterte's admiration for Marcos and his similar authoritarian traits.

Duterte's spokesman, Harry Roque, has repeatedly said the president has no desire to stay longer than his term and, if anything, would prefer to retire earlier.—Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Marriage Announcement

Ralf Robert Drotleff (The son of Mr Guenter Drotleff and Mrs. Inge Drotleff who are living in Germany) and Thu Zar Nwe (The daughter of U Wai Linn and Daw Khin Pyone who are living in Myanmar) were married by the agreement of both parent at the Yangon Western District Court at 15th January 2018. The marriage was officiated by the learned Judge and the respected witnesses by the registration number 20/2018.

Ralf Robert Drotleff / Thu Zar Nwe

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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‘Three Billboards’ biggest winner at female-flavoured SAG awards

LOS ANGELES — Dark comedy “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” won three prizes at the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) awards on Sunday in a ceremony marked by women and their stories amid the sexual misconduct scandal that has swept Hollywood.

The Fox Searchlight film about a furious woman seeking justice for the murder of her daughter was named best ensemble, the top SAG honour.

Frances McDormand won best actress and Sam Rockwell took home the best supporting actor statuette for their roles in the film.

Britain’s Gary Oldman won best actor for playing wartime leader Winston Churchill in Focus Features’ “Darkest Hour.”

Allison Janney won for her supporting actress role as a demanding mother in independent ice-skating movie “I, Tonya.”

The SAG awards are indicators of likely Oscar success in March because actors form the largest group of voters in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Oscar nominations will be announced on Tuesday.

The SAG ceremony took place after two days of marches by hundreds of thousands of women throughout the United States.

Host Kristen Bell said women were having a “watershed moment.”



Frances McDormand (C), who won the award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role, and the cast of “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” pose backstage with their awards for Outstanding Cast in a Motion Picture at 24th Screen Actors Guild Awards in Photo Room in Los Angeles, California, US on 21 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

“Let’s make sure we lead the charge with empathy and diligence because fear and anger never win the race,” said Bell, star of television’s “The Good Place.”

Accusations of sexual misconduct have forced dozens of powerful men in Hollywood to step down, be fired or dropped from creative projects.

Women, many of them leading actresses, have responded

by breaking their silence through the #MeToo social media movement and the Time’s Up campaign for legal support of victims.

On the red carpet, women swapped the black gowns that marked support for victims of sexual harassment at the Golden Globes two weeks ago for brighter blues, green and metallic hues.

Women were the dominant

theme inside the Shrine Auditorium.

Nicole Kidman, 50, won for playing a battered wife in HBO’s female-centric TV series “Big Little Lies.”

“How wonderful that our careers today can go beyond 40 years old. Twenty years ago we were pretty washed up by this stage in our lives. This is not the case now,” Kidman said.

Aziz Ansari, nominated for

his Netflix comedy series “Master of None,” was a no-show on Sunday after making headlines last week when a woman described feeling violated following an awkward date last year. Ansari said he believed their sexual activity was consensual.

Ansari lost the television comedy actor statuette to William H. Macy for “Shameless.”

James Franco, a best actor nominee for “The Disaster Artist,” did show up but skipped the red carpet and did not win. Franco had kept a low profile since describing allegations of sexual impropriety against him by five women two weeks ago as “not accurate.”

In television, NBC’s sentimental family drama “This is Us” was named the best drama ensemble cast in a surprise win over presumed front runners “The Crown” and dystopian series “A Handmaid’s Tale.”

The cast of HBO political satire “Veep” won best ensemble for a television comedy. Julia Louis-Dreyfus, who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer and missed the SAG show, was named best comedy actress.

“She’s genuinely been in good spirits when we’ve seen her, which I think will carry her along ... She is incredibly strong and is uniquely able to combat something like this,” Timothy Simons, who plays Jonah Ryan on “Veep,” told reporters on Sunday. —Reuters ■

Razzie ‘worst film’ nods is an Oscar-studded affair

LOS ANGELES — Adventure movie “Transformers: The Last Knight” led nominations on Monday for the annual Razzie Awards for the worst films on a list packed with previous Oscar winners Jennifer Lawrence, Tom Cruise, Mel Gibson and Russell Crowe.

The tongue-in-cheek Razzies, created in 1980, serve as an antidote to Hollywood’s Oscars ceremony. Winners of the year’s worst films — if they turn up — are given a gold, spray-painted trophy at a ceremony held on the eve of the Academy Awards in March.

“Transformers: The Last Knight,” the latest in the action franchise based on toys that change from robots to vehicles, earned nine nominations, including worst picture and worst acting nods for many



Actor Mark Wahlberg. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

of its star-studded cast, including Anthony Hopkins and Mark Wahlberg.

Despite lacklustre reviews, the 5th film in the series earned a healthy \$605 million at the worldwide box office in 2017.

Razzie founder John Wilson called “Fifty Shades Darker,” based on the best-selling erotic novels, “more sleep-inducing than sexy,” while the reboot of “Baywatch” was among the worst picture contenders.

Johnny Depp — a perennial Razzie target — was singled out for what Wilson called “his worn out drunk routine” in “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales,” the fifth entry in the franchise in a summer of Hollywood sequels and remakes.

Lawrence and director Darren Aronofsky also felt some Razzie wrath for their horror movie “Mother!,” which some movie reviewers viewed as the work of a genius and others found laughable.

The movie earned a rare F score from audiences and less than \$45 million at the global box office. Cruise and Crowe were among the worst actor nominees for “The Mummy,” while Gibson got a Razzie nod for his role in “Daddy’s Home 2.” —Reuters ■

Morgan Freeman calls out SAG for gender-specific statue

LOS ANGELES — Veteran actor Morgan Freeman, who was bestowed with the Screen Actors Guild’s lifetime achievement award, touched upon gender inclusion as he called out the guild for presenting a “gender-specific” trophy.

The 80-year-old actor said he was “beyond honoured” to accept the recognition and was grateful to the SAGs for the award. “These moments in life usually call for an entire litany of thank yous. I can’t do that because I don’t know all of your names, so I won’t try. This is beyond honour, this is a place in history. I want to say thanks to SAGs for this enormous honour.” —PTI



in
Picture

Larhu ethnic people celebrated the new year festival in Langkho District, Moehnae Township, Shan State (South) on Monday

Lahu ethnic people welcomed their traditional new year with paying respects to elders, traditional dance and a new feast. **PHOTO: SAI TUN MYINT**



Cyclists from Shan State start their trip for drug rehab in Golden Triangle. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

Charity bike ride for drug rehab in Golden Triangle

SEVEN cyclists from eastern Shan State kicked off their long distance cycling trip to raise money for the rehabilitation center for drug addicts in the Golden Triangle area.

Ko Nay Zar (Only Biker), Ko Khan Shan, members of the Kyaing Tong Mountain Bike Group U Sai San and U Chu Sein left Tarchileik on January 20 to join with three bikers; U Sai Yee Sai, U Hla Myint Moe and U Law Lu from the same biking group to start their long distance char-

ity ride from Kengtung on 21 January.

They will ride more than 1100 miles from Kengtung in Shan State to Puta-O in Kachin State. Their journey will last more than 20 days.

They will donate the money that they are offered along their journey to the Mai Koe rehab center for drug addicts at Yangon village in Tarchileik town to rehabilitate young drug addicts in the Golden Triangle area.—Myanmar Digital News

“King Lear” returns to Chinese stage

BEIJING — An acclaimed Chinese production of William Shakespeare’s classic “King Lear” has returned to the prime theater in Beijing.

The play, directed by Li Liuyi and starring veteran theatrical actor Pu Cunxin, is being staged at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) for a second round of eight performances through 28 January, 2018. Its debut, which contained 12 performances, was staged in January 2017.

“King Lear” was the NCPA’s third performance of a Shake-

speare play, after “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and “Hamlet.”

The production uses a new translation from the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) translation project, which aims to make Shakespeare’s works “most suitable” for a modern Chinese audience, according to the director.

Li and some of the cast crew have rehearsed and trained with the RSC in Britain, the NCPA said. German-born Michael Simon and Oscar-winning Japanese Emi Wada have joined the team as the set and costume

designers. “King Lear,” one of Shakespeare’s greatest tragedies, is based on the legend of power struggle in an ancient Celtic royal family. The plot reveals the dark-sides of humanity: greed, deception, betrayal, moral corruption and provokes much of the soul-searching.

The play has been widely adapted for the stage worldwide.

Pu, who plays the title role of the NCPA’s production, was commended for his good control of speech that rendered his representation of King Lear unique.—Xinhua ■

Judge overseeing AT&T, Time Warner merger trial hears document dispute

WASHINGTON — AT&T, owner of DirecTV, is asking for documents from a long list of companies as part of preparation for a trial to determine if they will be allowed to buy movie and TV show maker Time Warner, their lawyer Daniel Petrocelli said in a pre-trial hearing on Friday.

The Justice Department sued in November to stop AT&T, the No 2 US wireless company, from buying Time Warner for \$85 billion because of concerns that it could raise prices for rivals and pay-TV subscribers as well as hamper the development of online video. Trial is set for 19 March. Daniel Petrocelli, who represents AT&T and Time Warner, said that his team had been unable to get data requested from third parties, who had said they no longer had some of it. He asked the government, which did have the data, to return it so it could be subpoenaed.

An attorney for DISH Network Corp at the hearing iden-

tified himself to Judge Richard Leon and offered to discuss the dispute but Leon declined.

The third parties included Verizon Communications, Comcast, Cox, DISH, Charter, Disney and Viacom, among others, a source close to the trial said after the hearing.

Leon expressed surprise at the problem. “So, the only copy they had, they turned over to the government?” he said, calling the situation “rather extraordinary.”

Leon said that if no solution was found by noon on Monday, he would order the government to return the data to the companies so that they could then either comply with the subpoenas or fight them in court. “I think that’s a sensible approach,” Petrocelli told the judge. Fights over data are common during antitrust trials since companies that are subpoenaed frequently fear that their rivals’ executives will gain access to sensitive internal data.—Reuters ■

“Dali’s Fantastic Universe” in Beijing

BEIJING — Hundreds of works of late Spanish surrealist artist Salvador Dali have been brought to a up-market Beijing gallery for a three-month exhibition through to the end of March.

The exhibition, put together by Shenzhen MAO Industries Company, the Dali Universe and Espace Dali Paris, is being held at Yang Art Museum.

According to the organizers, on display are 230 pieces of art in

the forms of bronze sculptures, paintings, colored glass sculpture, Tarot collages, furniture and gold ornaments.

Three iconic sculptures — the 3-metre tall melting watch “Dance of Time II,” the “Profile of Time” and the “Woman Aflame” are included in the exhibition, according to the Dali Universe, a private collection of Dali’s artworks. Dali, who was born in 1904 and died in 1989, is

regarded as one of the greatest European artists of the 20th century, and known for using striking colors and bizarre visual images to create surrealist art.

The Chinese name of the exhibition is literally rendered “Crazy Dali Artshow.” A regular ticket costs 180 yuan (27.7 US dollars) while a family ticket, which can accommodate two adults and up to two children, costs 360 yuan.—Xinhua ■

Manchester United simply had to go for Sanchez, says Irwin

MUMBAI — Players of the calibre of Alexis Sanchez do not become available very often so Manchester United had no choice but to make a move for the Arsenal forward, former Ireland defender Denis Irwin has said ahead of the Chilean's expected move to Old Trafford.

The 29-year-old Sanchez, who is out of contract at the end of the season and was also a target for leaders Manchester City, missed Arsenal's 4-1 league win over Crystal Palace on Saturday.

British media reports say he will seal his move to United this week with Armenian midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan joining Arsenal in a swap deal.

"When a player of that ability comes along, I think you got to be in the market for him," Irwin, who played over 500 games for United during 12 trophy-laden seasons, told Reuters.

"He's a player who knows



the Premier League, his goal record ... he's an experienced international. He's quick, he's strong.

"It would be great if he comes to Manchester United because he would not just add to our squad but our team. He's a really good player and I think he will be a good addition, really good."

The Chile international has

scored 80 goals in 166 appearances in all competitions for Arsenal since joining from Barcelona for 35 million pounds (\$48.52 million) in July 2014.

The 52-year-old Irwin, now working a United ambassador, was speaking in Mumbai as part of Gulf Oil's fan-building campaign for the club's supporters, who were invited to a live screening of the Premier League

away fixture against Burnley on Saturday.

Irwin lauded Jose Mourinho's ability to attract top players and said the Portuguese manager had done enough to warrant an extension to the three-year contract he signed in 2016.

"Since he's come in 16-17 months back, he's brought in some really good players," said the former left-back, who was one of Alex Ferguson's key players.

"He attracts good players and all of them have strengthened us. He knows he's not there yet but we are getting back to where we should be.

"I feel we are lot more competitive that 16 months ago. For me, he's been fantastic. Two trophies last season, progression on the field, we are getting better and stronger, I don't see any reason why not (give him an extension)?"—Reuters ■

Magical Messi hailed by Betis fans after rolling back the years

MADRID — It is easy to forget how talented Lionel Messi is when the Barcelona forward performs at such a consistently high level that you simply expect him to work wonders in every match.

Occasionally, though, Messi has games which even by his own lofty standards are hugely impressive and, unfortunately for Real Betis, they ran into him at his best on Sunday.

Barcelona thrashed the Andalusians 5-0 at the Benito Villamarin, with Messi scoring twice and setting up a goal for Luis Suarez.

"You have to enjoy Messi. We're living at the same time as him and we just have to enjoy him," Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said.

"I've faced him in the past and I know what he's capable of. Now I can enjoy him. It's spec-

tacular to see him every day. He is the best player there is and the best there will ever be."

After a tight first half the Argentine forward stepped up a gear and single-handedly dismantled the Betis defence.

Messi finished clinically in the 64th minute, firing across Antonio Adan to leave the goalkeeper with no chance after being played through to double Barcelona's lead following Ivan

Rakitic's opener. The No 10's second goal was a work of individual genius, with Messi teasing two defenders before beating them with ease and casually slipping the ball past Adan.

Arguably the best was yet to come. In the final stages of the game the 30-year-old playmaker rolled back the years and embarked on a number of mazy dribbles, with Betis unable to get near him.—Reuters ■

Chung stuns Djokovic in Australian Open

MELBOURNE — Six-times champion Novak Djokovic bowed out of the Australian Open in the fourth round as relentless South Korean Chung Hyeon ground him down to claim a stunning 7-6(4), 7-5, 7-6(3) victory on Monday. The 21-year-old Chung, ranked 58th in the world, proved an immovable object, absorbing everything the former world number one could throw at him and returning it with interest.

Djokovic, grimacing occasionally and flexing his elbow, dropped the opening four games and although he clawed back the deficit Chung took the opening

set on the tiebreak.

Chung moved 4-1 ahead in the second set but again Djokovic recovered, only to falter when serving at 5-6, netting a forehand on set point after Chung had shown incredible defensive skills to stay alive in the rally. Again Djokovic battled back from a break down in the third set to force a tiebreak but Chung refused to let the 30-year-old Serb off the hook. Chung hooked a mind-boggling forehand winner past Djokovic to take a 5-3 lead in the tiebreak and when Djokovic netted a return it brought up three match points.—Reuters ■



Chung Hyeon of South Korea shakes hands with Novak Djokovic of Serbia after Chung won their match in Melbourne, Australia on 22 January, 2018. PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar vs. Thailand Lethwei challenge fight to take place in Mandalay

LETHWEI promotion groups MMTS and H&S Group will jointly organize a Lethwei event at Diamond Plaza in Mandalay at 6 pm on 26 January.

The Myanmar vs. Thailand Lethwei challenge fight titled "Giant Fight Myanmar" will take place with the endorsement of the Ministry of Health and Sports. One of the toughest Myanmar Lethwei fighters Soe Lin Oo will fight against his Thai opponent Naruto in the main event. Phoe Kay, Mandalay's proud warrior will face a Thai rival in the 2nd big match.

There will be other five bouts and three fights with up and new coming fighters during the event. The ticket fees for the event are set at Ks. 30,000, Ks. 20,000 and Ks. 10,000. —Kyaw Htike Soe

WBA middleweight champ Murata to make 1st world title defence

TOKYO — World Boxing Association middleweight champion Ryota Murata will fight 10th-ranked challenger Emanuele Blandamura of Italy on 15 April at Yokohama Arena in his first title defence since winning the belt last October, his gym announced on Monday.

Murata was crowned champion after beating France's Hassan N'Dam by TKO in the seventh round of their rematch, becoming only the second-ever middleweight titleholder from Japan following Shinji Takehara in 1995.

A gold medalist at the 2012 London Olympics, Murata acknowledged the difficulty of defending a title.

"It's because one becomes satisfied, loses that hunger," Murata said. "I want to do my best to change my mindset." The 32-year-old, who has a 13-win, one-loss record with 10 knockouts, suffered his only defeat in his controversial first bout with N'Dam last May, which saw two of the judges suspended for scoring the fight in favour of the Frenchman and WBA President Gilberto Jesus Mendoza calling for a rematch.—Kyodo News ■