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The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convenes today in Nay Pyi Taw as it prepares to elect a new president within seven days. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meets today on electing presidential candidate

Presidency vacancy shall be filled within seven days

A MEETING on electing a candidate for the presidency, which was vacated on Wednesday by U Htin Kyaw, will be held today at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting yesterday, Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than urged members to submit their names by 23 March to become members of the Presidential

Electoral College, which will scrutinise the vice-president selected by representatives of the Pyithu Hluttaw. The president will then be elected from among the vice presidents.

U Htin Kyaw, who resigned from his post in order to take a rest from his duties, was elected by the group of Pyithu Hluttaw representatives about two years ago. **SEE PAGE-2**

Rakhine villages to convert to solar power

AS part of the National Electrification Plan (NEP), 219 villages in Rakhine State will be connected to solar power electricity in the 2018-2019 financial year, said the Rakhine State Rural Development Department.

U Nay Htet Shein, Director of the Rakhine State Rural Development Department, said the NEP will be carried out in 16 townships and 219 villages in Rakhine State and will be outfitted with 11,333 units of solar electricity within the 2018-2019 financial year.

"The NEP's plan is to provide electricity to areas that are too far from the main power grid, or above 10 miles away from an 11KV power line, or have been unable to connect with the Electricity Department in 10 years' time," said U Nay Htet Shein.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meets today on electing presidential candidate

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Before the announcement, Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than also announced that Pyidaungsu Hluttaw documented a message from Acting President U Myint Swe informing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to fill the vacant seat of

the President in accordance with Sub-section (b), Section (73) of the Constitution as President U Htin Kyaw has resigned from his post on 21 March 2018.

Sub-section (b), Section (73) of the Constitution says that when a vacancy for the presidency hap-

pens during the session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the vacancy shall be filled within seven days.

At the beginning of the meeting of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than read out the letter of resignation of President U Htin Kyaw in

which U Htin Kyaw said he has resigned from his post of his own volition as he wants to take a rest from his current duties with effect from 21 March 2018. The President or any of the Vice-Presidents shall be allowed to resign from office of his own volition before

the expiry of the term of office, according to the Section (72) of the Constitution and Section (131) of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rule.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw also documented the resignation of President U Htin Kyaw.—Thura Zaw, Mi Mi Phyto/MNA ■

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw elects speaker, deputy speaker

THE 31st-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw was held at the meeting hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Pyithu Hluttaw representatives first elected U Khin Maung Win of Lanmadaw constituency as the chairman, who then signed the oath document.

Next, the chairman delivered a speech thanking the Hluttaw for electing him and said he was honoured to serve the Hluttaw. The chairman then mentioned how the second Pyithu Hluttaw meetings were held successfully and gave credit to the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker for achieving this. He concluded by noting the agenda of the day's meeting was to elect a speaker for the Pyithu Hluttaw, in accordance with its law and rules.

The meeting then continued after the chairman announced its successful commencement.

Later, Hluttaw representatives voted to elect the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker. Of the candidates in the fray for the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker, U T Khun Myat of Kutkai constituency secured 280 votes, while U Thauang Aye of Pyawbwe constituency got 141 votes. The chairman announced the election of U T Khun Myat as the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker.

This was followed by Hluttaw representatives voting to elect the Pyithu Hluttaw deputy speaker, where the candidates were U Tun Aung @ U Tun Tun Hein of Nawngkhio constituency and Dr. Maung Thin of Meiktila constituency. The chairman announced the election of U Tun Aung @ U Tun Tun Hein as the Pyithu Hluttaw deputy speaker after he received 270 votes against Dr.



U T Khun Myat is elected as the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker in yesterday's meeting. PHOTO: MNA

Maung Thin's 143 votes.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung @ U Tun Tun Hein then took the oath of office in the presence of the chairman and signed the oath document.

Following this, the Pyithu Hluttaw chairman transferred the duty to the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker. In his speech to the Hluttaw, U T Khun Myat thanked all the Hluttaw representatives for electing him. "As people's representatives, our thoughts and actions should set an example for the people who want to experience democratic practices and enjoy human rights," said the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker.

"The Hluttaw representatives need to serve the country and the people by being magnanimous and tolerant, maintaining mutual respect and by displaying the qualities of being forgiving, understanding and cooperative. All are urged to cooperate and work hand-in-hand to form a federal democratic union, establish and create a democracy and raise the human rights in the country. All need to work for the coun-

try instead of themselves, and through the successful conduct of our respective duties, we should raise our self-esteem," said the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker.

"As persons who are writing a new historical chapter for the country, all need to raise the honour and nobility of the Hluttaw. Among the country's legislative, administrative and judicial authorities, the Hluttaw performs the duty of drawing up and enacting legislations. In addition to this, it also has the duty of assessing if the existing laws, rules, notices and announcements are according to democratic practices, as well as of amending, adding, repealing and drawing up new ones accordingly," he said.

In conclusion, the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker pledged to perform his duties according to the Hluttaw law, rules, procedure and process without bias to achieve democratic opportunities and basic human rights.

The 32nd-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw is yet to be announced.—Aye Aye Thant/ Myanmar News Agency ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw holds 31st-day meeting

THE seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw held its 31st-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, asterisk-marked questions were raised and answered by Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun.

Responding to the first question by U Sai San Aung of Shan Constituency (12) on raising the level of education for ethnic nationals in Wa Self-administered Division, the Deputy Minister said a total of 13 school buildings and four staff houses for teaching personnel were earmarked to be constructed in the 2018-2019 fiscal year (FY).

The Saku basic education primary school in Namphan Township, Kaunglan basic education primary school, Yaunglan basic education primary school and Lakaing basic education primary school in Panwaing Township are located on lands that do not belong to the Ministry of Education, and so, the lands must be registered in the ministry's name first. Only then can the ministry upgrade the schools and construct more buildings for them, said the Deputy Minister.

A school building on a 60x30 square feet plot for the Kaunglan basic education primary school (different school with same name) in Metmung Township was, however, built in the 2014-2015 FY, added the Deputy Minister.

On the second question by U Myint Naing of Rakhine constituency (5) on the plan to release five acres of land belonging to the Ministry of Education in Kyauktaw Township, Naguma



U Win Maw Tun. PHOTO: MNA



U Sai San Aung. PHOTO: MNA

village tract, to the Ministry of Health and Sports for the construction of a station hospital, the Deputy Minister explained that this was proposed to the Rakhine State government by the Naguma village tract station hospital construction organising committee. The ministry is working in coordination with the Rakhine State government to transfer the land to the Ministry of Health and Sports, so that a station hospital can be constructed on the land, as desired by the Hluttaw representative and the people of the area.

After the question and answer session, the Hluttaw representatives discussed the report on the work of the Amyotha Hluttaw farmer affairs committee.

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75 per cent of Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre ready for repatriation

By Kyaw Thu Win and
Aye Min Thu

As the union government prepares to receive returnees from Bangladesh, it has completed some 75 per cent of the construction process at Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre. The project comprises 652 housing units, which will accommodate more than 30,000 returnees from Bangladesh, according to an engineer in charge of the centre.

"The Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre is situated in the Hla Phoe Khaung village tract in the Maungdaw Township, where the Construction and Infrastructure Task Force has supervised all the successful construction projects. We are building an eight-compartment wooden house for six family members. Also, all the houses are of the same model and will each receive a supply of 500 gallons of water. Besides two electric bulbs and a pair of sockets, the house

contains a toilet and two water pumps. For the convenience of the returnees, arrangements have been made to cook in the kitchen," the engineer said.

The Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre project began on 13 January 2018, and some 625 houses will be built here. The project is expected to be completed on 31 March 2018, after which some 30,000 returnees can live in the houses.

"This project is aimed at accommodating 30,000 people. Some 75 per cent of the construction has been completed. Efforts are being made to complete all the projects by the end of this month. Formerly, we planned to build on some 640 acres of land in the first phase, but we had to shift to other places due to uneven grounds and hilly regions," he added. According to the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh, Myanmar has made preparations for the repatriation process and is ready to accept the returnees. ■



The construction of Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre expected to be completed on 31 March 2018. **PHOTO: MNA**



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun visits Sarpay Beikman in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Minister for Information meets staff from Sarpay Beikman, MRTV (YGN)

U AUNG HLA TUN, Deputy Minister for Information, met with civil servants from Sarpay Beikman and Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV), Yangon, yesterday.

The Deputy Minister first arrived at the Sarpay Beikman office, Printing and Publishing Department in Kyauktada Township. He inspected the bookstore, public library, children's library, and e-library.

The Deputy Minister then met with government officials in the meeting hall and instructed them to conduct seminars and workshops with foreign literary experts, and to be up-to-date with current trends, while developing Sarpay Beikman's own style.

Deputy Chief Editor U Soe Myint Than then gave a presentation on Sarpay Beikman's progress. The Deputy Minister provided advice as necessary and then met with the rest of



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun addresses the meeting with staff from MRTV, Yangon, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

the organisation's staff.

Later in the afternoon, the Deputy Minister travelled to the MRTV Studio-A on Pyay Road. He met with the staff and told them that MRTV is an important sector that provides people with information, education, and entertainment, and it is important to change with the times to

stay relevant.

This was followed by the different divisions of MRTV discussing the requirements of the sector, to which Director-General U Myint Htwe provided explanations. The Deputy Minister then discussed possible solutions with the staff. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Rakhine villages to convert to solar power

FROM PAGE-1

The townships included in the plan are Ponnagyun, Pauktaw, Yathedaung, MraukU, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Myebon, Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Kyaukpyu, Yanbye, Manaung, An, Thandwe, Taungup, and Gwa townships. There are 11,333 households in these townships.

The NEP was started in 2016-2017 with support from the World Bank and funds from the Union Government and from the

general public as well.

"The public put in 10 per cent, the State put in 30 per cent, and the World Bank put in 60 per cent of the necessary budget," said U Nay Htet Shein. He said three types (30W, 45W, 60W) of solar home system units will be installed in households, and this will be done with the public's 10 per cent funds. The State will install units for public facilities such as street lamps, schools, libraries, med-

ical centres, monasteries, religious buildings, and other public places.

In the 2016-2017 financial year, 31,363 households in 549 villages were outfitted with solar power, while public facilities were outfitted with 4,091 units. In the 2017-2018 financial year 4,492 households in 68 villages and 166 units for public facilities will be outfitted with 60W and 100W solar home systems.—Kyaw Thu Htet ■



A rooftop solar home system uses a photovoltaic module to provide power for lights in Rakhine State. **PHOTO: HAN LIN NAING**

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

The Bangkok night market is opened in Mandalay from 21 to 24 March. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Taste of Bangkok in Mdy

THE Bangkok night market is open in Mandalay's Manaw Yaman grounds from 21 to 24 March. People can visit the market and sample zesty Thai food, such as sweet and sour prawn soup or Pad Thai and trendy Thai fashions, said Ma Nan Aye Myat Mon, an organizer of the night market.

This is the third time the night market took place in Mandalay. The Thai style night

market is comprised of more than 60 stalls, and about five shops are directly from Thailand where Thai accessories, clothes and food are sold.

The previous events were in November and December last year.

"In Mandalay, we do not have many social meeting places where we can walk around with friends or family and see and do different things at night.

And I'd like to have a place like the night markets in Bangkok. That's why we organized the opening of the night market here," Ma Nan Aye Myat Mon said.

Organizers intend to open BKK night markets in Monywa, Magway, Taunggyi, Sagaing, Magway Regions and Shan State.

The night market will open from 4 p.m to 10 p.m.—MDN ■

9th International Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Expo 2018 to be held

THE 9th International Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Expo 2018 will be held at the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Trade Centre on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road, Mayangone, in Yangon from 30 March to 2 April, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

The expo will feature 30 firms from five countries — Thailand, Myanmar, Hong Kong, Germany and India. The expo will be mainly sponsored by the Office Express.

At the exhibition, Germany will display its latest jewellery-crafting technologies this year. The expo will be a good

exposure for entrepreneurs wishing to invest in gems and jewellery for the first time.

Moreover, raw gemstones, finished products, rubies, sapphires, pearls and jade will be available for purchase and observation. Myanmar's gemstones will also be displayed at the exhibition.—GNLM ■

Yangon water bus on Yaele Kyauktan pagoda route

THE Yangon water bus will accept only 190 passengers on the Yaele Kyauktan pagoda route in its second week of operations, according to Tint Tint Myanmar Company.

The Yangon water bus is operating between Botahtaung and Insein as a regular route. Now, it will run on the Yaele Kyauktan pagoda route every weekend. The weekend day trip by the Yangon water bus started since 17 March.

"More than 200 passengers used the Yangon water bus on the first weekend. We want to provide more services this time. So, we will accept only 190 passengers. They have to sit on their own seats. We are also planning to provide more life jackets," said an official from Tint Tint Myanmar Company.

This weekend, the water bus will leave the jetty at 7.30 a.m. and reach Yangon Jetty at 1.20 p.m. The boat fare is Ks6,000 per person, inclusive of a lunch box, coffee and drinking water. The tickets for the weekend trips will be available from 22 March at Botahtaung and Insein jetties.

Myanmar's first ever Yangon water bus started operations on 6 October. Currently, it is operating between Botahtaung and Insein with stops at Nanthidar, Lanthit (Lanmadaw), Kyemyindaing and Hlaing jetties.

The Yangon water bus is also planning to operate new routes — North Dagon Myothit and Thanlyin Star City routes.—Su Hnin Let ■

Local farmers introduced to Htwet Toe mobile application

VILLAGE Link, a leading digital service company in Myanmar, has introduced the Htwet Toe mobile application to local farmers to provide them with information on agricultural technology, said U Thadde Hein, founder and CEO of Myanmar Awba Group.

The application will provide information on agricultural technology, weather conditions and the price of crops. Moreover, this application will connect farmers and agricultural experts on a single platform.

"This application has been developed to provide agricultural

information based on the latest research to local farmers on time," said U Thadde Hein.

The Htwet Toe mobile application was created by the Village Link company, with the support of the Geodata for Agriculture and Water (G4AW) programme, which will assist in further developing the application. G4AW, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is a programme carried out by the Netherlands Space Office and is focused on sustainable food production and water.

The beta version of the Htwet Toe mobile application has

been available since December 2017, with more than 20,000 farmers using the application, which can be downloaded through the Google Play Store. The application will include six functions — question and answer, agricultural technology, weather conditions, DM code, price of crops, and news and articles.

Myanmar's agriculture sector contributes to 38 per cent of its gross domestic product and employs more than 60 per cent of the labour force. Myanmar has large swathes of land to grow a variety of crops, compared with other ASEAN countries. However,

its local farmers have the lowest agricultural productivity and income in the region, because of the lack of technology and information. Therefore, the Htwet Toe application was introduced to provide local farmers with information and suggestions from agricultural experts.

"We are glad to receive strong support from the Dutch government to ensure the wide use of the application. We are also planning to update the application with the latest technology to develop the lifestyle of local farmers," said U Thadde Hein.—GNLM ■

Myanmar needs to develop stock market for AEC plans

By May Thet Hnin

The Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) needs more listed companies and heavy investors, if it has to execute the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) plans, said U Thet Htun Oo, executive senior manager of YSX.

This is because an underdeveloped stock market is one of the key challenges for Myanmar, U Thet Htun Oo added.

“More companies must be listed on the stock market, while its investor base must be expanded. Currently, the number of investors is few,” said U Thet Htun Oo.

It is hoped the AEC will bring foreign investors to the stock market, and they will soon be authorised for stock trading, in line with the Myanmar Citizens Law. Local companies need to expand their businesses to keep up with international companies. If needed, preparedness plans, setting up public companies, involving joint ventures, and combining companies for mergers and acquisition should be done, he noted.

An underdeveloped stock market is one of the challenges in implementing the AEC plans, said Daw Saw Kalaya Su, director of Foreign Economic Relations Department, operating under the Ministry of Planning and Finance, at the AEC 2025



Visitors look at the electronic board showing the stock exchange rates in YSX. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Workshop Forum held early March.

Besides these, other challenges for Myanmar are the lack of capital and technology for small and medium enterprises, less knowledge about AEC and the need to formulate an e-commerce law, she added.

Myanmar's stock exchange market will soon complete two years. Currently, there are only five listed companies: First Myanmar Investment, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings, Myanmar Citizens Bank, First Private Bank and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd.

Some 300 to 500 investors trade daily on the YSX. Some 10,000 shares are traded daily on an average, with their estimated value being Ks70 million. The value of share trading plunged by Ks30 million this year, compared with last year.

The decline in the stock trading value is attributed to the poor general economic climate, low income and the lack of knowledge about the stock market, said U Thet Htun Oo.

In a bid to attract more investors, YSX will double its matching time from the previous two sessions to four.

Additionally, officials from the YSX, under the guidance of the Planning and Finance Ministry, will conduct awareness campaigns about the stock market in Yangon and other towns outside Yangon, in cooperation with securities companies.

Five more companies, including Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation (MAPCO) and Great Hor Kham Public Co. Ltd, are preparing to be listed on the YSX, which is also ready to allow foreign investments in the existing listed companies. ■

Muse trade up by US\$385 million this fiscal year

THE value of trade through the Muse border gate, which sees the largest trade volumes in Myanmar, reached more than US\$5.37 billion three weeks prior to the end of the current fiscal year (FY), according to the Commerce Ministry.

Exports via Muse surpassed imports, with the estimated export value being \$3.79 billion and the import value being \$1.58 billion.

Between 1 April and 9 March this FY, the Sino-Myanmar border trade at Muse, Lwejel, Chinshwehaw, Kanpiketee and Kengtung gates amounted to \$6.23 billion, increasing from the \$5.82 billion achieved in the same period last FY.

Of the five checkpoints between Myanmar and China, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung showed a small decline in trade against last FY.

The trade values were \$210.6 million at Lwejel, \$543 million at Chinshwehaw, \$99.7 million at Kanpiketee and \$1.7 million at Kengtung.

Rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and vegetables, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, minerals and animal products are exported to China, whereas machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer goods and electronic tools flow into Myanmar.—Htet Myat ■

Thai-Myanmar border trade increases by \$89 million since April

TRADE through the Thai-Myanmar border gates was worth some US\$1.43 billion from 1 April to 9 March this fiscal year (FY), registering an increase of some \$160 million compared with last year.

Of the seven Thai-Myanmar border gates, Myawady gate is the main point for Thai-Myanmar trade, but the value of trade here was \$31.7 million less than last FY.

Similarly, Tachilek also showed a slight decline in trade. The other border gates showed

an increase. Exports via Kawthoung and Myeik checkpoints significantly surpassed imports.

The border trade values were worth \$79.7 million at Tachilek, \$834 million at Myawady, \$184 million at Kawthoung, \$247 at Myeik, \$84 million at Hteekhee, \$6.6 million at Mawtaung and \$0.8 million at Maese. High volumes of fishery products are exported daily through the Myawady gate. Nevertheless, the import of vehicles through the checkpoint ceased, owing to changes

in the new automobile policy, and therefore, many trucks and vans are stranded in Myawady.

Industrial machinery, trucks, agricultural equipment, tractors, motorcycles, cars, food and beverages, cosmetics, fuel oil, fertilisers, cement, construction materials and sugar for re-export are imported through the Thailand-Myanmar border checkpoints, while fish, prawns, crabs, onions, sesame, turmeric, herbs and forestry products are shipped to Thailand.—Htet Myat ■

Tomato farmers face loss

THE crops of tomatoes this season is abundant in Yaydashay Township in Bago Region.

It is a good sign for consumers, but tomato growers are facing losses. They did not earn enough to cover their production costs.

“If I sell tomatoes at wholesale rates at the market, I get Ks.100 a viss. If I sell tomatoes around villages, I get Ks. 500 for three viss,” said a tomato grower from a village in Yaydashay Township.

“However I can sell hundreds viss of tomatoes at novitiation ceremonies and make more money,” he added.



Since almost all farmers in the region grow seasonal crops such as tomatoes, cabbages or chilies, the supply is higher than the consumer's demand which could result in lower prices, some people noted.—Ko Lwin ■



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye poses for the documentary photo together with attendees in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MAY OO MOE**

Campaign launched to end physical violence against children

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye officially launched a campaign to end physical violence against children in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. In his address, Dr. Win Myat Aye expressed hope that the programme would help end physical and sexual violence in Myanmar.

Violence against children is a challenge for every country, and Myanmar is also facing the same challenge over its eradication, said the Union Minister.

After assuming office, the new government has made efforts to improve the livelihood

of people, so they can enjoy basic human rights and live with integrity.

Myanmar has been working with local and foreign organisations to end sexual abuse against children and rehabilitate them, he added.

As the Child Law enforced in 1993 was ineffective, the law was rewritten by the new government, and the new law is expected to be enacted soon, said Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye.

A campaign is being carried out by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the World Vision for five years to end physical

and sexual violence against children.

As part of the campaign, World Vision Myanmar will work together with its partner and civil organisations to raise awareness about violence against children, according to Suresh Bartlett, resident representative of World Vision Myanmar.

World Vision Myanmar will form committees to carry out educational activities targeting some 500,000 parents, teachers and children, as part of the efforts to prevent crime in Myanmar and fulfil the rights of children.—Khin Yadana ■

Amyotha Hluttaw holds 31st-day meeting

FROM PAGE-2

Daw Myat Thida Tun of Mon State constituency (5) suggested setting up meetings with Hluttaw representatives of states and regions to discuss problems arising from the confiscation of lands. Based on these discussions, suggestions and coordination should be provided to the states and regional governments or the central land assessment committee through the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker, and if required, a motion must be tabled in the Hluttaw. Only then can the Hluttaw help resolve the issue to a certain extent, the Hluttaw representative said.

Naw Hla Hla Soe of Yangon Region constituency (10), on her part, commended the committee for participating in amending the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management

Law. “Now, is the period when ceasefires are being made, and the country is headed towards a federal democracy union through the establishment of peace. Some ethnic organisations have their own land policies. The land sector issue is very important in the peace process, and the committee is urged to coordinate and combine the land policies and compile a report to the Hluttaw representatives for information,” she said.

U Shayrel Shu Maung of Kayah State constituency (2) and U Tin Aung Tun of Magway Region constituency (5) also joined the discussion on the report.

Amyotha Hluttaw Farmer Affairs Committee member U Lin Tin Htay then tabled a motion in the Hluttaw to approve and accept the committee report.

Government Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee report on questions asked and motions tabled during the second Amyotha Hluttaw’s sixth regular session were then read, after which Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than requested the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the report to enrol their names.

Similarly, the Amyotha Hluttaw’s Health, Sports and Culture Committee’s report on its works was read by committee member Daw Lwee Zar, and the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker called on the Hluttaw representatives to register and discuss the report.

The 32nd-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw is scheduled to be held on 23 March.—Aung Ye Thwin ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Union Election Commission Notification 41/2018

6th Waxing of Tagu, 1379 ME
22 March, 2018

Permission to register as a political party

National United Democratic Party (N.U.D) headquartered at No. 2319, at the corner of Chindwin Street and Khatta Street, Shwe Kyar Pin Ward, Zabuthiri Township, in Nay Pyi Taw, has been permitted to register as a political party in accordance with Section 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law on 22 March 2018.

The registration number of National United Democratic Party is 109.

Hla Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission



The 4th Judiciary meeting held at the Union-Attorney General’s Office yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union-Attorney General attends 4th Judiciary Meeting

THE 4th coordination meeting between the Union-Attorney General and Region and State Advocate Generals, and Region and State Magistrates, and District Magistrates was held at the Union-Attorney General’s Office yesterday.

The Union-Attorney General delivered the opening speech, in which he said the judiciary sector must do its utmost to uphold rule of law, legal fairness, responsibility and accountability in accord with the national policy.

“Everyone in the judiciary system must follow the law to deliver an equal justice system. If everyone in the judiciary system treats each case with fairness and equality, and completely abstains from bribery, then the public will grow

to trust the justice system”, he said.

The meeting will include discussions on the obstacles and progress made by judiciary officials in their respective Regions and States. The Union-Attorney General said a guidebook on drafting new laws will soon be published to help coordination in legal reviews.

The meeting will be continued today. Attending the meeting are 136 participants including the Deputy Attorney General, Region and State Advocate Generals, Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Directors, Region and State Magistrates, and District Magistrates.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Sai Din Bridge in Rakhine State to be opened at the end of March



Workers seen at the construction site of the Sai Din bridge in Rakhine State. **PHOTO: AYE MIN THU**

THE Department of Bridges under the Ministry of Construction is building several bridges that will help regional development in Rakhine State, officials said yesterday.

The bridge projects include the Sai Din Bridge, which is nearly completed and will facilitate travel between Ponnagyun and Buthidaung. It was learnt that arrangements are being made to finish the bridge by the end of the month.

The construction of Sai Din Bridge began in December 2016. The bridge is a two-way

concrete bridge measuring 600 ft in length, 24 ft. in width and 9 ft. in height. The bridge is being constructed with 150 labourers to complete the project within the designated time.

“It was targeted to complete construction in March, at the end of the open season prior to monsoon season.

On completion of the bridge, development along the region will be gained. In the past, local people used to depend only on waterways. On completion of the Ponnag-

yun-Yathedaung-Buthidaung Road, regional development will rise up remarkably. Transport plays an important role for the regional development”, said U Wai Myint Thu, official of the Bridges Department.

There are four other bridges being constructed — Yathedaung Bridge, Thaungdara Bridge, Nga San Paw Bridge and Ywa Haung Bridge. The spans are targeted to be completed by the end of March, the end of the budget year and before the monsoon season. —Kyaw Thu Win ■

Union Civil Service Board's coordination meeting held



Chairman Dr Win Thein delivers the speech at Union Civil Service Board coordination meeting. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE first three-month coordination meeting of the Union Civil Service Board (1/2018) was held at the meeting hall of the Union Civil Service Board yesterday.

During the meeting, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board Dr. Win Thein delivered a speech.

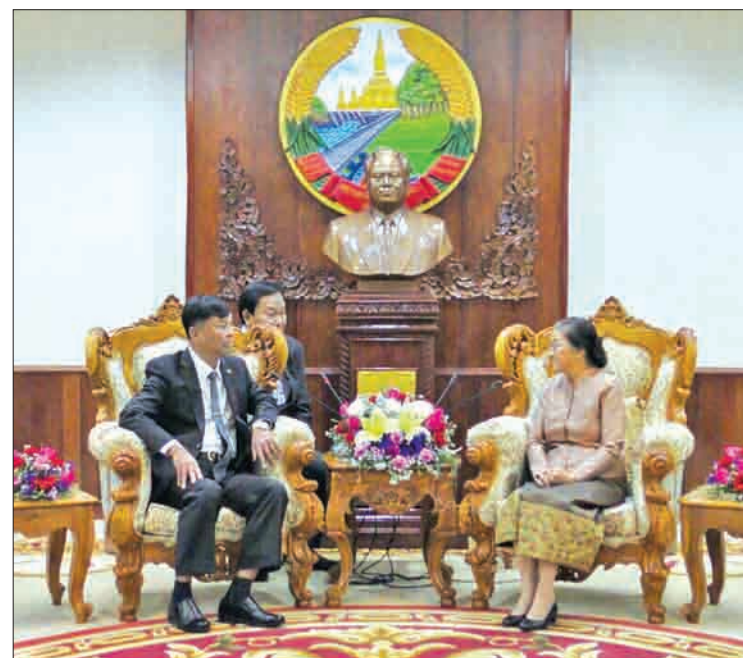
At the meeting, permanent

secretary, directors-general, rectors and deputy permanent secretary of the Union Civil Service Board, Chairman's Office, departments and central institutes of the civil service explained reviews of the works performed during three months, from December 2017 to February 2018, and plans to be imple-

mented from April to September 2018. Dr. Win Thein concluded the meeting with a speech about the reviews and plans.

Also present at the meeting were members of the Union Civil Service Board, such as U Win Maw, U Than Tun, Dr. U Pwar, U Saw Valentine and other officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar-Laos bilateral security and rule of law ministerial-level meeting held



Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe meets with President of National Assembly of Laos Mrs Pany Yathotou at the National Congress Office in Laos on 21 March. **PHOTO: MNA**

A DELEGATION, led by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, arrived in Laos on 18 March to attend the Myanmar-Laos bilateral security and rule of law ministerial-level meeting.

On the morning of 20 March, high-ranking officials, led by Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Aung Win Oo, attended a preliminary meeting at Lao Plaza Hotel where top officials, led by Lao People's Democratic Republic Ministry of Public Security Permanent Secretary Police Brig-Gen Sisavath Keomalavong, were also present. The meeting discussed matters relating to bilateral border security, the rule of law, anti-narcotics works and immigration.

Later in the afternoon, a Myanmar-Laos bilateral security and rule of law ministerial-level meeting was held at the Laos Ministry of Public Security. A Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and a Laos delegation led by Laos Minister

for Public Security Police Maj-Gen Somkeo Sylavong were present at the meeting. At the meeting, matters relating to co-operation in bilateral security, rule of law and stability, sharing of information, increasing border liaison office processes, anti-drugs and anti-human trafficking works, illegal crossing of borders, learning of languages for easier and smoother communication and raising bilateral cooperation were discussed in detail. The ministers from the two nations signed the minutes of the meeting.

The Union Minister called on President of National Assembly of Laos H.E. Mrs Pany Yathotou at the National Congress Office on the morning of 21 March and discussed the outcome of the bilateral ministerial meeting and the increasing of good neighborly relations between Myanmar and Laos. The Myanmar delegation led by the Union Minister was meant to return to Myanmar on 22 March. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Correction

A news story on Page 7 in the 21 March edition of The Global New Light of Myanmar contained errors. In the story headlined “Joint patrols along Myanmar-Bangladesh border”, the headline should read, “Coordinated patrols along Myanmar-Bangladesh border.” The third line of the first paragraph should also read “...Border Police forces conducted a coordinated patrol along the...”

When red silk trees bloom, rabid dogs roam

THE red let pan flowers of the silk-cotton trees (Bom-bax flower–Bombay buonopozense) falling slowly from their perch are an embodiment of beauty in the summer.

However, a less flattering analogy in Burmese proverbs is “Let pan pwint chain kway yu chain,” which roughly translates as “Rabid dogs roam when let pan flowers bloom.”

It serves as a warning to people. As the summer heat rises, stray dogs with dripping saliva can be seen roaming the streets, and it’s best to give them a wide berth, preferably taking another route to avoid them.

Dogs are such a frequent precursor of rabies in Southeast Asia that in Burmese, rabies is called “Kway yuu yawga,” meaning the “mad dog disease.”

According to a medical report, rabies causes some 25,000 deaths per year on an average in the region, making up for 45 per cent of rabies-related deaths in the world. The report

stated that Myanmar sees the second highest number of deaths from rabies in the region, with 1,000 people dying from rabies infection, while India ranks first with 20,000 deaths.

There are approximately 50 million people in Myanmar sharing a living space with a dog population of some 4 million, and of these, 600,000 people, mostly children, fall prey to dog bites each year. Unconfirmed reports state that 75 per cent of the stray dogs in the country have rabies, and so, it is important to exercise caution while loitering around hounds.

A scratch or a bite of a dog or cat with rabies or exposure to their blood or open wounds is enough to transmit the disease. It is also unsafe to get organ transplants from donors who died of or were infected with rabies, as the virus still persists and can spread throughout the body of the new host.

We can tell if our pets have contracted rabies if they display unusual behaviour, such as unusual shyness or aggression; higher tendencies to bite; chewing on sticks, litter or paper; change in the tone of the bark; hydrophobia, seizures, inability to swallow, excessive salivation or frothy saliva.

So how can you prevent rabies? First, you can visit your veterinarian with your pet on a regular basis and ensure he/she is vaccinated for rabies. Second, spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or vaccinated regularly. If necessary, pet owners should get a rabies vaccination themselves.

If you or someone you know have been bitten by a rabid animal, then make sure to wash the infected area with clean water and soap for at least 15 minutes before applying an antiseptic (such as betadine). ■

The value of our volunteers

Organizational Development Department
MRCS
(Continued from yesterday)

Total Volunteer investment

Category of Expen- diture	Cost Detail	Amount (MMK)	%
Transportation	Travel expenses made by volunteers to fulfill their duties	76,405,550	50.37%
Equipment	Equipment provided to volunteers	9,600,00	6.32%
Training Expenses	Expenses incurred for the training of volunteers as part of capacity building	2,632,000	1.73%
Briefing and Debrief- ing	The OD Department briefing and debrief- ing at Yangon	2,239,550	1.47%
Insurance	Insurance for volun- teers	320,000	0.21%
Accommodation for deployed volunteers	Accommodation for deployed volunteers	10,697,550	7.05%
Prediem	Prediem	49,790,000	32.82%
	Total	151,684,550	100%

The figure showing the different costs were actual costs and the information was obtained from the OD team, The calculated do not include personal costs of the regular paid staff of the MRCS OD department. The calculation included only the costs of briefing, capacity building training and debriefing conducted by the OD team.

Transportation

Transportation costs covered the volunteer’s transport from their local branch to the training venue in Yangon.

As well as their transport to an form the operation area. This was the highest cost due to the fact that all volunteers mobilized and deployed in the Rakhine operation came from other MRCS branched.

If it were local volunteers who were mobilized, the costs of transportation would decrease tremendously. Most of the volunteers deployed came from remote areas that took three days to travel by air to reach Rakhine State. With the high cost of plane fare plus additional expense for extra days at the transit place, MRCS had to spend MMK 76,405,550 (50.37%) of total investment.

Per diem

Per diem was MMK 5,000 per day per volunteer covering meal expenses. This was the second highest investments after the transportation costs.

Supporting materials

Supporting materials referred to personal hygiene kit provided to every volunteer. The ma-

terials included plastic box towel, toothbrush and tooth-paste, soap, detergent powder, comb, body powder, hair cream, disposable hand gloves, mask, nail clipper, ear plugs and shampoo.

Insurance

Insurance cost MMK 1,000 per volunteer for 2013 and all Rakhie volunteers were insured in the IFRC insurance scheme in line with MRCS’s “Supporting Guideline for RCVs working in emergency/disaster management.”

Accommodation

Accommodation costs included accommodation during transit and training days in Yangon and onsite in Rakhine.

Training

The training expense covered the Basic First Aids training (refresher) of the volunteers as well as the more advanced capacity building training conducted by the OD tram and technical department.

Briefing and De-briefing

Briefing and debriefing were organized in Yangon by the OD team. The briefing part consisted of informing the volunteers about the practical issues and safety guideline for working in field operation. The debriefing included costs of a farewell dinner for the volunteers.

B. Total volunteer value

This section analysis the functions carried out by volunteers and time spend on each

activity, and matches it to the equivalent paid work at the market wage. This produces and estimate amount- what Myanmar Red Cross Society would need to pay if it were hiring staff to carry out the same work.

The table below presents the equivalent positions or paid works a volunteer was doing during the course of their duties.

Total volunteer value

Title/Role	Equivalent Paid Job	Hourly Wage	#Of total Hours in	Total Value
First Aider	Technician	3,461.66	50,400	174,467,727.03
Relief Worker	Support Officer	2,884.72	12,320	35,539,722.17
Health Educator	Technician	3,461.66	13,640	47,217,059.46
Admins iterative and Reporting Volunteer	Technician	3,461.66	10,960	37,939,807.31
Total			87,320	295,164,315.97

The average wage rates were based on the most current wages MRCS pays its employees. Howere these wage rates are substantially lower than the average wage rates in private market and other national NGOs in Myanmar. Should the study consider average wages in private sector, the economic value of volunteering would be obviously higher.

First Aider was the most common role of the volunteer during Rakhine operation. First aids provided first Aid services and refer other cases to respective appropriate offices.

Relief workers focused on water and food distribution rescue and relief, evacuation needs assessment, relief good distribution, logistic works, loading and uploading of relief goods and restoring family line.

"Red Cross volunteering is very noble work and I value it more than anything else. I will work for Red Cross till the end of my like"

U Kyaw Naing Oo, RC volunteer since 1973

Health educators advised the community about health care, water and sanitation, and personal hygiene. They also educated the people how to avoid rish and harm and how to prevent communicable diseases in mass crowded population.

Administrative volunteer’s duties included registration of Red Cross volunteer participation in daily volunteering supervision and reporting, assigning duties and responsibilities, daily office management, arranging

meal and refreshment for the volunteers, arranging transportation, financial clearance and other insurance issues if required.

C. The VIVA ration

The VIVA ratio is computed using the formula:

$$\text{VIVA ratio} = \frac{\text{Total volunteer value}}{\text{Total volunteer investment}}$$

Using the values obtained during the VIVA exercise, we can reach the following calculation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VIVA ratio:} &= \frac{295,164,315.97}{151,684,550.00} \\ &= 1.945 \sim 2:1 \end{aligned}$$

The VIVA ration calculation means that for every Myanmar kyat spent on each Rakhine operation volunteer, the Myanmar Red Cross Society received two kyat’s worth of services from each volunteer.

D. Total number of volunteer hours

Total number of volunteers	320
Total number of volunteer hours rendered	87,320

E. Full-time staff equivalent to the total number of volunteer hours

In order to carry out the work of the 320 volunteers, the OD Department would need the equivalent of 45 full time paid staff. This was computed as follow:

F. Per capita costs and contributions

- Each volunteer mobilized has rendered 273 hours.
- MRCS has invested and average of MMK 474,014 per volunteer.
- Each volunteer mobilized during the year was valued at MMK 922, 388

Equivalent full time staff

1. Other Findings

The Rakhine operation has a wide range of benefits to MRCS are not directly measured in terms of economic value:

- Dissemination of the seven principles of the Red Cross through action showing, especially impartiality and neutrality of the volunteers in providing help in a conflict situation.
- Media coverage of Rakhine conflict showing Red Cross volunteers in action thus increasing then visibility and good image of MRCS in the community.
- The volunteers gained more self-esteem, learned new skills and felt important having been given the opportunity to help the most vulnerable.
- The volunteers exposed to the conflict have become more committed to the Red Cross and its Fundamental Principles.

2. Conclusion

This value of volunteers study shows that 45 full time paid staff would be needed to carry out the work provided by the Rakhine operation volunteers. The volunteers provided help to 70651 people in total and the services included First Aid, food and water distribution, health education and emergency evacuation. The total cash value of the work of the volunteers is estimated to be MMK 295,164,315. The study shows that for each Myanmar kyat spent on the operation, MRCS received two kyats’ worth of services provided by volunteers.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Equivalent full time staff} &= \frac{\text{Total volunteer hours/40 hours per week}}{48 \text{ weeks per year}} \\ &= \frac{(87,320/40)}{48} \\ &= 45.4 \sim 45 \text{ staff} \end{aligned}$$

3. Recommendations

Most of the programmes and activities of MRCS rely entirely on volunteer participation.

Therefore, it is vital to provide regular volunteering opportunities, training and recognition of volunteers’ contributions to the Movement. This is a key to ensure enthusiastic and committed volunteers now and in the future.

Key recommendations

- The current volunteer management system should be reviewed and enhanced in the light of the revised MRCS Strategy 2015.
- Volunteers working in situations of armed conflict and violence should be further motivated by consulting them on issues related to their work. This gives further importance to their role as volunteers.
- MRCS should give priority on volunteer retention strategy.
- Volunteers’ well-being should be taken care of. They must be given more free time to avoid getting burnt out from too much work in a stressful situation as communal conflict. They should also provide psychosocial support during and after the deployment.
- Conducting regular value of volunteers study is recommended to review and assess the cost effectiveness of the projects and to illustrate the economic value of the projects. ■

Organizational
Development
Department

MRCS

Let us make malaria extinct

Eliminating malaria is both possible and necessary. Here's how to accelerate progress

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Region has made dramatic progress in malaria prevention and control. As the recently released World Malaria Report documents, since 2010 the South-East Asia Region has led the world in reducing the number of people falling ill and dying from malaria, slashing the caseload by 50 per cent and associated mortality by 60 per cent. In addition, two countries in the region – Maldives and Sri Lanka – have been certified malaria-free. In 2016, four countries recorded fewer than 10,000 cases, while Bhutan and Timor-Leste reported zero deaths since 2013 and 2015, respectively.

These are substantial achievements, particularly in a world where the battle against malaria remains as challenging as ever. That eight of the region’s nine malaria endemic countries are on course to reduce malaria cases by 40 per cent by 2020 (with three countries – Bhutan, Nepal and Timor-Leste – identified as having the potential to achieve elimination) is proof that with the right policies and robust political will, malaria’s deadly burden can be lifted.

To make that happen region-wide by 2030, high-burden countries such as India, Indonesia and Myanmar must continue their forward trajectory. While each has made substantial gains in driving down malaria incidence and mortality, their further success will have a decisive impact on the region’s fortunes given that together they account for around 98 per cent of its burden. More importantly, they will have a decisive impact on vulnerable populations now suffering the disease, raising up their health and wellbeing and promoting social and economic advancement.

To achieve these outcomes, a number of tools outlined in WHO’s Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030 are of critical function.

Key among them is deepening community engagement and action at the grassroots. As the World Malaria Report highlights, countries across the South-East Asia Region have benefitted immensely from working directly with affected communities. Whether by disseminating insecticidal nets or carrying out rapid diagnostic testing, grassroots volunteer networks have the ability to catalyse real change where effectively engaged. India’s Accredited Social Health Activist programme is a good example of how this can be done, and how countries can reach the unreached and underserved while establishing greater community buy-in.

The embrace of innovation and new technologies is likewise crucial. That means strengthening and expanding support for basic, clinical and implementation research able to enhance understanding of both malaria parasites and the mosquitoes that spread them. It also means investing in new technologies and forms of service delivery that can hasten progress in specific contexts. Though region-wide uptake of Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACT), for example, has had dramatic impact, countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion, where resistance has inhibited ACT’s efficacy, must now seek out and obtain newer, more powerful tools before untreatable parasite strains emerge.

Recent momentum in each of these areas is encouraging. In November, a ministerial roundtable was held in New Delhi where, among other things, member countries focused on operationalising the South-East Asia Region’s 2017-2030 malaria elimination action plan. To follow that up, in early December the region’s health ministers convened once again, this time in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar’s capital, to share experiences and learn from one another in an effort to accelerate progress at the local, national and regional levels.

For the region’s three high-burden member countries, as well as those that have eliminated or are on the cusp of eliminating the disease, the need to retain focus and deepen the implementation of key tools and strategies cannot be overemphasised. ■ WHO

Tatmadaw and KNU to meet in Kyaukkyi for engagements in Papun area

By Ye Kaung Nyunt

THE second day meeting of 15th Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) was held yesterday morning in the National Reconciliation and Peace Center on Shweli Road, Yangon.

After the meeting, JMC-U secretary (1) Dr. Shwe Kha and JMC-U secretary (2) Col. Wunna Aung met with local and foreign news media to explain about two days discussion in the JMC-U and engagements between Tatmadaw and Karen National Union (KNU) Brigade 5 in Papun district that started on 5 March.

There had been engagement between Tatmadaw and KNU Brigade 5 in Papun District starting from 5 March as Tatmadaw was constructing a road to send provisions to Tatmadaw front-line headquarters in Lwe Mu Plaw and Khay Pu before the onslaught of the raining season.

Speaking about the engagements, Col. Wunna Aung said "Our front-line headquarters are in Lwe Mu Plaw and Khay Pu and we are arranging to stockpile provisions before the rain starts. In order to do this a road for vehicles to transport the provisions had to be built. There are about eleven Kayin villages between Khay Pu and Lwe Mu Plaw. After sending the provisions, Tatmadaw (vehicles) will return to their own places. The existence of a road would be very beneficial for regional development. It will permit motorcycle transport. But the other side is concerned of what we'll do with this road. On the one side,



JMC-U secretary (1) Dr. Shwe Kha and JMC-U secretary (2) Col. Wunna Aung meeting with local and foreign media at the press conference following the meeting of JMC-U. **PHOTO: PHO HTAUNG**

regional development and good administration is required. It means we need to coordinate more. That is why this was discussed in detail today and civilians mediate between the two sites. It is decided for Tatmadaw, KNU and KNLA (PC) leaders to meet in Kyaukkyi."

After the second day meeting of 15th JMC-U, civilian representatives from different levels of JMC formed a coordinating team to resolve the engagements that had occurred and decided for leaders from Tatmadaw and KNU-KNLA(PC) to meeting in Bago Region, Kyaukkyi on either 29 or 30 March.

Dr. Shwe Kha explained about JMC's response on the

matter of the engagement

Explaining about JMC's response to the engagements, Dr. Shwe Kha said "There were some minor skirmishes on 5 March. We try to contain the situation so that it wouldn't become widespread. In the last 3-4 days, JMC sent Reverend Saw Matthew and U Zaw Htoo Blat to meet Brigade 5 commander. The aim was to setup a meeting between the commanders of the two sides. Good results were achieved."

In the meeting scheduled for end March in Kyaukkyi Township leaders from Tatmadaw will participate while from the KNU side, Brigade 5 as well as central level commanders will part take in it said Dr. Shwe Kha.

"On this matter Tatmadaw explained clearly that it is simply building a road that was not intended for offensive action or to disrupt the peace. Some from the KNU side said this is a preparation for an offensive. This can be resolved if the commanders of the two sides meet and attempts were made for the commanders to meet. This is a very good outcome," said Dr. Shwe Kha on the skirmishes that had occurred.

At the 15th JMC-U meeting held today, it was decided to hold the fourth meeting of JMC civilian representatives during the second week of July 2018 in Papun, Kayin State to strengthen the peace process and to achieve more progress. ■

Papers on ethnic literature and culture read in Taunggyi

PAPERS on literature and culture of Gonshan, Lisu, Wa, Larhu and Enn were read by resource papers from the ethnic tribes at the Ethnic Literature and Culture Development festival and funfair at the Awaiyar Konmyintharyar grounds in Taunggyi, Shan State, yesterday morning.

The festival organized by the Ministry of Information and the Shan State government turned to second day yesterday.

The paper reading session of the festival began with an opening address by Shan State Minister for Arkha Ethnic Affairs U Ar Bay Hla.

The resource persons also discussed with the those present at the session.

The festival includes reading the papers on a wide range of ethnic minority groups in Shan State, such as Tai Lue (Shan Gyi), Gon Shan, Tai Khamti, Tai Sa (aka) Mai Tar, Tai Leng (Shan), Tai Neua (Shan), Wa, Pa-O, Danu, Inn Thar, T'ang (Palaung), Kokang, Kachin, Kayan, Yin Net, Yin Kyar, Taung Yoe, Hta Naw, Lisu, Akha, Lahu and Enn at Taunggyi University convocation hall.

Arrangements were made to entertain the audience with musical concerts and the display of booths, entertainment and traditional food stalls at the fire balloon launching field in Taunggyi.—Wai Yan Lin (IPRD) ■

Japan provides more than Japanese Yen 15 billion to Myanmar

THE signing ceremony of three exchange of notes between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Government of Japan took place at the Ministry of Planning and Finance in Nay Pyi Taw at 2 pm yesterday.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Set Aung, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo,

the permanent secretaries, the directors-general, the deputy directors-general, Ms. Tomoko Yoshihiro, Charge d' Affaires ad interim of the Embassy of Japan and Japanese officials.

At the ceremony, three agreements on providing Japanese Yen 1,000 million for economic and social development plan, Japanese Yen 8,661 million for construction of New Yangon General Hospital and Japanese

Yen 6,033 million for development of Mandalay Port were sealed and exchanged by Deputy Minister U Set Aung and Ms. Tomoko Yoshihiro, Charge d' Affaires ad interim of the Embassy of Japan.

The signing of three exchange of notes will strengthen friendship between Myanmar and Japan, thereby contributing to public healthcare and transportation and communication sector.—MNA ■



The signing ceremony of three exchange of notes between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Government of Japan in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

World sees rapid upsurge in extreme weather

PARIS — A world addled by climate change has seen a four-fold increase in major flooding events since 1980, and a doubling of significant storms, droughts and heat waves, Europe's national science academies jointly reported Wednesday.

In Europe, where precise data reaches back decades, the number of severe floods has jumped five fold since 1995, according to the report, which updates a 2013 assessment.

"There has been, and continues to be, a significant increase in the frequency of extreme weather events," said Michael Norton, environmental programme director for the European Academies' Science Advisory Council.

"They underline the importance of avoiding greenhouse gases, which are fundamentally responsible for driving these changes," he told AFP.

For impacts that cannot be avoided, he added, "this makes climate proofing all the more urgent."

In Europe, efforts to shore up defences against river flooding have proven effective: despite an increase in frequency of such events, economic losses on the continent have remained static.

"Rather than just coping



A Category Four hurricane which slammed into the Dominican Republic and Haiti in 2016 triggered major floods. **PHOTO: AFP**

with disasters after they strike, we need to shift to proactive management of all drivers of risks," commented Munich Climate Insurance Initiative director Soenke Kreft, who did not contribute to the report.

In the United States, however, the damage wrought by storms doubled, on average, from \$10 billion in 1980 to \$20 billion in 2015, adjusted for inflation, according to the report, based

in part on data from insurance giant Munich Re's NatCatSERVICE.

The update also assessed new findings on possible changes in the Gulf Stream, powerful ocean currents running between the Arctic region and the Caribbean that warm the air in northwestern Europe and the US eastern seaboard.

Climate 'hotspots'

The weakening of the Gulf

Stream "is now a credible hypothesis," said Norton.

"Some of the underlying drivers of extreme weather which were speculative four years ago are looking less speculative."

The prospect of the Gulf Stream — also known as the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) — slowing, or even shutting down entirely, "must be taken as a serious pos-

sibility," he added.

Scientists have estimated that winters in Britain and much of western Europe would be several degrees Celsius colder under such a scenario.

The study also examined recent disruptions of the polar Jet Stream, a band of west-to-east winds that circulate at bullet-train speed some 10 kilometres above Earth's surface at the upper boundary of the troposphere.

Recent research has linked severe winters in North America and Europe, as well some extreme summer weather, to Jet Stream fluctuations possibly driven by global warming in the Arctic, where temperatures have risen twice as fast as for the planet as a whole.

"The linkage between climate change and individual weather events — such as the 'Beast from the East' — in inherently uncertain," commented Phil Williamson, a climate researcher at the University of East Anglia.

But the new report "is fully consistent with global trends," he added. "For example, there have been roughly ten times more warm record-breaking temperatures than cold one in the last 150 years."—AFP ■

Russian military supplies food to thousands Eastern Ghouta citizens

EASTERN GHOUTA — Specialists of the Center for Reconciliation of the Warring Sides in Syria on Thursday delivered hot food for 8,000 citizens in Eastern Ghouta, a Damascus suburb, a spokesman for the center Maj. Gen. Vladimir Zolotukhin said.

"Today the Russian servicemen delivered hot food to 8,000 citizens of Eastern Ghouta, and 2,500 food parcels were handed out," Zolotukhin said.

The reconciliation center focused on providing medical assistance, delivering hot food and also distributing sleeping bags and other essentials among refugees at the checkpoints and camps.

The citizens continue leaving Eastern Ghouta.

Daily five-hour humanitarian pauses have been in effect in Eastern Ghouta since 27 February, after the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2401

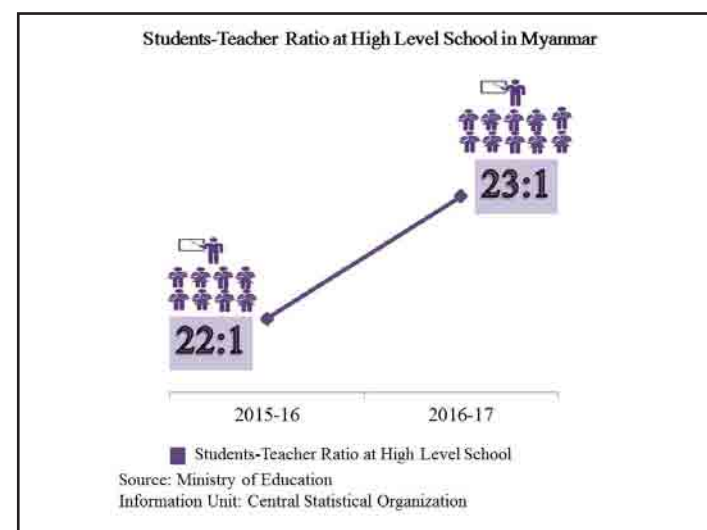


More than 87,000 citizens left the area during the humanitarian pauses. **PHOTO: TASS**

at Russia's initiative calling for an end to hostilities in Syria. Militants disrupted humanitarian pauses in the first several days, shelling the corridor and holding civilians hostage. However, later on, the situation in Eastern Ghouta stabilized. On 13 March, the Russian Defense Ministry re-

ported that hostilities had ended in the city of Douma. That made it possible to ensure civilians' exodus to the areas controlled by government troops.

According to the center's latest data, more than 87,000 citizens left the area during the humanitarian pauses.—Tass ■



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Texas bomb suspect blows himself up, leaves confession

TEXAS — A man suspected of carrying out a series of bombings in the Texas capital Austin blew himself up Wednesday, leaving behind a recorded video “confession” that police said portrayed “challenges in his personal life.”

Police said they surrounded Mark Conditt, a 23-year-old white male, outside a hotel in city suburbs, where a series of bombings that began on 2 March killed two men, both black, and injured several others. The suspect detonated a device in his car and later died, Austin police chief Brian Manley said, bringing a dramatic end to the massive manhunt involving hundreds of federal agents and local police. Police recovered a roughly 25-minute recording from a phone that was in Conditt’s possession when the explosion occurred, and Manley said he “would classify this as a confession.” On the recording, Conditt describes seven explosive devices, and “we have accounted for the devices that we have known about,” the police chief said. Manley



Law enforcement officials put on protective gear as they investigate the place where the suspected package bomber blew himself up in suburban Austin. **PHOTO: AFP**

said that on the 25-minute video, Conditt “does not at all mention anything about terrorism, nor does he mention anything about hate.” “Instead, it is the outcry of a very challenged young man talking about challenges in his personal life that led him to this point,” he said.

Conservative views

Police zeroed in on Conditt over the past 24 to 36 hours as evidence came in from video footage and witness accounts, Manley said. A sealed federal arrest warrant and criminal complaint had been filed Tuesday night, charging Conditt with one count of unlawful possession and transfer of a destructive device, the US Department of Justice said. Law enforcement officers searched a home in the Austin suburb

Conservative views

Police zeroed in on Conditt over the past 24 to 36 hours as evidence came in from video footage and witness accounts, Manley said. A sealed federal arrest warrant and criminal complaint had been filed Tuesday night, charging Conditt with one count of unlawful possession and transfer of a destructive device, the US Department of Justice said. Law enforcement officers searched a home in the Austin suburb

of Pflugerville identified as Conditt’s residence. Police evacuated a five-block radius and detained the suspect’s two roommates for questioning. Fred Milanowski of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) said a recovery team discovered explosive material in the home, along with “componentry” that resembled those found at the scenes of previous explosions. Information about Conditt’s past began to trickle out.

The Houston Chronicle reported that Conditt grew up in a religious family, was homeschooled and briefly attended a local community college. Police could not say how he had learned to build explosive devices. News organizations found a 2012 blog with six postings attributed to Conditt, who would have been a teenager at the time of their publication. On it, Conditt described himself as “conservative.” The posts, apparently part of a class assignment, argued against gay marriage, saying homosexuality was “not natural,” supported the death penalty, and criticized the sex offender registry. Conditt’s family released a statement to CNN saying they were unaware of “the darkness that Mark must have been in.”

“Our family is a normal family in every way. We love, we pray, and we try to inspire and serve others. Right now our prayers are for those families that have lost loved ones, for those impacted in any way, and for the soul of our Mark.”—AFP ■

Saudi-led airstrike kills two Yemeni civilians

SANAA — Two men were killed and three women wounded late on Wednesday when a Saudi-led warplane hit a pickup truck laden with wood in Nihm district northeast of the Yemeni rebel-held capital Sanaa, a security official and residents said.

The airstrike hit the car in Maswarah area, few kilometers away from the battlefield near the central province of Marib, where combat is taking place between the dominant Houthi rebels and coalition-backed government forces of exiled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

The targeted family members were collecting wood for cooking due to acute shortage of cooking gas, the official and residents said.

Nihm is about 50 km northeast of the capital Sanaa.

The attack was the latest in a series of airstrikes conducted by the US-backed Saudi-led coalition air force since the start of the war in Yemen three years ago.

On 8 March, the coalition airstrikes hit a farm and a popular market in the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah, killing eight civilians, according to the local officials and residents.

The Saudi-led coalition intervened in the Yemeni conflict in March 2015 to roll back the Iranian-allied Shiite Houthi rebels and to support the internationally-recognized President Hadi, who was forced into exile by the Houthis.

The war has killed over 10,000 Yemenis, mostly civilians, displaced 3 million others and triggered the worst humanitarian crises.—Xinhua ■

IS militants kill four border guards in western Iraq

RAMADI — The Islamic State (IS) militants on Thursday killed four border guards in an ambush near the Iraqi border with neighboring Jordan, a security source said.

The incident occurred after midnight when the extremist militants opened fire on the car carrying the border guards, who

were in civilian uniform, and killed them all on the main road near Trebil border crossing with Jordan, Major Mohammed al-Obeidi from the Border Guards Command told Xinhua.

Iraqi security forces launched a search campaign in the area looking for the attackers, Obeidi

said. During the past few months, dozens of IS militants fled their former urban strongholds near the borders of Syria and Jordan, as well as in other Iraqi provinces in north of Baghdad after the Iraqi forces carried out major anti-IS offensives.

However, remnants of IS militants resorted to

hideouts in the vast desert in western Iraq and rugged areas in north and east of the country to continue their almost daily attacks against civilians and Iraqi forces.

On 9 December, 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi officially declared full liberation of Iraq from IS militants after

Iraqi forces recaptured all the areas once seized by the extremist group.

However, small groups and individuals of IS militants regrouped and are carrying out attacks against the security forces and civilians despite operations from time to time to hunt them down.—Xinhua ■

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 27th (Tuesday) March 2018 “ ARMED FORCES DAY ” under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 27th MARCH 2018 (Armed Forces Day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

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Peru's embattled president Kuczynski announces resignation

LIMA — Peru's President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski announced his resignation Wednesday in an address to the nation, the day before he was to face an impeachment vote in Congress.

The 79-year-old former Wall Street banker, under fire over his links to Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, denied allegations of bribe-taking but said his resignation was "the best thing for the country."

Kuczynski is the first president to lose his job over the scandal in which the Brazilian company admitted paying out millions of dollars in bribes and gifts to Latin American politicians and businessmen to secure public works contracts.

His resignation comes a few weeks before Kuczynski was due to host the Summit of the Amer-



Peru's President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski leaves the government palace in Lima after recording a televised message announcing his resignation. **PHOTO: AFP**

icas in Lima, where US President Donald Trump and others leaders of the Western Hemisphere are expected April 13-14.

"Faced with this difficult situation that unfairly makes me appear guilty,

I think the best thing for the country is for me to resign the presidency of the republic," he said in the televised address, which showed him seated at a polished conference table with his cabinet standing

grim-faced behind him. "I do not want to be an obstacle, for the country to continue suffering with the uncertainty of these recent times," said the president, who survived a previous impeachment vote in De-

cember. The Congress said it would debate the resignation on Thursday and vote on Friday on whether to accept it. Vice President Martin Vizcarra, who is currently serving as Peru's ambassador to Canada, is likely to replace Kuczynski to avoid early elections at a time of widespread voter discontent with political parties. Vizcarra, who is expected in Lima on Thursday, would hold the post until July 2021, when Kuczynski's mandate was due to end. Pressure built on Kuczynski to resign throughout Wednesday after the opposition alleged the embattled president was trying to buy votes ahead of the impeachment ballot. Lawmakers from Keiko Fujimori's Popular Force party released recordings of her brother Kenji and others apparently negotiating public works contracts in return for votes, and said it was proof that Kuczynski was trying to buy votes. "This government thought it could buy everything. There will always be brave and worthy Peruvians who are not for sale. It's time to tell Mr PPK that he's leaving, and NOW!" Keiko Fujimori tweeted, using the president's initials. The videos, dating from December, were filmed ahead of the previous impeachment vote, which Kuczynski survived with Kenji Fujimori's help. Days later, Kuczynski pardoned the Fujimoris' imprisoned father, ex-president Alberto Fujimori, in what was widely seen as a payoff for support. The government denied vote-buying.— AFP■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V YANG TZE NOVA VOY. NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V YANG TZE NOVA VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 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 COMET SHIPPING
AGENCIES PTE, LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V DA ZHONG VOY. NO. (160)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V DA ZHONG VOY. NO. (160) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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INVESTMENT & DEVELOPMENT CO, LTD.**

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO. (027 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO. (027 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-3-2018 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.

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 CONTINENTAL
SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI AMPLE VOY. NO. (0233-453)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI AMPLE VOY. NO. (0233-453) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPING
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HASIL VOY. NO. (KHS A 0078 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HASIL VOY. NO. (KHS A 0078 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ANAN BHUM VOY. NO. (213 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ANAN BHUM VOY. NO. (213 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-3-2018 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Troma guru Lloyd Kaufman: my career in the slimelight

LOS ANGELES —With a library of 800-plus movies, a cult following and a record for giving stars their break, Lloyd Kaufman could be the biggest movie mogul you've never heard of.

For half a century, the 72-year-old co-founder of Troma Entertainment — the world's oldest independent film studio — has been the enfant terrible of comedy horror; a low-budget Abbott and Costello for the gross-out crowd.

Troma's iconic B-movie back catalogue includes such squelchy, sanguinary delights as "The Toxic Avenger," "Surf Nazis Must Die," "Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead" and "Tromeo and Juliet."

The movies — mainly shown these days in art house theaters and on college campuses — haven't made money since the 1990s but Troma's mutants have become icons of American schlock culture.

"Troma has left a big mark on the countryside of the moving images industry. But we are not that well-known," laments Kaufman, who describes the studio he founded with university friend

Michael Herz as "jalapeno peppers on the cultural pizza."

Troma was a stepping stone to Oscars glory for Oliver Stone and Kevin Costner as well as a filmmaking hothouse for James Gunn ("Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 1 and 2") and Trey Parker and Matt Stone ("South Park," "Team America").

Other luminaries whose early work can be found in Troma's library of self-produced and acquired movies include Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman, Vincent D'Onofrio, Samuel L. Jackson and Eli Roth.

Not for the thin-skinned or politically correct, the filmography is a Pandora's box of cannibalism, radioactive goo, bodily fluids and pneumatic breasts, not to mention relentlessly mocked racial, religious and sexual stereotypes.

AFP caught up with Kaufman at his oceanside hotel as he visited Los Angeles for the west coast premiere of his latest opus, the onerously-titled "Return to Return to Nuke 'Em High: AKA Vol. 2."

- Disco-dancing chicken -

The second part of an

\$800,000 revisiting of Troma's 1986 classic "Class of Nuke 'Em High," it deals with environmental degradation, bullying, anti-LGBTQ prejudice and school shootings, all in the inimitable Troma style.

The movie reunites fans with Tromaville High School classmates and lovers Chrissy and Lauren, who battle fellow students who have turned into vicious mutants after eating contaminated tacos as part of a corrupt school meals program.

"Poultrygeist," a satire of the chemical-industrial food complex, focuses on a fast food restaurant built on a native American burial ground that sparks a disco-dancing chicken-human hybrid zombie apocalypse.

"The Toxic Avenger," considered by most to be Kaufman's finest work, stars 90-pound (40-kilogram) weakling Melvin Junko, who falls into a vat of chemical waste and emerges as Toxie, New Jersey's first superhero.

Pretty much ignored upon its release in 1984, it eventually proved to be Troma's break-



Lloyd Kaufman, the co-founder of Troma Entertainment — the world's oldest independent film studio — has for half a century been the enfant terrible of comedy horror. **PHOTO: AFP**

through into the mainstream consciousness, celebrated by arthouse types from Greenwich Village to Tokyo.

It has spawned three sequels, a stage musical, a Marvel comic, video game and a children's cartoon series, and is due to be inducted into the US Library of Congress this year.

"The people in Tromaville are... perfectly capable of running their own lives but they suffer," Kaufman says.

"They are victims of a conspiracy of the labor elite — labor

leaders who make millions of dollars while the constituency is eating dog food."

To say Kaufman is outspoken would be to under-sludge the radioactive pudding. A twinkle in his eye, he enjoys pulling the rug from under establishment figures he considers pompous or corrupt.

The Troma hashtag for the ballet dress-wearing Toxie — #MeTutu — is a provocative nod to the entirely serious #MeToo movement against sexual harassment that is likely to offend as much as it amuses.—AFP ■

Vampire Weekend re-emerge for Lollapalooza festival

CHICAGO —Vampire Weekend, whose indie rock fusion has found critical and commercial acclaim, will play their first full show in four years at Chicago's Lollapalooza festival as the band readies a new album.

Announcing the lineup on Wednesday for the 2-5 August festival, Lollapalooza — conceived in the 1990s as a celebration of alternative culture — named headliners who are among the biggest mainstream names.

Bruno Mars, the funk revivalist who swept the latest Grammys, and R&B sensation The Weeknd top the billing for the festival in Chicago's lakeside Grant Park, which will also feature high-decibel garage rocker Jack White, indie rock favorites The National and rappers Travis Scott and Logic.

But the name that caught particular attention was Vampire Weekend, whose members have been saying for two years that they are working on their fourth album.

Vampire Weekend, former



Vampire Weekend, former Columbia University students who have merged world music into their indie pop, last released an album in 2013. **PHOTO: AFP**

Columbia University students who have merged world music into their indie pop, last released an album in 2013 — "Modern Vampires of the City" — which won the Grammy for Best Alternative Music Album.

The band has not played full concerts since 2014, although it made two brief appearances in 2016 to campaign for leftist presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

Frontman Ezra Koenig

has said, perhaps jokingly, that the next album will be called "Mitsubishi Macchiato" and in September tweeted that it was "80% done but the last 20% is always the hardest."

The album will be the first since the amicable departure of keyboardist and co-songwriter Rostam Batmanglij, who last year put out a solo album that brought an ethereal feel while delving deeper into sonic experimentation. — AFP ■

Australian media firms fail in Rebel Wilson bid

SYDNEY — Six Australian media companies seeking to join the battle against a record Aus\$4.5 million (US\$3.5 million) defamation payout to Hollywood star Rebel Wilson had their case knocked back Thursday.

The "Pitch Perfect" star was awarded the damages against magazine publisher Bauer last September over articles claiming she lied about her age and background to further her career.

The allegations were made in Woman's Day, Australian Women's Weekly and OK Magazine in 2015, which Wilson said damaged her reputation. She won the case and vowed to give the payout to charity.

Last month newspaper publishers News Corp. and Fairfax, radio station owner Macquarie and television broadcasters ABC, Seven and Nine joined forces to back Bauer's appeal against the country's largest defamation payout.

They argued the size of the damages could stifle public-interest journalism.

But Justice Pamela Tate of the Supreme Court of Victoria on Thursday rejected their bid to intervene, agreeing with Wilson's defence that the arguments of the six firms did not differ enough from those of the Bauer appeal.

Wilson took to social media afterwards, saying the firms should be "embarrassed" for colluding with Bauer.—AFP ■



Six Australian media companies seeking to join the battle against a record Aus\$4.5 million (US\$3.5 million) defamation payout to Hollywood star Rebel Wilson have had their case knocked back. **PHOTO: AFP**

Colorful Thingyan Makeup Creation Contest 2018 brings out the best in make-up designer

CITY Mart Supermarket's Thingyan Makeup Creation Contest 2018 was held at City Mart in Myaynigone Township on 18 March 2018.

The makeup artist Nyi Nyi Maung (Sanchaung) chose the three finalists Ma Su Lae Yi, Ma

Zin Mar Cho and Ma Ei Thazin Pwint. The competition sponsored by Bella, GARNIER, Kanebo, L'OREAL, MAYBELLINE, NIVEA, POND'S and REVLON. Health & Beauty Fair is held at all City Mart branch from 8 March to 28 March.—GNLM ■



A makeup artist carefully applies eyeliner to a contestant at City Mart's Thingyan Contest yesterday. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

YouTube follows Amazon into movie theaters

LOS ANGELES — YouTube has announced it is making a movie in-house to be released in theaters, in a development seen as a step towards the model of new-media innovator Amazon.

"Vulture Club," which is in post-production, stars Oscar winner Susan Sarandon ("Dead Man Walking," "Thelma and Louise") as an emergency room nurse whose son is been kidnapped by terrorists. Directed by Iranian-American Maryam Keshavarz ("Circumstance"), the thriller also stars Edie Falco ("The Sopranos," "Nurse Jackie") and Matt Bomer ("Magic Mike," "American Horror Story: Hotel"). "Vulture Club" follows the singular journey of a woman abandoned by her government who finds community in the most unexpected places," Keshavarz said in a statement. "It's an honor to work with Susan Sarandon, Edie Falco and Matt Bomer who are the incredible talents and an innovator like YouTube to tell this timely story." Online entertainment magazine IndieWire hailed the move by YouTube Red — the Google-owned company's \$10-a-month streaming service — as "a significant strategy shift."

The platform showed Barbara Kopple documentary "This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous" on limited New York and Los Angeles theatrical runs ahead of its February YouTube Red release.

But the company appears to have changed direction since telling IndieWire last year it was not making movie theaters a fulcrum of its release strategy.



Oscar winner Susan Sarandon — shown here at the premiere of 'Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story' during the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival in New York — will star in "Vulture Club," the first movie produced by YouTube for theatrical release. PHOTO: AFP

'Powerful perspective'

YouTube Red, founded in 2014, has distributed around a dozen feature-length fictional movies for its subscribers and is working on a handful more.

It moved into films for the general movie-going public with sci-fi comedy "Lazer Team" in January 2016, but that was a low-budget project with unknown actors that failed to make a dent at the box office.

"Vulture Club," with its all-star cast, belongs in a different league alongside two other recent YouTube Red acquisitions — Eminem's satirical hip-hop drama "Bodied" and Morgan Spurlock's "Super Size Me 2: Holy Chicken!"

While the Eminem movie is also bound for theatrical release, YouTube dropped the Spurlock sequel after the filmmaker admitted to sexual misconduct and

harassment in the past.

In "Vulture Club," Sarandon — recently nominated for Emmy, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild awards for FX miniseries "Feud: Bette and Joan" — plays a mother who struggles to free her kidnapped journalist son.

After running into roadblocks with government agencies, she discovers a clandestine community of correspondents and advocates who might be able to help the war reporter, played by Julian Morris ("Pretty Little Liars"). "This emotional drama grapples with relevant issues journalists around the world face today," said Susanne Daniels, YouTube's global head of original content. "Maryam Keshavarz lends her powerful perspective as an Iranian-American filmmaker, and Susan Sarandon's moving performance immediately drew

us into this compelling film."

Sanctity of cinema

YouTube Red said principal photography on "Vulture Club" was complete, but gave few details on its theatrical release other than confirming its big-screen debut would precede its streaming release.

Netflix has shown little regard for the perceived sanctity of cinema, annoying some filmmakers — notably Christopher Nolan — and sparking calls for bans from film festivals by debuting its movies online only or at the same time as in theaters.

Amazon Studios, on the other hand, has partnered with Bleecker Street, Lionsgate and other entertainment companies to give its original movies a theatrical window of several weeks ahead of their internet release.

The company is now accepted in the industry as a conventional movie studio, its back catalogue including Oscar nominees and winners such as "The Big Sick," "Manchester by the Sea" and "The Salesman." The company plans to average approximately one movie a month and its upcoming in-house theatrical slate includes Luca Guadagnino's horror remake "Suspiria" and Gus Van Sant drama "Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far on Foot."

"We don't have any news to report on a theatrical partner at this stage. Perhaps later once we identify a partner," a YouTube Red representative told IndieWire of "Vulture Club."—AFP ■

Claudia Cardinale stars as Tunisia opens City of Culture

TUNIS — Claudia Cardinale, the Tunis-born Italian movie star, was the guest of honour on Wednesday as Tunisia inaugurated a long-awaited complex to showcase its cultural wealth.

The richly equipped City of Culture complex, launched a decade ago but long stalled, incorporates a modern art museum, a 1,800-seat opera, two theatres, a cinema, library and studios to host festivals.

"Every Tunisian should be proud of this project, culture is the main tool with which we will fight terrorism," President Beji Caid Essebsi said at the opening ceremony. "Tunisians have to dream and have confidence in themselves."

The project was initially launched under president Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, who was overthrown in a 2011 revolution. Located in central Tunis, the nine-hectare (22-acre) Cite de la Culture with its iconic glass globe is estimated to have cost 130 million dinars (more than \$49 million). Culture Minister Mohamed Zine el Abidine told reporters at the opening that it is "the largest cultural complex in the Maghreb, the Arab world and Africa". The project, held up by financial disputes, had been abandoned after the revolution but was revived in March 2016.—AFP ■

Kyrgyzstan defeats Myanmar to secure the qualification in 2019 AFC Asian Cup

KyawZin Lin

KYRGYZSTAN qualified for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup that will be played in the UAE by beating Myanmar 5-1 yesterday at Incheon Stadium in South Korea.

Two goals in the first few minutes of the match were all the scoring needed to earn Kyrgyzstan their first trip to the AFC Asian Cup.

The Myanmar footballers seemed to be slow even at kickoff, perhaps affected by the very cold weather in South Korea's beautiful city of Incheon.

Myanmar's slow play and big defensive mistakes allowed the two consecutive goals by their opponents.

At the 3-minute mark, Kyrgyzstan made the opening goal with a curling shot by Islam Shamsiev that found its way into the top corner of the net.

Three minutes later, Kyrgyzstan's second goal was made



Myanmar football star Kyaw Ko Ko attempts to trick the ball from opposing player in yesterday's AFC Asian Cup qualification at Incheon Stadium. **PHOTO:MFF**

by Anton Zemlianukhin.

Myanmar tried to mount an

offensive using speedy play after the two goals, but could not pass effectively against the big and

fast players of Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan's great tackling and wide play bothered Myanmar

and caused many mistakes in the defence line in the first half.

In the second half, Myanmar changed tactic in the attacking line, which seemed to improve the offensive attack.

Myanmar's play was much better, but there was still loose play in the defence line.

Myanmar missed a golden opportunity to score when Aung Thu's shot was blocked on a rare foray forward 18 minutes into the second half.

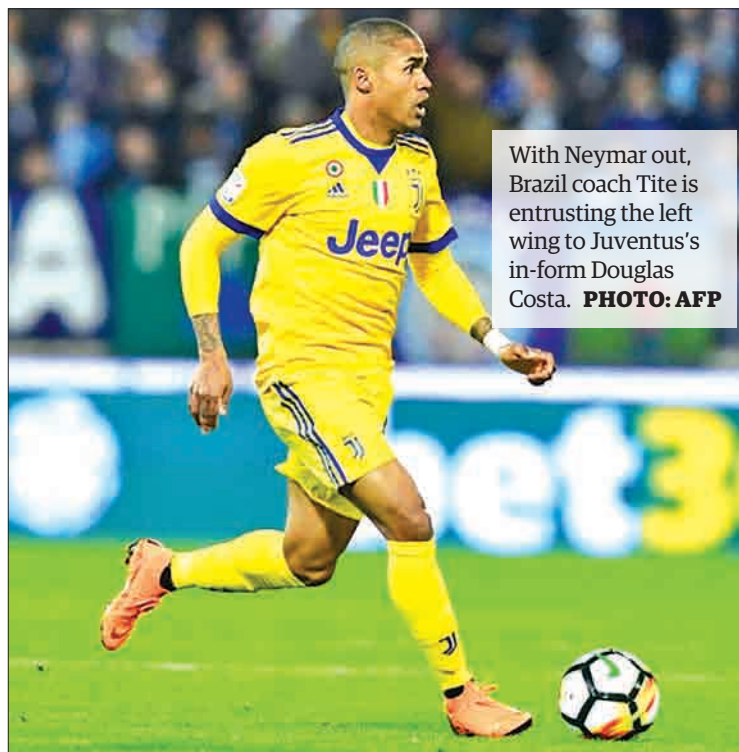
Zemlianukhin then claimed the third goal for Kyrgyz at 63 minutes before Vitalij Lux tapped in the fourth and Bekzhan Sagynbaev scored a fifth to move the Kyrgyz Republic five points clear of Myanmar with just one game remaining.

Myanmar never gave up and Kyaw Ko Ko scored a single and late consolation goal for Myanmar in the late minutes before the final whistle. ■

In the snow without Neymar, Brazil brace for Russia

MOSCOW — Training between mounds of snow without Neymar, Brazil may be forgiven for feeling out of their element as they prepare to face hosts Russia in their penultimate World Cup warmup.

The most expensive football player on the planet is back home, celebrating his sister's birthday with his famous right foot recovering from surgery in a protective boot. But things are deadly serious in Moscow, where the Selecao play on Friday at the Luzhniki Stadium in which they will hope to lift a record sixth World Cup trophy on 15 July. Coach Tite will try to make sure his superstars have learned from the unmitigated disaster of their 7-1 drubbing by Germany, whom Brazil play on Tuesday, on home soil back in 2014. That fateful World Cup semi-final four years ago was played without the injured Neymar or suspended centre-back Thiago Silva. Now, as then, Brazil



With Neymar out, Brazil coach Tite is entrusting the left wing to Juventus's in-form Douglas Costa. **PHOTO: AFP**

are looking vulnerable in defence and missing their 26-year-old hero. Paris Saint-Germain forward Neymar "is a different

player. He is one of the top three in the world," said Tite. "But a strong team should not depend on specific names."—AFP ■

Myanmar squad ready for U-15 football tourney in Hong Kong

MYANMAR national U-15 football team has released its team list for competing in Jockey Club International Youth Invitational Football Tournament 2018 that will held at Po Kong Village Road Park Football Pitch in Hong Kong from 23 to 25 March.

There are a total of 20 selected footballers from Mandalay Football Academy, Patheingyi Football Academy and Tatmadaw Football Academy.

The team will be headed by its Head Coach Mr. Takuma Koga.

Selected Goal Keepers are Hein Htet Soe, Htet Arkar Win.

Defenders are Aung Paing Zaw, Htun Htun Win, Myo Myint Htwe, Kaung Zay Bo, Phyo Min Paing.

Midfielders are Sa Khant Aung Pyae, Zeyya Phyo, Thura Aung, Sai Zeyya, Kaung Khant, Thura Thaw, Wai Yan Lin Thu,

Kaung Myat Naing Htun.

Strikers are Yan Naing Tun, Htet Myat Lwin, Min Khant Thu, Moe Swe and Soe Myat Min. Myanmar will play against Hong Kong U-15 on 23 March, Malaysia U-15 on 24 March and Singapore U-15 on 25 March respectively.

All matches will be played on Single Round Robin basis.

Each match shall last 90 minutes, comprising two periods of 45 minutes, with an interval of 15 minutes in between from the whistle ending the first period to the whistle starting the second period.

Admission for tournament is free of charge. Tickets are available for collection at the reception area of respective venue during match days on a first-come-first-serve basis according to the tournament's officials.— KyawZin Lin ■