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Tuesday, 27 March 2018

Honouring the 73rd Armed Forces Day



Kainggyi Dam in Maungtau Township, Rakhine State, is expected to complete by April. **PHOTO: AYE MIN THU**

Dam to benefit local farmers in Maungtau Tsp

THE Kainggyi Dam, which is one of the 26 dams being constructed by the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department in Maungtau Township, will irrigate some 100 acres

to grow paddy in summer and will supply water to nearby villages on completion.

The dam is targeted to be completed in March, the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Man-

agement Department said. The construction of the dam near Kainggyi Village in Maungtau Township started on 16 December 2017, and the project is 85 per cent complete. The Rakhine

State government contributed with Ks300 million for the project. Thanks to the dam, local farmers can practise double cropping, as well as get sufficient water supply. —Kyaw Thu Win ■

Presidential election on Wednesday

THE election of the president will be conducted by the Presidential Election College on 28 March 2018 (Wednesday) at 10 a.m. where the president and vice-presidents will be elected.

The announcement came at the seventh regular session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held its 19th-day meeting yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. At the meeting, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than read and submitted to the Hluttaw the report of the Presidential Electoral College on the assessment and evaluation of the vice president nominated by the elected Pyithu Hluttaw MP group. The report said the elected Pyithu Hluttaw MP group elected U Win Myint of Tamu constituency as vice president, and the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker informed the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker about this via a letter on 23 March 2018. The Presidential Electoral College was formed with Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, Daw Khin San Hlaing of Pale constituency from the Representatives Group of the Pyithu Hluttaw,

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'BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017'

Awarded by Financial Times (The Banker)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

MPs discuss Wildlife protection bill, approves ADB loan, 4.5-billion Thai baht loan

Thuya Zaw, Aye Aye Thant

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw confirmed clause by clause the bill on the protection of wildlife and the conservation of natural areas, in which two Hluttaws were in disagreement and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced that follow-up action will be taken, according to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw law and rules.

Later, Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin commented on the discussions and suggestions of the MPs on the US \$360-million loan from ADB and ASEAN Infrastructure Fund for the Ministry of Construction to develop roads in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region sent by the President.

The Deputy Minister said that of the three road projects, the Yangon-Pathen road was conducted under a BOT system by the Oriental Highway Company, with the permission of Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC). The Ministry of Construction had coordinated with MIC to transfer this project back (to the ministry) by the step in/step out method and the agreement (for the project) will be as confirmed by the Union Attorney General's office.

Another road project to be conducted under the ADB loan is the Yangon-Mandalay expressway, and the 40 miles Yangon-Bawnetkyi road section of this project is a portion that is to be implemented in relation to the Hanthawaddy International Airport project. By connecting the Yangon Inner Ring Road with the Yangon-Mandalay expressway, cars can reach Hanthawaddy International Airport from downtown Yangon in a short time. With the Yangon Inner Ring Road, traffic congestion in the city is expected to reduce.

According to the Yangon City Development Project, the development of Yangon is to be expanded northward. South Korea is also planning an industrial zone and a green city in the vicinity of the Yangon-Bawnetkyi road. Thaton-Hpa An-Myawady can be assessed through the Yangon-Bawnetkyi road. There-



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



Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin. **PHOTO: MNA**



Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing



Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win. **PHOTO: MNA**

fore, the Yangon-Bawnetkyi road section is definitely becoming part of the east-west economic corridor and this 40-mile road section should be a fully owned concession of the nation. That is why the upgrade of this road section using the ADB loan was explained by the Deputy Minister.

The Bago-Thanlyin road to be constructed with the ADB loan is also connected to the east-west economic corridor that will ease travel by road to Thilawa Economic Zone via Bago and will support the transport connection between Thilawa Economic Zone and the Greater Mekong Region countries.

Myanmar will participate in the development of east-west economic corridors of the Greater Mekong Region countries and by implementing the Cross Border Transport Agreement, the development of the country's social, economic and transport sectors will be substantial and thus, the Deputy Minister requested the Hluttaw to approve the \$360-million loan from ADB

and the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced the approval of the Hluttaw on the matter of the \$360-million loan.

Following this, Dawei Special Economic Zone management committee chairman Deputy Minister Dr. Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win and Myanmar Special Economic Zone central management committee chairman Union Minister Dr. Than Myint discussed and explained discussions by MPs on the 4.5-billion Thai baht loan by Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA) of Thailand sent by the President.

Dawei Special Economic Zone management committee chairman Deputy Minister Dr. Tun Naing explained that the loan is a government-to-government loan and Italian-Thai (Company Group) could not accept this loan. Only the Myan-

mar government can obtain this special (low) interest rate loan.

As per the loan term, the Ministry of Construction is responsible to implement the two-lane road work and the Dawei Special Economic Zone management committee will systematically amend the concession agreement signed with the Italian-Thai Company Group and re-sign it with the Ministry of Construction. This road is outside Dawei Special Economic Zone and is included in it as related work. With the Ministry of Construction taking over the responsibility of constructing this road, it will be a government-owned road that the public can use at a fair rate.

Deputy Minister Dr. Tun Naing further added that by implementing this road project quickly, it will support the development of other projects and related regions, Dawei Special Economic Zone, Taninthayi Region, the country's economy and the image of the government.

In his explanation, Deputy Minister for Planning and Fi-

nance U Maung Maung Win said the interest on the loan, including the management fee, is some 0.105 per cent per annum and the grant element calculation for the loan shows that it is a cheap loan.

An announcement was then made by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker about the Hluttaw approving the 4.5-billion Thai baht loan.

The Public Accounts Joint Committee Report (5/2018) on the committee's findings and comments on the Union Auditor General Office report for the fiscal year 2016-2017 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fund was then discussed by U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency, U Aung Thike of Seikpyu constituency, U Sai Oo Kham of Hsenwi constituency, U Aung Kyaw Oo of Mongton constituency, U Pe Than of Myebon constituency, U Sit Aye of Taungtha constituency, U Kyaw Htay of Leshi constituency, U Aung Kyaw Zan of Pauktaw constituency, U Whey Tin of Chin constituency (11), U Nyan Hein of Thanbyuzayat constituency, U Sein Aung of Paletwa constituency, Dr. U Lin Lin Kyaw of Myittha constituency, Dr. Sein Mya Aye of Dala constituency, U Tin Aung Tun of Magway Region constituency (5), U Wom Hla of Nanyun constituency, U Win Aung of Moemaik constituency, U Ar Moe Si of Khaunglanphu constituency, U Kyaw Tote of Mandalay Region constituency (7), U Zarni Min of Shwegu constituency, U Thein Tan of Hlegu constituency, Dr. Daw Khin Nyo of Dedaye constituency, U Lal Min Htan of Chin State constituency (10), Daw Khin Hnin Thit of Padaung constituency, U Oo Tun Maung of Ponnagyun constituency, U Khin Maung Latt of Myanaung constituency, Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency, U Myint Kyi of Katha constituency, U Zaw Hein of Taninthayi constituency (7) and Daw Ni Ni May Myint of Taungup constituency.

After the discussions, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announced that the members of union-level organisations will respond to these discussions on the 20th-day meeting of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the date of which is yet to be informed, it is learnt. ■

Actions to be taken against those who make false statements

Notification

At the Myanmar Motion Picture Academy Awards Presentation Ceremony for 2017 held at Myanmar Event Park, Yangon on 23 March 2018, Pianist Tin Win Hlaing was awarded the best music award and in his acceptance speech and in his meeting with the media after the event included personal attacks and untrue accusations against the Ministry of Information and Myanma Radio and Television. The personal attacks and accusations were put up online and this notification is being issued in order to inform the public that the points mentioned were not true.

The main attacks and accusations of Pianist (U) Tin Win Hlaing are being explained as follows.

(a) “Chay Chay Myit Myit Nhith Nhith Kar Kar” (meaningful and vital) programme was

not broadcast for more than a year. This programme was broadcast every Tuesday evening by MRTV and episode 152 was broadcast on 20 March. The programme contributor’s family was contacted repeatedly between June 2017 to 22 March 2018 but daughter of (U) Tin Win Hlaing replied that (U) Tin Win Hlaing had to undergo an eye surgery and to continue the shooting of the programme only after the Academy Awards Ceremony.

(b) “Not a single RCA stylus left in hand”: This is totally untrue. RCA (Radio Corporation of America) record players were used by Myanmar Radio for more than 70 years. Although the original manufacturer has ceased production of spare styluses, MRTV has collaborated with

foreign experts to repair and use a machine. The songs on records and tapes were being digitalized using modern machineries and digitization of more than 123,148 songs was completed. Digitization of television and radio programs is ongoing and the statement “Myanma Radio will be submerged in the ground” is totally untrue.

(c) “Recording of songs is costly. Without money no records are made”: This is not an accusation against an entity but the entire government and the ministries. If money had to be paid, report can be made to the relevant ministry (or) the Anti-Corruption Commission. Investigations and actions were being taken against any complaints. It is unacceptable to make such an unfounded accusation against entities and

ministries.

(d) It is totally untrue that Pianist (U) Tin Win Hlaing could not come near the Union Minister. He never contacted MRTV, Ministry of Information office, other entities or staff of Ministry of Information verbally, in writing, through telephone or email or in person to meet with the Union Minister. There are no records of officials from the ministry preventing a meeting or ignoring a request for a meeting with the Union Minister.

(e) His accusations are personal attacks as well as inappropriate against Tatmadaw personnel who were transferred to the civilian part of the public service. If any of the personnel are not serving according to the public servant regulations, official written complaint that in-

cludes name(s) should be made. But the unsubstantiated accusation against all Tatmadaw personnel who were transferred to the civilian part of the public service is just an unsubstantiated accusation.

The slanderous unsubstantiated accusations of Pianist (U) Tin Win Hlaing were being relayed on the social media network and the media. To prevent the public from being misled, relevant entities will issue open letters about the event, conduct press conferences and interview relevant personnel.

Legal action will also be taken against those who make such false statements as well as those who relay those false statements.

Information Team of Ministry of Information
26 March 2018
(Unofficial Translation)

Presidential election on Wednesday

FROM PAGE-1

U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Magway Region constituency-4 from the Representatives Group of the Amyotha Hluttaw and Maj-Gen Than Soe of the Tatmadaw Representative Group by office of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw order 22/2018 on 23 March 2018.

The report further stated that the Presidential Electoral

College held a meeting at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker’s room at 9 a.m. on 26 March to scrutinize U Win Myint of Tamu constituency elected by the elected Pyithu Hluttaw MP group. The Presidential Electoral College found U Win Myint qualified to be elected as presidential candidate.— Thuya Zaw, Aye Aye Thant/Myanmar News Agency

Coordinated patrols along Myanmar-Bangladesh border

The Myanmar Border Police and Bangladesh Border Police forces conducted coordinated patrols along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border fence, from border posts 40 to 41, on 25 March.

After coordinating with each other, the security forces conducted coordinated patrols 20 times; 14 times from

border posts 42 to 55 from 4 to 26 February 2018, and once each from border posts 31 to 34, 34 to 36, 36 to 38, 38 to 39, 39 to 40 and 40 to 41 on 11, 15, 18, 20, 22 and 25 March, respectively. A coordinated naval patrol along the Naf River was also conducted on 5 and 20 March.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Concrete road inaugurated, bridge opened to traffic in Kayin State

A new concrete section on Kyain Seikgyi-Chaungzon Road in Kyain Seikgyi Township, Kayin State was put into service yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw, Chief Minister of Kayin State Daw Nang Khin Htwe Myint, Chief Minister of Mon State Dr. Aye Zan, Kayin State Minister for Environmental Conservation, Mining, Forestry and Road Transport U Saw Pyi Tha and the Director-General of the Road Department U Ohn Lwin formally opened the new concrete road section.

The 40 mile and 5 furlong long newly inaugurated road was 18 ft wide and 8 inches thick and was constructed at a cost of more than Ks. 12 billion from the state budget in the fiscal year 2017-2018. The road connecting Kyain Seikgyi Township and Phayathonezu Town linking with Thanbyu-zayet-Phayathonezu Road and Mudon-Myawady Road plays a crucial role in Kayin State. As peace and stability is restored in Kayin State, the road becomes an important corridor for the development of the economy, trade and the social interaction between



Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw attends the opening ceremony of the new concrete road section in Kyain Seikgyi Township. **PHOTO:MDN**

Myanmar and Thailand.

Makkatha Bridge on Kyain Seikgyi-Chaungzon Road was also opened to traffic. Speaker of Kayin State Hluttaw U Saw Chit Khin, Kayin State Minister for Environmental Conservation, Mining, Forestry and Road Transport U Saw Pyi Tha, the Deputy Director-General of the Bridge Department U Aung Myat Oo, Kayin State Hluttaw Representative U Tin Myo Oo and U Saw Mya Aye, a local resident cut the ribbon to open the new bridge.

Afterwards, Union Minister U Han Zaw, Chief Minister of Kayin State Daw Nang Khin Htwe Myint and Chief Minister

of Mon State Dr. Aye Zan pressed a button to open the signboard of the bridge and sprinkled scented water on it. The 240 ft long and 24 ft wide bridge has three foot width walkways on each side and was built mostly from concrete, the price tag for the bridge Ks. 900 million.

The newly opened bridge is expected to help facilitate better flow of commodities produced in the region to other parts throughout the country, thereby contributing to improving the livelihood and living standard of the local people and generating job opportunities for them.—Myanmar Digital News ■

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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.

Yangon Water Bus to operate trip to Twantay

THE Yangon Water Bus service will make a trip to Twantay Township on 27 March, so that travellers can visit the Shwesandaw Pagoda, central market and the pottery workshop.

The ticket cost is Ks7,000 per person, inclusive of a lunch box, coffee, bottled water and travel charges in town. The vessel will depart at 9 a.m. on 27 March.

The Yangon Water Bus has also launched a weekly pilgrimage trip to Thanlyin Kyauktan Pagoda every weekend, as of 17 and 18 March.

The water bus will leave at 6.30 am from Botahtuang Yangon Water Bus jetty, and the tour, excluding the travel time, lasts two-and-a-half hours.

The cost, inclusive of a

Yangon water buses are moving along the Yangon River in Yangon. **PHOTO: YANGON WATER BUS**

lunch box, coffee and bottled water, is Ks6,000 for a local traveller and US\$15 for a foreign traveller.

Tickets can be bought

in advance at Insein and Botahtuang jetties on Friday, and at the Botahtuang jetty on arrival.

The Yangon Water Bus also

launched operations on the Insein-Botahtuang route, as of 23 March, and will also extend its route to Hlaingthaya and other townships.—GNLM ■

MR eyes 47 million railway passengers this FY

MYANMA Railways (MR) has targeted to increase its ridership to more than 47 million commuters this fiscal year (FY), according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

MR is upgrading its circular railway and the Yangon-based railway services step by step to increase the number

of commuters. More than 42 million railway passengers used the services in the 2015-2016 FY, while more than 44 million passengers used them in the 2016-2017 FY. MR is expecting more than 47 million railway passengers to avail of the services this year. The MR will also shut down services that cater to

only a few passengers.

MR earned Ks60 billion from the railways annually. The number of passengers taking the Yangon circular trains has increased significantly with the change in tickets fares.

The MR is now charging Ks100 for a 15-mile route and Ks200 for longer distances in

Yangon. The MR is also upgrading the Yangon-Mandalay route, Mandalay-Myitkyina route, Yangon-Mawlamyine route and Yangon-Pyay route, which sees 75 per cent of the commuters. The MR will also run new coaches after completing the railway upgrade work.—GNLM ■

Myanmar, Thailand jointly launch free healthcare programme in Kayah State

DEAF persons in Kayah State received free medical treatment under a Myanmar-Thailand joint programme titled "Ear Surgery Mobile Unit", according to a source from the Information and Public Relations Department.

The programme, jointly organized by the Ministry of Health and Sports of Myanmar and the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand and Royal Thai Embassy in Yangon to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries was launched at a 500-bed People's Hospital in Loikaw, the capital of Kayah State yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, Kayah

The child is receiving medical checkup and treatment at the hospital. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Myint Wai extended greetings before Ambassador of Thailand to Myanmar Mr. Jukr Boon-Long gave a speech. Afterwards, Medical

Superintendent of the hospital Dr. Ye Myint Aung spoke words of thanks and had a documentary photo taken together with those present.

The Kayah State Chief

Justice, the Deputy Speaker of Kayah State Hluttaw, Kayah State cabinet members, Kayah State Advocate-General, Kayah State Auditor-General and the guests gave words of encouragement to the patients who are receiving medical checkup and treatment at the hospital.

Around 400 deaf people have already enlisted in the programme that runs until 28 March.

A Thai mobile medical team led by Dr. Soontom Antarasen from Bangkok's Rajavithi Hospital provided the local people with free healthcare services for the first time in Kayah State in cooperation with the surgeons from Yangon's University of Medicine (1).—Myanmar Digital News ■

YSX to form special task force for new companies entering market

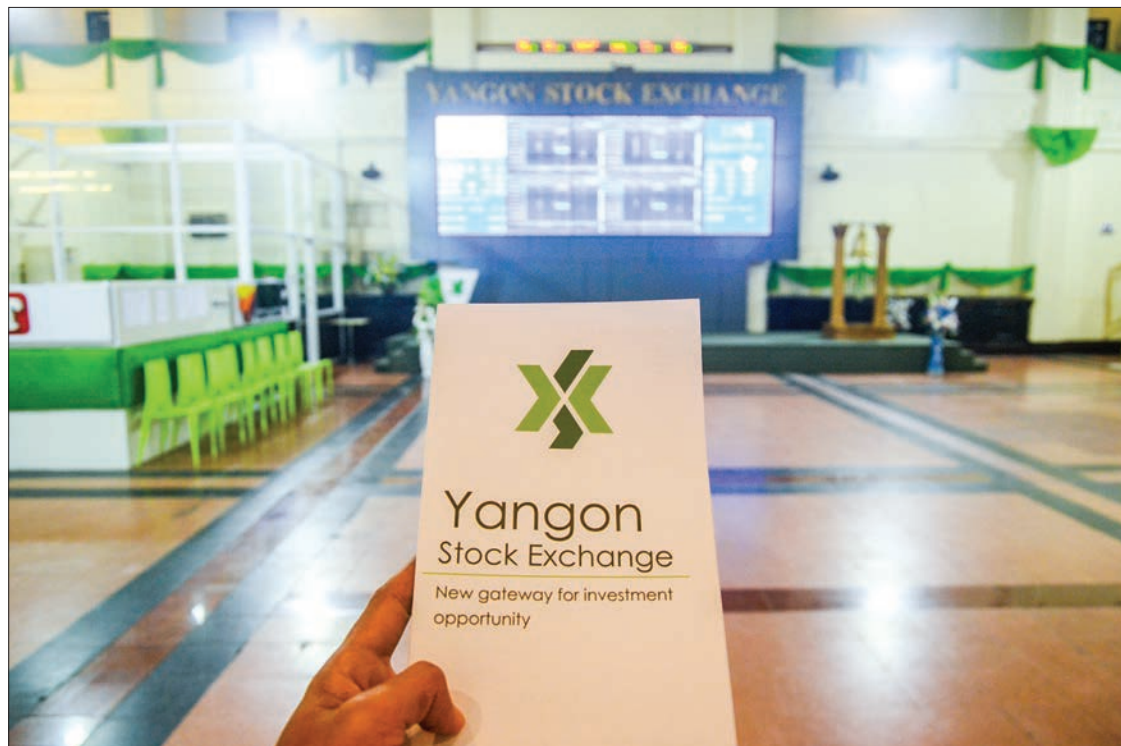
By May Thet Hnin

THE Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) will form a special task force, in cooperation with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), to provide consultation to new companies that want to enter the stock exchange, said an official from YSX during the second-year anniversary celebrations of the YSX held on 25 March.

At the ceremony, Myanmar Securities Exchange Commission Chairman and Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win said, "Our country is still in the early stage of development and is yet to gain momentum, but will do so soon. The country is promoting the YSX market, and so, has formed a special task force to provide consultancy for new companies who want to list themselves with the exchange."

"Companies that have the potential to be listed on the exchange have to hire a law and an accounting firm to register with the stock exchange. This is a complicated task (for an ordinary company), so the special task force will provide a one-stop service for such companies. This group will provide consultation to new companies," said U Thet Htun Oo, executive senior manager of YSX.

Currently, five companies have listed on the YSX in two



Electronic board showing stock information at YSX in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

years. They are First Myanmar Investment Company, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public, Myanmar Citizens Bank, First Private Bank and TMH Telecom Company. Five more companies are planning to register with the YSX this year. During this two-year period, the stock market saw more than 5.2 million shares being traded, at an estimated value of Ks93 billion.

Although the YSX market is in a fair condition, the market still needs to try very hard to catch up with other Asian region stock markets, said U Yin Myo Zaw, Managing Director of YSX.

"We could not set up a perfect stock market in a short period. To become a perfect market, we need a fair number of investors and timely market information must be provided. There should be no monopolistic behaviour in the market," he added.

Author and financial advisor U Kyaw Myo Tun noted that stock exchanges in other countries also took three to four years to run smoothly, and these also started with a small number of listed companies. "Although more security companies and listed companies

should be attracted to the Myanmar stock exchange market, it is more important to have a qualified company listed," he said.

Regulators had granted permission for online trading in the YSX by the end of 2017, with an aim to attract more investors to the country's stock market, as well as raise the volume (value) of stock trading. Due to this, the number of trade orders increased 30 per cent last year.

The YSX will soon increase its number of trade matching sessions from two to four per day to raise the trade volume

and attract more investors.

According to the newly passed Myanmar Companies Law, foreign investors are permitted to buy up to 35 per cent shares in a local company. This rule will come into force on 1 August 2018, and the YSX is drafting a system to manage the participation of foreigners in the exchange.

Moreover, the YSX is co-operating with developed Asia region stock exchange markets and collaborating with the ASEAN Stock Exchanges CEOs' conference, ASEAN Capital Market Forum and stock exchanges in the Mekong region, said U Yin Myo Zaw.

The YSX is also conducting awareness talks and stock exchange training sessions in Yangon and other regions to increase the number of investors in the market. More than 50 training sessions have been conducted recently, he added.

The YSX is also arranging to sign a contract with Mono Tech Company, e-Trade Myanmar and Zee Kwet to share stock exchange information through the internet, telephone and SMSes.

The YSX saw more than 20,000 shares, worth some Ks100 million, being traded daily in the 2016-2017 fiscal year (FY). In the 2017-2018 FY, only some 10,000 shares, worth some Ks70 million, were traded daily. ■

Myanmar's trade deficits significantly lower due to rising export volume

SINCE Myanmar's export volume has increased this budget year from April 2017 to March 2018, the nation's trade deficit has significantly decreased, according to the figures of the Department of Trade, under the Ministry of Commerce.

The trade deficit this budget year of 2017-2018 fell to US\$ 3.5 billion, compared to the previous year's amount. In the budget year 2016-2017, the trade deficit was more than US\$ 5 billion.

"Rice export volume this year has increased. It is the main reason of increased export volume this year. The volume of re-export this year has also increased. We re-export Thai-

land's sugar to China and other countries.

That's why the trade deficit is lower," said U Thein Myint Wai, Assistant Director of the Department of Trade.

Although bean and pulse exports have dropped this year, rice exports have increased which has led to a steady surge in Myanmar's export volume. The total trade volume last year was more than US\$ 29 billion. But this year's trade volume until the end of January is more than \$27 billion and it is expected to be \$32 billion after calculating the trade volume in February and March.

However, Myanmar's import volume is still higher than

its export volume because it is a developing country. If the amount of imports is higher than the export volume, the country's trade deficit will be higher. If export volume is higher than the import volume, the trade deficit will be decrease; thereby more projects can be conducted to develop the country to be more self-sufficient.

Myanmar's trade deficit will gradually decrease in the coming years because the country's exports and re-exports have been steadily increasing and Thilawa SEZ is developing year after year, experts have predicted. —Myanmar Digital News ■

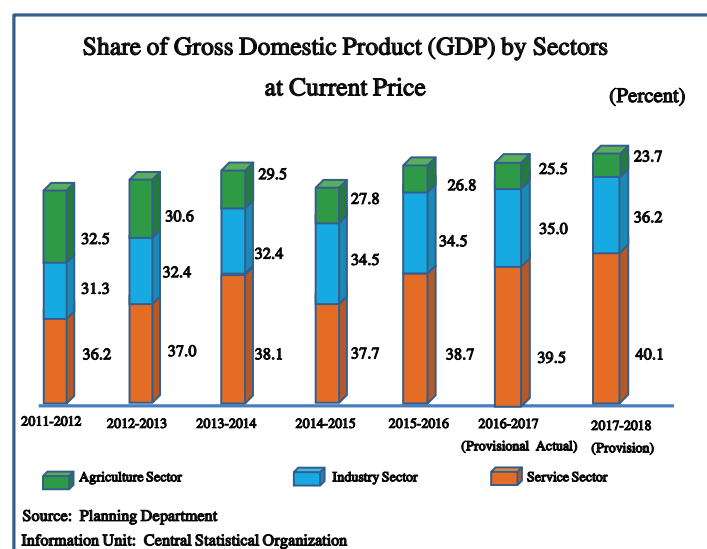
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Wooden portrait sculpture of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing handed over to Tatmadaw Museum

A CEREMONY to donate a wooden portrait sculpture of Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in honour of the 73rd anniversary of the Armed Forces Day was held at the Tatmadaw Military History Museum, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning.

The Tatmadaw commander-in-chief accepted the donation.

On behalf of the donor, U Kyaw Kyaw explained the reason for donating the Padauk (*Pterocarpus macrocarpus*) wooden portrait sculpture to the Tatmadaw commander-in-chief.

Next, the donors presented the wooden portrait sculpture, which was accepted by the Tatmadaw commander-in-chief, who in return gave U Saw Hla Aye and his party a certificate of honour and gifts.

The wood portrait sculpture was carved from more than a 100-year-old Padauk tree in Myaingyingu area near the Myanmar-Thailand border. The wood was donated by U Saw Hla



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing gives the certificate of honour to donors. **PHOTO: MNA**

Aye and the carving was done by wood sculptor U Ye Yint Naung Latt, who worked on the sculpture for some two months. The wood portrait sculpture weighted a tonne, and the work is estimated to have cost some Ks100 million. —Myanmar News Agency

47th Bangladesh Independence Day, National Day held

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye and wife Professor Dr Mya Thida were welcomed by Bangladesh Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Manjurul

Karim Khan Chowdhury at a ceremony to mark the 47th Bangladesh Independence Day and National Day which was held in Sedona Hotel in Yangon at 6:30 pm on 26 March.—MNA ■



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and wife Professor Dr Mya Thida welcomed by Bangladesh Ambassador at the ceremony to mark 47th Independence Day and National Day. **PHOTO: MNA**

Psychotropic drugs caught in Yaychanpyin Port, Sittway

POLICE forces seized around 649,600 psychotropic drug tablets, estimated to be worth Ks 1,948.8 million, hidden in seventeen SCG cement bags in one of the motor vehicles aboard the Mayu Bayin watercraft en route from Yaychanpyin Port, Sittway Township to Angumaw Port, Yathedaung Township on 24 March.

Yaychanpyin police force searched the watercraft around 4:55pm and found the drugs wrapped in clear plastic in an SCG cement bag in a SKAT truck onboard. The drugs were branded with the letters WY/R on them.

Upon inspection the police force discovered the car



Suspect Kyaw Kyaw Lin together with drugs. **PHOTO: MNA**

belonged to Kyaw Kyaw Lin, son of Upper Clark U Htun Hla from Maungtaung District Education Office, and his driver Htun Aung Lin (a) Maung Chay from Ward-1, Maungtaung City.

The two men escaped the ship and police forces kept a lookout in checkpoints near the area. Police forces halted and inspected a WISH (4L/5194) car on the Angumaw-Maungtaung road near Ward-9 in Yathedaung Township. The car belonged to Nay Zaw Min, son of U Hla Maung from Pyitawtar

Ward in Sittway City, and his wife Ma Mya Thandar, a middle school teacher from Kamaung Seik B.E.H.S in Maungtaung Township. Police officers apprehended Kyaw Kyaw Lin who was in the car and confiscated Ks429,000 from him.

Sittway Myoma Police Station has filed a case against Kyaw Kyaw Lin, Nay Zaw Min, Ma Mya Thandar and runaway Htun Aung Thein under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Aungmyaythazan Branch of Innwa Bank opened

AUNGMYAYTHAZAN branch of Innwa Bank branch held an opening ceremony yesterday in Mandalay as a gesture of honouring the 73rd Armed Forces Day. Central Command Commander Brig-Gen Kyaw Swar Lin, Union Minister for Security and Border Affairs Mandalay Region Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Min, Myanmar Economic Corporation Deputy Managing Director U Eant Zaw and Managing Director U Aung Ngwe Oo opened the ceremony by cutting the ribbon. Next, Brig-Gen Kyaw Swar Lin formally opened the bank by unveiling a sign. The Commander sprinkled it with scented water and his party viewed around the bank.

Union Minister for Security and Border Affairs Mandalay

Region Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Min, Myanmar Economic Corporation Deputy Managing Director U Eant Zaw and Managing Director U Aung Ngwe Oo opened the ceremony by cutting the ribbon. Next, Brig-Gen Kyaw Swar Lin formally opened the bank by unveiling a sign. The Commander sprinkled it with scented water and his party viewed around the bank.

The 48th Innwa Bank branch is ready to offer financial services for local people and beyond. The bank is located at the first floor of Mandalay Call Center at the corner of 26th street and 66th street in Mandalay Region.—Myanmar News Agency ■



The opening ceremony of Innwa Bank's new branch in Mandalay. **PHOTO: MNA**

China urges US to ‘stop economic intimidation’ over tariffs

BEIJING — China on Monday lashed out at US “economic intimidation” following President Donald Trump’s announcement of new import tariffs, but said it was open to negotiations to resolve trade frictions.

The two countries have traded threats and heated rhetoric in recent days, ratcheting up fears that the world’s two biggest economies are heading towards a damaging trade war.

Trump said last Thursday that the United States would impose new tariffs on some \$60 billion of Chinese imports over the “theft” of intellectual property, rattling global financial markets.

Vice President Mike Pence boasted that the measures mean that the “era of economic surrender is over”.

Asked about the remarks, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a press briefing on Monday that “it would have been more appropriate to say that it’s time to stop the US’s economic intimidation and hegemony”.

Beijing has not stood idle. On Friday, it unveiled a list of \$3 billion worth of US goods, including pork, fruits and wine, that could be targeted with tariffs in retaliation for steel and aluminium tariffs — if negotiations fail.

“We also have the confidence and the capacity to safeguard our legitimate and legal interests, whatever the circumstances,” Hua said. “Now the ball is in the US court.”

While the two sides have traded barbs in public, US and



China has unveiled a list of \$3 billion worth of US goods, including pork, fruits and wine, that could be targeted with tariffs in retaliation for steel and aluminium tariffs — if negotiations fail. **PHOTO:AFP**

Chinese officials have begun behind-the-scenes negotiations to improve American access to the Asian country’s huge market, according to the Wall Street

Journal.

“We keep saying that the Chinese side is willing to negotiate with the US to properly manage divergences, on the basis of

mutual respect and equal mutual benefits,” Hua said when asked about the report. “Our door is always wide open to dialogue and consultation.”—AFP ■

On chaotic SE Asian roads, local hero Grab zips past Uber

SINGAPORE — Uber may be the world’s biggest ride-hailing company but it was left in the dust in Southeast Asia by homegrown upstart Grab, which knew better how to navigate the chaotic highways and byways of an eclectic region.

Spanning 10 countries, from wealthy, ultra-organised Singapore to places like Indonesia and the Philippines that are home to traffic-choked cities, coming up with a ride-hailing service for the whole of Southeast Asia was never going to be easy.

But Grab’s Malaysian chief executive, Anthony Tan, combined his local knowledge with sharp business sense from his time at Harvard Business School to come up with a service well adapted to the region and quickly raced past Uber.

After a years-long fight that cost both companies huge sums as they aggressively slashed fares and rolled out special offers, the California-based company threw in the towel Monday and sold its

ride-sharing and food delivery services to Grab for an undisclosed sum.

“Grab is more familiar with its home territory, Southeast Asia,” said Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with CIMB Private Bank.

“They saw the Uber model and tweaked it to adapt to local conditions, giving Southeast Asians what they want.”

In 2015 they added motorbike taxis to their ride-hailing app in Indonesia, where many commuters get around on two wheels due to heavy traffic, helping them to rival local titan Go-Jek, which had pioneered the service.

Uber followed slowly up the rear, only adding motorbike taxis to their service in the Indonesian capital a year later, by which time the market was saturated.

Uber’s disadvantage was that they lacked local knowledge and relied heavily on the model which had allowed them to lead in developed markets, according to Song.—AFP ■

Malaysia proposes 10 years’ jail for ‘fake news’

KUALA LUMPUR — The Malaysian government on Monday proposed a “fake news” law which would carry a maximum 10-year jail term, including for articles published abroad, sparking fears of a crackdown on dissent as elections loom.

Governments in several countries, emboldened by US President Donald Trump’s fulminations against “fake news”, are considering such legislation. But rights groups warn that authoritarian regimes are likely to use such laws to silence opposing voices.

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak has already been targeting critics in politics and the media who have attacked him over allegations that huge sums were looted from sovereign wealth fund 1MDB. Najib and the fund deny any wrongdoing.

The proposed law, introduced in parliament on Monday, fuelled fears the government is seeking to intensify a clampdown before a general election, which must be called by August but is widely expected sooner.

Opposition MP Charles San-

tiago said the bill was “a powerful weapon for the government to silence dissent in the country”.

“It is timed for the elections and to silence discussions on 1MDB,” he told AFP.

The bill, which described fake news as a “global concern”, includes a maximum 10 years in jail or fine of up to 500,000 ringgit (\$130,000) for anyone guilty of creating or disseminating what authorities deem to be fake news. It said anyone — including foreigners — who breaks the law outside the country by publishing fake news can face punishment in Malaysia, as long as what is published concerns Malaysia or a Malaysian citizen.

Fahmi Fadzil, spokesman for the opposition People’s Justice Party, said it suggested the government was seeking to target foreign media, which have led the coverage of 1MDB.

Phil Robertson, Asia deputy director for Human Rights Watch, accused the Malaysian government of employing “Trump-style scare tactics to grant itself powers to arbitrarily determine what people can say about Malaysia in the world”.

Taking aim at fake news

Malaysia’s traditional pro-government media have reported on the 1MDB controversy only occasionally and in a muted and largely uncritical fashion.

Despite the concerns, cabinet minister Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar insisted the law “will not be abused”, adding: “It is not aimed at silencing critics.”

The bill must be approved by a majority in the 222-seat lower house and also in the upper house, and this is likely as both chambers are controlled by the ruling coalition. It needs to go through several readings in parliament before it passes.

Malaysia is ranked 144th out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index. The government has the power to revoke newspapers’ printing permits and regularly attacks critical media, particularly online news sites that have gained a following by reporting on official malfeasance and corruption. Other countries in Southeast Asia have also been taking aim at what they claim is fake news.—AFP ■

Cooperation in water management is the key to prevent water-related problems

LIKE many other countries, Myanmar is facing problems of too much water or too little water and water pollution because its water resources are not being effectively maintained.

There is so much potential for the proper utilization of our water resources in Myanmar. Myanmar receives good rainfall, except in the central dry zone, and has many rivers and natural lakes, as well as groundwater aquifers.

To prevent the problems, we need to manage our country's water resources effectively. At the same time, we need to build up the capacity of the staff and stakeholders related to the water sector.

The demand for water in Myanmar's cities has increased with the increase in population and urbanization, while the demand for water in the rural areas has also increased due to expanding cultivation and other rural-based economic activities.

Myanmar has frequently suffered from destructive earthquakes and water-related extreme events, such as cyclones, periodic flooding, and droughts, besides landslides, which resulted in the loss of several lives and damages, posing major challenges in terms of water quality control and wastewater management.

Myanmar has many dams and reservoirs for drinking water; while villages tend to use open water ponds for water storage.

Every summer, the central part, coastal areas and the delta regions across the country face water shortage, especially in villages that rely on natural resources, which tend to dry up due to inadequate rainfall.

Therefore, it is important to promote awareness, discussion and sharing of information, knowledge and technology, and mutual cooperation among water users.

Besides, we need to raise awareness and share knowledge with the general public through education and the sectors concerned to convey the importance of water resources for the economic, social and all-round development of all the sectors and their protection.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation is updating the relevant laws and regulations and working together with international communities to reduce the disasters caused by water and to manage the water resources.

The Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win also discussed the integrated water resources management to preserve and secure water resources, along with a combination of disaster risk reduction and water supply, sanitation and hygiene methods to reduce water-based disasters at the 8th World Water Forum in Brazil recently.

Our people must cooperate with the authorities in managing water supply and water treatment, sanitation, and personal hygiene. As we make efforts to promote agriculture, livestock breeding and the tourism industry, we need to make sure that our environment is not harmed in any way. ■

Our people must cooperate with the authorities in managing water supply and water treatment, sanitation, and personal hygiene. As we make efforts to promote agriculture, livestock breeding and the tourism industry, we need to make sure that our environment is not harmed in any way.

Anniversary of Myanmar Tatmadaw Day

Maha Saddhamma
Jotikadhaja,
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

27TH March is Myanmar Tatmadaw Day which we annually celebrate.

Tatmadaw (တပ်မတော်) is Myanmar word for all armed forces of Myanmar legally formed for the defense of the country, its entire people, its territory, its unity and its sovereignty.

Myanmar Lunar Calendar has many red letters days gazetted holidays by virtue of traditions, culture, religion, religious freedom and history. Twelve months of our Lunar Calendar have twelve traditional monthly festivals which fall usually on full moon days of the months. Dominant Theravada Buddhism also gives as special events, special occasions or special days to commemorate and celebrate. These days also fall nominally on Waxing, Waning, Full moon or No moon days. Because of religious freedom and religious tolerance of Buddhism, holidays of other religions are also red letter days in Myanmar such as Hindu Dewapani Day, Islamic religious Days, and Christmas Day. Besides each of the 135 national ethnic races has its own festival and ethnic day to celebrate.

Modern history of Myanmar brought in red letters days of political importance. In 1885, the last Myanmar King and his family were deported to India by the British army, so that year and day was "Pa-daw mu Day. The Day Myanmar King was deposed and taken to India. The years that followed 1885, were years of Myanmar Struggle for national freedom. So great events, occasions and days of these years became red letters days of political importance such as National Day, M.E 1300 Ayedawpone [1938 all-round Anti British Colonial Rule movement, Anti-Fascist movement Day 27 March, 12 February the Union Day [ပြည်ထောင်စုနေ့], 19 July the Martyrs' Day, 4 January Independence Day, Resistance Day, Armed Forces Day 27 March, 2 March Peasants' Day.

Modern Myanmar Army formed by Bogoyoke Aung San and his 30 comrades-in-arms [Yebaw Thon-gaik] plus their sincere Japanese trainers underwent different names Burma Independence Army BIA, Burma—Defense Army BDA, Burma [Myanmar] Armed Forces, Tatmadaw Day, 27th March was originally marked as Anti-Fascist Day [တပ်မတော်လွန်နေ့]. The day on which Myanmar both military and civilian —the enteric Myanmar people turned against Japanese

Fascist Rule and drove it out of the country. The name [တပ်မတော်လွန်နေ့] Anti-Fascist Resistance Day 27th March lasted for some years after Myanmar regained independence. But time and circumstances changed and that name lost its relevance. So the name Armed Forces Day was substituted. Armed Forces Day includes Army, Navy and Air Force.



Myanmar Kings had four features [Regiments] of military strength (1) Elephantry (2) Cavalry (3) Charioty and (4) Infantry. Infantry march was composed of swordsmen, spearsmen lancers and archers, gunners and artillery. Myanmar water forces are floatillas of boats, rafts and ships of different sizes for inter-nal wars and galleons or armadas of sea going sail ships or later steam ships of different sizes locally made or purchased from abroad. Military march was always dual ရေကူး၊ ကျည်ကူး ခိုတော်မူသည်. Military march or military progress by water and land. Being always a militia army and never a mercenary army [though Myanmar Kings, like other kings of other countries hired Portuguese free booters]. King's army was called အောင်တပ်မတော် Royal Army of Victory.

Therefore Myanmar people and Government changed 27th March to a new name Tatmadaw Day [တပ်မတော်နေ့] which is historically right.

Military sciences military campaigns, military strategies and tactics, battles, experiences, victories and defeats were recorded in Myanmar visual and performing arts, and literatures. Buddha's jataka stories provide us with volumes of lessons of military sciences and battle field experiences. In Myanmar traditional education monastic education had two types. (1) Pariyatti monastic education which taught reading, writing and arithmetic [3R's] plus religious and moral education in accordance with the Dhamma teachings, civics and training of good character and good citizen.

(2.) Pwe kyaung education was taught at Pwe kyaung monasteries. Retired veteran soldiers and elderly crafts men and artisans such as black smith, silver or gold smiths, broze smiths, carpenters, sculptors, carvers, tunners, painters, architects masons, lacquerwear makers, with the permission of their wives and children, became monks. They no longer pursued Pariyatti education, Neither could they teach Pari-yatti to others. But they taught theirs crafts, arts and martial art. Young ones who did not want to continue their learning at Pariyatti monasteries or who preferred active and lively training would go to Pwe kyaung monasteries. They got good training in arts, crafts and martial arts as

well as herbal medicine, Therapy culinary art, architecture also in astrology, astronomy, alchemy, Vedas and other occult sciences. Products of Pwe kyaung monasteries were recruited into King's armed forces.

Myanmar literature is rich in literary works on military science, strategies and tactics plus experiences of military campaigns and battle fields. Literary works take three forms of prose, verse and drama, which were originally epigraphs inscribed on stone, metal objects, palm leafs and folding papyrus [Parabikes]. Inscriptions on King Bayint Naung's Bell in the precincts of Shwe Zigone Pagoda in Bagan, Inscriptions on Singu Min Bell and Thayawaddy Min's Bell on the platform of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon and Inscriptions on the Bell of Pathodawgyi Pagoda at old capital Amarapura are most outstanding records of Myanmar military campaigns in prose form Among the verse forms. Mawkuns are most prominent. Arthan Naing Maw Kun, Yakhhaing Naing Maw Kun, Dawe Naing Maw Kun and Tayoke Than Yauk Maw Kun record in detail Myanmar military strategy, tactics and campaigns and battlefields. Pyo type of verse were also composed to describe and record Myanmar military science, strategy and tactics. Letwei Thondara Amat [Junior minister]

of late Konbaung Period [1 8 1 9- 1 8 85] composed three pyos [Poems of epic dimension] on Myanmar military Sciences namely Thayning-abyuha Pyo, Byuha Setki Pyo and Nandithayna Pyo Maha Dhamma Thingyanm Ex-monk Maung Daung Sayadaw II composed 37 Luta poems on 37 ways of equestrian tournament and fightings, with colourful illustration. They showed swordsmanship, spearmanship, lance throwing, archery, gunnery, artillery and charioting as well as combat fighting.

Thayningabyuha kyans Treatises on military sciences were handed down to generations of Myanmar armies throughout Myanmar history. In the Second World War time, while Bogoyoke Aung San was Minister of War a book မြန်မာ့သေနတ်ဗျူဟာစစ်ပညာကျမ်း [Myanmar Military Science] was compiled by Saya U Ba Thauang with a foreword by Bogoyoke Aung San, the then Minister of War [စစ်ဝန်ကြီး]. In the foreword Bogoyoke Aung San made references to military scientists of world repute. He also pointed out the importance and still relevance of Myanmar traditional military tactics of guerrilla warfare [မြောက်ကြေးတိုက်နည်း] or [မြို့ခိုတိုက်နည်း] because Myanmar people know well of their locality, geography, climate and environment. They know where to hide, how to survive when short of food ration, how to heal injuries, how to cure aches and how to carry message or news quickly. So from the time of King Narathihapate of Bagan Period, who repulsed the invading equestrian Tartar soldiers of Kublai Khan through Manchu-Myanmar wars of Konbaung Sinbyu Shin King, right down to Anti-Fascist Resistance war of his time guerrilla tactics has been always Myanmar traditional military tactics we should maintain it always.

The compiler Saya U Ba Thauang happened to be the writer's lecturer in Compulsing Burmese and Optional Burmese, at Mandalay University College in the years 1948-1952. The writer had a good chance of receiving a gift from Saya U Ba Thauang a copy of that book.

Myanmar literature on Myanmar military Sciences has been translated, researched and topics and themes of Ph.D. Thesis abroad. The late Dr. Myo Myint, Director General of Research Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, did his M.A. degree with a thesis on Let-wei Thonedura's Thayningabyuhar Pyo, Nandithayna Pyo and Byuha Setki Pyo at Monarch University of Australia. With this article the writer hails the Tatmadaw Day 27th March of this year 2018. ■

Open letter to Sandayar (Pianist) Tin Win Hlaing

TO, Sayar Sandayar (Pianist) Tin Win Hlaing

1. The purpose of this letter is to address the remarks you made in your acceptance speech on the occasion of the Myanmar Academy Awards Ceremony for 2017 at Myanmar Event Park in Yangon on 23 March 2018.
2. As you said, we at MRTV (Myanma Radio and Television) are trying our best to make sure Myanmar traditional and fine arts are not submerged into the ground. Perhaps, you didn't notice. Since 1946, the Myanma Athan Radio has been broadcasting programmes on Myanmar songs and fine arts, including Myanmar theatre, the essence of a past era, the Jataka tales, theatre entertainment, Hsaing Waing (musical ensemble) entertainment, Myanmar traditional music, voice of musicians, rural melodies and old-school hits, among others. We have also been broadcasting programmes on television since 1980 on natural arts, including Sokayeti (national traditional performing arts competition), puppet theatres, public maxims, old classic songs, current hit songs, fine arts theatre and popular Myanmar movies, as well as "Chay Chay Myit Myit Nhith Nhith Kar Kar" (your programme). These are just some of the works we are doing to uphold fine arts, in case you are still worried it will come crashing down.
3. You also mentioned that we do not possess more than two RCA (Radio Corporation of America) record players and cassette players, and we use the ones we have to hold water pots. To refute your claim, MRTV has been using an RCA record player (16 inches) for more than 70 years. The original manufacturers have ceased production of the spare parts, but MRTV has collaborated with foreign experts to repair the machines and has successfully repaired one of them in 2017. We have also replaced the needle on the player with a suitable substitute. We have replaced the old record copier for the 7-inch, 10-inch and 12-inch record discs with a modern digital recorder and have archived them. The archived records include music and songs from the previous generations and other programmes that have been combined into 123,148 files. We are always updating and adding to our collection.
4. You mentioned it's been a year since we stopped airing your programme "Chay Chay Myit Myit Nhith Nhith Kar Kar." We have recorded 209 episodes of your programmes. Since the broadcast of your last recorded episode on 3 July 2017, we have been, and are still, broadcasting re-runs of the previous episodes every Tuesday at 4.30 p.m. Therefore, we do not understand why you said we haven't aired your programmes for a year. Just three days prior to the academy awards on 20 March 2018, we aired your programme Gita Yeiktar-152 on television. MRTV has tried contacting you to shoot new episodes of "Chay Chay Myit Myit Nhith Nhith Kar Kar." For this purpose, we met your daughter on 27 June 2017. She told us you had an eye operation and needed to rest for a month. We spoke with her again on 27 July 2017. At that time, she told us you were yet to get the eye operation, but you were composing music for upcoming movies. She told us you would contact MRTV soon. However, we did not receive any communication from you; so on 22 March 2018, we contacted your daughter again. She said you would resume shooting with us after the academy awards show. The honorarium for an episode of "Chay Chay Myit Myit Nhith Nhith Kar Kar," which has three musical pieces in each episode aired on MRTV, used to be Ks100,000, but since the beginning of 2017, we have conferred an honorarium of Ks400,000 for each episode.
5. Another accusation you made is that people have to pay a large amount of money to record with us. Artistes who want to record with us have to submit documents, and if approved, we begin recording as soon as possible. According to the rules, artistes only need to pay Ks2,000 for an episode or programme that includes three to four musical pieces. If the recording artist is contributing to our department, then we provide them the services free of charge. We would like to know to whom, when and how much you had to pay, so we may take action against them.
6. Further, you said that if the payments are not made, the Ministries stick to their own people. If there are any such cases of bribery, and if you have concrete evidence, then you can file a case with the anti-corruption commission or other relevant departments. If not, then you need to know that accusing ministries and its employees without concrete proof destroys the dignity of the people working there.
7. We would like to know if you have ever contacted MRTV or an official from MRTV to discuss or report the accusations you have made, and whether there was inaction on the part of the department.
8. You have damaged your own reputation by making groundless accusations on live television. There are other avenues to air your grievances. The MRTV staff dutifully follow the rules and regulations of the department in providing valuable services to the public.
9. We request you to offer an explanation for these accusations you have made, despite the long working relationship we have had with you.

Staff of Myanmar Radio and Television

Lawyers decline Trump legal team invite

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump insisted on Sunday there was no shortage of lawyers willing to help him fight a collusion investigation as two more attorneys decided against joining his defense team.

Days after the resignation of John Dowd as Trump's lead attorney in the handling of allegations of collusion with Russia, US media reported that Joe diGenova and his wife and colleague Victoria Toensig had reversed a decision to come on board.

"The President is disappointed that conflicts prevent Joe diGenova and Victoria Toensig from joining his Special Counsel legal team," Jay Sekulow, another of Trump's lawyers, was quoted as saying in a statement.

The White House had announced last week that DiGenova — who is a familiar figure on US news networks — had been hired to bolster the legal team tasked with responding to special counsel Robert Mueller's

investigation into last the 2016 US election.

His hiring came amid reports that another high-profile attorney Theodore B. Olson — who served as solicitor general under former president George W Bush — had turned down an invitation to sign up with the Trump team.

Writing on Twitter on Sunday, Trump denounced any suggestion that he was struggling to attract top legal talent as "fake news."

"Many lawyers and top law firms want to represent me in the Russia case...don't believe the Fake News narrative that it is hard to find a lawyer who wants to take this on," the president wrote.

"Fame & fortune will NEVER be turned down by a lawyer, though some are conflicted.

"Problem is that a new lawyer or law firm will take months to get up to speed (if for no other reason than they can bill more),



Writing on Twitter on Sunday, Trump denounced any suggestion that he was struggling to attract top legal talent as "fake news". **PHOTO: AFP**

which is unfair to our great country — and I am very happy with my existing team."

Dowd quit days after Trump directly attacked former FBI chief Robert Mueller's sprawling Russia investigation as a "witch hunt," raising fresh questions about whether the president was

interfering with the probe.

Mueller is expected to seek to interview the president over allegations that his campaign team colluded with Russia during the 2016 presidential election and that Trump himself may have obstructed the investigation.

Trump said on Thursday

that he was still willing to be interviewed by Mueller.

The increasingly embattled Trump is also fighting off allegations that he had an affair with the porn star Stormy Daniels, with his defense by his long-time personal lawyer Michael Cohen.—AFP ■

Gunmaker Remington files for bankruptcy

LAS VEGAS — US gunmaker Remington filed for bankruptcy on Sunday, as the more than 200-year-old firearms manufacturer vies to restructure its massive debts.

"Directors have determined that it is advisable and in the best interests of the Company that the Company file, or cause to be filed, a Voluntary Petition commencing the Chapter 11 Case," the bankruptcy filing says.

Remington had announced it would file for bankruptcy in February, just two days before a

shooting at a Parkland, Florida high school killed 17 people and reignited a national debate on gun control.

The restructuring agreement will allow Remington to reduce some \$700 million of its consolidated debt, according to the company, as well as inject a contribution of \$145 million of new capital into its operating subsidiaries. In February Remington said its "business operations will continue to operate in the normal course and will not be disrupted by the restructuring process."

Remington's financial woes illustrate a paradox of the Trump era: weapon manufacturers ramped up production in anticipation of a Hillary Clinton presidency that would drive sales of those fearing increased gun control.

Instead, they got a period of political dominance for the powerful National Rifle Association gun lobby — with Republicans controlling Congress and the White house — that was nonetheless accompanied by financial fragility for gunmakers. The company has also been hit with lawsuits by families of victims of the Sandy Hook school shooting that killed 20 small children and six adults in 2012. The families say 20-year-old killer Adam Lanza would never have been able to carry out his 264-second attack if he had not had access to a high-capacity weapon which had been "specifically engineered" for military use in combat. More than a million Americans flooded streets of cities nationwide on Saturday demanding tighter gun control on Saturday, marches that were spearheaded by teenagers from Parkland who survived the shooting.—AFP ■



US gunmaker Remington has filed for bankruptcy, as the more than 200-year-old firearms manufacturer vies to restructure its massive debts. Photo: AFP

Not rude, just French: fired waiter claims discrimination

PARIS — A French waiter fired for being "aggressive, rude and disrespectful" says his behavior wasn't out of line — he's simply, well, French.

Guillaume Rey, who worked at a Vancouver restaurant on Canada's Pacific coast, filed a complaint with British Columbia's Human Rights Tribunal against his former employer, claiming "discrimination against my culture."

The restaurant, operated by Cara Operations, accused Rey of violating its code of conduct and said he persisted in his behavior despite verbal and written performance reviews.

In alleging discrimination Rey said French culture just "tends to be more direct and expressive."

He owes his sacking to his "direct, honest and professional personality," which he acquired while training in France's hospitality industry.

Both parties agree Rey performed well at his job despite his

allegedly disagreeable demeanor. The restaurant and its parent company had attempted to dismiss the complaint but tribunal member Devyn Cousineau denied that application, clearing the path for a yet unscheduled hearing.

She said the application's denial should not be seen as an indication of the case's outcome.

"Mr Rey will have to explain what it is about his French heritage that would result in behavior that people misinterpret as a violation of workplace standards of acceptable conduct," she wrote in her decision.—AFP ■



A French waiter fired for being "aggressive, rude and disrespectful" says his behaviour wasn't out of line — he's simply, well, French. **PHOTO: AFP**

Egypt heads to polls to choose between Sisi and ‘rival’

CAIRO — Egyptians headed to the polls on Monday in a presidential election to choose between incumbent Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and a little-known politician who has struggled to make the case he is a serious contender.

Polling stations opened at 9:00 am (0700 GMT) for the three-day vote, in which Sisi is all but guaranteed to win a second four-year term.

The president was among the first voters, shown on Egyptian television casting his ballot at a school in Cairo's Heliopolis district under tight security.

Voters turned up early at polling stations and queued to cast their votes. Outside some stations, musical troupes showed up to celebrate the election.

“What’s the alternative other than Sisi? If we don’t come to vote would that benefit the country?” said Adel Sameeh, 66, an insurance consultant.

Security forces were deployed across the country to protect polling booths and armoured vehicles were stationed at several points around Cairo.

“Nothing will scare the Egyptian people. Not terrorism or anything else,” Prime Minister Sherif Ismail told state television after casting his vote.

The Islamic State group’s Egyptian affiliate, which has killed hundreds of soldiers and civilians, has threatened attacks on election infrastructure.



An Egyptian soldier stands guard outside a Cairo polling station as voters prepare to cast ballots in a presidential election on 26 March, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

On Saturday, two policemen were killed in a car bomb attack targeting the provincial head of security for the northern Alexandria governorate. The security chief was unharmed.

Some 60 million people in Egypt, the most populated Arab country, are registered to vote on 26, 27, and 28 March. Official results are expected on 2 April.

They will have the choice between Sisi and Moussa Mostafa Moussa, who registered immediately before the close date for applications, saving the election from being a one-horse race.

Moussa, who has denied he is a “puppet”, had been leading a Sisi re-election campaign until the moment he registered as a candidate.

Other opponents have been sidelined, including former military chief of staff Sami Anan, who was detained in January, shortly after announcing his candidacy.

The military said the reserve general broke the law by illegally declaring his candidacy.

Authorities hope for high turnout

In an interview broadcast

on Egyptian television last week, 63-year-old Sisi said the lack of serious opponents was not his doing.

“I wish we had one, or two, or three, or 10 of the best people and you choose however you want,” he said.

Sisi won his first term in 2014, a year after the former army chief ousted his predecessor Mohamed Morsi following mass protests demanding the divisive Islamist’s resignation.

In that election, Sisi faced Hamdeen Sabbahi, an established left-wing politician much

better known than Moussa. Sisi won with 96.9 per cent of the vote.

With Sisi’s victory effectively guaranteed, authorities will be hoping for a large turnout to enhance the vote’s legitimacy.

Sisi has stressed in his pre-election appearances the importance of voters turning out in large numbers.

In 2014, about 37 per cent of voters participated in the two-day election, prompting authorities to add a third day to obtain a final participation rate of 47.5 per cent.

It is unlikely that this year’s turnout will even reach the 37 per cent threshold, said analyst Mostafa Kamel al-Sayed.

“The result is known in advance, and this does not encourage Egyptians to go out and vote,” he said.

During the campaign, Sisi appeared frequently on television and in newspapers, hailing factories and infrastructure projects built over the past four years. Egyptian cities, especially Cairo, are flooded with banners showing Sisi and messages of support from business owners. Posters vowing support for Moussa, 65, are rarely seen.

But with an economic crisis and gruelling price hikes — and the return of a regime seen as at least as authoritative as that of ex-leader Hosni Mubarak — support for Sisi appears to be slightly in decline.—AFP ■

Saudi forces intercept new Yemen rebel missile over Riyadh

RIYADH — Saudi forces intercepted a Yemeni rebel missile over Riyadh on Sunday, in the latest strike on the capital which coincides with the third anniversary of the Saudi-led coalition’s intervention in Yemen.

The Iran-aligned Huthi rebels claimed their target was Riyadh’s King Khalid International Airport, with residents reporting loud explosions and bright flashes in the sky shortly before midnight.

Authorities reported no immediate casualties from the attack, which comes after the US defence secretary last week urged Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during his visit to Washington to pursue “urgent efforts” to end Yemen’s

wrenching conflict.

The Huthi-run Al-Masira television channel claimed the rebels also fired multiple missiles at airports in southern Abha, Jizan and Najran provinces, but Saudi state television only reported the attack on Riyadh.

“Saudi air defence forces intercept a missile northeast of Riyadh,” Saudi state news channel Al-Akhbariya said in a brief report.

The attack is the latest in a series of Huthi missiles fired at Riyadh since November, all of which Saudi forces say they intercepted.

The first attack, which also targeted Riyadh international airport on 4 November, triggered the tightening of a longstanding

Saudi-led blockade of Yemen — already on the verge of famine.

Another attack on 19 December targeted Riyadh’s Yamamah palace, the official residence of King Salman.

Saudi Arabia has accused its arch foe Iran of supplying the missile to the rebels, a charge Tehran strongly denied.

The Huthis expelled pro-government forces from the capital in September 2014 and went on to seize swathes of the impoverished Arabian Peninsula country.

This prompted a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia to intervene in Yemen on March 26, 2015, to help the government push back the Shiite rebels.—AFP ■



Seven missile were fired by Iran-backed Houthi rebels from Yemen into Saudi Arabia overnight, with the kingdom's military claiming to have shot down all seven. **PHOTO: AFP**

Puigdemont in German court as arrest ignites Catalan protests

BARCELONA — Former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont is to appear in court on Monday following his arrest in Germany which triggered a wave of protests in Catalonia where thousands of separatists faced off with police.

Puigdemont spent the night in a German jail cell following his arrest on Sunday after he crossed the border from Denmark, under a European warrant issued by Spain.

The arrest comes five months after Puigdemont went on the run as Spanish prosecutors sought to charge him with sedition and rebellion in the wake of a vote by the Catalan parliament to declare independence.

It marks the latest chapter in a secession saga that has bitterly divided Catalans and triggered Spain's worst political crisis in decades.

According to Puigdemont's lawyer Jaume Alonso-Cuevillas, he was on his way back to Belgium, where he fled after Spanish authorities moved to impose direct rule over Catalonia.

The ousted Catalan leader, 55, will be brought before a German court Monday to confirm his identity. It will later decide if he is to remain in custody pending extradition proceedings.

'Delicate' situation

"It will take place in the course of the day, probably in the afternoon," a spokeswoman for the prosecutor's office for Schleswig-Holstein state told AFP.

Calling the situation "very delicate", Alonso-Cuevillas told Catalonia's *Rac1* radio it was "very likely that he will not be allowed to leave Germany".

Clashes erupted as protesters took to the streets in Catalonia on Sunday following his arrest.

Catalan police decked out in riot gear shoved and hit demonstrators with batons to keep the crowd from advancing on the office of the Spanish government's representative in Barcelona, the capital of the wealthy northeastern region.

Officers fired warning shots in the air to try to contain the demonstrators, who pushed large recycling containers towards police. Some people threw glass bottles, cans and eggs at police.

About 90 people were slightly injured during the protests in Barcelona, including 22 police officers, emergency services said.

Another seven people were injured at a protest in Lleida, about 150 kilometres (90 miles) west of Barcelona and one person was injured in Tarragona to the south.

'Solution can be found'

The case lands an unwanted diplomatic hot potato in German Chancellor Angela Merkel's lap less than two weeks after her new government was sworn in.

Her spokesman insisted Monday that the decision on Puigdemont's extradition rested solely in the hands of the German regional justice authorities, while Spain had the right to decide how to handle the accusations against him and the broader Catalonia issue.

"Spain is a democratic state based on the rule of law. The German government is convinced that a solution to the Catalonia conflict has to be found within Spain's legal and constitutional order," he said.



Protesters held a banner reading "Freedom to political prisoners" during a demonstration in Barcelona after Catalonia's former president was arrested in Germany. **PHOTO: AFP**

When asked whether the case would weigh on relations with Spain, Seibert responded with a simple "no".

"It angers us that they arrested Puigdemont, he is our highest representative," 22-year-old architecture student Judit Carapena told AFP at the Barcelona protest.

Catalan parliament speaker Roger Torrent appealed for calm in an address broadcast on regional television.

"I have no doubt that Catalan society will act as it always has, with non-violence," he said.

Aside from Puigdemont, nine other Catalan separatist leaders are in jail in Spain over the region's failed bid for independence.

His arrest came two days after Spain's supreme court issued international arrest warrants for 13 Catalan separatists including

Puigdemont and his nominated successor Jordi Turull.

The court said they would be prosecuted for "rebellion", a charge which carries a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison.

Twelve more face less serious charges like disobedience.

Issuing the warrant for Puigdemont on Friday, Judge Pablo Llarena accused the ousted Catalan leader of organising an independence referendum in October last year despite a ban from Madrid.

The vote had been swiftly followed by the Catalan parliament's declaration of independence on 27 October.

'Revenge and repression'

Puigdemont had been visiting Finland since Thursday, but slipped out of the country before Finnish police could detain him.

Elsa Artadi, a lawmaker with Puigdemont's Together for Catalonia party, said he should fight his extradition.

"Spain does not guarantee a fair trial; only revenge and repression," she wrote on Twitter.

While separatist parties won Catalonia's regional elections in December called by Madrid, they have been unable to elect a president and form a government as they have picked candidates who are now either in exile, in jail or facing prosecution. After Puigdemont was forced to withdraw his bid for the presidency as he could not return to Spain without facing arrest, another pro-independence leader Jordi Sanchez followed suit when a judge refused to let him out of jail to be sworn in. The third candidate, Turull, was placed in custody on Friday.—AFP ■



Russians have chosen names for the country's newest weapons by participating in a poll on the Defence Ministry's website. **PHOTO: TASS**

Russians choose names for newest weapons — Defence Ministry

MOSCOW— Russians have chosen names for the country's newest weapons by participating in a poll on the Defence Ministry's website, a ministry source said.

While delivering his State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly on 1 March, Russian president Vladimir Putin suggested that the country's people choose names for a combat laser

complex, an underwater drone and a nuclear powered cruise missile.

"The name *Peresvet* won the vote for a name for the combat laser complex. Most people voted for the nuclear powered cruise missile to be named *Burevestnik*, while the name *Poseidon* was chosen for the underwater drone," the Defence Ministry

source said.

The poll on the Russian Defence Ministry's website concluded at 20:00 (17:00 GMT) on Thursday, the source added. This is the first time in Russia's history that weapons has been named by a popular vote as in the past, the military used to choose names for weapons and military equipment.—Tass ■

Slain Vietnamese girl's dad hopes similar tragedy never happens

CHIBA, Japan — The father of a slain 9-year-old Vietnamese girl told reporters on Monday, the first anniversary of the discovery of her body, that he hopes similar incidents will never happen again.

Le Anh Hao, the 35-year-old father of Le Thi Nhat Linh, visited the site where her body was found a year ago in Abiko, east of Tokyo, and laid flowers in front of Linh's photo. She was allegedly murdered by a neighbour.

Hao, a resident of Matsudo in Chiba Prefecture, also said it was "really a long year" for the family and expressed hope that justice will be served in the upcoming trial. — Kyodo News ■

Chinese Korean war dead set to return home

INCHEON — A Chinese officer saluted on Monday as the remains of 20 former comrades were arrayed in a South Korean military facility ahead of their return home, decades after they died in the Korean War.

The brown-stained bones — including some near-complete skulls — were laid out on tables at the temporary ossuary in Incheon before being placed in identical boxes pending their repatriation on Wednesday.

It will be the fifth annual return under a 2013 agreement which has so far seen 569 sets of remains sent back. Communist Chinese forces played a crucial role in support of the North during the 1950-53 Korean War, but former South Korean president Park Geun-hye offered to return the bodies of Beijing's war dead as a goodwill gesture.

Mao Zedong sent mil-



A Chinese military officer salutes near the remains of Chinese soldiers who fought during the Korean War. PHOTO: AFP

lions of troops to intervene as US-led United Nations forces drove Kim Il Sung's army back towards the Chinese frontier in late 1950,

saving the North from defeat in a decisive turning point in the war.

South Korean and UN forces were pushed back

south, losing control of Seoul before recovering to recapture the capital and end up in a stalemate along what is now the Demilita-

rized Zone. Casualty figures remain disputed but Western estimates commonly cite a figure of 400,000 Chinese deaths, while Chinese sources mention a death toll of about 180,000.

The repatriations take place ahead of China's annual Qingming — tomb-sweeping — festival, when many people visit and clean the graves of their ancestors. The bodies being sent back on Wednesday were exhumed last year from multiple sites in Gangwon province in South Korea's northeast, a defence ministry spokesman told AFP.

Hundreds of North Korean soldiers remain interred at a special cemetery plot in Paju, just south of the heavily fortified border with North Korea, but Pyongyang has ignored Seoul's offers to return them despite sporadic talks on the issue.—AFP ■

6.4 quake off eastern Indonesia, tsunami alert lifted

JAKARTA — A 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck off eastern Indonesia in the early hours of Monday, triggering a brief tsunami alert that was swiftly lifted, according to seismic monitoring organizations.

The quake struck deep at some 171 kilometres (106 miles) below the earth's surface in the Banda Sea, the US Geological Survey said.

A tsunami alert was initially triggered by the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS).

However IOTWMS followed up with a second bulletin that said there was "no threat to countries in the Indian Ocean".

The quake's epicentre was located in a sparsely inhabited part of the Banda Sea, 380 kilometres from Ambon, the capital of Maluku province.

Local officials said there were no reports of

damage or injury.

"The tremor was felt mildly for two to three seconds by the locals, there was no panic and no tsunami threat," disaster mitigation agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told AFP.

A similar 6.1-magnitude quake hit close to Monday's epicentre on 26 February and caused no damage.

Indonesia sits on the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, a seismic activity hotspot.

It is frequently hit by quakes, most of them harmless. However the archipelago remains acutely alert to tremors that might trigger tsunamis. In 2004 a devastating tsunami caused by a magnitude 9.3 under-sea earthquake off the coast of Sumatra killed 220,000 people in countries around the Indian Ocean, including 168,000 in Indonesia.—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V VICTORIA-82 VOY. NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V VICTORIA-82 VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MSTL-1 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 RK SHIPPING &
TRADING PTE, LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-3-2018 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA
SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (010)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (010) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27-3-2018 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 INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

'Pacific Rim' dethrones 'Black Panther' in box office

NEW YORK — Smash-'em up blockbuster "Pacific Rim: Uprising" sent shockwaves through the North American box office this weekend, claiming the top spot with takings of \$28 million, industry estimates showed Sunday.

The action-packed sequel knocked "Black Panther" from number one after five straight weeks, according to industry tracker Exhibitor Relations, but the film attracted mixed reviews and fell short of "Pacific Rim's" \$37.3 million debut in 2013.

Set 10 years after "Pacific Rim," "Uprising" follows a new generation of pilots of the first film's giant "Jaeger" military mechanoids — fending off enormous Kaiju monsters aiming to end humanity.

The movie, from Universal, centers on "Star Wars" sensation John Boyega as Jake Pentecost, son of Idris Elba's character Stacker, who died to save the

world in the first film.

London-born Boyega also took a producing role alongside Guillermo del Toro, the first film's director.

While the film rose to prominence, it was time for Wakanda's King T'Challa to surrender his box office crown. "Black Panther" dropped into second place with earnings of \$16.7 million.

The Marvel smash hit, starring Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan and Lupita Nyong'o has earned \$631 million in the US and Canada — making it the highest-grossing superhero film in the US according to industry tracker Box Office Mojo, overtaking "The Avengers" (2012).

Thanks to an impressive box office reign, it is also the first film since "Avatar" (2009) to chalk up five consecutive top spots.

In at third for a second week was low-budget, faith-based drama "I Can Only Imagine," which

amassed \$13.8 million.

Made for a modest \$7 million, the movie stars J Michael Finley as the lead singer of a popular Christian band. Dennis Quaid and Cloris Leachman also star.

Fourth place went to newly-released "Sherlock Gnomes," taking \$10.6 million.

A sequel to 2011's "Gnomeo and Juliet" the Paramount animation features big names including James McAvoy and Emily Blunt. The Shakespearean pair call upon Sherlock (Johnny Depp) to get to the bottom of a string of garden gnome disappearances.

Falling from second last week to fifth this was "Tomb Raider," a Warner Bros. adventure reboot starring Swedish actress Alicia Vikander as the fearless and ferocious Lara Croft.

The movie, also starring Dominic West and Kristin Scott Thomas, netted an estimated



John Boyega attends Universal's "Pacific Rim: Uprising" premiere in Hollywood, California. **PHOTO: AFP**

\$10.4 million for total earnings of \$41.7 million.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

"A Wrinkle In Time" (\$8 million)

"Love, Simon" (\$7.8 million)

"Paul, Apostle of Christ" (\$5 million)

"Game Night" (\$4.2 million)

"Midnight Sun" (\$4.1 million)—AFP ■

Pyongyang Style? Seoul 'push' for Psy to play N Korea

SEOUL—Seoul is pushing for "Gangnam Style" star Psy to perform in next week's historic concerts by South Korean artists in the North's capital, multiple reports said.

A team of at least nine South Korean pop acts are set to visit North Korea next week for two concerts in Pyongyang, the first of their kind for more than a decade.

The shows — part of reconciliatory moves ahead of a planned inter-Korean summit in April — feature many top stars including K-pop girlband Red Velvet.

But Seoul is also seeking to include Psy in the lineup, South Korean media reports said, citing sources in the government and the K-pop industry.

The 40-year-old rapper/



Psy has in the past stripped topless on stage in the South and his lyrics include Korean swearwords. **PHOTO: AFP**

singer became an international sensation in 2012 when his wacky but catchy "Gangnam Style" mu-

sic video went viral on Youtube, pushing him into global stardom. The song satirised the life-

style of the wealthy denizens of Gangnam in Seoul, the South's richest district, and the video has been viewed more than 3 billion times, spawning a host of imitations. "We have formally proposed to the North to add Psy to the lineup," Seoul's MBC TV station late Sunday quoted a Seoul government official as saying. But Pyongyang opposed the idea, it said, adding the conservative North was apparently concerned about the singer's provocative performance style. Psy has in the past stripped topless on stage in the South and his lyrics include Korean swearwords, while spectators at shows by the North's popular Moranbong band remain firmly seated throughout.—AFP■

Kanye West's muse Abloh takes over Louis Vuitton menswear

PARIS—American designer and celebrity DJ Virgil Abloh is to take over menswear at Louis Vuitton, the brand said Monday, in a dramatic shake-up at the top of men's fashion. The appointment of rap star Kanye West's longtime friend and creative director to the French luxury label shows the massive impact street style is now having on fashion.

Abloh, 37, a former architect, who has won plaudits for his own Off-White label, posted a picture of a vintage Louis Vuitton travel chest to his 1.6 million Instagram followers to announce the move.

He had earlier teased them with a post of a white T-shirt with the initials "SHM", which stood for "something huge Monday".

He is the second black man to head one of the big Paris fashion houses, with French designer Olivier Rousteing responsible for both Balmain's men and women's lines.

They follow in the footsteps of British creator Oswald Boateng, who led Givenchy menswear from 2003 to 2007.

"It is an honour for me to accept the position of men's artistic director for Louis Vuitton," Abloh said in a statement released by the brand, the largest in the luxury giant LVMH's stable.—AFP■

Date nights are important, says Megan Fox

LOS ANGELES—Actor Megan Fox believes date nights are important for a relationship to survive.

The 31-year-old actor, who has kids Noah, five, Bodhi, four, and Journey, 18 months, with her husband Brian Austin Green, said spending quality time with her partner has been key to keeping their romance

alive.

"We don't do it often, but we went to Nobu for Valentine's Day and that was nice. The thing about that that's so essential is you remember why you like the person that you had kids with.

"When you have so many people pulling at you and needing stuff, you kind of forget. You

become like business partners and then you go on a date and you're like, 'Ugh! I'm attracted to you!' So it's important to do that. I'm going to try and do it more often," Fox told Us Weekly.

The actor had filed for a divorce from Green in August 2015, but the duo sorted out their differences.—PTI■



Megan Fox. **PHOTO: AFP**

Second Kadu ethnic traditional festival celebrated

THE second Kadu ethnic traditional festival was celebrated in Indaw Township in Sagaing Region on 26 March, 2018.

The festival was opened by Sagaing Region Deputy Hluttaw Speaker U Bo Than Nyunt, Chin Ethnic Affairs Minister U Lar Htaung Htan, Katha District Management Committee Chairman U Tint Wai Thone, Indaw Township No 2 region constituency Hluttaw representative U Than Win and Kadu ethnic group's patron U Pyi Thein by cutting ribbon while Sagaing Region Hluttaw Speaker U Than unveiled the archway.

Then, Sagaing Region Hluttaw Speaker U Than de-



Kadu ethnic women taking part at the ethnic traditional festival. PHOTO: MG CHIT LINN (INDAW)

livered opening speech.

Also, Chin Ethnic Affairs Minister U Lar Htaung Htan, Kadu ethnic group's patron U Pyi Thein and Kadu ethnic leaders U Chin Aung and U Win Shwe delivered speeches.

Indaw Township's Kadu ethnic group leader U Kan Aung gave words of thanks to the attendees and presented gifts to the group members of Sagaing Region Hluttaw Speaker and Chin Ethnic Affairs Minister.

The festival was celebrated until 27 March featuring entertainments, beauty contests and fashion shows and displaying Kadu traditional booths.—Mg Chit Linn

(Indaw) ■

Street art makes a splash in Hong Kong

HONG KONG — From murals made famous by Instagram to painting battles, Hong Kong's once largely underground street art scene has exploded in recent years, and is now blossoming across the city's walls and alleyways.

The commercial high end of the art world is at the fore in March, with gallerists, collectors and celebrities descending on Hong Kong for the annual Art Basel fair.

But English mural artist Dan Kitchener, drawn to the city's unique geography and energy, made his third visit to Hong Kong this month to depict atmospheric urban scenes with spray paint in its narrow and steep streets.

"Hong Kong's got that feel to me — the epic scale and the sky-

scrapers, and then it's got these little tiny alleyways," Kitchener told AFP while balancing on bamboo scaffolding as he painted on the outside wall of a city bar.

Trained for many years in watercolour and acrylic painting, 43-year-old Kitchener is particularly fond of portraying neon lights, reflections and rain — sights that first captivated him in Tokyo.

He had just finished a detailed mural of a street market in the bustling Wan Chai district, before moving on to paint outside a watering hole in downtown Central.

Just opposite the bar is a mural by graffiti artist Alex Croft said to be the city's most photographed wall, featuring rows of old townhouses on a bright blue

background. Hong Kong lacks a world-class art museum and marquee exhibitions rarely make a stop in the southern Chinese city, where it can be difficult to secure permission for public shows.

But street art has enjoyed a boost from growing demand in Asia and an increasing number of exhibitions in recent years, giving it a higher profile and more commercial spin in the city.

In 2015 a mosaic of 1970s American cartoon character Hong Kong Phooey by French artist Invader sold at auction in Hong Kong for HK\$2 million (\$258,000).

The popular piece of street art had been destroyed by the city's authorities, infuriating residents, and was later recreated for sale.—AFP ■



British artist Dan Kitchener made his third visit to Hong Kong this month to depict atmospheric urban scenes with spray paint in its narrow and steep streets. PHOTO: AFP

Super heroes take to sky in Thailand's int'l kite festival

HUA HIN, (Thailand) — Giant fancy kites in shapes of super heroes from 14 countries worldwide took to sky at the Thailand International Kite Festival in southern Thailand's seaside resort Hua Hin on Sunday.

The summer sky above the coastal city has been filled with color as giant kites in the forms of cartoon characters namely superman, transformers and batman and kites in geometric forms soar. All kinds of kites ride the sea breezes, including big kites, little kites, stunt kites, high tech kites and the battling displays of international kites.

Shows of unique Thai kites dancing in the sky, accompanied by Thai classical music Pi Phat ensemble have been the highlight of the event in which flying teams from four countries jointly show off their high-speed flying skills to improvise an air ballet of kites.

The tourism authority of Thailand has invited 20 kite flying teams from various countries, including Switzerland, Germany, France and China. Held during 23 March and 25 March, the event attracts thousands of kite enthusiasts from all over the world to the famous seaside destination on the gulf of Thailand.

"We are looking for the best kite fliers in the world,

and we know the best ones are in China, namely the two-line teams and the big-kite teams," said the festival's co-organizer, Ron Spaulding.

"It's a family kite festival. I'm inviting people with their families to the event, as it's a place to leave good memories," said Ron, adding that the festival is a golden opportunity for family gathering as Thai students have summer vacation in March.

"The festival runs in a very friendly atmosphere and it has so many countries represented, that's what makes it different. It's like a cultural exchange running for nearly 20 years so all became a family," said Simon, a kite flier from New Zealand who has been a fan of the festival for more than three years.

The festival returns to Hua Hin this year, a town about a three-hour drive from Bangkok.

Once a quiet fishing village, Hua Hin grew into a fashionable escape for residents of Bangkok after the 1920s, when the Thai royal family built summer palaces here. Hua Hin Beach, popular for kitesurfing and other water sports, is the main stretch of sand, lined with high-end hotels and seafood shacks.—Xinhua ■

Checkmate or knockout: Chess boxing lands a punch

BERLIN — With his dental guard still in his mouth and a slightly queasy feeling in his gut, a shirtless Thomas Cazeneuve was exuberant after checkmating his opponent during a chess boxing bout in Berlin, the world capital of the unusual sport.

Just as deft in the movement of his rooks as with his fists, Cazeneuve claimed victory against his Ukrainian challenger after seven alternating rounds of boxing and chess.

The match played out before a crowd of curious onlookers drawn to the spectacle of the so-called “Intellectual Fight Club”.

Chess boxing was born 16 years ago when its founder Iepe Rubingh brought to life a seemingly far-fetched idea from a French graphic novel, “Cold Equator” by Enki Bilal.

Today, Rubingh has set his sights on introducing chess boxing to the Olympics and even looking at sending robots into battle, as the multidisciplinary sport gains popularity.

The rules of chess boxing are simple.

Three minutes of gentlemanly chess played on a board in the ring is alternated with three-minute bouts of intense boxing over 11 rounds — six of chess, five of boxing.

The winner has to earn either a boxing knockout or a checkmate on the chessboard, but either chess boxer can be disqualified for taking too long to make a chess move or by breaking the boxing rules.

‘We were sober’

“You need to be good in both disciplines, which can be quite complicated. But it’s true that one mustn’t be afraid of being punched,” said Rubingh.

The biggest difficulty may be staying lucid to pull off the winning chess move despite the physical demands of boxing.

“It was my toughest fight with a rival who is a total all-rounder, and who has left me exhausted, especially in boxing,”



Daniel Biman (R) and Mohamad Kadija during an amateur fight at chess boxing which was born 16 years ago when its founder Iepe Rubingh brought to life a seemingly far-fetched idea from a French graphic novel, “Cold Equator”. **PHOTO: AFP**

said Cazeneuve, 24, a recruitment consultant.

“I held on thanks to my mental strength,” he added. In fact, “60 percent of the winning moves are made on the chessboards and 40 percent in boxing,” said Rubingh, a 43-year-old Dutchman.

Recalling the sport’s gestation, chess-lover Rubingh said that it began in 2002, when, after a round of chess that ended in stalemate, he suggested to a friend that they go for a boxing bout at a bar in Amsterdam.

“The idea was born, but we were sober,” he said.

“Combined, the two sports are the amalgamation of the most beautiful capacities of human beings to create a type of supreme being,” he said. The author of the graphic novel, Bilal, told AFP that he found it “rather amusing that the idea that was potentially absurd had become reality”.

‘More Kasparov than Tyson’

While it was considered more a curiosity than a real sport in the beginning, chess boxing has gained a strong following, including chess fans who have

crossed over to the more physical realm of boxing.

Alina Rath, a 29-year-old German, has been a member of a chess club for 20 years but only began adding boxing to the mix in August.

“Chess boxing breaks down clichés of the rough guy who only knows how to beat up the weak intellectual,” said the accountant.

Although Rath says she feels “more like Kasparov than Tyson”, she said she was tempted to sign up for the dual discipline after five years of practice in mixed martial arts.

Some 3,500 people are card-carrying members of 11 federations in countries including Britain, Iran and Russia.

And it is Berlin that is the undisputed headquarters of the sport after the World Chess Boxing Organisation was set up there in 2004.

Man versus robot?

Regular exhibition games are organised, pitting players of all nationalities.

“Our aim this year is to create a professional league financed

by investors and partners,” said Rubingh, who is pushing for the sport to be included in the Olympic Games in Paris in 2024.

To gain publicity for the sport, Rubingh has another seemingly space-aged idea up his sleeve.

This time, he is turning to science fiction guru Isaac Asimov for inspiration.

Taking a leaf from Asimov’s series depicting man’s fight against the machine, Rubingh wants robotic companies to partner him in organising a series of matches pitting men against robots.

“I would fight against a robot with artificial intelligence and which is much stronger than us in chess but also weaker in terms of reflexes,” he said.

“Every year, I would challenge the best of the robots and it would become increasingly difficult for me to win as they improve. “The day that I lose, the machine will have overtaken mankind,” said Rubingh, who is dreaming of a million-dollar fight in New York’s Times Square.—**AFP ■**



Daniel Biman (L) and Mohamad Kadija attend a chessboxing fight during an amateur fight event at the Intellectual Fight Club IX in Berlin. **PHOTO: AFP**

Nishikori knocked out in 3rd round of Miami Open

MIAMI, Florida — Kei Nishikori was defeated by Argentina’s Juan Martin del Potro in straight sets on Sunday and was forced to make a third-round exit at the Miami Open.

Nishikori could only muster one break-point opportunity against the world No 6, which the Argentine saved in a 6-2, 6-2 rout over the Japanese in 72 minutes.

“I started out well, but I’m still lacking confidence and don’t feel stable enough. I made so many mistakes in the second set that I felt like it wasn’t even a game anymore,” Nishikori said. “But I wasn’t completely overwhelmed, and there were some positive things that came out of it.”

The former world No 4 Ni-

shikori held Del Potro back until the Argentine turned the first set 3-2, going on to win 77 per cent of both his first and second serves. Del Potro shot six aces to Nishikori’s two and converted four of 13 break points in the lopsided victory.

“It’s frustrating that I couldn’t play at 100 percent. I wanted to play a little harder,”

Nishikori said.

At this tournament, the world No 33 received a bye in the first round as the 26th seed and beat Australian John Millman in the second round.

He returned to competition in January after a season-ending wrist injury last August but withdrew from the BNP Paribas Open earlier this month due to

illness.

Del Potro, who has won six of eight matches with the Japanese, advanced to a fourth-round meeting with Serbia’s Filip Krajinovic.

Nishikori is expected to play in the 15-22 April Monte Carlo Masters, the first clay court match of the ATP season in Europe.—**Kyodo News ■**