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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi greets trainees of the Psychology of Leadership Course. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor greets instructors, trainees of leadership course

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a speech at a dinner party of instructors and trainees of the Psychology of Leadership Course at the Kempin-

ski Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Before delivering the speech, the State Counsellor warmly greeted the instructors and trainees.

After the dinner, the State

Counsellor discussed the effectiveness, needs and requirements of the course. The course was conducted by the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). A

total of 16 trainees with the rank of lieutenant colonel or colonel attended the course from 12 to 15 December.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Mine explosion kills two in Shan State

MEMBERS of the KIA, MN-DAA, TNLA and AA armed groups attacked a military convoy on Wednesday evening, killing one civilian and one soldier.

The members of the armed group exploded three mines on Lashio-Muse Highway near Hsan Laung Village in Hsenwi Township, northern Shan State.

The explosion instantly killed Maung Naing Tun, 32, of Mandalay, and a soldier.

KIA ambushes military convoy, injures two civilians

Members of the KIA ambushed a military convoy in Kutkai Township on Wednesday afternoon and retreated after government troops returned fire.

Two civilians who were aboard a 22-wheeled truck that was part of the convoy were injured in the fighting. Meanwhile, 13 out of 21 villagers from Pankun Village, Kyaukme Township who were forcibly recruited by the TNLA armed group arrived back home on Wednesday. Another villager was recruited by the TNLA the same day. The TNLA is still detaining nine villagers.

KIA/TNLA combined armed group attacks government troops

A combined armed group of about 85 from the KIA and TNLA comprising about 85 troops attacked government troops stationed near Panwa village, 10 miles from the north of Namtu in the north eastern part of Shan State,

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 3rd regular session's 8th day meeting held

AT yesterday's Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting, Major General Aung Soe, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, clarified the approval of Myanmar's admission into the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children. "Admission into the ASEAN Convention will help the country to effectively control the crimes of border crossing and human trafficking activated by gangsters."

Now, the 2015 human trafficking eradication law is being amended, with rules and regulations to be drafted according to the new law. As per the ASEAN Convention for the country to enter now, ASEAN member countries are required to cooperate with countries of origin, transit or destination, under any circumstances, regarding the main objectives of taking responsibility, protection of human trafficking, filing cases and giving care to victims of human trafficking. Thus it will help strengthen the commitments of regional and international cooperation."

As regards the approval of Myanmar's admission into ASEAN's convention, 18 parliamentarians took part in the discussion



U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism. PHOTO: MNA



Major General Aung Soe, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Win Myint Chit of constituency 8 of Bago Region. PHOTO: MNA

Than Lwin of constituency of Pan-an, Dr Mya Thaung of constituency 7 of Bago, U Nyan Lin of Shwe Pyi Tha constituency, U Okkar Min of constituency 8, in Tanintharyi Region, U Nyi Sein of constituency 5, in Shan State, Daw Nan Htwe Thu of Phasaung constituency, U Kan Oo of Salin constituency, Daw Khin Hnin Thit of Padaung constituency, U Hla Oo of constituency 4, in Sagaing Region, U Sai Pan Pha of constituency 12 in Kayah State, Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Latt of constituency 3 in Bago Region and Daw Tin Tin Yi of Kyunzu constituency supported the motion respectively.

Yesterday's meeting also recorded the appointments of U Min Thu as deputy minister for the President's Office, and U Hla Kyaw as deputy minister for agriculture, livestock breeding and irrigation. Afterward, U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, addressed the matter concerning signing the agreement on establishing coordination on greater Mekong countries, sent back by the President of the State.

The Speaker of the Hluttaw announced he would enroll the names to discuss in the meeting. —Myanmar News Agency

and the Hluttaw approved it. In the discussion, Daw Cho Cho of Oaktwin constituency said, "Trafficking in persons is attributed to poverty, unemployment and lack of rights and opportunities. Most victims of human trafficking are women under 18, and in Myanmar 2,009 girls under 18 and 86 boys were victims of human trafficking."

Dr Daw May Win Myint of Mayangone constituency in Yangon Region said, "Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand in south-eastern countries and China are closely related and they are notorious places of human trafficking. According to reports, human trafficking took place based on different development among neighboring countries, the existence of long border between countries and weakness of security in border areas. In Myanmar, women and children were mostly victims trafficked to Thailand and China. The agreement should be signed for approval as soon as possible, to save the lives of women and children and to be proud of ourselves as a country that can safeguard the rights of children and women."

Dr Daw Khin Sithu of Loi-

kaw constituency said, "Shan State is the most affected area in Myanmar in terms of human trafficking, followed by Yangon Region, Chin State and Kayah State. The government and the whole populace are required to actively take part in protecting from these inhumane activities. Particular facts should be included in school curricula to know how to avoid these situations."

Dr Win Myint Chit of constituency 8 of Bago Region, Dr San Shwe Win of Yegyi constituency, Daw Htu May of constituency 11 of Rakhine State, Daw Nan Than

Daw Khin Kyi Foundation raises US\$ 121,000 with black tie fundraiser & auction event

OVER 300 guests attended the 1st 'Black-Tie' Fundraiser & Auction Event on the 25th Nov 2016 hosted by the Sedona Hotel Yangon for the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation in aid of their community programs for the under-privileged in Myanmar.

The Gala and Auction which took place at the ho-

tel raised over USD 121,000 through ticket sales, sponsorships and auction items, making the premiere fundraiser event for the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation the most successful one.

The main attraction of the evening was a replica of the now famous painting by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu

Kyi, made in 1990, which was printed onto a T-Shirt and autographed by Her Excellency.

From a starting bid of USD 5,000, the bidding quickly sped up and concluded with the winning bid by U Soe Naing Tun of Myint Tun Oo Gems and Jewellery. —GNLM



Rakhine State Day observed in Maungtown

THE Rakhine State Day was observed in Maungtown yesterday, with reading of the message on the day sent by President U Htin Kyaw.

At the ceremony held at the Maungtown Township General Administration Office, Chairman of the ceremony U Maung Ohn Kyi clarified the emergence of the Rakhine State Day.

Afterwards, U Hla Myint, Head of Maungtown Township General Administration Office, read the message sent by President U Htin Kyaw.

The 42nd anniversary com-



A ceremony to commemorate the 42nd Rakhine State Day at the Maungtown Township General Administration Office. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG LWIN

moration was held in the towns across the state.

After having been designated as Rakhine State in 1974 Constitution, the 1st Rakhine State People's Council decided to designate December 15 as Rakhine State

Day, the day on which Referendum commenced for the approval of the Constitution. Starting from 1975, it has been being celebrated, reaching the 42nd anniversary Rakhine State Day today. —Zeyar (Mirror)

Appointment of Ambassador agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Philippe Kridelka as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok.

Mr. Philippe Kridelka was born on 18th May 1960 in Charleroi, Belgium. He graduated with Master's Degree in Law and joined the Belgian Diplomatic Service in October 1987. He had served at the Belgian Embassy in Tehran, Iran and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgium, and at the Belgian Embassy in Warsaw as first secretary, deputy director and counsellor respectively from 1989 to 1995. He also served as a diplomatic advisor to the Belgian Minister for Foreign Trade in 1998, counsellor to the Belgian Representation to the

European Union-World Trade (WTO) desk from 1999 to 2000, diplomatic advisor to the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister, in charge of Employment Policy and Gender Equality from 2000 to 2002, prior to his appointment as Ambassador of Belgium to the Republic of Singapore and to the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam.

He served as Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Belgium to UNESCO from 2005-2009, Director of Cabinet, Office of the Director-General of UNESCO from 2009-2010, and Director of UNESCO's Liaison Office in New York in 2010. Since September 2013, he has been serving as Secretary General of the Household of His Majesty the King of the Belgians.

He speaks French, English, Dutch and German. He is married and has a son. —Myanmar News Agency

Parliamentarians commemorate Kayin New Year at residence of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

IN commemoration of the Kayin New Year 2756 KE, Kayin national parliamentarians from Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw came to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house to sing psalms and Kayin New Year songs on Tuesday evening, it is learnt.

Kayin New Year Day is annually held in the regions where Kayin nationals reside. Kayin nationals performing duties in Nay Pyi Taw assembles on Kay-

in New Year Day, inviting other brethren to take part in their celebration by visiting others to entertain with songs.

The Kayin New Year Festival is to be celebrated in Nya Pyi Taw on 29 December as a holy traditional festival with pomp and circumstance that includes the traditional festival of eating the first crop of the year, exhibition of traditional commodities and traditional dance.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is seen at the event in which Kayin national parliamentarians sing psalms at her residence in Nay Pyi Taw in commemoration of the Kayin New Year. PHOTO: MNA

Villager abducted by armed group in Maungtaw

Acting on a phone tip that claimed an armed group had abducted a villager, security forces conducted an investigation Tuesday night and found out that foreman Herby Roman from Thawunchaung (North) Village in Muangtaw Township was kidnapped by a 17-member armed group.

It was later discovered that the armed group led by Mawlawi Zubaing fired shots and abducted Herby Roman at his home in Thawunchaung Ywathit Village.

Security forces found a bullet shell casing in the kitchen of the abductee and conducting area

clearance operations in the eastern portion of Thawunchaung Village.

Security forces also seized two 90-foot long, 4.5-foot wide pieces of cloth commonly used to make uniforms hidden in a thatch plantation near Leikai Village in the township on Monday.

Security forces also seized two activated improvised land mines in bags along with automobile pistons used in making land mines while conducting area clearance operations in the hills near Mayintaung and Hmawtaung.—*Myanmar News Agency*



The IEDs seized by security forces in the area clearance operation. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR OFFICE'S INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Freshwater fish garden to be opened in 2017

A freshwater fish garden that had been scheduled to open last month will now open early next year due to construction delays, it is learnt from the Yangon region fisheries department.

"Our freshwater fish garden will be opened in 2017, to enable the opening of ornamental fish showrooms. Actually, we expected to open in November 2016. We had to spend five months just to seek the approval of the Myanmar Investment Commission", said U Tun Win Myint, the head of Yangon region fisheries department.

Local ornamental fish entrepreneurs can pursue a business jointly with foreign ornamental fish entrepreneurs. Also, local and foreign professionals can

now conduct research for their research papers at the freshwater fish garden, officials said.

"The authorities have not made any official announcement. When they start to implement the project, we will move out from the Friday market. We are not sure yet whether our ornamental fish market will be good or bad," said U Sai, chairman of Myanmar's Ornamental Fish Entrepreneurs Association.

Most of the ornamental fish keepers are doing it as a part-time hobby. The prices of ornamental fish vary depending on the variety. Currently, ornamental fish keepers are faced with space problems, it is learnt.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Civil service reform strategic plan discussed

THE Round of Consultation for the Development of the Civil Service Reform Strategic Action Plan for Myanmar was conducted in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday and will continue today.

In conjunction with the consultation, a forum on enhancing civil servants' enthusiasm by rewarding equal opportunities in accordance with their competence and ethics was organized by the

Union Civil Service Board (UCSB) and the UNDP at Myanmar International Convention Centre (2) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Dr Win Thein, chairman of the UCSB, and Mr Peter Batchelor, country director of the UNDP, extending greetings at the opening ceremony of the workshop and forum.

U Saw Valentine, a member of the UCSB, discussed under the

title "Drafting a strategic plan for civil service reform in Myanmar through comprehensive dialogue," and Mr. Ryan Orange, former deputy commissioner of the civil service commission, discussed under the title "Pilot findings of drafting a strategic plan for civil service reform at the forum."

The workshop and forum will continue today.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President U Myint Swe and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing seen upon departure for Ratnagiri, India, to attend a donation ceremony marking 100th anniversary of death of King Thibaw. PHOTO: MNA (News on Page 9)

Trial of Eleven Media CEO and chief editor postponed

THE trial of the CEO and the chief editor of the Eleven Media Group was postponed yesterday after the prison doctor applied for an exemption from appearing at the court as witness.

The CEO and the chief editor have been sued by the Yangon Region Government under Section 66 (D) of the Communication Law.

"Today's trial was supposed to hear from the prison doctor of U Than Tun Aung, the CEO, but the doctor was not available and we asked for the medical certificate

at the next hearing," the Tamway Township judge told Myanmar News Agency.

U Kyi Myint, the lawyer representing Dr Than Tun Aung, applied for bail on health grounds after the accused had suffered from a fall, but the court rejected the application on 9th December.

When the lawyer applied for bail for his client again, the court summoned the prison medical officer, but the doctor applied for an exemption from appearing at the court as a witness as there are only

six doctors working for healthcare services, sanitation and food inspection at the prison, one of the biggest prisons in Myanmar.

"The doctor asked for an exemption from appearing at the court as a witness as he is too busy to appear at the court. I have never heard of such an application for exemption from appearing at the court as a witness in my life. My client has lost his right to justice," said attorney U Kyi Myint.

The trial was adjourned to 22 December.—*ZawGyi (Panita)*



The aircrafts and helicopters being launched with ceremony. Photo: MNA

Vice Senior General Soe Win attends launching of new aircrafts and helicopters

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win, in Air Force uniform, delivered a speech at the launching ceremony of aircraft and helicopters at a fly training base in Meiktila yesterday.

Four new 1900D aircrafts and four EC 120 B helicopters were launched at the ceremony.

The Air Force has received a total of 55 aircrafts and 14 helicopters in eight launching ceremonies of new aircraft.

Then, the commander of the fly training base announced the launching of the aircraft.

At the ceremony, Commander-in-Chief (Air Force) presented a gift to the vice senior general to commemorate the ceremony.

Later, squadrons of fighter jets displayed aerobatic maneuvers.

The vice senior general and party also released 69 birds to mark the ceremony before sprinkling scented water onto the aircraft. Then, the vice senior general and party viewed round the exhibition booths of the Air Force.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Fish paste and dried fish entrepreneurs request loans from revolving fund

FISH paste and dried fish entrepreneurs want the fisheries department to grant loans from a revolving fund, it is learnt from the Myanmar Fish Paste, Dried Fish and Fish Sauce Producers Association.

“Our association chairman and chairman of fisheries federation discussed how to receive loans at the 3rd annual meeting. The members of association want to borrow the loans. I want to know if we can borrow the loans from the revolving fund from Mya Sein Yaung project,” said U Tun Sein, secretary of the association, on Tuesday at the meat and fish sector entrepreneur’s regular

meeting.

Some of the fish paste and dried fish entrepreneurs are being faced with monetary difficulties because they have to rent land to keep their products at a higher rate and they are also being faced with higher production costs.

“Mya Sein Yaung project is granting loans for rural area development. But fish paste and dried fish entrepreneurs want to submit loan applications to the SMEs office, which have billions of kyats to lend. The government also has a plan to lend the loans,” said U Tun Win Myint, the head of Yangon region fisheries department.

The rural development department has been providing Ks30 million to each village for initial investment from the Mya Sein Yaung project to reduce poverty in Myanmar. Yangon region fisheries department has also provided loans to 50 villages. The Mya Sein Yaung project (meat sector) lent Ks6000 million to 484 village-tracts to develop livestock breeding on a manageable scale in rural areas in the 2014-2015 fiscal year, Ks1,200 million to 40 village-tracts in the 2015-2016 fiscal year and Ks780 million to 26 village-tracts in the current 2016-2017 fiscal year.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Traffic accidents in Mandalay kill 638, injure 3,124

SIX-HUNDRED and thirty-eight people died and 3,124 others were injured in road accidents across Mandalay over the past 11 months, according to regional traffic police.

The number of traffic accidents that occurred across the seven districts in the region this year topped 2,000, an increase of over 110 cases compared with the same period last year.

The traffic fatalities rate

far exceeded last year’s total, although non-fatal injuries declined by about 100. In the first 11 months of 2015, a total of 1,878 cases were reported, leaving nearly 600 people dead and 3,226 injured.

Among all districts in the region, PyinOoLwin reported the most accidents with 434 cases, followed by Kaukse with 420 cases, Mandalay with 358 cases, Meiktila with 316 cases, Yame-

thin with 168 cases, NyaungU with 165 cases and Myingyan with 158 cases.

A member of the traffic police said the high death toll in road accidents is due to both drivers and pedestrians who fail to abide by traffic safety rules and regulations. Traffic rule enforcement efforts have been made throughout the district to reduce road-related deaths in the region.—*Khine Mye*

Mine explosion kills two in Shan State

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at about 7:45 am on December 14, from two separate places. Due to the cross-fire of the Tatmataw troops, the armed group retreated into the east.

While pursuing them, the armed group comprising about 160 troops attacked the government troops from three separate places from the hills nearby Panwa at about 12:30 pm with artilleries and firearms. Due to backup from aerial forces, the armed group dispersed into the east and west.

Similarly, at 6:20 pm or so, on 14 December, KIA, TNLA armed groups attacked a convoy of Tatmataw vehicles bound for Lashio from Hsenwi, performing their regular administrative duties with 2 remote-controlled mines, killing Maung Tun Naing, the driver of a 12-wheeled truck by shrapnel from the mine. In the incidents, some officials and some rank-and-file members sacrificed their lives for the country, with some injured.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Crime NEWS

80 cars cause fire in nine months kill four, injure 23

FOUR people died and 23 individuals sustained injuries in 80 cases of cars catching fire in the first nine months of this year across Myanmar, according to the Fire Services Department.

Between January and September, a total of 80 cases of vehicles catching fire were reported across the country. Total losses from the fires reached over Ks26.2 million, the department official said.

Yangon topped the list of cities with the most car fires with 22 cases, including fatal accidents. The loss from the accidents in the commercial capital totalled about Ks14.1 million.

The Fire Services Department continues to urge people to follow suggestions provided by the department to reduce possible losses in cases of vehicles catching fire.

Reasons for the vehicles catching fire are overheating, battery explosion and electrical issues, the head of the department said.

According to departmental records, 14 cases of cars catching fire occurred in January, 13 cases in February, 10 cases in March, nine cases in April, 11 cases in May, five cases in June, two cases in August and 11 cases in September.—200

Six people arrested for electro-fishing in Thabaung

SIX people were arrested for fishing with the use of illegal battery-powered shock machines by local people at Tabubonsar Creek, Thabaung Township, Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

U Zaw Khine, U Thura, U Than Oo, U Ko Win, U Maung Maung and U Nay Min were arrested. Local villagers also seized nine batteries, an electric-shock machine, two pipes and a boat.

“We arrested them when we found them fishing using the method of electro-fishing. It is an illegal fishing method,” said U Soe Naing, a local villager.

“The illegal fishermen are avaricious, with a self-centred mentality. Their actions can adversely affect fish resources. We are planning to send them to the fisheries department,” said U Than Win, the village administrator.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



Seized battery-powered shock machines.

PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

LOCAL Business

Over US\$3.1billion of FDI put into Myanmar's real estate sector

MYANMAR's real estate sector attained foreign direct investments of US\$3,111.451billion as of the end of November in the current fiscal year, according to the statistics of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

In the same period, over US\$690million of Myanmar citizen investments flowed into real estate development activities.

The real estate sector ranks fifth in the foreign investment sector, whereas the oil and gas sector is at the top of the list with an investment of US\$22,410.368million. The FDI in the real estate sector constitutes 4.64 per cent of total foreign investments.

The power sector ranks second with investments of US\$20,290.314million, followed by manufacturing in third place and the transport and communication sector in fourth place.

Foreign investments also go into mining, hotels and tourism, livestock and fisheries, agriculture, industrial estates, construction and other services.

According to the announcements of the DICA, foreign investments of permitted enterprises in the real estate sector were US\$ 440.573million in 2013-



A construction site being seen in Yangon. File photo taken on 21 February 2015. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

2014, US\$780.745million in 2014-2015 and US\$728.680million in 2015-2016.

One third of the country's population lives in urban areas, prompting authorities to implement numerous urban development projects. The real estate sector is thus required to improve and grow in line with the

burgeoning urban population, experts said.

Most of Yangon residents stay in rented housing, so the rental market of real property is the most active. Plots of land in suburban areas are selling well.

The construction ministry is developing projects to sell fair-and low-cost apartments

through a instalment plan via the Construction and Housing Development Bank. In addition, private developers have been found to sell their apartments under instalment plan.

The price of real property in Myanmar is skyrocketing as foreign investment in the country increases.—*Mon Mon*

Individual car importers need to seek permit in person

THOSE who want to individually import cars are required to seek permits in person, and asking somebody to do it will result in a denial of the permit, according to an announcement released by the Supervision Committee for Motor Vehicle Import.

Representatives, company staff and anyone else other than the actual importer are not permitted to apply for a free permit on car imports starting from 12th December because there are unscrupulous importers seeking free permits with the documents of others or forged National Registration Cards. Authorities will take immediate action against them.

Additionally, the photo of the license seeker will be recorded and affixed to the import license, stated on the announcement of the above said committee.

Car import licenses have to be applied for by 23rd December this year. The deadline for seeking a car import license was set at 28th December last year, according to the Commerce Ministry.—*Ko Htet*

Hatching rate of prawns plunges over 80 per cent within eight years

The hatching rate of prawns has dropped significantly since 2008, plunging 80 per cent in 2016, according to the Myanmar Shrimp Association.

The hatching rate plummeted after Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar. Previously, a hatchery could produce up to 5 million of prawns. Now, only 600,000 prawns can be produced per hatchery, said U Soe Myint, the joint-secretary of Myanmar Shrimp Association.

Prawn businessmen and experts are planning to discuss how to boost the production rate, according to the association.

The drop in production rate is also attributed to the high cost of feedstuff and other general costs, plus requirements in infrastructure, he added.

Additionally, the hatching rate declined due to diseases. The Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF) is making an effort to prevent prawns from diseases, said Daw Toe Nandar Tin, the



Shrimps. PHOTO: NZM

vice chair of the MFF.

Competent authorities and entrepreneurs need to cooperate for the shrimp farming business to raise its head again, she added.

There are 80 members in Myanmar Shrimp Association across the nation.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Over Ks100million of tariffs levied from passengers at Yangon International Airport in November

TARIFFS levied on commodities and goods coming in and out of the Yangon International Airport (YIA) in November reached over Ks100million, according to the customs department at YIA.

The custom duties are imposed on goods entering and leaving the airport, in conformity with the laws and procedures of the customs duty, in the prevailing dollar price. The goods beyond

duty and relief exemptions set by Myanmar Customs Department are levied a tariff. The growing number of passengers at the airport have scaled up the country's revenue. There are around 35,000 people leaving from and for the YIA, utilising about 120 airlines, it is learnt. Most of the imported items at YIA are consolidated cargo, documents, newspapers and personal goods, according to the

department.

Customs duties are levied at a recorded price at the airport in accordance with the prescribed price in international countries, according to an official from the department. The revenue earned from customs duties at YIA were over Ks90million in September and over Ks100million in October, according to the aforementioned department.—*Ko Khant*

Cold storage facilities for fish exports to EU to be announced

THE list of cold storages granted permits to export fishery products to the European Union (EU) will be announced in January, according to the Yangon Region Fisheries department.

"We have not garnered the number of permitted factories yet. The permitted factories will be announced at the end of next month", said U Tun Win Myint, the head officer of Yangon Region Fisheries Department at a

regular meeting held at Myanmar Fish Federation (MFF) on 13th December.

The cold storage facilities will be checked by inspectors once every four years, it is learnt.

Eighteen out of 20 cold storages are reported to have been checked, said Daw Toe Nanda Tin, the vice chairperson of Myanmar Fishery Products Processors and Exporters Association.

Myanmar has granted a

generalized system of preferences for export of fishery products. Fishery products exported to the EU need to be in compliance with set criteria and only some products are able to be exported, it is learnt.

There are over 100 cold storages in Myanmar, but products from only 20 cold storages were permitted to export to EU, it is learnt.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



A satellite image released by the Asian Maritime Transparency Initiative at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies shows construction of possible radar tower facilities in the Spratly Islands in February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

China says deployment of military equipment on Spratlys is legitimate

BEIJING — China's deployment of necessary defensive military equipment on the Spratly Islands in the disputed South China Sea was legitimate and lawful, its defence ministry said on Thursday.

The ministry made the comment on its official

microblog.

On Wednesday, a US think tank reported that China appeared to have installed weapons, including anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems, on all seven of the artificial islands it has built in the busy waterway, citing new satellite imagery.—Reuters

Japan, Hitachi to stump up \$8.5 billion for Horizon nuclear project in Wales

TOKYO — The Japanese government and a Hitachi Ltd unit will compile a package worth around 1 trillion yen (6.78 billion pounds) for a UK nuclear power plant project, a government official involved in the project said on Thursday.

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the Development Bank of Japan will provide financing for the project, the official told Reuters. The funding plans are a boost for the project, one of several new nuclear plants planned in the UK, which is aiming to replacing its ageing fleet of atomic reactors. Hitachi's Horizon unit plans to construct at least 5.4 gigawatts of new nuclear capacity across two sites in Britain.—Reuters

South Korea presidential hopeful: US missile defence should wait

SEOUL — The former leader of South Korea's main opposition party, who is leading polls of candidates to be the next president, said on Thursday deployment of a US anti-missile system that has antagonized China should be decided by the next administration.

Moon Jae-in, 63, who lost the last presidential election to Park Geun-hye by 3 percentage points, confirmed he would run in the next election, which is scheduled for the end of 2017 but could be much sooner if a Constitutional Court upholds an impeachment vote against Park and she has to leave office.

South Korea and the United States agreed this year to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile system in response to North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

But China vehemently

opposes the system's deployment in South Korea, fearing its radar would be able to penetrate its territory. Russia also opposes it.

The missile system has also raised opposition in South Korea, particularly in the area where it is due to be based.

Uncertainty surrounding Park following a vote in parliament to impeach her last week, the timing of the next election and the change of administration in

the United States have contributed to questions about the timing of the deployment of the system.

Moon told a news conference in Seoul it should await a new president in South Korea.

"It is inappropriate for the THAAD deployment process to go on under the current political circumstances," he said.

The commander of US Forces Korea said last month the THAAD bat-

tery would be deployed to South Korea within eight to 10 months.

Moon held out the possibility of renegotiating the agreement to deploy the system, saying doing so would not damage relations with the United States.

He said if elected, he would work to maintain strong ties with the United States, which has 28,500 troops in South Korea.—Reuters

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Duterte continues to enjoy high satisfaction ratings



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, seen in this undated photo, continues to enjoy a high satisfaction rating of 77 per cent among Filipinos almost six months since his election, despite his controversial remarks and policies that have ruffled feathers domestically and abroad, an opinion poll showed on 15 December 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

MANILA — Almost six months since his election, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte continues to enjoy a high satisfaction rating of 77 per cent from Filipinos, despite his controversial remarks and policies that have ruffled feathers domestically and abroad, an opinion poll released Thursday showed.

A 3-6 December survey by Social Weather Stations showed Duterte scored 1 percentage point higher than in a similar survey in September. The survey also showed 13 per cent of the 1,500 respondents were dissatisfied, while 10 per cent were undecided.

Duterte's net rating of 63 percent, the rounded-up difference between those satisfied and dissatisfied, was a point lower than that

in the September survey, but described by the pollster as "very good," second to the highest classification of "excellent."

The highest net satisfaction rating recorded since the SWS began conducting the survey was by then President Corazon Aquino, who scored 72 per cent in October 1986.

Duterte's first five months in office have been marked by his intense campaign against illegal drugs and criminality, the shift of his foreign policy to establish friendlier relations with China and Russia and a cooler one with traditional ally the United States, and his colourful language, particularly directed at US President Barack Obama, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, and the European Union, among others.

He also allowed the burial of the remains of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos at the country's Cemetery for the Heroes amid opposition from victims of martial law.

In the same survey, 51 per cent agreed that "Duterte's habit of publicly cursing foreign or international officials whom he does not like is harmful to the relations of the Philippines with the countries or institution of those officials."

Meanwhile, 33 per cent disagreed, while 17 per cent were undecided.

Duterte, 71, a long-time mayor from the southern Philippine city of Davao, was elected by 16.6 million Filipinos, roughly a third of those who voted during the May elections.—Kyodo News

South Korea to hold military exercise on disputed islets next week

SEOUL — South Korea plans to hold military exercises next week on and around a pair of disputed islets in the Sea of Japan, *Yonhap News Agency* reported on Thursday, citing an unidentified South Korean government source.

"The exercise to defend Dokdo will be held by the Navy and the Coast Guard next week for one day, with the participation of destroyer, patrol ship and aircraft," the source said, referring to the islets by their Korean name.

The group of islets, controlled by South Korea and known as Takeshima in Japan, is embroiled in a territorial dispute between the two nations.

If the weather permits, South Korea's Marine Corps plans to hold landing

exercise on the islets, the report said. South Korea has held similar exercises once or twice a year since 1986 in an effort to prevent external forces from occupying the islets or approaching them, drawing protests from Japan.—Kyodo News

Thai PM defends cyber controls as censorship concerns rise

BANGKOK — Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha on Thursday defended a decision to amend a cyber-crime law to increase the military government's ability to remove online content as authorities seek to tighten control on dissent.

A royal transition this month saw new King Maha Vajiralongkorn ascend the throne following the death of his father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, on 13 October.

Thailand has some of the world's toughest laws against royal insult, which has curtailed public discussion about the monarchy's role following the death of King Bhumibol, who was seen as a unifying figure.

Since King Bhumibol's death, authorities have cracked down on what they consider to be insults to the royal family and have shut down hundreds of websites.

The government is also sensitive about what it sees as criticism of the military's role in politics, and opposition to its seizure of power in a 2014 coup.

Prayuth's comments came a day before parliament will decide whether to pass amendments to a 2007 Computer

Crime Act which critics say could result in more extensive online monitoring.

Amendments to the law, seen by Reuters on Friday, would allow state officials to obtain user and traffic data from service providers without court approval.

Any website that is seen as a threat to national security or "offends people's good morals" can also be removed or suspended.

The current law says officials need court approval to remove content.

"This law is for when anyone posts something that is poisonous to society so that we know where it comes from," Prayuth told reporters.

"Don't think this is a rights violation. This isn't what we call a rights violation ... this is what we call a law to be used against those who violate the law," he said.

Critics say parliament is likely to approve the amendments.

Since taking power, Prayuth's military government has made increasing state control over cyberspace a priority.—*Reuters*

South Korea's powerful business lobby group dealt big blow by Park scandal



A flag bearing the logo of the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) and a national flag flutter in the wind at its headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, on 13 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — Long the voice of the conglomerates that form the engine of South Korea's economy, the Federation of Korean Industries could become another casualty of the scandal that is poised to cost President Park Geun-hye her job, as key members flee.

The FKI, whose board is made up of the chiefs of the country's conglomerates, or chaebol, has been the nexus for close ties between government and big business. It formed the two non-profit foundations, Mir and K-Sports, backing Park initiatives that are central to the current po-

litical crisis.

Prosecutors have charged Park's friend Choi Soon-sil with colluding with the president into pressuring conglomerates such as the Samsung Group [SAGR.UL] to pay funds to the foundations.

Last week, Jay Y. Lee, scion of the Samsung Group, the FKI's largest member, said it will leave the group, prompting others including the LG Group, SK Group and state-run banks including the Industrial Bank of Korea (IBK) and Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM) to follow suit, raising questions over whether the group can survive in its current form.

"We're leaving because abandoning the FKI won't change anything for us," an IBK official said, declining to be identified because the matter is sensitive.

An FKI official declined to comment on its future plans. It has said it will devise plans for reform by the end of February.

In recent years, some members complain, the FKI was being used by the government to pressure businesses — and not the other way around, fuelling resentment. Hiring paid lobbyists is illegal in South Korea.

"The FKI's role was to be a voice for companies as Samsung or LG can't speak for all conglomerates," said another source whose company is also preparing to leave the FKI. "The members are leaving because they feel the FKI was being used by the government to demand concessions from businesses."

FKI Vice Chairman Lee Seung-cheol told a parliamentary hearing last week that the presidential Blue House had played an unusually pushy role in managing the two foundations.

"It was difficult to turn down the Blue House's orders and requests," he said. "What was different about the Mir and K-Sports foundations from other foundations the FKI established was the fact that the Blue House became involved in detail."—*Reuters*

Abe, Putin meet at hot spring resort, territorial row in focus

NAGATO (Japan) — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin met at a hot spring resort in western Japan on Thursday, with Abe hoping that his fourth meeting this year with the Russian president will open the door for progress in the territorial talks over Russian-held islands claimed by Japan.

In their meeting held in Nagato, in Abe's home prefecture of Yamaguchi, the leaders are set to discuss the long-stalled territorial dispute that has prevented the two neighbours from signing a post-World War II peace treaty.

Japan says the islands — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islet group — are their inherent territory that were illegally seized by the Soviet Union after Japan's surrender in World War II in August 1945. Russia says the Soviet Union took the islands legitimately as the result of the war.

Putin's trip to Japan is the first by a Russian president since November 2005. His visit was initially eyed for 2014 but postponed as Russia's ties deteriorated with Group of Seven members and other Western countries following Moscow's annexation of Crimea in Ukraine.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands at the outset of their talks at a hot spring hotel in Nagato, in Abe's home prefecture of Yamaguchi in western Japan, on 15 December 2016. The Russian president arrived earlier that day in Japan for a two-day visit. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

"I am very delighted to welcome your first visit to Japan in 11 years at my home, Nagato," Abe said at the outset of the talks with Putin at a Japanese-style "ryokan" inn.

In the portion of the meeting open to the media, Putin said, "I hope that the summit today and tomorrow will greatly contribute to promotion of Japan-Russia ties."

Abe and Putin were meeting for the 16th time, including during Abe's first stint as premier from 2006 to 2007.

Ahead of the meeting, Abe told reporters, "I want to negotiate as a representative of Japan with the earnest desires of the former residents (of the disputed islands) deeply engraved in my mind."

A representative of the former residents' group said earlier

this week the residents wish to return to their home islands so they can visit their ancestors' graves without needing to be granted permission.

Given Putin's strong interest in Abe's economic cooperation proposal made in May focused on industrializing the Russian Far East and developing the energy sector, there have been some expectations in Japan that the leaders will reach a breakthrough deal in the stalled territorial talks at this summit.

But Russia maintains its staunch stance over the islands off Japan's northernmost main island Hokkaido.

Abe said in May following his meeting with Putin in Sochi that the leaders agreed to take a "new approach" in resolving the peace treaty issue, but the Japanese premier has recently played down such expectations, saying it is "not easy to make a big step forward."

The leaders may discuss the possible launch of talks on engaging in joint economic activities on the disputed islands in areas such as fisheries and seafood processing, and on expansion of the scope of visa-free exchanges for business purposes, Japanese government sources said earlier.

Japan does not deny the idea but takes the stance they need to be conducted in a way that would not lead to recognizing Russian sovereignty over the islands, the sources said.

Japan as a G-7 member remains united with the European countries and the United States in imposing economic sanctions on Russia for the Crimea annexation, a move Moscow is not happy with.

Tokyo also says it needs to maintain close dialogue with Washington, its main security ally whose relations with Russia have hit a low over the Ukrainian and Syrian issues.

Aside from the motivation to move the island issue forward, Abe is also looking to forge closer ties with Russia in the security area to counter the rising assertiveness of China at sea and amid the intensifying nuclear development and missile activities in North Korea.

After staying in the hot spa resort overnight, Abe and Putin will travel to Tokyo the following day for another round of meetings focused on economic cooperation, hold a joint press conference and attend a business forum before Putin concludes his trip, Japanese officials said.—*Kyodo News*

Opinion

Write for us

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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.

Danger of steps taken with ulterior motive

Editorial from
MyanmaAlinn

WE welcome the news that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is planning a meeting with foreign ministers of ASEAN nations. The planned meeting with the foreign ministers will be a step taken in the right direction – a step taken to consolidate the existing friendly and co-operative tradition within the ASEAN family of nations. The use of made-up and ugly photos as a tool to smear the good image of Myanmar abroad shows that there are linkages among the destructive forces inside and outside of Myanmar.

The Rakhine incident probably has its roots with that imagined race those insurgents held out with the intention of imposing on the minds of Myanmar people and international

public. There had never been such a race among the indigenous races of Myanmar.

It is learnt that the Ministry of Religious Affairs is planning to prove the non-existence of such a race with the help of unbiased research conducted by respectable historians.

Successive Myanmar governments have seen to it that those foreigners who had stayed in Myanmar within the prescribed period of time in the manner required by its laws had been given the status of naturalized citizenship. But the demands made by those whose citizenship are in question exceeded the bounds of reason. They are demanding that the whole lot of them be recognized as citizens irrespective of the law governing

citizenship. Had they been recognized wholesale as citizens irrespective of the law—the next step would inevitably be a demand for a state of their own which is an affront to the whole Myanmar people.

There are only around 3 million ethnic Arakanese in Rakhine State. But the nation on the other side exceeds a population of 160 million. It is only natural for a large number of surplus citizens from that nation to cross the border and settle down in the sparsely populated state next door. Although successive governments have given citizenship status to those who are qualified for it, the whole lot of people who made their way into the state could not be given citizenship regardless of their real

status. No nation in the world has ever done such a thing (Myanmar laws promulgated in accordance with justice should gain international acceptance.)

The state has never infringed upon the freedom of faith or human rights of those who entered Myanmar. If the international community really had good intentions to help resolve the conflicts and reduce the tension prevailing in Rakhine State, they should promote peaceful co-existence among differing races of people and differing religious beliefs. They should also create employment opportunities for both communities equitably. That, we think, is the only way to develop and pacify the state and make it prosperous and happy.

Hail to the 70th year diamond Anniversary of Mandalay University 2017

BA THAN

THE inspiring article commemorating the 96th National Day and pre-centenary of Yangon University, authored by Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt on 25th November 2016 of GNLM has awakened me to the flex my idling fingers again to tap the computer keyboard, recollecting in like manner, memorable years at the Mandalay University. Come to think of it, it is now just one year (nay) mere seven months away to hail the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Mandalay University, which was inaugurated as a modest Mandalay University College on the month of July 1947. In fact the auspicious opening day might have been selected much earlier before. But most tragically the founding leaders of our country including Bogoyoke Aung San and Sayagyi U Razak were martyred on 19th July, postponing the opening to a much later date. Incidentally I remember the sayings of some gurus who said most wisely: "Don't predict history before the fact for it can go awry. Only recount it after the fact, then you can never be wrong". Our most renowned late historian Dr Than Tun also had advised that we must study history so that we may not be fooled. Guru Dr Nyunt with his inimitable and prolific literary flair had walked along the inroads of Rangoon University campus through the twelve memorable sheets of its 2017 calendar. Hurrah for your running commentary where the process of history has been taken for granted. But my

theme touches on a different mode. It is a fact of history that the Rangoon University was inaugurated in the year 1920. Rangoon was then the most auspicious site chosen on many counts: first and foremost because it was a new emerging gleaming metropolis. Then it was the capital of British Burma, seat of government with the ornate Governor's residence and the Secretariat, Centre of British colonial administration. It was also the nucleus of business, with its outlet towards the open sea from the thriving Port of Rangoon. There was a gamut of sprawling buildings built grandiosely with distinctive colonial flavor. And there was the Pegu Club on Prome Road where white colonialists (white only) lounged exclusively as a home away from home. But then the author, a Mandalayan was wont to ask: "Whither Mandalay?" with reason! Mandalay was an integral part of our Anyar land with its intrinsic culture Buddhism, civilizations and seats of Burmese sovereign power throughout the first millennium, the first thousand years AD. During the pre-Bagan period, three kingdoms arose in all their glory and glamour: i.e Hanlin, Sri Khisra (Thray Khetayar) and Pyu respectively. All these ancient kingdoms had been acknowledged as genuine heritage sites by UNESCO, credit to Myanmar heritage anthology.

The Bagan Dynasty and the first Myanmar Emperor King Anawrathar heralded the first Anyar Kingdom of pomp power, magnificence and glory on 1044 AD. It was during his reign that

the heretic Ari monks were disrobed and banished. Theravada Buddhism with its foremost missionary Ashin Arahan was most venerably introduced from Thaton, known as Suvanna-bhumi. Theravada Buddhism thrived as witnessed by enshrining thousands of Pagodas and temples. It was said that even a lowly widow could donate a pagoda to gain newly accredited merit. King Anawrathar's military might had grown so phenomenally that he managed to consolidate the scattered mini-states into the First Myanmar Empire. Successive dynasties followed as the plight of kingdoms rose and fell with the dispositions of the reigning kings.

The Second Myanmar Empire was consolidated during the Toungoo dynasty under the reign of Emperor Bayint Naung. Likewise the Third Myanmar Empire was formed during the 1st Konbaung Dynasty by the reigning Emperor Alaung Phyayay U Aung Ze Ya. All these glorious thousand-year anthology of Myanmar Sovereign dynasties came to an abrupt end with the annexation of the Konbaung dynasty and the deportation of king Theebaw in 1886 by the British Imperialists.

With pomp and pageantry the University of Rangoon was inaugurated in Rangoon by the Colonial Administration on 1920. With the backdrop of a thousand years of continuous dynasties of Myanmar sovereign kings, and the predominance of Anyar culture and refined social mores, most Anyarthars and Mandalayans might tend ask, "Whither Mandalay?" These personages

might have envisioned setting up an institute of higher learning, a college leading to a university in the Second City, Capital of the last reigning king, fine arts and royal social interrelations. Mandalay has long been and still is seat of learning in Buddhist studies. Imposing seats of Buddhist scholastic teaching and learning, sponsored by reigning Myanmar kings were constructed supervised by Sasana-paing, venerable head monks, teachers (dhamma.kahtika) and thousands of learner disciple monks, making it a total of tens of thousands of sanghas in Mandalay alone at one time.

With such a magnificent setting, the Mandalayans and Anyathars might have pondered the justification of establishing an institute of higher learning even if it was a modest one, a fitting vindication to its past grandeur and heritage. Eventually after much discussion and collaboration, Mandalay Intermediate College was established in 1925. Many students with potential for future development attended its classes as a transit step towards the first degree courses in Rangoon and beyond. U Ko Lay, the future founder and principal of the Mandalay University College in twenty years hence was also one of the pupils. In this context I would like to interject with due respect to the eminent historians that I leave the historic dates for them to fill in as necessary as I proceed with momentum the interesting events as it has unfolded. Then to move the time gap fast-forward to July 1947, the first institute of higher

learning, The Mandalay University College seated in Mandalay opened its welcoming doors to inspiring matriculate students from Anyar Land. Two memorable founding fathers were instrumental in making it happen: Sayagyi U Razak, the Minister of Education who was martyred on 19th July 1947, and Sayagyi U Ko Lay, a Master of Science graduate from London University, a dedicated Anayathar who became the first Principal selected by the late Sayagyi U Razak to groom the nascent college into greater heights of educational accomplishments. There were 24 founder teachers in respective faculties in Arts and Science. Initially it taught the two years intermediate course absorbing the Mandalay Intermediate College, and finally expanded into a 4 years degree college, conferring 1st degree graduate certificate in the first convocation of 1951. The Anyar matriculates who attended the 1947 first year course Arts and Science including myself amounted to only around 100.

Aesthetically we became the pioneer students of this ornate Mandalay College. The Mandalay Intermediate College, opened since 1925 still continued to survive barely for over 20 years. Some students attended the MIC as 1st year inter students in the Post-war era of 1946. Now with the opening of Mandalay University College these students were merged as 2nd year Intermediate class, adding dignity and respect to both parties as MIC faded into history.

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Chairman sayadaw seen upon departure for India. PHOTO: MNA

Delegation led by Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara arrives India

A DELEGATION led by Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara, chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, comprising Vice President U Myint Swe and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, arrived Ratnagiri, India, to attend a donation ceremony marking 100th anniversary of death of King Thibaw.

After abdicating the throne,

Thibaw, his wife Supayalat and two infant daughters were exiled to Ratnagiri, India, a port city off the Arabian Sea.

The delegation led by chairman sayadaw left Yangon International Airport at 8:30 am on Thursday for India.

The delegation also includes U Soe Win, the great grand child of the deceased King Thibaw and royalities and responsible officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Hail to the 70th year diamond Anniversary of Mandalay University 2017

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Mandalay is a sprawling city with well laid quarters, good road layouts and greenery all around. Commoners like us use bicycles as the cheapest transportation to attend the college as day students. Inter-relations among students were simple and friendly. Relations with teachers were based on respect and humbleness on the part of Anyar students, reciprocated by kindness, and compassion by the teachers. In fact student-teacher relationship of Anyar social network fringed on high school settings familiar to them. Rangoon University seated in metropolis opened since 1920 had matured considerably with campus environment and suave urban lifestyle. By comparison, Mandalay College was still a fledgling. The students were free to choose the subject combination to their liking in line with liberal education curriculum. We all were young, fresh brimming, with hope, vision, inspiration and expectation. How time had flown! I could still remember my teaching staff most vividly: Mr J. Moonie and Saya U Ko Ko Gyi of English, Saya U Sein Win (Tavoy), Saya U Toe Aung, Saya Ba Thaung (Mg Thuta), U Hla Tin and Daw Than May of Burmese, Saya U Mg Mg Gyi and Sayama Daw Ma Ma Gyi of History, Sayamagyi M.A Daw Ohn and Saya U Ko of Pali, Saya U Aye Hlaing of Economics, Saya U Ba Toke of Mathematics, Saya U Thein Maung of Geography, Mr B.K Pal of Chemistry, etc. There are many whom I had forgotten as memory faded with the growing years. On January 1948, Burma became fully independent opting to stay out of the British Commonwealth. Such a situation had added grace, dignity and prestige to the college, the collegians and Anyar community. The Anyar College moved onward, brimming with new as-

piring matriculates, as the 1947pioneers proceeded class after senior class. Ultimately in 1951 the first '47 intake received their first degree in Arts and Science. Mandalay College was also upgraded into a full-fledged 4-year degree college. Fresh and full of pride these new graduates applied for positions of tutors and demonstrators to teach the new intake of matriculates who flocked in ever increasing numbers as the reputation of the Alma Mater grew far and wide. I still remember dimly a few of my colleagues: U Ba Than and U Sein, Tutor in English, Naw Agnes Claipo in Geography, Daw Khin Hlaing in Pali, U Tun Yee, U Chit Swe demonstrators in Mathematics, U Thaung in Physics, U Khin Maung in Chemistry. How wonderful the world was – the first pioneer 1947 students becoming the first pioneer teaching staff in 1951. Sayagyi U Ko lay might have been beaming with delight indeed that his efforts have begun to bear fruit. Finally the Mandalay University College became a full-fledged independent university in 1958 materializing the vision and mission of Sayagyi U Ko Lay.

Time did not stop there but continued to move on. Graduate students now ventured beyond national borders to prestigious institutes of higher learning abroad: Oxford, Cambridge and London of UK; Harvard, M.I.T, Yale Princeton of USA etc, to study post grad studies of M.A, MSc and thenceforth towards PhDs. Imagine the reach the Anyar University of 1947 had travelled. We pay our deep respect and gratitude to the two venerable founders: Sayagyi U Razak and Sayargyi U Ko Lay for their vision and efforts through all these difficult movements in the passing of history. Graduates chose their professions according to their aptitude and avocation. Some chose to stick to

the teaching professions, in schools and colleges with dedication and sense of mission. Many chose to venture to the wide borders of the world in exciting profession of administration, law, business, engineering, diplomacy, politics and international services. And a few chose to renounce the turbulent world and search for solitude and peace of mind by taking the robes of religion. Eventually come 60 years, with superannuation the working people began to retire from active service, giving way to upcoming generation to take up the mantle. Here again a new wave of respect and veneration began to take shape. Old students who have already been successful in their various vocations became aware of the plight of teachers of the high schools and universities, leading a lean existence in their old age. They congregated together to mobilize a puja meeting, most conveniently in the winter month open season to pay homage to their teachers and also to meet old friends and classmates again to recount those hilarious times. Old students and serving faculty members of the Mandalay University initiated such puja ceremony to pay veneration to their teachers. Seated in the front row of chairs, with wrinkles on their calm smiling faces were the founder faculty members of the Mandalay College, 24 of them headed by Sayagyi U Ko Lay. New generation of retired teachers also joined the ceremony. All old students cupped their hands and paid respects as the teachers gave their heartfelt blessings. Then offering were presented to the Sayas by the generous students. Such puja ceremonies were celebrated yearly as the number of retired teachers grew, as the founder members dwindled and the front row of chairs grew vacant year by year. In 1997 The University celebrated the 50 years

of its momentous institutional work with presentation papers read by Sayagyi U Ko Lay himself. Eventually Sayagyi passed away in 2004 at the ripe age of 91.

The year 2013 was the centenary of Sayagyi U Ko Lay's birthday. Devoted disciples and members called a meeting to celebrate the centenary, and one item included was to erect a bronze bust statue of Sayagyi Razak and Sayagyi U Ko Lay in front of the lawn of the entrance of the main University building, side by side of the bronze bell. Sayagyi U Ko Lay's bronze statue was successfully mounted. However Sayagyi U Razak's statue was postponed to a later date. Three years later on 24th November 2016, the tenth waning of Tazaungmone, coinciding with the 96th National Day, Sayagyi U Razak's statue was erected in front of the Razak Hall of the Mandalay University building with pomp and pageantry by State dignitaries, Universities heads and faculty members and family of Sayagyi U Razak.

To the time of this writing only Sayagyi U Ba Toke, Born 26th December 1920 is still living at age 96, a miraculous feat indeed for such longevity. From among the 1947 first pioneer batch of students only very few remained alive in Yangon, virtual octogenarians: Ko Hla Moe, Ko Mg Mg (Myitthar), Ko Ohn, Ko Ba Than, Ko Kyaw Za, Khin Ma Lay (Betty), Terry Latt (now in Australia) and Naw Agnes Claipo. From among the 48 batch, my friends Ko Khin Maung Nyunt, and Kyi Kyi Hla (Dawn) still move about in literal society. Ko Khin Maung and Ko Chit Maung also belong to this grouping. The author hopes he may be forgiven if some are left out, due to failing memory.

In the Mandalay University Campus today many buildings have been added to accommodate

surging growth and development from within and abroad. The halls, facilities and classrooms are bustling with educational activities: lectures, discussions, workshops, symposiums, seminars, paper reading sessions and conference from within and abroad. Many eminent scholars, learned dignitaries and readers pay frequent visits to this Anyar Institute. The MU has also gained maturity and now offers post graduate degrees leading to Doctors of Philosophy, Letters and Science.

Today at the time of writing, the Mandalay University now proudly boast the bust bronze statues of two most memorable founders: Sayagyi U Razak and Sayagyi U Ko Lay. Their untiring and most dedicated efforts extended to build the Mandalay College of higher learning in post war 1947 had led to successful inauguration of the College on July 1947. Now as the University has neared the 70th anniversary grateful students, staff members, Mandalayans and the Anyar community have repaid their gratitude with their statues reposing serenely on their beloved campus welcoming new generations for times to come.

In this manner the author most respectfully commemorates the chronology of the Mandalay University from its modest beginning on July 1947, to the approaching 70th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee on July 2017. Contemplating on the passing of time the author would like to conclude his endeavor with a rhyme from "The Brook" composed by Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). Thus: -

"I chatter chatter as I flow
To join the brimming river:
For men may come and men
may go
But I (Mandalay University)
shall go on forever"



Flags are seen inside the European Council headquarters on the eve of a EU Summit in Brussels, Belgium, on 14 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

EU leaders to hold ‘minefield’ summit

BRUSSELS — Leaders of the European Union meet in Brussels on Thursday for a summit fraught with disputes on how to handle the many crises they face, bar on possibly the biggest rift of all — how to handle Brexit.

After a day of talks on migrants, Turkey, Russia, defence in the era of Donald Trump and the euro zone economy in the age of austerity, leaders will see British Prime Minister Theresa May out and then agree over dinner how to get rid of her for good.

Diplomats and officials involved in preparing the quarterly European Council said a consensus on the procedures the 27 will adopt once May launches Britain’s formal withdrawal by

March had been among the least divisive issues on the table.

“We are walking on a minefield,” a senior EU official said.

The 28 leaders will start with a review of where they stand on dealing with the crisis which blew up last year when over a million people, many war refugees from Syria, reached Europe, mostly via Turkey by boat to the Greek islands.

Satisfaction that the route is all but closed is shaded by unease at how this was achieved: tightening controls on borders within Europe, sealing Greece off from the Balkans and offering inducements to awkward neighbour Turkey to stop people leaving.

Leaders will reaffirm their commitment to keeping promises to Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan despite anger at the way he has cracked down on critics after a coup attempt six months ago.

But the Austrian government, battling anti-immigrant opponents at home, blocked a broader statement on Turkey one day joining the EU because Vienna had insisted that the summit formally suspend Ankara’s EU membership talks.

Brussels is working to curb migration from Africa to Italy by putting pressure on governments there via aid budgets and by preparing to step up the deportation of illegal immigrants.—*Reuters*

Britain’s May to brief Brussels as EU prepares for Brexit talks

BRUSSELS — Prime Minister Theresa May will update Britain’s partners in Brussels on Thursday on her plans to launch talks by March on quitting the EU, and they will settle their arrangements for the negotiations.

May will join an EU summit starting after 12 pm (1100 GMT) to discuss issues from migration to the economy, security and building up defences against Russia as Donald Trump prepares to enter the White House with an agenda many Europeans fear may dilute the historic US military commitment to protect them from Moscow.

Summit chair Donald Tusk said in a tweet that May will “update” the leaders “on Brexit preparations” before she leaves early in the evening to let the other 27 EU leaders agree their own strategy over dinner.

An aide to May stressed ahead of the meeting that she saw no problem in not being included — rather saw it as a positive — and said the premier was

determined to open the two-year window for divorce talks within three months despite doubts raised by a court case that seeks more parliamentary control of the process.

“They are facing up to the reality that the UK is leaving the EU,” the aide told reporters. “That means they are going to need to know how they are going to handle the process.”

Continental governments have been impatient for May to start a process which they see as being held up by divisions in London on what to ask for in a Brexit which even few of its supporters had thought likely before the shock referendum vote in June.

They will end their dinner debate by issuing a statement saying they are ready to start talks with London and stand by a commitment made in the days after the referendum to negotiate swiftly, to stick together to preserve the Union and to ensure Britain does not retain EU bene-

fits, for instance on trade access, if it shirks obligations, such as accepting EU migrants.

“They stand ready to start negotiations with the UK as soon as the UK has notified “a draft of the statement said.

It went on to detail how the Council of EU leaders would give a negotiating mandate to the EU’s executive arm, the European Commission, while ensuring national governments were kept in the loop by officials named by Tusk to sit in on talks run by the commission’s negotiator, former French minister Michel Barnier.

One party less than impressed with the plan is former Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, who has been named by the European Parliament as its representative to the process. He told lawmakers on Wednesday that he was not happy to be given only a subsidiary role in the Brexit talks, even though the EU legislature will have to sign off on any final divorce deal.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Germany’s parliament approves nuclear waste deal with utilities

BERLIN — Germany’s lower house of parliament approved a new law on Thursday which will see the country’s top utilities pay into a 23.6 billion-euro (\$24.8 billion) state fund from next year in return for shifting the liability for nuclear waste storage to the government.

The new legislation removes uncertainty over how to pay for the costs of storing nuclear waste, giving investors greater clarity over the finances of Germany’s top four utilities — E.ON, RWE, EnBW and Vattenfall. The energy firms will remain responsible for dismantling Germany’s nuclear plants, the last of which will be shut down in 2022 as part of the country’s abandonment of nuclear power, a decision triggered by Japan’s Fukushima disaster five years ago.

“I am glad we have succeeded in reaching an agreement on the disposal of nuclear waste in the future,” German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel told parliament.—*Reuters*

Japan’s oldest man, 112-year-old Masamitsu Yoshida, dies

TOKYO — The oldest man in Japan, 112-year-old Masamitsu Yoshida, a resident of Tokyo’s Ota Ward, has died, welfare ministry officials said on Thursday.

The Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry was informed of Yoshida’s death, on 29 October, by the Tokyo metropolitan government on Wednesday. The oldest man in the country is now 111-year-old Masazo Nonaka, who lives in Ashoro, Hokkaido. He was born on 25 July, 1905. The oldest person in Japan is 116-year-old Nabi Tajima, a woman in the town of Kikai, Kagoshima Prefecture, who was born on 4 August, 1900.—*Kyodo News*

EU, Denmark find deal on Europol after Danes voted to quit

BRUSSELS — The European Union and Denmark have found a way to continue police cooperation vital to counter-terrorism and crime fighting after Danes voted to leave Europol, the EU said on Thursday.

Foreshadowing Britain’s vote to leave the 28-nation bloc in June, the Nordic country last December rejected a government proposal for new laws needed to keep the country inside the European police agency.

Since then, Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen has sought a compromise to maintain police cooperation with the EU and access to Europol’s database, crucial to acquire information from other EU police forces. EU leaders Jean-Claude Juncker and Donald Tusk said in a joint statement with Rasmussen on Thursday that they had agreed on the need for operational arrangements, to minimise the negative impact of Denmark’s departure in May.—*Reuters*

Dozens of Afghans deported from Germany arrive in Kabul

KABUL — A group of 38 Afghans arrived in Kabul from Germany on Thursday, the first to be deported under an agreement reached between the two countries this year, following the rejection of their applications for asylum.

Thousands of Afghans joined asylum-seekers from the Middle East and elsewhere entering Europe from 2015, and became the second biggest group of asylum seekers in Germany in 2016 after Syrians, according to German data.

A charter plane carrying the Afghans, all men, arrived in the Afghan capital from Frankfurt, a Reuters journalist at Kabul’s airport said.—*Reuters*

EU urges Kosovo to implement agreement on Community

BRUSSELS — On behalf of the Council of the EU, the Slovak EU Presidency has urged the Kosovo authorities to implement the agreement on forming the Community of Serb Municipalities and cooperate with a court set up to try war crimes by the former “KLA”.

“The Council urges Kosovo to swiftly implement in good faith its part of all past agreements, in particular the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities and to engage constructively with Serbia in formulating and implementing future agreements,” an official statement said.

“The Council welcomes that Kosovo met its remaining obligation on the establishment of the Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecution Office to investigate allegations of international crimes committed during and after the 1999 conflict. All authorities in Kosovo should comply with their requests for assistance,” it said.—*Tanjung*

Medical convoy trying to leave Aleppo comes under fire

ALEPPO, (Syria)/BEIRUT — An attempt to evacuate people in need of medical attention from rebel-held eastern Aleppo stalled on Thursday when fighters loyal to the Syrian government fired on the convoy, wounding three, the head of the ambulance service said.

The vehicles had intended to leave under a deal to evacuate people from rebel areas following rapid advances in Aleppo by government forces.

The evacuation of the last rebel enclave would end years of fighting for the city and mark a major victory for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

“The convoy was shot at by regime forces and we have three injured, one of them from civil defence ... They were brought back to besieged areas,” ambulance service Ahmed Sweid told the pro-opposition Orient TV.

A Reuters witness in nearby government-held territory heard a burst of gunfire that lasted several minutes.

An official with an Aleppo rebel group said the medical convoy had stopped before clearing the besieged eastern part of the city.



Buses are seen parked in Aleppo's government controlled area of Ramouseh, as they wait to evacuate civilians and rebels from eastern Aleppo, Syria on 15 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

A Syrian official source told Reuters earlier on Thursday that efforts to organise the departure of fighters from east Aleppo had begun and the International Committee of the Red Cross said it had been asked to assist with the evacuation.

A Reuters witness in

government-held territory said columns of black smoke could be seen rising out of the rebel-held area. Thirty green buses guarded by Syrian soldiers were waiting to ferry people out of eastern Aleppo.

Residents hoping to be taken out have been burn-

ing personal belongings they cannot take with them. “Outside every building you see a small fire, papers, women’s clothes,” a resident of eastern Aleppo told Reuters.

Russian soldiers were preparing to lead rebels out of Aleppo, the defence min-

istry in Moscow said. Syria had guaranteed the safety of rebels and their families, who would be taken toward Idlib, a city in northwestern Syria.

Russia would use drones to monitor how rebels and their families were transported on 20 buses,

accompanied by 10 ambulances, along a humanitarian corridor, the ministry said.

A truce brokered by Russia, Assad’s most powerful ally, and opposition backer Turkey on Tuesday broke down following renewed fighting on Wednesday and the evacuation did not take place then as planned.

An official from the Jabha Shamiya rebel group said a new truce came into effect at 2.30am (0030GMT) on Thursday.

Shortly before the new deal was announced, clashes raged in Aleppo.

Government forces made a new advance in Sukkari — one of a handful of districts still held by rebels — and brought half of the neighbourhood under their control, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group.

Rebels said they attacked government forces with suicide car bombs.

The Russian defence ministry said — before the report of the government forces’ advance in Sukkari — that the rebels controlled an enclave of only 2.5 square km (1 square mile).—Reuters



UN Special Advisor for Syria Jan Egeland. PHOTO: REUTERS

UN's Egeland: hopeful about Aleppo deal but UN involved late

GENEVA — UN humanitarian adviser for Syria Jan Egeland said on Thursday that he was hopeful about the evacuation of thousands of civilians from eastern Aleppo but that Russia had only just asked

for UN involvement, which was very late.

“We are now receiving information from the Russians that they would indeed want us to participate in the evacuation, but confirmation only

seems to come now, this morning, which is very late, because it is already ongoing and there have already been security incidences,” Egeland told Reuters.

“Thousands of people

are in need of evacuation, but the first and most urgent thing is wounded, sick and children, including orphans,” he said. “I am really hopeful because it’s long, long overdue.”—Reuters

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Kabul security gates in storage as Afghan officials trade accusations

KABUL — A set of giant security gates financed by China and intended to protect Kabul from large bombs and drug smuggling more than five months after they arrived, while Afghan authorities bicker over who should install them.

Intended for the four main entry points into Kabul, they have been delayed by infighting between departments and by a land dispute, underlining the difficulty of getting things done in a country where conflict and corruption have slowed progress.

The hangar-style gates, each weighing around 30 tonnes, are to reinforce the so-called “Ring of Steel” that surrounds Kabul, a city of five million people already protected by blast walls, armed checkpoints and eye-in-the-sky surveillance cameras. Although there are many entrances to the city, security officials believe channelling large vehicles through the gates could help reduce the risk of big truck and car bombs that have previously wrought devastation in Kabul.

The gates are to be equipped with control

rooms and surveillance scanners to enhance inspections of vehicles.

Civilian deaths are rising across the country as Afghan Taliban insurgents fight to topple the Western-backed government and drive out foreign troops, while an offshoot of Islamic State has claimed responsibility for several attacks in the last year.

Not all are carried out by car or truck bombs, but in September a car bomb went off outside a central Kabul security office during rush hour, killing dozens of people.—Reuters



US military personnel perform triage during a joint nuclear disaster drill with Japan at the US Navy's Yokosuka base in Kanagawa Prefecture near Tokyo, on 15 December 2016. The drill was the 10th in a series that began in 2007. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Japan, US holds antinuclear disaster drill at Yokosuka base

YOKOSUKA, (Japan) — Japan and the United States held a joint antinuclear disaster drill at the US Navy's Yokosuka base in Kanagawa Prefecture near Tokyo on Thursday.

The drill was conducted on the supposition a blackout occurred in the city of Yokosuka following an earthquake measuring upper 6 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale of 7 with its epicenter beneath the Miura Peninsula on which the base is located.

Around 270 people,

including officials from the US Navy, Japan's Foreign Ministry and the US Embassy in Japan, participated in the drill. The nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan has been deployed at Yokosuka, southwest of Tokyo, since 2015.

In the drill, a team of officials from Japan's Nuclear Regulation Authority set up transportable monitoring posts, on the assumption the blackout prevented monitoring posts which measure radiation

levels around the base from sending data.

"It was a significant drill as we could conduct it following the manual," said Yokosuka Mayor Yuto Yoshida.

He said if a quake measuring stronger than lower 6 on the Japanese seismic scale hits, the Japanese government can confirm the situation of US Navy vessels through the US embassy.

The drill was the 10th in a series that began in 2007.—Kyodo News

Colombia's FARC rebels expel five commanders opposed to peace deal

BOGOTA — Colombia's FARC rebels have expelled five commanders for refusing to demobilize and join a peace process with the government aimed at ending more than five decades of war, guerrilla leadership said.

The five commanders, all from units in the country's southeastern jungle, include one former participant in four-year-long peace talks in Cuba.

"This decision is motivated by their recent conduct, which contradicts our political-military line," leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of

Colombia (FARC) said in statement late on Tuesday.

"We call on all combatants who have been tricked into this futureless path to distance themselves from this mistaken decision taken by their commanders," the statement said.

The expelled commanders are the second group of rebels to declare their opposition to the peace deal under which the FARC convert into an unarmed political party. In July a First Front unit leader and some of his fighters left the group in protest of the deal.—Reuters

Life after the caliphate: Boko Haram's Nigerian former stronghold now a safe haven

BAMA, (Nigeria) — In the northern Nigerian town of Bama the streets are eerily quiet. Houses lie empty, riddled with bullet holes, and symbols of the jihadist group Boko Haram are painted on the walls.

Bama, once the militants' stronghold, was liberated from the Islamist fighters by the Nigerian army in March 2015, but is only reached safely by helicopter — the roads still too dangerous because of the risk of ambush by the insurgents.

Despite its ghostly atmosphere and violent history, the town is now a safe haven for around 10,000 people, among more than

two million in Nigeria who have fled areas held by Boko Haram. Two years ago, when militants seized Bama and rounded up all the men, 55-year-old Malam Wana hid in his house for a month, surviving on grain and sending his wife out to collect water.

When Wana was eventually discovered by Boko Haram fighters, they took him to the yard of Bama prison, crowded with men.

"They spared the older men, but took the others out of the prison and shot them all," said Wana, who was released due to his elderly appearance before fleeing to a nearby village.

Since the town's liberation, Wana has lived in Bama's camp for those uprooted by the conflict. The walled compound, full of makeshift shelters covered by tarpaulins bearing the names of aid groups, is home to 10,000 people who have fled fighting.

Some like Wana are from Bama itself - forbidden from leaving the confines of the camp as the town has been designated a military security zone. Most camp dwellers are from surrounding villages, many of which are still controlled by insurgents. Those who have reached Bama are the lucky ones. Abdi Farah, an official at

the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in Maiduguri told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that some areas still controlled by Boko Haram are out of the reach of aid agencies.

In many areas north of Bama, people are suffering "famine-like conditions" and millions are in need of urgent food aid in order to survive, according to several United Nations agencies.

Although they feel safer in Bama, the thousands displaced by conflict face a new set of problems on arrival. Kelu, 20, had just been dropped off by pick-up truck with her two infant sons.—Reuters

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Russia to appeal Dutch ruling to return Crimean treasures to Ukraine

MOSCOW — Russia will appeal a Dutch court ruling that said a priceless collection of gold artefacts from Crimea on loan to a Dutch museum must be returned to Ukraine, the director of St Petersburg's Hermitage Museum has said.

The collection, including gems, helmets and scabbards, was on loan to Amsterdam's Allard Pierson Museum when Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. Kiev and Crimean museums have been wrangling over its fate ever since.

On Wednesday, a Dutch court ruled that only sovereign countries could claim such objects as cultural heritage, and that since only Ukraine, not



Handout photo in Amsterdam, Netherlands, shows a piece of artifact from Crimea that was on loan to a Dutch museum when Russia seized the peninsula and that a Dutch court ruled must be returned to Ukraine and not Crimea, on 14 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Crimea, was sovereign, it was for a Ukrainian court to adjudicate competing ownership claims.

Mikhail Piotrovsky, director of the world-famous Hermitage Museum and one of Russia's most senior cultural figures, told a news conference after the ruling, that Russian law-

yers were preparing to appeal the ruling.

The Dutch court's decision disregarded guarantees given to the Crimean museums that the artefacts would be returned to them, he said.

"A Crimean museum's things belong in a Crimean museum. That is fair, because they were found in

that land," said Piotrovsky.

He said the Dutch ruling was part of what he called a rising trend of using claims over cultural treasures to pursue other aims.

"It's important that there are cultural rights, and not [just] government and individual rights," said Piotrovsky.—Reuters



Stone pillars with masks placed on them by students of a university, as a pollution-themed art installation, are seen in the school campus in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, China, on 12 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Beijing issues red alert for severely high air pollution

BEIJING — Beijing's city government has issued a red alert for severely high levels of air pollution in the Chinese capital, running for five days from Friday evening, the environmental protection bureau said on its official Twitter-like Weibo account.

The city issued its first ever red alert on smog in December last year, after adopting a colour-graded warning system in a crack-down on environmental degradation left by decades of breakneck economic

growth. Smog expected this week will stem from air pollution accumulated in Beijing and its environs, such as the nearby city of Tianjin and the northern provinces of Hebei, Shandong and Henan, the bureau said, citing environment monitoring forecasts.

New environmental protection measures took effect on Thursday, among them unifying Beijing's system of alerts with those of Tianjin and Hebei, and a ban aimed at keeping older, polluting cars off

Beijing's roads.

In addition, drivers of newer cars face an 'odd-even' usage limit determined by the final digit of their license-plates.

Schools freed from an earlier requirement to close en masse are being given the authority to 'flexibly' cancel classes, on the basis of their needs and those of students' parents.

Companies may also consider early departures for employees, or provisions to work from home.

After temporary school

closures and construction halts brought by last year's smog alert, the city government has tweaked its system. In February it linked the threshold for red alerts to a higher average of the daily air quality index (AQI).

Red alerts are now issued when the AQI, a measure of pollutants in the air, is forecast to break 200 for more than four days in succession, surpass 300 for more than two days or overshoot 500 for at least 24 hours.—Reuters

Yahoo says one billion accounts exposed in newly discovered security breach

NEW YORK — Yahoo Inc warned on Wednesday that it had uncovered yet another massive cyber attack, saying data from more than 1 billion user accounts was compromised in August 2013, making it the largest breach in history.

The number of affected accounts was double the number implicated in a 2014 breach that the internet company disclosed in September and blamed on hackers working on behalf of a government. News of that attack, which affected at least 500 million accounts, prompted Verizon Communication Inc to say in October that it might withdraw from an agreement to buy Yahoo's core internet business for \$4.83 billion.

Following the latest disclosure, Verizon said, "we will review the impact of this new development before reaching any final conclusions."

A Yahoo spokesman told Reuters that the company has been in communication with Verizon during its investigation into the breach and that it is confident the incident will not affect the pending acquisition. Yahoo required all of its customers to reset their passwords - a stronger measure than it took after the previous breach was discovered, when it only recommended a password reset. Yahoo also said Wednesday that it believes hackers responsible for the previous breach had also accessed the company's proprietary code to

learn how to forge "cookies" that would allow hackers to access an account without a password. "Yahoo badly screwed up," said Bruce Schneier, a cryptologist and one of the world's most respected security experts. "They weren't taking security seriously and that's now very clear. I would have trouble trusting Yahoo going forward." Yahoo was tentative in its description of new problems, saying the incident was "likely" distinct from the one it reported in September and that stolen information "may have included" names, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, hashed passwords and, in some cases, encrypted or unencrypted security questions and answers. It said it

had not yet identified the intrusion that led to the massive data theft and noted that payment-card data and bank account information were not stored in the system the company believes was affected. Yahoo said it discovered the breach while reviewing data provided to the company by law enforcement. FireEye Inc's Mandiant unit and Aon Plc's Stroz Friedberg are assisting in the investigation, the Yahoo spokesman told Reuters.

The breach is the latest setback for Yahoo, an internet pioneer that has fallen on hard times in recent years after being eclipsed by younger, fast-growing rivals including Alphabet Inc's Google and Facebook Inc.—Reuters

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Japan's pudgy pop stars take aim at obesity prejudice

TOKYO — Competition is cut-throat among Japan's thousands of pop idol wannabes, but a unique concept is winning fame for a band of "chubby" girls deploying their cheeky cuteness to combat prejudices against obesity.

Despite one of the lowest rates of obesity in the developed world, Japan has a growing number of underweight young women, who rely on excessive dieting to satisfy society's emphasis on being slim.

Heavy people are the frequent target of jokes in the media and use of the derogatory "debu," or "fatso," remains common.

Enter "Pottya", a pop group named after a slang word for chubby and consisting of four young women who are not especially hefty to Western eyes, but well above average weight in Japan.

"People assume that being chubby is a sign of laziness or lack of self-discipline," said Michiko Ohashi, the group's heaviest member at 87 kg (192 lb) and a height of 167 cm (5.5 ft).

"I became an idol with the



Members of pop group Pottya perform at a live theatre in Tokyo, Japan, on 10 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

hope of changing that image. If they see us working to make our dreams come true, we can show that chubby people can work hard."

First treated as a quirky joke at its debut in 2015, the group's

image is changing, with the release of two albums and a growing roster of live concerts and television appearances.

Members range in weight from 63 kg (139 lb) to 87 kg (192 lb) for the 26-year-old Ohashi,

and their average of 76 kg (168 lb) is about 26 kg (57 lb) over the Japanese average for women aged 13 to 18, according to the Health Ministry.

Their body mass index, which compares weight to height,

ranges from 27.4 to 31.2. Doctors consider an individual with a BMI above 25 to be overweight, and one above 31 obese.

"We're really heavy but we want to use that to shake up the idol world," Ohashi said.

Pottya has passionate devotees, both male and female, many of whom describe themselves as overweight.

Fans gather to meet Pottya members for a high-calorie lunch each month, with the menu of one recent meal featuring rice, noodles, chicken and potatoes — all fried.

"I was quite attracted and overwhelmed with how lively their plus-size bodies move and dance," said Tabo, a 36-year-old man who gave only his fan nickname.

The group was an inspiration, said Miho Kishi, who was bullied about her weight as a child.

"They've come out and are actually selling themselves as chubby, which has given us chubby women a lot of hope and courage," said the 25-year-old. —Reuters

'Manchester by the Sea,' 'Moonlight' edge out 'La La Land' in SAG nominations

LOS ANGELES — "Manchester by the Sea" and "Moonlight" cemented their status on Wednesday as front-runners in Hollywood's awards season in Screen Actors Guild (SAG) nominations that saw musical romance "La La Land" stumble. "La La Land" scored nods for leads Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling, but was shut out of the top SAG prize for best ensemble. Although the category favours large casts, the omission was seen as a potential setback for the current awards darling.

With a leading four nominations, gritty family drama "Manchester by the Sea" will compete for best ensemble against "Moonlight," "Fences," "Hidden Figures" and — in a surprise entry — unorthodox family comedy "Captain Fantastic."

Top SAG winners, voted for by actors, often go on to win Oscars as actors form the largest voting body in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. For example, "Spotlight" took the SAG best ensemble award and went on to win best picture at the Oscars this year.

"Manchester by the Sea," about a working-class family dealing with multiple tragedies, landed nominations for actor Casey Affleck and supporting stars Michelle Williams and Lucas Hedges.

"It's incredibly meaningful

to be recognized by one's peers," Affleck said in a statement.

The SAG list followed Monday's Golden Globe nominations, where "La La Land" and "Moonlight" led the race, and precedes January's Oscar nods. SAG winners will be announced in Los Angeles on 29 January.

Other notable omissions on Wednesday included 1970s comedy "20th Century Women," which stars Annette Bening as a free-spirited single mother, and "Loving," the real-life story of a couple who changed interracial marriage laws in Virginia.

Independent drama "Moon-



Actor Sophia Bush poses after announcing nominations for the 23rd Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards in West Hollywood, California, US, on 14 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

light," about an impoverished black boy grappling with his sexuality, and "Fences," an African-American family drama based on a Pulitzer Prize-winning play, scored three nominations each.

"Fences" best supporting actress nominee Viola Davis said in a statement that the nods were "not only a testament to the strength of (playwright) August Wilson's words but to the endurance of the human spirit." "Captain Fantastic" and "Hidden Figures," about three black female mathematicians working on the 1960s space race, also received nods in the best ensemble category.

Affleck and Gosling will face Andrew Garfield for "Hacksaw Ridge," Viggo Mortensen for "Captain Fantastic" and "Fences" star Denzel Washington for best actor. Stone will vie for best actress alongside Amy Adams for "Arrival," surprise nominee Emily Blunt for "The Girl on the Train," front-runner Natalie Portman for "Jackie" and Meryl Streep for "Florence Foster Jenkins." In television, HBO's medieval fantasy series "Game of Thrones" and sci-fi western "Westworld" will compete against British period drama "Downton Abbey" and new Netflix shows "The Crown," a British royal period drama, and 1980s sci-fi mystery "Stranger Things." —Reuters



Actress Jackie Evancho arrives at the gala presentation for the film 'The Company You Keep' during the 37th Toronto International Film Festival, on 9 September, 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

Teen Jackie Evancho first singer confirmed for Trump inauguration

NEW YORK — Classical crossover singer Jackie Evancho, who charmed TV audiences as a child on "America's Got Talent" six years ago, will sing the US national anthem at the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump — the first performer to be announced for the ceremony.

Trump's inaugural committee made the announcement on Wednesday, saying Evancho, 16, "represents the best and the brightest of America."

"I'm so excited. It's going to be awesome," Evancho said on the "Today" show on Wednesday.

Celebrity news website TMZ reported on Wednesday that Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli would also be singing at the Jan. 20 ceremony, but there was no official confirmation.

As a tiny 10-year-old, Evancho wowed Americans with her soaring soprano on classical arias like Puccini's "O mio babbino

caro," taking second place on "America's Got Talent." She will follow in the footsteps of Aretha Franklin and Beyonce, who performed the "The Star-Spangled Banner" at President Barack Obama's two inaugurations.

After her "America's Got Talent" run, Evancho became the youngest solo artist to have a platinum-selling album in the United States. She met Trump at that time and has a photo on her Facebook page of the two of them standing together.

The inaugural committee has said it has "world-class talent" offering their services for the ceremony, but Evancho is the first celebrity to be announced.

The inaugural committee's chairman, Tom Barrack, quashed speculation on Tuesday that rapper Kanye West, who had a surprise meeting that day with the Republican president-elect at Trump Tower in New York, would be performing. —Reuters

Duchess of Cambridge celebrates a century of UK's Cub Scouts

LONDON — The Duchess of Cambridge attended a special meeting on Wednesday with children from Kings Lynn, England, to celebrate 100 years of Cub Scouts in Britain. Prince William's wife Kate took part in icing "cub cakes" for the occasion, as the children participated in games and activities promoting ideas of looking after themselves and others physically and emotionally.

The event came ahead of Friday's official centenary of the Cub Scouts, an extracurricular organisation helping youth develop teamwork and leadership skills, which will be celebrated with a series of events held nationwide. —Reuters



Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge (C), reads the Scouts promise during a Cub Scout Pack meeting with cubs from the Kings Lynn District, in Kings Lynn, Britain, on 14 December, 2016, during an event to celebrate 100 years of Cubs. PHOTO: REUTERS

High school students bring tsunami awareness back to Indonesia

JAKARTA — A group of high school students addressed a tsunami symposium in Indonesia on Thursday, three weeks after attending an international summit in Japan.

Five students, three from Japan and two from Indonesia, spoke at the event in Jakarta, which was organised by the UN Office for Disaster Reduction and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia.

All five had been among 400 high school students from 30 countries who attended a tsunami awareness summit in Kuroshio in Japan's Kochi Prefecture on 26 November, where the participants adopted a declaration to

learn, take action and create, with regards to awareness of the dangers of tsunami.

At the event in Jakarta, where students spoke about their experience and what they had learned from the summit, Wika Andriani, 18, an Indonesian student from Aceh, said she had learned about the importance of seeking higher ground during evacuation drills and earthquake simulations, among other things.

"In Aceh I will make a team to demonstrate what we have learned to our friends. We want to share this important message. Knowledge about disasters is very important," she said.

Hidetoshi Nishimura,

president of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, said the symposium was aimed at sharing information about tsunami awareness.

Tsunami Awareness Day, commemorated on 5 November, was inspired by the story of Goryo Hamaguchi, who helped save lives following a massive earthquake and tsunami which struck Japan's Wakayama Prefecture in 1854, and subsequently invested in sea defences for the area.

Mohammad Haikal Razi, 17, a student from Aceh, said that Hamaguchi's actions can help teach the importance of early warning and the importance of investing in disaster risk reduction.

ter risk reduction.

Haikal's family passed away when a huge tsunami struck Aceh in 2004. He said people need to be well-prepared for future disasters.

Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla said that the country has a long history of tsunamis. The wave created by the 26 December, 2004, magnitude-9.1 earthquake, which hit Aceh, triggered a tsunami and caused the deaths of 180,000 people.

"Commemoration of Tsunami Awareness Day is important to create a program with the world for education and training. It is commemorated to prevent bigger death tolls," said Kalla. —Kyodo News

Spirit character town to undergo major facelift

TOTTORI (Japan) — A popular tourist spot in western Japan featuring spirit and monster characters created by the late cartoonist Shigeru Mizuki will undergo its first major renovation, introducing a nighttime attraction.

"Mizuki Shigeru Road" in Sakaiminato, Tottori Prefecture, is a shopping street adorned with 153 statues of characters, including Kitaro and Nezumi Otoko (mouse man) from "GeGeGe no Kitaro," well-known comic series depicting spirits and monsters in Japanese folklore called "yokai."

From the summer of 2018, the yokai town, which opened in 1993, will be equipped with special illumination lamps to

highlight the shadows of yokais inside spotlight circles on the street, enhancing its spooky appeal, according to the Sakaiminato city government.

Shops alongside the street will also extend their business hours in sync with the lamps' introduction. The number of statues will be also increased by 18 and they will be re-organized into five zones such as "yokais inside a house" and "yokais of the forest."

An annual 2 million people from Japan and abroad visit the Mizuki Shigeru Road, which also has a museum dedicated to the cartoonist. The city of 35,000 on the Sea of Japan coast is the birthplace of Mizuki. —Kyodo News

Superfriendly fish at aquarium demands petting, toothbrushing

NAGOYA — A one-meter-long fish in a Nagoya aquarium has become so accustomed to humans that it now demands to be petted and have its teeth brushed by its keeper.

The longtooth grouper called Futami No. 1 at Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium approaches its 35-year-old keeper Hitoshi Okamoto when he visits its fish tank, floating as he strokes it around the mouth.

"I've never seen a fish that has got used to humans this much," Okamoto said. Physical contact between the two began about a month after the fish was moved from an aquarium in Ise, Mie Prefecture, in 2014.

fecture, in 2014.

As the fish was failing to eat at the time and had its mouth open, Okamoto tried poking its gum and the fish appeared to enjoy it, he said. The rare contact escalated to toothbrushing this year.

As the fish has sharp teeth, only Okamoto at the aquarium can touch it.

"The fish may have learned that it feels nice to be touched by human hands, just like it is touched by the fins of bluestreak cleaner wrasse" that cleanse longtooth grouper of parasites, said Tetsuo Kuwamura, a professor at Chukyo University specializing in fish behavior. —Kyodo News



Hitoshi Okamoto, a keeper at Port of Nagoya Public Aquarium in the central Japan city of Nagoya, brushes the teeth of a longtooth grouper called Futami No. 1 on 14 December 2016. The one-meter-long fish, which has become so accustomed to humans, also demands to be petted. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(16-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 17-12-2016 07:00 AM) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Discovering Tribes: Akha- Their Life and Customs (Part-2)
07:54	Am	Made in Myanmar "Mixxo"
08:03	Am	News
08:25	Am	On the River
08:47	Am	Gemstone Sculptor
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Karaweik Palace-A Symbol of Glorious Myanma Culture
09:42	Am	Jade Pagoda: Weirawsana
10:03	Am	News
10:27	Am	The Green Corner (Epi-7) Cloth Fish
10:37	Am	Image of The Monks

10:53 Am Independent Filmmaker

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Part-3)
07:38	Pm	MONASTERY (Bargayar Kyaung)
07:52	Pm	My Life & My Art
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part- 1)
08:52	Pm	Entrepreneur: Dr. Thin Nwe Win

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Fabregas earns Chelsea perfect 10, City and Liverpool win

LONDON — Chelsea maintained their stranglehold on the Premier League by beating Sunderland 1-0 on Wednesday to register their 10th successive win and move six points clear at the top of the table.

Cesc Fabregas's first-half strike ensured the Blues took full advantage of Tuesday's slip-up by second-placed Arsenal to leave Liverpool, 3-0 winners at Middlesbrough, and Manchester City, who beat Watford 2-0, to keep up the chase.

Manchester United continued their recent improvement with a 2-1 victory at Crystal Palace and West Bromwich Albion's Salomon Rondon took the individual honours with a hat-trick of headers in a 3-1 win over Swansea City.

Chelsea's win was particularly welcome because it came without the injured Eden Hazard.

One of the secrets behind their success has been continuity of selection so manager Antonio Conte will be delighted at the way his revamped midfield of Fabregas and Willian combined beautifully just before halftime for the Spaniard to score the goal which confirmed Chelsea's best run since 2005-06.

"Cesc is a good player for us," Conte told reporters.

"I have four midfielders and it is important for me to evaluate the form of the single players, some games you need players



Chelsea's Cesc Fabregas celebrates scoring their first goal with Victor Moses and Pedro during Premier League at the Stadium of Light, on 14 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

more physical and some games more technical. It is important that Cesc had a good game.

"I prefer my players not to look at the table and to focus on the next game in three days. We must prepare very well to have a good Christmas."

That seems guaranteed since Chelsea will definitely top the table on 25 December. On each of the previous four occasions they have done that they have gone on

to win the title.

Liverpool overtook Arsenal in second place after a comfortable 3-0 win at Middlesbrough with Adam Lallana involved in all three goals, scoring twice and laying on another for Divock Origi.

Manager Juergen Klopp reacted to dropping five points in the last two games by picking Simon Mignolet in goal ahead of Loris Karius and the Belgian

responded with one outstanding save in a clean sheet.

Manchester City also put recent stutters behind them as goals from Pablo Zabaleta - his first in two years - and David Silva secured a 2-0 win over Watford, only their fifth victory in 16 games.

Fifth-placed Tottenham Hotspur comfortably overcame Hull City 3-0 while Jose Mourinho's Manchester United are

starting to get a return on the huge money they invested in Paul Pogba and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

James McArthur looked to have earned Palace a point after cancelling out Pogba's opener but Swede Ibrahimovic struck two minutes from time to delight his manager.

"It was an amazing performance for a guy who is 35 years old, scoring goals, being a leader, amazing," said Mourinho after overseeing United's first back-to-back league wins since August.

West Bromwich Albion moved up to seventh, one place behind United, after Rondon became the first player to score a headed hat-trick in the Premier League since Duncan Ferguson in 1997.

The goals came in a devastating 13-minute burst early in the second half as Swansea succumbed to the defensive frailty that has dogged them all season.

Their only consolation was that most of the sides around them also lost, West Ham being the exception after beating Burnley 1-0 with a goal from Mark Noble after his penalty was parried by Tom Heaton.

Stoke City striker Marko Arnautovic was sent off in his side's 0-0 draw with Southampton, Stoke boss Mark Hughes's 400th game as a Premier League manager.—Reuters

Benzema and Ronaldo book Real's place in Club World Cup final

TOKYO — Real Madrid booked their place in the Club World Cup final by beating Club America 2-0 on Thursday, although FIFA's new video technology was again the talking point after confusion reigned following Cristiano Ronaldo's injury time strike.

Real will play Japanese champions Kashima Antlers in Sunday's final in Yokohama, looking to become world champions for the second time in three years and earn a record 21st international title.

Karim Benzema's classy one touch finish put Real ahead in first half injury time, easing their nerves after they had struggled to find their rhythm in the opening 45 minutes against the Mexican side.

Newly crowned Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo rounded off a far stronger performance from Real after the break with

powerful finish in the 93rd minute.

The goal looked to have been ruled out as offside by Paraguayan referee Enrique Caceres before, in consultation with the video referee, eventually giving the goal.

Real initially struggled to break down the CONCACAF champions in a tight first half and the only opportunity before Benzema broke the deadlock was a Ronaldo header which struck the post.

Zinedine Zidane's side took full control after the break and hit their opponents with frequent counter attacks.

Benzema spurned a free header and Ronaldo saw his stinging effort repelled by goalkeeper Moises Munoz, while substitute Morata wasted a late chance to kill off the Mexicans before Ronaldo's late strike.—Reuters

Video evidence used for first time to award penalty

TOKYO — Video evidence was used to award a penalty for the first time in a FIFA competition at the Club World Cup on Wednesday and there was controversy over the decision itself and the time taken to reach a verdict.

Japanese champions Kashima Antlers were the beneficiaries after an off-field official known as a video assistant referee (VAR) called Hungarian referee Viktor Kassai's attention to an infringement by Atletico Nacional's Orlando Berrio.

Kassai indicated that he would review the incident which he watched on a computer screen at the side of the pitch before deciding to award a penalty.

Shoma Doi converted the spot-kick for Kashima, who went on to beat the South American champions 3-0.

Berrio tripped Daigo Nishi as the players moved into the box to challenge for a free kick, but the decision provoked anger from fans who thought Nishi was offside when the free kick was taken.

There was also concern about the time taken to make the decision.

The ball remained in play for 45 seconds after the penalty incident during which Atletico lost possession and Kashima launched another attack which was cleared by Atletico who

then counter-attacked and won a throw-in.

Atletico were about to take the throw when Kassai called for a review, one minute and 10 seconds after the incident. It took another one minute and five seconds before the penalty was awarded.—Reuters



Referee Viktor Kassai awards a penalty to Kashima Antlers during FIFA Club World Cup Semi Final at Suita City Football Stadium, in Osaka, Japan on 14 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS