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Htamane competition at Shwedagon Pagoda

Members of one of several teams participating in the Htamane cooking contest yesterday at Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. Htamane is made with sticky rice, coconut slices, sesame seeds and peanuts, a traditional food made especially on the full moon of Tabodwe. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Union Day Flag ceremony and dinner will be broadcast live on Sunday

THE 70th anniversary of Union Day Flag salute ceremony will be broadcast live tomorrow on MRTV and Myanmar Radio starting at 6:40am from Nay Pyi Taw City Hall square.

Later that evening, to further celebrate the 70th anniversary of Union Day, a grand dinner will be served in which cultural ethnic groups from different regions and states will perform their national dances starting at 6.45pm in Nay Pyi Taw. This will be also broadcast live on MRTV and Ethnic TV Channel.—Myanmar News Agency

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Vice President U Henry Van Thio receives Thai Transportation Minister

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No assignments to trace parliamentarians in the line of duty secretly or openly

Members of Parliament are not being traced or tracked as they are doing their jobs, said a high-ranking official from the Ministry of Home Affairs during yesterday's Pyithu Hluttaw session.

The statement was made in response to an unusual query from an MP representing the Insein constituency.

"As for the Ministry of Home Affairs, there is no assignments to trace parliamentarians in the line of duty, secretly or openly," said Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, at Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

The Ministry of Home Affairs assigns investigation teams to scrutinise whether candidates get involved with sections 8 and 10 of election law and submit investigation reports to the Union Election Commission (UEC), said Maj-Gen Aung Soe.

He added that candidates who will contest for parliamentary seats in Regions and States Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw are required to submit their statements to the UEC in accord with the laws, rules and regulations, in his reply to question as to which responsible officials or organisations assigned persons and organisations to trace Hluttaw representatives in the line of duty, raised by U

Maung Maung Oo, representative of Insein constituency, at the 7th day meeting of 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw.

U Maung Muang Oo and other MPs have suspected that they have been followed in the past, representatives said.

The deputy minister continued to say that the Union Election Commission informs the Ministry of Home Affairs

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Maj-Gen Aung Soe. PHOTO: MNA

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Speaker U Win Myint holds talks with UN Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Haoliang Xu. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives UN Assistant Secretary-General

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received UN Assistant Secretary-General UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director for Asia-Pacific Mr. Haoliang Xu yesterday at the

Hluttaw building.

During the meeting, they discussed matters regarding UNDP's assistance in Myanmar's democratic reform process, internal peace, the rule of law and the

Hluttaw development process.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and Hluttaw officials. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Country Programme 2015-18 under discussion

SETTING up a national-level Country Programme 2015-2018 to be able to face the challenges of drugs and crime in Myanmar was discussed for third time at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw by the implementation central committee for the Country Programme.

The discussion focus on the

strengths and the weaknesses in the 2016 implementation and future plans in 2017 based on transnational organised crime and illicit trafficking, anti-corruption, criminal justice, drugs and health and sustainable livelihoods and development. The discussion was attended by the chairman of the implementation central committee

for the Country Programme, Maj-Gen Aung Soe Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Chief Police Officer and related ministries, General Attorney, Mr. Jeremy Douglas Regional Representative Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and Mr Troels Vester, country manager for Myanmar.—*Myanmar News Agency*

No assignments to trace . . .

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so as to be able to scrutinise as to whether candidates who have names enlisted get involved with section 8 & 10 of the respective Hluttaw Election Laws, or not. Afterward, Daw Mya Khwar Nyo Oo of Shwedaung constituency raised a question as to whether the department of general administration and the Myanmar Police Force under the Ministry of Home Affairs have any plans to supervise production of riverine marbles operating along the Ayeyawady River including Shwedaung township, in accord with rules and regulations laid down by department of water resources and rivers and creeks development. Maj-Gen Aung Soe replied to the question, "Under section 13 of water resources, rivers and creeks conservation law, anyone is strictly prohibited to abundantly pump or dig sand from a river and exploit riverine marbles and artisanal and small-scale gold mining in the river. If committed, the violator will be sentenced to less than two years imprisonment or fined less than Ks 30,000 or both, under section 26 of the law. Section 26 is an arrest-able offence. So, General Administration Department and Department of Water Resources and Development of Rivers and Creeks are scrutinizing and arresting the offences whether they are operating without licenses or not.

In addition, Maj-Gen Aung Soe replied to the question raised by Daw Khin Saw Wai of Yathaydaung Constituency by saying, "Those who are using SIM cards from another country cannot be taken legal actions against, under the existing communication laws,

according to the co-response by the Ministry of Transport and Communication. Rakhine State's Maung-taw region is abutting Bangladesh, so most of local people are using mobile SIM Cards from the other side illegally. Due to these illegal uses, rule of law and security of Myanmar can be harmed. Hence, Myanmar Police Force is arresting the users under section of Export and Import Law, filing 81 cases in 2014, 84 cases in 2015, 22 cases in 2016 — altogether 187 cases and 187 persons."

Then, the Deputy Minister replied to queries on administration and management raised by U Khin Cho of Hlinebwe constituency, U Se Korki of Mai Khat constituency, U Ne Lin Aung of Mintat constituency, U Myint Oo of Thanatpin constituency and U Tin Ko Ko Oo of Bilin constituency.

U Tin Htwe of Waw constituency put forward a motion to urge Union High Court to uphold the deterioration of the Judicial Panel with U Zaw Win of Kyimyindine constituency, Yangon Region supporting the motion. Following that, Speaker of Hluttaw received the decision of the Hluttaw to approve the motion. The Hluttaw announced that the motion would be seconded, followed by an announcement to enroll the names of those who would like to discuss the issue.

The Deputy Minister put forward a bill on the transfer of the culprit law with Daw Mar Mar Khaing of Thaton constituency and a drafting committee member reading out the report. The Speaker of the Hluttaw announced he would enroll their names to submit the motion to amend.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Pinlae Nay Kyel Co. to be sued in accordance with Forestry Law

PINLAE Nay Kyel Co. is to be sued by the Forestry Department of Thamu Township for cutting down trees without approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, according to Union Minister U Oun Win.

The legal action was revealed in response to a question raised by U Mg Mg Latt of constituency 9 of Sagaing Region in the 4th Meeting of the 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw convened today and is currently in its 7th day.

"How will the company which has deforested over 50 acres of land without official approval be responsible before the law; and whether there is any consideration for approval if the local residents were to petition for agricultural/farming rights in the aforementioned areas?" asked U Mg Mg Latt.

The Union Minister stated that the area of the incident was not under the protection of the forest reserve and was land under

the government's management. Pinlae Nay Kyel Co. had already applied for long-term agricultural projects to the Administrative Department for Vacant Lands but had proceeded to cut down trees before official approval had been issued.

Local residents wanting to petition for rights to use the land for agriculture have to submit to the relevant department in accordance with the Free Hold Land Act legislated in 2012, which had prevented the area in question to be under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forestry and petitions therefore will have to be submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

U Saw Mo Kha (Samuel) of constituency 1 of Kayin State then asked another question.

"Has there be any (EIA) (SIA) appraisals submitted concerning the national effort to transition from natural gases to coal as fuel in cement factories in Myaing Kalay's 4,000

tonne factory, among factories in Kyaukse, PinPat, and PyiNyang Regions and whether or not the emissions are within the range set by the (605/2015) Bill and which department is regulating this process."

In response, the Union Minister stated that coal-fueled operations within 1-10 megawatts require an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) test and those exceeding 10 megawatts required an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) test for Environmental Safety. Cement production of 10-30 tons per hour and 20-50 tons an hour are required an IEE test and cement production exceeding 30 tons an hour and above 50 tons an hour required an EIA test.

The 4,000 ton cement production factory in Myaing Kalay had not submitted any appraisals with regard to its transition to coal fuel. Furthermore Triple A, Than Taw Myat, Kyar Gaung, Myanmar Sinn in Kyaukse division

and Ruby Dragon in TiKyit Division, Ngwe Yay pearl cement factories in Naung Cho Division have not submitted appraisals for Environmental Safety Concerns and their relevant Ministries and Departments will be contacted to ensure the companies will be able make a smooth submittal, according to the Union Minister.

Furthermore the Union Minister stated in Kyaukse Division, Myanmar Conch, Sin Min(2) cement factories, in Pyi Nyaung Division ShweTaung Cement factory, and in PinPat Division Kanbawza cement factory has all submitted necessary appraisals to their respective ministries and are being inspected by the department for Environmental Safety Concerns.

Ministries and Departments that had issued approvals for the factories that have not submitted appraisals of their transitions to coal-fuel will be contacted to work out the necessary Environ-

mental Safety Concerns forms to be submitted.

U Han Win Thein of constituency 4 of Thanin TharYi Division's question, "Is there any consideration of approval to allot Yay Phyu City of Thanin TharYi Division from classification as a Mining area to a City State?" and U Mg Kyaw Zan of constituency 9 of Rakhine State's question, "Is there any plan to establish a Forestry/Agricultural Plantation in areas decimated by high tides in Rakhine State in accordance with the 1995 Myanmar Forest Policy?" were answered by Union Minister U Oun Win of Ministry of Natural Resources respectively.

Amyotha Hluttaw Chairman then stated the "The National Commission's Draft Law for the second amendment" will be notified when the Pyithu Hluttaw returns with amendments to any delegates who have registered and wishes to discuss this further.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of the Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus

Mr. Viadimir A. Goshin, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar presented his credentials to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 2:35 p.m yesterday.

Present on the occasion were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Ko Ko Naing of the Protocol Department.—*Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials from Mr. Viadimir A. Goshin, the Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus. PHOTO: MNA



President U Htin Kyaw, second from right, and Servio Saul Samudio Bethancourt, second from left. PHOTO: MNA

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of the Ambassador of the Republic of Panama

Mr. Servio Saul Samudio Bethancourt, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Panama to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar presented his letter of

credence to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 2 p.m yesterday.

Present on the occasion were

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Ko Ko Naing of the Protocol Department.—*Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor receives WWF-US Board Member and Country Director of WWF



State Counsellor receives Mr Matthew Carey Harris, left, and Dr. Amirtharaj Christy Williams yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received Mr. Matthew Carey Harris (WWF- US Board Member) accompanied by Dr. Amirtharaj Christy Williams, Country Director of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) yesterday morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they

exchanged views on matters relating to possible cooperation between Myanmar and the WWF in Myanmar's environmental conservation measures including conservation of endangered species of animals and flowers, production of renewable energy, reforestation, recruiting human resources in the fields of environment and forestry, and promoting awareness of the people on environmental conservation.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Vice President U Henry Van Thio receives Thai delegation led by Thailand Transportation

VICE President U Henry Van Thio, Chairman of the Central Committee of Myanmar Special Economic Zone, received the Thai delegations led by H E Mr Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, Minister of Transport in Thailand, and Chairman of Myanmar-Thailand Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) at Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the two sides friendly discussed about the cooperation for tourism development and better transportation between the two countries, investment and trade convenience, border trade promotion, the situation of Dawei Special Economic Zone and its future plan.

At present were Dr Than



Vice President U Henry Van Thio holds talks with Mr Arkhom Termpittayapaisith in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Myint, Union Minister for Commerce, Dr Le Le Maw, Taninthayi Region Chief Minister, Deputy Minister Dr Htun Naing and responsible persons. Thai-

land Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Pisanu Suvanajata and Thailand delegations also attended the discussion.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Chief Justice of the Union meets guests

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo received a delegation led by United National Development Programme (UNDP) Assistant Secretary General Mr. Haoliang Xu yesterday morning and another delegation in the afternoon led by US Federal Judge Ms. Allyson Duncan at the Supreme Court of the Union in Nay Pyi Taw.

In the meeting with Mr. Haoliang Xu, they cordially discussed further cooperation between the

Supreme Court of the Union and the UNDP on various issues including the Supreme Court of the Union's (2015-2019) Strategic Planning, the production of an ethics manual for law practitioners, cooperation between departments for rule of law, efforts to standardise to international law standards, and efforts in cooperation between various organisations for peace building in Rakhine State.

In the meeting with Ms. Al-

lyson Duncan, they cordially discussed further cooperation between US and Myanmar's judiciary departments in various sectors of the Supreme Court, efforts to standardise to international law standards in cooperation with various organisations, cooperation between departments of the rule of law efforts with support from international organisations, and scholarship programmes to the US.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Union Day ceremonies, peace programme to be broadcast live Sunday

THE 70th anniversary of Union Day Ceremony (Panglong) and the Panglong Peace Talks programme in which the State Counsellor and ethnic people will participate in Panglong, Shan State will be broadcast live on MRTV and the Myanmar State Counsellor Office's Facebook Page start at 9:20am on Sunday.

The Panglong Peace Talks will take place under a banyan

tree, the same place where General Aung San read a book while he was attending the original Panglong Conference. Family members of the leaders who signed the Panglong agreement, including State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, will attend the 70th anniversary of Union Day Ceremony, according to the State Counsellor Office's information committee.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Police training courses end

THE graduation ceremony of police recruit training course No. 293/2016 (Zeya company) was held from 7am to 8:35 am yesterday at No. 2 Police Training School (Wet Htee Kan) of Myanmar Police Force. Police Col Myo Min Hteik from Bago Region Police Command delivered the graduation speech and presented prizes to outstanding recruits at the ceremony. All 198 recruits passed the training course, which was conducted from 29 August 2016 to 10 February 2017. Also present at the ceremony were officials from the Myanmar Police Force, trainers, trainees, parents and invitees.

Another graduation ceremony of women recruits from training course No. 35/2016 (Thura company) was held from 7:30am to 8:10am yesterday at No. 1 Police Training School (Yame-thin) of Myanmar Police Force. Research, Planning and Administration Head Police Col Ohnma Yin Mi from Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TOC)



Police Col Ohnma Yin Mi presents prize to outstanding woman graduate at graduation ceremony of police recruits. PHOTO: MPF

delivered the graduation speech and presented prizes to outstanding women graduates at the ceremony. All 181 women recruits passed the training course, which was held from 29 August 2016 to

10 February 2017. Also present at the ceremony were officials from Myanmar Police Force, trainers, trainees as well as their parents and invitees.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Nationwide, 125 rapes in January, 81 involving children

THERE were 125 cases of rape last month in Myanmar, including 81 cases of child rape, according to Myanmar police.

Among the five cases of rape that occurred in Nay Pyi Taw, four cases were child rape. Moreover, there were four cases of child rape and one case of adult rape in Kachin state; three cases of child rape and one case of adult rape in Kayah state; one case of child rape in Chin state, one case of child rape and one case of adult rape in Sagaing region; three cases of child rape and one case of adult rape in Taninthayi; 11 cases of child rape and nine cases of adult rape in Bago region; four cases of child rape and four

cases of adult rape in Magwe region, five cases of child rape and seven cases of adult rape in Mandalay region; five cases of child rape and one case of adult rape in Mon state, one case of child rape and one case of adult rape in Rakhine state; 20 cases of child rape and five cases of adult rape in Yangon; five cases of child rape and four cases of adult rape in Shan state and 14 cases of child rape and seven cases of adult rape in Ayeyawady region.

Yangon region topped the list of the most rape cases in Myanmar, while Kayah state did not report any cases of rape in January.—*Than Oo (Laymyethna)*

Fire loss over one month in Mandalay totalled Ks35 million

THE TOTAL amount of fire-related loss over the past 39 days in Mandalay was over Ks35 million, according to figures issued by the Mandalay Region Fire Services Department.

The number of fire accidents that occurred across the region between 1 January and 8 February reached 22.

In January alone, the region experienced 16 fire accidents. It is calculated that the losses in January totalled over Ks20 million. Over the first 8 days of this month, six fire cases occurred in the region, damaging properties worth about Ks15 million.

Fire prevention tasks will be continued at factories, workshops, residential houses and fuel stations under fire safety plans being developed by the department, said U Than Zaw Oo, head of the department.

The number of fire cases in 2013 was 248. The figure decreased by 32 cases in 2014.

Seven residents were killed, while 13 individuals sus-

tained injuries in fiery accidents in 2015, when as many as 340 households were destroyed by the flame.

A total of 583 households plus two plants and six warehouses were damaged in fire accidents last year. The majority of fire cases occurred in March and April, the hottest months of the year.

The fire killed eight people while 34 others with injuries escaped from the blazes. The number of fire victims reached 567 in 2016.

Last year's fire loss increased by over Ks1 billion compared with the similar period in 2015 because of the fire at Mingala Market, a huge shopping centre in the region.

Eight new fire extinguishers were bought in the 2015-16 fiscal year. There are 31 fire extinguishers plus 47 tanker trucks in 2014-2015 FY in Mandalay, with the department having recently submitted a proposal to buy new fire-related equipment.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

New Nyaung Chaung Thar beach open

NEW Nyaung Chaung Thar Beach, which does not allow the beach-goers to stay overnight, was opened in Nyaungdon township, Ayeyawady region on Wednesday, it is learnt.

"Nyaung Chuang Thar Beach, which was opened in 2012, was moved to a place near Bo Myat Tun and Ayeyawady (Nyaungdon) bridges because there was a high risk of death

from drowning," said a Hluttaw representative from Nyaungdon township, Ayeyawady region.

"The old Nyaung Chaung Thar Beach is very deep. It is dangerous for the visitors. We have chosen the sand flat where the visitors can bathe in the water safely and where visitors from Yangon and Patheingyi can make a day's trip," said Daw Ni Ni Moe, Ayeyawady region Hluttaw representative.

"Nyaung Chuang Thar Beach is open from 5 January to 31 May. We have allowed 60 shops to open around the beach," said an employee from Nyaungdon township development affairs department.

"The new Nyaung Chaung Thar Beach is under the control of the Nyaungdon township development affairs department.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



File photo shows the sunset over the Ayeyawady river.

PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

LOCAL Business

Local gold price rises by over Ks 20,000 per tical

THE price of gold is nearly Ks900,000 per tical in the domestic market, while the price of gold reached US\$1,242 per ounce in the global market on 9 February. The local gold price has increased by over Ks 20,000 per tical within one week, according to a local gold dealer.

The price in the global gold market has been increasing starting from 2 February till 9 February. The prices in the global gold market are US\$1,235 on 7 February, US\$1,237 on 8 February and US\$1,242.29 on 9 February. The price of global gold market has declined US\$ 1241.52 on the morning of 9 February. The price of global gold has increase in value from US\$ 1205 per ounce to US\$ 1,240 per ounce on 9 February.

The local gold price is positively related to the global gold

price. The price of domestic gold will increased when the price of global gold increases. The domestic gold price was Ks 876,700 on 3 February, down from Ks 880,200 on 2 February. The price of domestic gold was Ks 880,300 on 4 February, 881,500 on 6 February, 887,100 on 7 February and 891,600 on 8 February.

The price of local gold price was opened at Ks 898,700 on the morning of 9 February and closed with Ks 899,000 per tical in the evening.

The price of local gold price has reached Ks 900,100 per tical on 4 October, 2016 too because of increase in US exchange rate and global gold price.

Currently, the price of domestic gold price is Ks 899,000 per tical on 9 February. Only needing to equal the peak price on 4 October, 2016.—*Min Min*



The dollar price is currently unstable in the global market, which is directly related to the domestic market. PHOTO: REUTERS

US exchange rate jumped to over Ks1,369 on 8th Jan

THE US dollar exchange rate that was fluctuating between Ks1,354 and Ks1,362 in recent days jumped to Ks1,369 on 8 February. The purchasing US dollar price is Ks1,367, whereas the selling price is Ks1,371 on 9 February, according to a local private bank.

After the dollar index reached a recorded high of 103.78 point in the global market on the evening of 3 January, the rate dropped slightly. On 7 February, the rate rose to a high of 100.14, then reached the 100.54 point on the afternoon of 8 February.

The dollar price is currently unstable in the global market,

which is directly related to the domestic market. The green-back exchange rate hit a high of Ks1,438 on 16 December, then plunged down to Ks1,346 on 16 January. The rate has varied between Ks1,354 to Ks1,362 from 20 January to 7 February. The exchange rate climbed up to Ks1,369 on 8 February with the rise in global currency market, it is learnt from local currency exchange market. The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) set the exchange rate at Ks1,350 from 31 January to 6 February. The rate on 7 February was at Ks1,355 until CBM increased the rate to Ks1,360 on 8 and 9 January.—*Ko Khant*



A file photo shows workers seen on a production line at a garment factory in Hlaingthaya. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

US\$ 7 billion worth of garments exported this FY

GARMENT enterprises using the Cutting, Making and Packing (CMP) process have earned over US\$7 billion so far during this fiscal year so far, said an official from the Ministry of Commerce.

Currently, there are 389 garment factories employing over 400,000 labourers, with 171 privately owned factories, 196 foreign-owned and 22 joint ventures, it is learnt.

Thirty-three per cent of garment exports went to the Japan

market, followed by the European Union, Korea, America and China.

The orders from EU member countries is currently rising. Therefore, the EU could possibly surpass Japan as the top importers of Myanmar garments. The demand from the EU market started an upward trend after Myanmar restored the generalized system of preference (GSP) from EU. The export volume from the garment industry is likely to increase

year by year, creating more job opportunities for local people.

The garment export from 1 April to end of December in this fiscal year hit over US\$7 billion, whereas the garment export values last year amounted to only about US\$6 billion. This being so, the export value from garment industry is up by over US\$1 billion.

Myanmar's garment sector is expected to hit over US\$8 billion next year, it is learnt.—*200*

FPB share trading volume at YSX hits new low

FIRST Private Bank (FPB), which entered the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) on 20 January, hit a recorded low in trading volume on 8 February with 257 shares, according to statistics released by YSX.

FPB's share trading volume plunged down to three digits on 8 February. The stock trading volumes of FPB were 1,655 on 1 February, 2,800 on 2 February,

5,821 on 3 February, 3,165 on 6 February, 2,131 on 7 February and 257 on 8 February. It managed to boost trading volume up to 3,457 on 9 February. Currently, there are four companies trading on YSX: First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizen Banks (MCB) and FPB.

With the lowest trading volume of FPB, only 11,075 shares

worth Ks74,614,200 were traded on 8 January. A total of 14,478 shares worth Ks 138,849,800 were traded on 10th Jan, with the share volume of 1,658 from FMI, 10,388 from MTSH, 35 from MCB and 2,397 from FPB.

The share prices on 10th Feb were 14,500 for FMI, 4,100 for MTSH, 8,800 for MCB and 30,000 for FPB, according market statistics to the YSX.—*Ko Htet*

New manufacturing plant to distribute fertilizer in early 2018

A new manufacturing plant under the name of Agri First Co., Ltd (AFC) will start to distribute fertilizer in early 2018, according to Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation (MAPCO).

The new fertilizer manufacturing plant is being established by MAPCO in cooperation with Japan-based Mitsui and German chemical distributor Behn Mayer in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone. This plant is likely to produce 150,000 to 200,000 tonnes of fertilizer a year, with the capacity of 50 tonnes per hour.

The plant construction project is slated to be completed in November and the plant will commence its distribution in early 2018, it is learnt.

The agribusiness corporation will distribute the products through Agri Service Center (ASC) in Nay Pyi Taw. A Yangon market will be created by MAPCO in Bayintnaung market and open more stalls to expand the market in the towns where fertilizer is in high demand.

Currently, fertilizer is imported from abroad. If this plant

produces enough fertilizer, it can help to reduce the import volume of fertilizer. Additionally, it ensures the growers that they can utilise quality domestic fertilizers.

The Fertilizer and Agrochemicals Business Unit was reformed by MAPCO with the aim of enhancing the agribusiness by producing and distributing quality fertilizer and antimicrobial medicine. Awareness campaigns are currently being conducted for farmers to boost the production rate.—*Mon Mon*

Modi's reforms meet realpolitik in key Indian state election

LUCKNOW, (India) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised to clean up politics. The man running the ruling party's campaign in a crucial state election, who is facing 11 criminal cases, says it will take a while.

"At a time of elections, one has to forget every other aspect and just focus on victory," said Keshav Prasad Maurya, as his three-vehicle convoy carrying police with automatic rifles sped through the countryside.

Polls open on Saturday in Uttar Pradesh, with a population of some 220 million, and on the ground Modi's loftier aims for a new India seem far away.

Maurya, the state's president for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), says the charges against him are false and politically motivated; unless he is convicted, they do not prevent him from holding office.

His bosses are not concerned.

An official at the prime minister's office referred questions about Maurya and his criminal cases to the BJP, where an aide to party president and Modi confidant Amit Shah said there was no problem.

The charges are relat-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi walks to speak with the media as he arrives at the parliament house to attend the first day of the budget session, in New Delhi, India, on 31 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

ed to Maurya protesting on behalf of Hindu causes, said the aide, and anyone who does so "is not a criminal in the party's eyes."

"Slowly," Maurya told Reuters, "the BJP will be moving towards a direction where it will only have politicians who are absolutely clean and have no cases of corruption against them."

Modi stormed to power in 2014 vowing to sweep away corruption and vested interests from business and politics.

Late last year, he abruptly abolished 86 per cent of cash in circulation, in a bid to crush the shadow economy, force Indians to declare their wealth and empower the poor.

Ahead of the world's biggest scheduled election this year in Uttar Pradesh, though, the BJP is sticking to an old formula: an elite with rap sheets and swelling bank accounts who pit religious communities and caste against each other.

The party's manifesto

for the state poll, for example, mixed development with a set of right wing Hindu causes likely to upset the sizeable Muslim population.

As Maurya crisscrossed Uttar Pradesh by helicopter and sport utility vehicle ahead of a month-long election, voters were doubtful of wholesale reform to the way Indian politics work.

"That's not going to change — the corrupt and the criminal are able to get votes," said Rakesh Kumar

Gupta, as he sold bread, cigarettes and snacks from the same cramped stand his father tended before him in Uttar Pradesh's capital, Lucknow.

Ashutosh Mishra, head of the political science department at the University of Lucknow, said he saw no sign that Modi or any other major Indian politician was serious about overhauling a system he described as "feudal."

"Why should they? They are enjoying the perks of power, they are living the lives of modern gods," Mishra said.

The biggest of five state polls held in India this spring points to a central dilemma for Modi.

If he loses the poll in Uttar Pradesh, he risks dissent in the ranks of his support base and a weaker position for his bid for re-election in 2019.

But analysts say that if Modi wins through divisive politics driven by men with controversial backgrounds, it undermines his populist narrative of a rising India.

Also at stake in Uttar Pradesh is the number of seats Modi controls in the upper parliamentary chamber, where the opposition has managed to delay some economic reforms.—Reuters

Landslides kill 12 in Indonesian's Bali, more rain expected

JAKARTA — Twelve people have been killed in three landslides across the Indonesian resort island of Bali, as torrential rain lashed the area, Indonesia's disaster agency said on Friday.

The landslides destroyed houses late on Thursday in three villages in Bali's Kintamani district, on the slopes of the Mount Batur volcano, killing the 12 residents, including a one-year old boy, the agency said.

Several people were injured, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency said. "All victims have been evacuated and the injured have been taken to hospital," said an agency official in Bali, Indra Kalak. Kalak said more heavy rain was falling on Friday and people in the area should be aware that the steep slopes meant it was particularly vulnerable to landslides. The national weather agency said heavy rain would continue in Bali on Saturday and Sunday.—Reuters

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New Zealanders race to rescue whales after hundreds stranded

WELLINGTON — Rescuers were trying to save scores of pilot whales on Friday in a remote bay in New Zealand, where some 300 carcasses littered the beach after one of the country's largest recorded mass whale strandings.

Hundreds of volunteers flocked to Golden Bay, at the northwest tip of South Island, after dawn broke and surviving whales were re-floated at high tide by lunchtime, but 90 quickly became stranded once again as the tide ebbed. About 50 more lingered in shallow waters near their beleaguered pod.

A conservation department worker spotted the whales washed ashore on Thursday evening. But the government agency decided against a night rescue effort because of the risk of accidents. Hoping to save more whales at the next high tide on Friday evening, rescuers took turns pouring water over the beached whales to try and keep them cool, while school children sang to soothe the distressed beasts.

A ferry service offered free transport to qualified marine medics, while broadcast media carried a live-stream of the rescue attempt.

Even for a country with the most whale strandings in the world, the scale of the latest event "was a shock," said Darren Grover manager of marine environmental or-

ganisation Project Jonah.

It was New Zealand's largest known whale stranding since 1985, when 450 were stranded in Auckland, and the third largest on record.

The precise cause of the stranding was not known, though beached whales are not an uncommon sight at

Golden Bay. Its shallow muddy waters confuse the marine mammals' sonar, leaving them vulnerable to stranding by an ebb tide, according to Project Jonah.

Pilot whales are not listed as endangered, but little is known about their population in New Zealand waters.—Reuters



Volunteers attend to some of the hundreds of stranded pilot whales still alive after one of the country's largest recorded mass whale strandings, in Golden Bay, at the top of New Zealand's South Island, on 10 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Asian shares scale 1-1/2-year peak on China trade, Trump's tax cut talk

TOKYO — Asian shares rallied to an 18-month peak on Friday, as investors cheered upbeat Chinese trade data and strong gains on Wall Street after US President Donald Trump promised to unveil a major tax announcement to lower the burden on businesses.

The mood was expected to carry over into European trading, with financial spreadbetters predicting opening gains for Britain's FTSE, Germany's DAX and France's CAC.

China's January exports rose 7.9 per cent from a year earlier, while imports jumped 16.7 per cent, beating expectations and getting the economy off to a strong start in 2017 even as Asia braces for a rise in US protectionism under President Donald Trump.

On the political front, Trump seemed to change tack and said he would honor the longstanding "one China" policy during a phone call with China's leader, a major diplomatic boost for Beijing which brooks no criticism of its claim to neighbouring Taiwan.



Investors look at an electronic board showing stock information on the first trading day after the New Year holiday at a brokerage house in Shanghai, China, on 3 January 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS

China's strong trade "is related to the global pick-up in growth in the US Europe and also emerging economies," said Jianguang Shen, chief economist at Mizuho Securities in Hong Kong.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares

outside Japan was up 0.5 per cent to the highest level since July 2015, and was on track to gain 1.5 for the week. The Shanghai Composite Index was up 0.5 per cent.

Japan's Nikkei stock index surged 2.5 per cent thanks to the tailwind from

a weaker currency, and added 2.4 per cent for the week.

Wall Street's three main indexes notched record highs on Thursday after Trump said he would make a major tax announcement in a few weeks, though he offered

no details.

"Financial markets latched on to his comments yesterday about 'something phenomenal on tax in the next two to three weeks' like a thirsty man spying what looks like an oasis in the desert," Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets, said in a note.

US economic data also underpinned the dollar. Initial jobless claims unexpectedly dropped last week to a nearly 43-year low, while inventories at wholesalers surged in December for a second straight month.

The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of six major currencies, added 0.1 per cent on the day to 100.72, on track to gain 0.8 per cent for the week.

The Australian dollar rode the trade data from China, Australia's major export market. The Aussie rose 0.2 per cent to \$0.7641, also supported by an optimistic view from the country's central bank, which suggested that further interest rate cuts were

off the table.

The euro, under pressure from political concerns as the campaign for France's presidential election heated up, was steady on the day at \$1.0655. It was still down 1.2 per cent for the week.

Against its Japanese counterpart, the dollar gained 0.4 per cent to 113.75 yen, up more than 1 per cent for the week ahead of a meeting later on Friday between Trump and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe will propose a new cabinet level framework for US-Japan talks on trade, security and macro-economic issues, including currencies, a Japanese government official involved in planning the summit said.

Crude oil prices extended gains, with US prices bolstered by evidence that gasoline demand could strengthen in the world's biggest oil market.

US crude added 0.3 per cent to \$53.13 a barrel. Brent crude rose 0.2 per cent to at \$55.76. —Reuters

Nasdaq plans venture arm to invest in financial technology

NEW YORK — Exchange operator Nasdaq Inc (NASDAQ.O) plans to set up a venture capital arm to invest in financial technology companies that can help grow its own businesses, two people familiar with the plans told Reuters.

The amount Nasdaq would invest could not be learned, though one person described it as "modest" relative to its broader earnings and capital plans. Nasdaq generated \$2.3 billion in net revenue last year.

Nasdaq is best known for running stock exchanges around the globe, but it is also one of the largest

providers of technology to other exchanges and companies involved with trading.

A venture arm would formalize some of the investing Nasdaq has already been doing in early-stage financial-technology companies.

It was one of the earliest supporters of blockchain, a record-keeping tool that some expect will fundamentally change the cost, speed and accuracy of trading.

The move would also align with plans set out by Nasdaq's new chief executive, Adena Friedman,

who wants to increase the company's focus on technology.

"Areas of focus for us in terms of big projects are all around technology," Friedman said last month on CNBC. "It's a matter of making sure that we continue to take all of the new technologies that are available in the marketplace and ... offering them to our clients."

Nasdaq's current investments include San Francisco-based blockchain startup Chain.com and artificial-intelligence company Digital Reasoning. In the venture capital arm under discussion, Nasdaq would go beyond investment dollars to help companies develop technology faster, one of the sources said. The two sources were not authorized to speak publicly. Nasdaq is not the first financial firm to set up a venture arm as a way to stay competitive. CME Group Inc (CME.O), JPMorgan Chase & Co (JPM.N), Citigroup Inc (C.N) and Banco Santander SA (SAN.MC) are among those that have similar units. —Reuters



People walk outside the Nasdaq Market site in New York's Times Square, in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Opinion

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Solving Differences in a Peaceful Way!

Khin Maung Oo

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor, has asserted that it is necessary to believe that differences of vision in political, religious and ethnic affairs can be solved in a peaceful way, at the meeting of Union Peace Dialogues Joint Committee, held on 6th February 2017 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Difference of opinions may exist within organizations, as well as among individuals. If people cannot march towards a certain goal hand in hand with each other on the pretext of having different views and visions, that institution or organization cannot survive for long.

Sometimes, it may be difficult to unite people with different points of view. However if there is a willingness to listen to the other

person with an open mind, there is a possibility that you will understand the other person's point of view although you may not agree with that person. The important thing is to identify what are the common interests and the shared goals.

The State Counsellor has provided ample proof of her sincerity and genuine desire for peace. She stated very clearly that the work being done at the NRPC – National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, was not for the benefit of the NLD, nor for the Union Government but only for the emergence of the Union.

Peace is of great importance for the benefit of the Union and its nationals. Many national leaders have been exerting their concerted efforts to achieve internal peace in

Myanmar as quickly as possible. However, peace has been elusive though successive governments have tried their best each in their own way, depending on the times and circumstances.

At the present time when the genuine government of the people is in power, the government is striving hard to achieve peace in a peaceful way. At such a time, we are seeing those who are not desirous of peace, conspiring and engaging in subversive activities. Hence, we are required to cooperate in unity, for the peace process not to be ruined.

In fact, the whole nation hopes for peace, as do different organizations. Yet, it must be said that the reason that we are still far from peace may be attributed to our inability to solve

problems in a peaceful way. Unless we are able to work sincerely and honestly for the common goals and shared beliefs, we will not be able to reach our goal of building a modern democratic federal republic where peace and justice will prevail.

Peace cannot be achieved through the use of arms or violent methods, peace can only be solved by using peaceful means. In trying to bring about national reconciliation, we not only need to find solutions in consultation with armed groups but also with different groups in the whole country. So let us set aside our petty differences and try to forget about the interest of any political party or any particular national race and forge ahead for a strong, durable and peaceful Union.

The festivals of the month Tabodwe

**Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja Sithu
Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt**

(Continue from 10-2-2017)

"ON the full moon day of Tabodwe, even the tips of the tusks of Saddam White Elephant shiver in the cold, on such day, Lord Buddha the Exalted sage in his lifetime took the warmth of fire to keep off the cold. To commemorate that event, an annual puja of bon fire was held. On the 14th waxing moon night of Tabodwe, the bonfire festival was held in the courtyard of Shey Yone Taw. Officials of the Hluttaw [King's council] and Shey Yone Taw supervised the making of yagu from the first crop of paddy and sweet milk. Then at dawn of the full moon day, 15 braziers with burning sandal woods, 15 plates of yagu. Thazin orchid flowers and oil lamps were carried by officials to 15 pagodas and temples including Maha Muni which were in Royal List. There to the Buddha Images and Sacred Relics these were offered".

Now-a-days the festival of bonfire in Tabodwe is held only in upper Myanmar. Big towns and cities like Monywa, Shwebo, Sagaing, Meiktila, Magwe, Pakokku, Myingyan, Kyaukse and Mandalay. Buddhist devotees still celebrate bonfire puja at prominent pagodas and temples. Similarly in the other states like Shan, Mon, Rakhine, Kachin, Chin and Kayah, states such pujas are held at pagodas and temples. On the eve of the full moon day of Tabodwe fragrant fire woods are arranged in the shape of a stupa in the foreground of the pagoda or temple and burn them on the full moon night to offer warmth to the Buddha Images. Such bonfire is also offered to aged monks and people as a sign of respect as well as an act of religious merit.

The bonfire puja and festival annually held at Maha Muni Temple in Mandalay is a grand show worth noting and recording. The day before the full moon day of Tabodwe all kinds of fragrant woods are arranged like a ceti in the spacious precinct. Among other offertories Yagu rice porridge or htamane [a Myanmar traditional delicacy concocted from glutinous rice and ingredients] are dominant. At dawn, religious music band of the Temple begins a religious music "Nayi" accompanied by the, singing of Te Diem song Htoo Ma Chana. This religious band was dedicated by successive Rakhine and Myanmar Kings to Maha Muni Image only. The band performs three times daily- at dawn when the face of the Image is washed, at noon when lunch is over, and at eventide. On the full moon night bonfire is burnt, fireworks are displayed. Religious music and songs carry on.

Mandalay is noted for severe climate. Its cold season is as severe as its summer is burning hot. Mandalay people harbor a belief that only after Maha Muni Image has received bonfire puja on the full moon night of Tabodwe, cold begins to reduce.

Associated with the bon fire festival of Tabodwe is the communal celebration of the making of a Myanmar traditional delicacy called htamane. In Myanmar literature it is said that yagu and htamane are two different names of the same Myanmar delicacy. But in fact they are two different kinds. While yagu is just a rice porridge with or without milk and sugar, htamane is a delicacy prepared with glutinous rice from the first harvest Seasoned with ingredients and condiments. According to

Treatise on Myanmar traditional medicine, the cold in Tabodwe dries up body skin. There is no perspiration to moisten the body skin. So it is necessary to take a little more of vegetable oil to protect the unbearable cold of Tabodwe. Oily htamane is eaten as a sort of preventive medicine by Myanmar old folks.

There is a recipe for concocting htamane. For easy memorization, the recipe is composed as a tay-htat song. The following is a loose translation of it:-

"Take a pyi of a basket rice glutinous rice and wash it clean by fresh water. Put one viss of pure sesamum oil in a big iron pan which is placed stable on wood fire. Fry 3 tickals' weight of ginger slices in the oil to produce flavor put the washed glutinous rice in the ginger flavored oil and stir it thoroughly. Add some water to it and knead the stuff with wooden ladles. When the glutinous rice gets grilled, with oil oozing out of it, reduce the fire and spray on the stuff in the iron pan 80 tickals' weight of fried ground nuts, 32 tickals weight of roasted sesamum seeds, 20 tickals weight of shedded coconut kernel and 7 tickals weight of salt.

Then knead and crush the stuff again and again. Taste it to test if it has attained the required quality standard. If so, the htamane is put on the banana leaves for serving with hot plain tea".

Htamane making and eating is a festival common to all Myanmar ethnic nationalities. It is a new harvest festival known as Kauk Thit Sar Pwe. Different species of grain are cultivated across the country. On plains and deltas paddy of different varieties are the main crop. On hill regions, in addition to paddy, millet, maize, corn, beans etc. are grown. New Harvest festival is one of the festivals all ethnic nationalities cele-

brate their agricultural activities- ploughing, sowing, planting, transplanting, weeding reaping, winnowing, storing, eating communally the new crops etc. Hence htamane festival is also a social occasion for a communal activity in which all are involved- the aged, the adult, young both male and female and even children. Htamane making and feast take place in the precinct of a temple, pagoda or monastery. Either individually or collectively a htamane party is formed. Needed Kitchen utensils such as giant iron pan [moe bye de oh] two pairs of great wooden ladles, knives, daggers, baskets, mortar and pestle trays, low tables, tea pots even napkins are hired from the store house of the monastery. Young men carry them to the site of htamane making. Adult males make fire place dug out in the ground, bring fire woods, fetch water from nearby aquatic bodies well, tank, river, fall or spring or stream and all other heavy works. Women and girls do lighter works, winnowing glutinous rice, washing rice, shedding ground nuts and ginger, washing pots pans and tea pots and cups. Strong young men climb up coconut trees to cut bring them down and cut them open. Children sweep the ground and keep the party alive by their playful activities. Women and girls do the initial part of the process men's hard labour comes in when glutinous rice in the pan becomes grilled soft and pliant, muscular hands are needed to knead and crush the sticky stuff thoroughly with long wooden ladles. A good htamane is the result of correct proportion of glutinous rice, oil, water, ingredients and thorough kneading and crushing by wooden ladles.

It is so amazing to watch men doing this arduous work, are sweating in the cold of Tabodwe. When the htamane pan is moved from the

fire place feminine hands spray ingredients on the grilled glutinous rice at regular interval with correct handful amount. Now is the turn of the experienced aged to judge if htamane is well made. They form a group of connoisseurs to taste to test the good or bad of the htamane in the pan. If everything is judged O.K by these connoisseurs, then, the first pick is to be offered to Buddha Images, next picks go to the monks, the aged, the seniors, superiors, parents, and teachers. The rest are portioned and placed on banana leaves spread out on low tables for all to eat and enjoy to fill. Earthen pots of boiling hot green tea are ready on the low tables. Hot green plain tea is the best to go with this oily delicacy in the cold of Tabodwe.

If a contest is held, there is more excitement and a more festive atmosphere is created. Contesting parties are cheered up by music bands like Ozi or Dobhat waings. Folk songs and folk dances are performed in full swing, teasing, joking and mimicking one another. Village elders supervise the contest, so that the proceeding is in accordance with game rule. Winner parties are awarded with cash and kind like clothings. Winner party make a procession around the village with performance of music and dances.

Htamane making contests are held in schools and colleges to train young students in communal cultural activities and to breed community spirit among them. Htamane fests are open to all. No invitation is needed to join them. Any stranger or passerby regardless of race, religion or creed is welcome and is served with htamane to his fill, with cups of hot plain green tea. He may take some home because there are packets of htamane wrapped up with banana leaves for the taking.

National League for Democracy Party presents policy and programmes



U Win Myint, a member of the secretariat of the National League for Democracy Party.

U Win Myint, a member of the secretariat of the National League for Democracy Party, presented the policies, attitudes and programmes of his party on 10 February 2017, on Radio and TV programmes.

The full text of his presentation is given below:

First of all, I'd like to wish entire union nationalities physical and mental well-being. National League for Democracy will contest April 1st bye election in 18 constituencies. So, I'd like to make the voters aware of our policy and programmes.

Esteemed voting people,

According to the fundamental principle of democracy, "Sovereignty descends from the people", people's wishes play a pivotal role in establishing a democratic system. Just as people's co-operation and participation are required, the decision of the people is very important.

Since establishment of NLD in 1988, the objectives have been to build up a genuine, democratic, federal union that guarantees basic human rights in accord with the people's aspirations and to prevent emergence of a political system which will oppress and persecute the people and which will be like dictatorship. In realization of these objectives, we've firmly held the ideologies of using peaceful means, free from terrorism; national reconciliation; and building general consensus free from grudges and prejudices.

Although NLD and its members were severely oppressed and attacked during the stormy political weather, these objectives were never abandoned. We'll undauntedly continue to embrace these policies and attitudes in transforming (the country) into a peaceful democracy.

When we contested 2015 multi-party democracy general election, our objectives were to ensure the rule of law, to achieve internal peace and to amend the constitution. Public support and confidence had won us about 80 per cent of the votes from the constituencies where we contested.

The overwhelming support of the voters have mandated us to perform the national duties to fulfill the people's aspirations. We were provided with a chance to exert effort to enable the people to enjoy democracy and human rights. NLD never forgets the gratitude they owe to the voting public.

Esteemed voters,

The rule of law and internal peace are intertwined. Only when there prevail in our country the rule of law and the democratic rights, will there be internal peace. And only when there prevails internal peace, will there be the rule of law and democracy. This being so, we have been annulling, amending and enacting the laws which are not in accord with the contemporary age and system, which the people find it difficult to abide by and which are not in concordance with the democratic norms and human rights criteria.

NLD has been exerting effort amidst diversified danger and difficulty for 28 years to establish a democratic federal union.

Beginning from 2010, effort has been directed towards holding Second Panglong Conference, which is the union peace conference based upon the belief that our objectives can be realized successfully and peacefully only through co-operation among all indigenous races inclusive of Barmans based on the very essence of Panglong spirit.

National Reconciliation and Peace Centre was formed in July 2016 with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself as chairman. Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong Organizing Central Committee was formed in August. Then, the Union Peace Conference – 21st century Panglong was first started to be held on 31st August, 2016. Both signatories to the Nation-wide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and non-signatories indigenous armed organizations were able to attend the meeting.

We've held the national-level political dialogues in Kayin State and subject-wise nation-

al-level political dialogues in Nay Pyi Taw Council area with active participation by the people. The dialogues are being attended by the legal political parties, indigenous armed organizations, civil society organizations and those who are worth attending.

The dialogues involve reading of political sector paper, economic sector paper, social sector paper and land and natural resource sector paper. Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong will be held again in 2017. The national-level political dialogues will be held in the remaining states and regions soon.

Effort will be made to be able to build a genuine, democratic union in accord with common agreement of the union indigenous races reached at the 21st century Panglong, to ensure emergence of a constitution appropriate for the state in accord with the democratic norms and to create economic conditions that will contribute to equal development among all regions and states.

Peace talks require a time period. Seeking agreement through dialogues is in unison with democratic practices and a correct process for the future of Myanmar. However, it is particularly important not to delay the dialogues for an unlimited time period. Effort will have to be exerted to implement the agreement reached to be able to amend the constitution. And in making amendment to the constitution, care needs to be taken not to affect national stability and the people.

Esteemed voters,

(1) To promote the socio-economic life of the peasants, the government has issued agricultural loans during fiscal 2016-2017 to farmers with the rate of Ks 150,000 per acre, a Ks 50,000 increase compared to the amount of the loan granted by the previous government.

(2) Self assessment system was exercised by the tax payers. The increased revenue has enabled greater government spending in public interest.

(3) The National Education Strategy Plan 2016-2020 was formulated and implementation is under way in nine education sectors. Regarding basic education sector, measures are being taken to create better chances to pursue primary, middle and high school education and to develop technical and vocational training sector. Not to make parents burdened with education expenses, the government has spent the budget much more on the education sector.

(4) Measures were taken to provide the people with quality health care service and to make entire people healthy. The national health plan was formulated to be able to provide health service effectively and efficiently. Of-



Party Logo.

ficers numbering 2,004 and service personnel numbering 7,456 to be able to provide the people with better health care, better treatment and better prevention. Health budget was increased to reduce the public costs for receiving medical treatment.

(5) Rehabilitation activities were carried out more efficiently in regard to malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS. Yangon General Hospital was equipped with world class apparatuses with the result that over 200 patients have undergone cancer tests, 27 patients have undergone kidney transplants and 3 have liver transplants etc.

(6) Concerning victims of natural disasters, the ministries concerned had taken prompt action to visit the disaster stricken areas and provide assistance direct to the people in co-operation with social organizations.

(7) For perpetuity of sovereignty, the national defence duties are being performed by laying down strategic plans in such a manner as to suit the geographical situations. To ensure the rule of law, regional peace and prosperity and security, the police force is being transformed to become a world class one.

(8) To ensure life security and psychological security of the citizens and not to lose their inherent rights, the laws that are no longer in accord with the contemporary systems, democratic norms and human rights criteria have been amended, added and annulled.

(9) As investment in the garment industry has increased in Yangon region, the job opportunities are better now. YBS system was introduced. Back lane drains were cleared to prevent flooding in the rainy season. A total of 1,562 low-cost apartments and 421 fair-cost apartments will be sold. Besides, Yangon City is to be extended and upgraded to become a metropolitan city.

(10) A total of 74 hospitals and dispensaries were opened in Mandalay region. A total of 291-mile-long rural roads, 292-mile-long main roads and 72 bridges were built. Electricity was supplied to 244 villages. For staff quarters, a total of 448 apartments were sold whereas 562 fair-cost apartments were sold to the public.

(11) Projects were laid down

for all the remaining states and regions to develop in synchronization. Priority is given to regions that lag behind.

Esteemed voters,

In implementation of NLD's policies and programmes, eyes will be kept open and ears will be turned to the people to find out the people's wishes. We'll not lose sight of people's concerns and aspirations.

Regarding the reform processes, certain changes are easily visible whereas certain are not but they are being effectuated and will become obvious with the passage of time.

NLD has never made the country and the people suffer (from its actions); it has only struggled for the democratic cause and human rights aspired by the people, standing steadfastly on the people's side. NLD has thwarted all unjust oppressions relentlessly without adversely effecting whosoever individuals and/or whatsoever organizations. Nor has it ever broken its promise given to the public. It has never cheated and/or threatened the people and carried out organizational activities through the use of undue influence. It has constantly done things within the bounds of laws, rules and regulations. As we've behaved frankly and friendly towards the people in the past, we'll continue to behave the same. This is our firm commitment. We're honestly performing our duties as mandated by the people. In so doing, we'll join hands with all indigenous races within the union for emergence of a federal union, a modern, developed state and ensuring the rule of law and prevalence of regional peace and prosperity, keeping in our heart our party's policies and programmes.

Esteemed voters,

Hluttaw is a symbol of democracy. For a Hluttaw to be strong, it is needed for democracy to be strong. Only when those candidates who value democracy are elected, the obstacles to the path to democracy can be overcome. NLD will respect the wishes of the voting people.

I'd like to wish entire indigenous races inhabiting the republic of the union of Myanmar freedom from all dangers, peace of mind and wishes fulfilled.

Thank you everybody.—
(Unofficial Translation)

Job Vacancies At The Global New Light of Myanmar

The Global New Light of Myanmar, the country's oldest continuously published English-language daily newspaper, is looking for experienced journalists to join its expanding editorial team. Applications should be sent no later than **21 February, 2017**.

The GNLM currently has openings for a chief editor, two editors, five translators and reporters for its newsroom in Yangon.

1. Candidates for the chief editor (Male, Myanmar national) position must have the following qualifications.

- He must have extensive editorial experience with editing and must possess at least an MA English degree.
- He must have at least 15 years experience with print media in positions at the senior management level and possess good computer skills.
- He must be in good health and willing to work night shifts.
- He must be aged between 40 and 60.
- Salary is negotiable.

2. Candidates for two expatriate editors (Male/Female) must have following qualifications.

- He/she must be a native English speaker and must be a university graduate with a specialisation in journalism.
- He/she must have editing experience at newspapers or online publications.
- He/she must be in good health and willing to work night shifts.
- Age should be under 40, but those over 40 will be considered if he/she possesses excellent skills.
- Salary is negotiable.

3. Candidates for two senior translators (Male) must have the following qualifications.

- He must be a university graduate.
- He must be able to quickly translate and rewrite multiple stories from Myanmar to English, with at least 10 years experience in translation.
- He must be in good health and willing to work night shifts.
- Salary is negotiable.

4. Candidates for three junior translators (Male/Female) must have following qualifications.

- He/she must be a university graduate.
- He/she must be able to translate from Myanmar to English, with at least five years experience in translation.
- He/she can work night shifts.
- Salary is negotiable.

5. Candidates for three senior reporters (Male/Female) must have following qualifications.

- He/she must be a university graduate.
- He/she must be fluent in Myanmar and be able to write clear and concise copy in Burmese. Those who can write news stories in English will be preferred candidates.
- He/she must have experience with writing for an English-language newspaper or online publication. This will be a major advantage.
- He/she must have at least three years experience in print or online media.
- Salary is negotiable.

6. Candidates for junior reporters must have following qualifications.

- He/she must be a university graduate.
- He/she can write news stories clearly in Burmese.
- Salary is negotiable.

For further information, please call or email the following contacts. Applicants should send a cover letter and CV to No.150 Nga Htat Gyi Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, or email: gnlmdaily@gmail.com, dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com or call (01) 8604529, 09-428120086, 09-49445545.

Trade, security in spotlight as Abe, Trump hold 1st summit

WASHINGTON — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Donald Trump will hold their first official summit in Washington on Friday, with their countries' trade and security relationships likely to be high on the agenda.

The meeting offers a chance for the leaders to find common ground amid uncertainty about how Trump's "America First" agenda could affect Japan, which counts the United States as its top export destination and defence ally.

According to Japanese government officials, Abe and Trump will exchange views on how their countries could expand bilateral trade

and investment to aid in economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

Since his inauguration on 20 January, Trump has criticized Japanese automobile trade practices as being "not fair" to US automakers. He has also withdrawn the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, a 12-nation pact that Abe has promoted as economically and strategically beneficial.

Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, and US Vice President Mike Pence will also take part in the summit. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, however, will not, according to a

source close to bilateral ties.

After their summit in Washington on Friday, followed by a press conference and working lunch, the leaders will fly to Palm Beach, Florida, where Trump owns a vacation estate.

Trump has told US media that he and Abe, both known as keen golfers, will play a round of golf in Palm Beach. Japanese officials have expressed hope that the Florida trip will help the leaders build solid personal ties.

They have also said the primary goal of Abe's visit is to demonstrate the unwavering nature of the Japan-US alliance amid an increasingly severe security

environment in the Asia-Pacific region.

Abe and Trump are expected to discuss regional security issues, including the nuclear and missile development threat from North Korea and the situation in the East and South China seas, where China has been increasingly assertive in pressing claims to disputed territory. Ahead of the leaders' meeting Friday, Aso, who doubles as finance minister, is set to meet Pence, while Kishida will hold talks with his counterpart, Tillerson, with whom he spoke on the telephone last week.

Abe is scheduled to return to Japan on Monday evening.—*Kyodo News*



A KJ-200 surveillance aircraft of the Chinese Air Force flies during a training session for the upcoming parade marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, on the outskirts of Beijing, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

US, China military planes come inadvertently close over South China Sea

WASHINGTON — A US Navy P-3 plane and a Chinese military aircraft came close to each other over the South China Sea in an incident the Navy believes was inadvertent, a US official told Reuters on Thursday.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the aircraft came within 1,000 feet (305 meters) of each other on Wednesday in the vicinity of the Scarborough Shoal, between the Philippines and the Chinese mainland.

The official added that such incidents involving Chinese and American aircraft are infrequent, with only two having taken place in 2016.

The US aircraft was "on a routine mission operating in accordance with international law," US Pacific Command told Reuters in a statement.

"On 8 February, an interaction characterized by US Pacific Command as 'unsafe' occurred in international air space above the South China Sea, between a Chinese KJ-200 aircraft and a US Navy P-3C aircraft," it said.

The KJ-200 is a propeller airborne early warning and control aircraft based originally on the old Soviet-designed An-12.

"The Department of Defence and US Pacific Command are always concerned about unsafe interactions with Chinese military forces," Pacific Command added.

"We will address the issue in appropriate diplomatic and military channels."

In Beijing, China's defence ministry told state media the Chinese pilot responded with "legal and

professional measures".

"We hope the US side keeps in mind the present condition of relations between the two countries and militaries, adopts practical measures, and eliminates the origin of air and sea mishaps between the two countries," the *Global Times* cited an unnamed defence ministry official as saying.

Separately, China's Defence Ministry said in a statement on Friday three ships had left port for drills taking in the South China Sea, eastern Indian Ocean and Western Pacific.

China's blockade of Scarborough Shoal, a prime fishing spot, prompted the previous Philippine government to file a legal case in 2013 at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague, infuriating Beijing, which refused to take part.

While the court last year largely rejected China's claims, new Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte has sought to mend ties with Beijing and the situation around the shoal has largely calmed down.

China is deeply suspicious of any US military activity in the resource-rich South China Sea.

In December, a Chinese naval vessel picked up a US underwater drone in the South China Sea near the Philippines, triggering a US diplomatic protest. China later returned it.

The United States has previously criticized what it called China's militarization of its maritime outposts in the South China Sea, and stressed the need for freedom of navigation with periodic air and naval patrols nearby, angering Beijing.—*Reuters*

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily
UB-017	17:45	19:15	Daily
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6

YGN TO DMK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-252	8:30	10:20	Daily
FD-256	12:55	14:40	Daily
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily
DD-4239	21:00	22:55	Daily
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily

YGN TO CAN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-713	20:25	01:00+1	1
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5

YGN TO SIN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily
3K-582	11:35	16:05	Daily
TR-2823	9:25	13:55	1,2,4,5,7
UB-001	7:15	11:45	Daily

YGN TO NRT

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily

BANGKOK TO YANGON

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily
UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5
UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily
UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6

DMK TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-251	7:15	8:00	Daily
FD-255	11:35	12:25	Daily
FD-253	16:20	17:05	Daily
FD-257	20:15	21:10	Daily
DD-4234	10:30	11:15	Daily
DD-4230	6:30	7:15	Daily
DD-4238	19:25	20:15	Daily
SL-200	08:45	10:00	Daily
SL-206	17:10	18:35	Daily

CAN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-714	2:05	3:40	2
8M-712	14:15	15:50	2,4,5,7
CZ-3055	8:40	10:35	3,6
CZ-3055	14:40	16:40	1,5

SIN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-232	13:45	15:15	Daily
SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily
MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6
MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily
MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,3,5
MI-533	11:30	12:45	2
3K-583	17:30	19:00	Daily
3k-581	09:10	10:40	Daily
TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,7
UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily

NRT TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-813	11:00	16:30	Daily

YGN TO ICN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily

YGN TO KUL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily
AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily
8M-501	16:10	20:10	2
8M-501	11:45	15:45	1
MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily
MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7

YGN TO KMG

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily
MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily
MU-2012	12:55	19:55	3

YGN TO TPE

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CI-7916	10:50	16:10	Daily

YGN TO PEK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-906	23:50	0550+1	1,3,5,7

YGN TO HAN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-956	19:10	21:30	Daily

YGN TO SGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-942	12:10	14:55	2,3,4,5,7

YGN TO HKG

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KA-251	1:05	5:25	Daily
UB-8027	09:00	13:30	1,3,5,7

YGN TO DOH

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,3,4,6,7

YGN TO CNX

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-724	13:40	15:35	Daily

YGN TO DAC

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
BG-061	16:45	18:30	1,3,6

MDL TO DMK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-245	12:55	15:15	Daily

ICN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KE-471	18:30	22:30	Daily

KUL TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
AK-504	6:55	8:00	Daily
AK-502	17:20	18:30	Daily
8M-502	16:45	17:45	1
8M-502	21:10	22:10	2
MH-742	13:55	15:05	1,4,6,7
MH-740	09:10	10:15	Daily

KMG TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-415	10:50	11:30	Daily
MU-2031	13:50	14:30	Daily
MU-2011	08:20	11:55	3

TPE TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CI-7915	7:00	9:50	Daily

PEK TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-905	19:30	22:50	1,3,5,7

HAN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-957	16:40	18:10	Daily

SGN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-943	9:25	11:10	2,3,4,5,7

HKG TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KA-250	21:50	23:45	1,3,5,7
KA-252	22:20	00:10	2,4,6
UB-8028	14:50	16:20	1,3,5,7

DOH TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
QR-918	20:10	5:20	1,3,4,6,7

CNX TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-723	12:00	12:55	Daily

DAC TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
BG-060	13:30	16:00	1,3,6

DMK TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-244	11:10	12:25	Daily

MDL TO SIN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-533	15:45	20:50	2
MI-522	14:15	20:15	4,6

SIN TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-522	11:30	13:20	4,6
MI-533	11:30	14:50	2

MDL TO BKK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-710	14:10	16:35	Daily

BKK TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-709	12:00	13:20	Daily

MDL TO KMG

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2030	14:25	17:15	Daily

KMG TO MDL

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2029	13:20	13:15	Daily

NYT TO BKK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-722	19:50	22:50	1,3,4,5,6,7

BKK TO NYT

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-721	17:20	19:20	1,3,4,5,6,7

AIRLINE CODES

8M = Myanmar Airways International

BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines

MH = Malaysia Airlines

MU = China Eastern Airlines

NH = All Nippon Airways

SQ = Singapore Airways

PG = Bangkok Airways

UB = Myanmar National Airlines

VN = Vietnam Airline

3K = Jet Star

AI = Air India

CI = China Airlines

DD = Nok Airline

KA = Dragonair

MI = Silk Air

TG = Thai Airways

AK = Air Asia

CA = Air China

CZ = China Southern

FD = Air Asia

KE = Korea Airlines

QR = Qatar Airways

TR = Tiger Airline

DAY

1 = Monday

2 = Tuesday

3 = Wednesday

4 = Thursday

5 = Friday

6 = Saturday

7 = Sunday

Aust'n researchers prevent progression of diabetic kidney disease for first time

SYDNEY — An Australian pharmaceutical company has successfully prevented the progression of Diabetic Kidney Disease (DKD) for the first time.

DKD is an often fatal long-term complication of type 2 diabetes which is the most common cause of severe renal disease. It affects one third of people with type 2 diabetes and has no viable treatment until now.

An international team of scientists in collaboration with Melbourne-based global biotechnology leader CSL Limited investigated a therapeutic approach that targets the transport of fatty acids, or lipids, from the blood into tissues to treat DKD.

Using 2H10, an antibody developed by CSL, the researchers were able to block Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor B (VEGF-B), a protein that affects the transport of lipids into body tissue. Elevated levels of VEGF-B are a common symptom among patients with DKD.

By inhibiting VEGF-B signalling the researchers were able to reduce the accumulation of lipid deposits within the kidney and moderate the progression of kidney disease in a number of models of type 1 and 2 diabetes.

Andrew Nash, Senior Vice President of Research at CSL, said the finding could save lives.

“This research addresses an important area of unmet medical need and could lead to an entirely new approach to the treatment of type 2 diabetes,” Nash said in a media release on Friday.

Professor Ulf Eriksson, the lead researcher on the study, said that “the study reveals some mechanistic understanding of the disease progression and challenges the hypothesis that diabetic kidney disease is simply the result of chronic elevated blood glucose.”

The study, which was published in respected journal *Cell Metabolism* on Friday, was carried out on mice but a human trial of the protein in humans with DKD has been flagged for the near future.

—Xinhua

PHOTO: XINHUA

Eating during labor may be safe — even beneficial — for women

NEW YORK — Women may be able to eat more than just ice chips during labor without risking complications, according to a new review of previous research.

In fact, women who were allowed to eat before delivery had a slightly shorter labor than those who were restricted to ice chips or sips of water - although the study can't prove that eating caused deliveries to happen sooner.

“We really don't know how much if anything people can eat or drink in labor,” said senior author Dr. Vincenzo Berghella, of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia.

Whether women can have more than water or ice chips as they labor to give birth is a common discussion among healthcare providers, he told Reuters Health.

Concerns go back decades, to a 1940s study in which women who delivered under general anesthesia were at risk of inhaling their stomach contents and choking in it, Berghella and colleagues write in *Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

The use of general anesthesia during delivery is far less common today, but guidelines still recommend against eating solid food during labor, they add.

For the new study, the researchers compiled data from randomized controlled trials that compared the labor outcomes of women who were allowed to eat only ice chips or water and those who were allowed to eat or drink a bit more.

For example, one study allowed women to drink a honey and date syrup. Another study allowed all types of food and drinks. A few others allowed women to drink liquids with carbohydrates.

Overall, the researchers analyzed 10 trials that included 3,982 women in labor. All were only delivering one child — not twins or triplets — and were not at risk for cesarean delivery.

The women with the less restrictive diets were not at increased risk for other complications, including vomiting or choking, during the use of general anesthesia.

And women who were allowed to eat and drink more than the traditional ice chips and water had labors that were shorter, by an average of 16 minutes, compared to women with the more restrictive diets.

“If we're well hydrated and have adequate carbohydrate in our body, our muscles work better,” said Berghella. A woman's uterus is largely made of muscle.

The finding is reinforced by another of his studies, which found women who received more fluid than normal delivered faster than other women.

Berghella said it's still common practice for women with uncomplicated births to be restricted to water or ice chips during labor.

“The evidence from well-done studies is they can have more than that,” he said.—Reuters

lished in respected journal *Cell Metabolism* on Friday, was carried out on mice but a human trial of the protein in humans with DKD has been flagged for the near future.

—Xinhua

UN considering removing military peacekeepers from Haiti: official

PORT-AU-PRINCE — The United Nations is considering removing military personnel from its peacekeeping mission in Haiti, a UN official said on Thursday, indicating a possible scaling back of one of the body's longest-running and widely-criticised missions.

The UN mission in Haiti, often locally called by its French acronym MINUSTAH, has been in the country since 2004, when a rebellion led to the ouster and exile of then-President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

It is the only UN peacekeeping mission in the Americas.

Haiti suffered a two-

year political crisis until the recent election and inauguration of President Jovenel Moise. It has suffered major natural disasters, including an earthquake in 2010 and Hurricane Matthew last year. But the impoverished country has not had an armed conflict in years.

Herve Ladsous, a UN deputy secretary-general, said the institution was encouraged by the recent successful completion of the elections, the inauguration of the president, and the development and building up of the police force.

"The security situation throughout the country cannot be compared with that of



A United Nations (UN) car drives along a street of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on 9 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

10 years ago," Ladsous said.

"But I say to all who would be tempted to take advantage of this temporary period to return to illegality, commit crimes, violations of

human rights, I say no, we will not accept that."

He said there would be a UN assessment mission to determine a "reconfiguration" of MINUSTAH,

although he cautioned that the picture was not unequivocally rosy.

"If the military component is erased ... there is still a lot of work left to do on the police, on the law ... on human rights, on the status of women," Ladsous told journalists. The mission has been criticized for sexual abuse allegations and its role in Haiti's cholera epidemic, which was started by UN peacekeepers after the earthquake.

"Re-evaluation is especially appropriate in light of MINUSTAH's slow, expensive and limited progress in its primary mission," said Brian Concannon, the head

of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, a charity that has worked with cholera victims.

Concannon cited the introduction of cholera and sexual exploitation as areas of concern. Last October, the UN Security Council, which approves the mandates of the various peacekeeping missions, renewed MINUSTAH for six months rather than the usual year, a signal to observers of possible changes for the mission.

The secretary-general will weigh in on any change by 15 March, and the Security Council is expected to make its decision in April. —Reuters

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Htlin Lin Oo LL.B Advocate
MYANMAR TRADEMARK AND
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E-mail: mtpip@mpmail.net.mm
Tel:376318 G.P.O Box:666
Yangon. 11th February 2017

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Yangon. 11th February 2017

Greek city set for biggest peacetime evacuation over WWII bomb

ATHENS — Up to 72,000 people will be evacuated from their homes in Greece's second-biggest city of Thessaloniki on Sun-

day so experts can defuse and remove a World War II bomb.

The 250 kg bomb was discovered about 5 metres

below ground during excavation works at a gas station last week. Military experts will attempt to defuse the bomb where it is in an op-

eration expected to last several hours. Starting at 6 am (0400 GMT) on Sunday, buses will take residents living within a 2 km (1.2

miles) radius of the bomb site to local gyms, stadiums and cafes, police said, in the country's biggest peacetime evacuation.—Reuters

Four arrested in France for planning attack — sources

PARIS — Four people have been arrested in and around Montpellier, southern France, on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack,

police and justice sources said on Friday.

Those in custody included a 22 year-old man and his 16 year-old girlfriend,

both known to authorities for connections with radical Islam, after authorities found TATP explosives and other bomb-making materials in

his home. France remains on high alert over possible Islamist militant attacks. More than 230 people have died in a series of assaults since the

beginning of 2015 and the country has been under state of emergency rules since November the same year. —Reuters

Brazil's Supreme Court probes former president, senators



Brazil's interim President Michel Temer (C) attends a meeting with Brazil's Senate President Renan Calheiros (R) and Planning Minister Romero Juca (L) in Brasilia, Brazil, on 23 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SAO PAULO — A Brazilian Supreme Court justice on Thursday authorised a probe into allies of President Michel Temer on allegations they tried to thwart an investigation into political kickbacks at state-run oil firm Petrobras, a court official said.

Prosecutor General Rodrigo Janot had earlier this week accused ex-President Jose Sarney, who now sits in the Senate, along with Senators Romero Juca and Renan Calheiros of conducting "political manoeuvres" in a bid to hamper the massive investigation, known as Operation Carwash.

Sergio Machado, a former head of a unit of the state oil company, was also implicated in the scheme, the prosecutor said.

It was the first investigation authorised by Supreme Court judge Edson Fachin since he took over the Carwash probe on 2 February from Justice Teori Zavascki, who died in a plane crash.

The prosecutor general produced six hours of conversations between Machado and the politicians, which Janot claims demonstrate their intent to obstruct the investigation.

Machado, who has turned state's witness, recorded the conversations himself. In the recordings, the men discuss how they could create roadblocks to the investigation into political graft, which has cast a shadow over Temer's centre-right government. —Reuters

Indian PM calls Rahul Gandhi biggest political joke on Google

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a jibe at main opposition Congress party's second-in-command Rahul Gandhi on Friday, saying the Nehru-Gandhi scion is the biggest political joke on Google.

Attacking Gandhi at a

political rally in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the prime minister said that the Congress vice president lacked understanding of issues faced by the farmers. "Some leaders want to make potatoes in factories. What can be expected from such leaders? They cannot work

for the welfare of farmers, they don't know what farming is," Modi said, addressing the rally in the town of Bijnor.

He added: "There is this Congress leader known for his childish acts. If you Google, you will see the number of jokes on him. No

other leader is the target of as many jokes as this Congress leader. Because of his acts, even senior Congress leaders prefer to maintain distance from him."

The politically important state of Uttar Pradesh goes to polls this month and it will be a sort of electoral

referendum for Modi's demonetisation move.

In November, the prime minister from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced scrapping of currency notes of higher denominations in a sudden televised address to nation.—Xinhua

Two die as winter storm wallops northeastern United States

BOSTON/NEW YORK — The fiercest snowstorm of the winter slammed the northeastern United States on Thursday, leaving a foot (30 cm) of snow in places, canceling thousands of flights and shutting down schools. At least two deaths were blamed on the storm.

The storm, which came a day after temperatures had been a spring-like 50 to 60 degrees (10 to 16C), had wind gusts up to 50 miles per hour (80 kph) and left roads and sidewalks dangerously slick in densely populated cities such as New York, Boston and Hartford, Connecticut.

The storm's winds reached as far south as Virginia, where a truck driver

died after his tractor-trailer was blown off the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, Tom Anderson, the facility's deputy director, said in a phone interview.

A New York City doorman died while shoveling snow as he slipped and fell down a flight of stairs, crashing into a window that cut his neck, police reported.

Some areas experienced "thunder snow," violent bursts of weather featuring both snow and lightning.

Nearly two-thirds of the flights into or out of the three major New York-area airports were canceled, as were 69 percent of those at Boston Logan International Airport, according to Flight-aware.com.

Nationwide, about 4,000 flights were canceled and 5,700 delayed.

"The roads are dangerous," New York Governor Andrew Cuomo told reporters. "I don't care if you have a four-wheel-drive car and you think you're a super hero ... if you don't have to be out, don't be out."

David Hassan, 50, attested to the ugliness of the weather as he packed up his mobile coffee cart in New York's Times Square.

"I don't like coming out in this weather but I have three kids going to school and I have to work," Hassan said as he prepared for the two-hour trip back to his home in Parsippany, New Jersey.



Stranded travellers sit beneath a sign displaying cancelled flights in a nearly empty Delta Airlines terminal at New York's LaGuardia Airport during a powerful winter storm in New York City, US, on 9 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

New York received about a foot of snow, while Boston was braced for up to 20 inches.

Many schools systems

were closed in the area, and Boston schools would remain closed on Friday, Mayor Marty Walsh said.

Many government

offices also were shuttered with Massachusetts and Connecticut ordering non-emergency workers to stay home.—Reuters

Sri Lanka to launch tourism promotion in southeastern China

COLOMBO — The Sri Lanka government will undertake a tourism promotion drive in Fujian province of China next week to attract more and more Chinese tourists, a Sri Lankan Minister said on Friday.

Tourism Promotion Minister John Amararatunga told Xinhua that tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka were up by 20 per cent in January compared with the corresponding period of the last year.

"We received more than 200,000 tourists last month. This is despite flight restrictions at the Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport for renovations of the runways," he said.

Asserting that the Chinese and Indian nationals account for a bulk of tourist arrivals, he said he would leave for Fujian on 17 February to start a promotion drive with the help of authorities in the south-

eastern province of China.

"We will set up a tourism promotional centre in that area for the benefit of those willing to travel in Sri Lanka," he said.

Last year 2.2 million tourists visited Sri Lanka.

The minister said he was targeting to bring as many as 2.5 million this year.

Sri Lanka became a place of attraction particularly after the civil war ended in May 2009. —Xinhua



A monarch butterfly rests on the ground at the Sierra Chin-cua butterfly sanctuary on a mountain in Angango, Michoacan on 24 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Weather, deforestation curb monarch migration to Mexico in 2016/17

MEXICO CITY — More than 27 per cent fewer monarch butterflies migrated to Mexican forests during the 2016/2017 season, a study showed on Thursday, fueling concerns the orange-and-black insect could face growing threats from weather and deforestation.

During the second half of December 2016, monarch butterflies covered 2.91 hectares (7.2 acres) of fir and pine forests in the central states of Michoacan and Mexico, compared with 4.01 hectares (9.9 acres) in the same period in the previous year, the study said.

Led by the World

Wildlife Fund, Mexico's National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), and others, the study cited fewer mating sites, extreme weather and deforestation as threats to the migration of the monarch butterfly.

Monarch density in Mexico reached a record low during the 2013/2014 season, when the butterfly occupied just 0.67 hectares (1.6 acres) of the forests, the study noted. While their numbers have rebounded in recent years since, they are still well below what they were two decades ago.—

Reuters

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MV OEL MALAYSIA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV OEL MALAYSIA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of B.S.W where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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MYANMAR PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 12th FEBRUARY 2017 (Union Day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

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Would you play for the Nazis? 'Django' movie poses moral dilemma

BERLIN — When the Nazis asked Django Reinhardt to play for troops heading to the Eastern Front, the musician faced a moral dilemma relevant to artists today, the director of a biopic on the jazz guitar pioneer said on Thursday.

"Django", which opens the Berlin Film Festival, tells the story of the French guitarist who was courted by the Nazi occupiers to make a morale-boosting performance and counter "negro" jazz music at a time when people of his Romani ethnicity were being rounded up and killed in concentration camps.

French director Etienne Comar, who listened to Django's music as a child because his father was a fan, said he wanted to depict an artist in a complex historical era to show something that would resonate with contemporary audiences.

"Political commitment is not a straightforward question - should you play or not play to a certain audience when you don't approve of their ideas, for example?" Comar said at a news conference before the film's screening.



General view of the red carpet arrivals for the screening of the movie 'Django', during the opening gala of the 67th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin, Germany, on 9 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

In the movie, Django has just

performed in a successful show in occupied Paris when a German officer tells him that Joseph Goeb-

bels, Nazi Germany's propaganda minister, and maybe even Adolf Hitler want to see him play in Ber-

lin. While Django initially thinks his popularity will protect him, he decides to try to flee to Switzerland with his mother and pregnant wife when his lover warns that people are being rounded up in Germany and babies are being used for experiments.

"I realized there were an enormous number of parallels (with today)," Comar said. "Refugees, the ways in which you can constrain people, preventing them from traveling and moving about freely."

More than a million migrants, many of them fleeing conflict and persecution, have arrived in Germany over the last two years and the premiere of "Django" comes at a time of international outrage over US President Donald Trump's temporary travel ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries and refugees.

"Django" is one of 18 films at the 'Berlinale' competing for Golden and Silver Bears. The festival in the German capital runs until 19 February. —Reuters



Actor Jake Gyllenhaal presents director Ang Lee with the John Schlesinger Britannia Award for Excellence in Directing at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Los Angeles' Britannia Awards in Beverly Hills, California, in 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jake Gyllenhaal to make Broadway debut at historic Hudson Theatre

NEW YORK — One of New York's oldest theaters will stage a play for the first time in almost 50 years when movie star Jake Gyllenhaal makes his Broadway debut later this month at the Hudson Theatre in a musical about 19th century French artist Georges Seurat.

Showbusiness legends including Elvis Presley, Barbra Streisand, Sammy Davis Jr. and Carol Burnett have passed through the Hudson's dressing rooms, as have a long line of rock bands and burlesque artists during the theater's colorful 114-year history.

Its original owner Henry B. Harris died in 1912 on the RMS Titanic, while his wife made it onto the last lifeboat before the ship sank. CBS Radio broadcast from there from 1934 to 1943, and NBC network premiered its "Tonight Show" from the theater in 1954.

During the more seedy Sixties it hosted burlesque shows, and in the 1980s it became a

venue for rock concerts. More recently, until 2015, it was used for special events by Millennium Hotels.

For its rebirth as a theater, the Hudson is staging 'Sunday in the Park with George', a revival of a 1984 Broadway production, based on the book by James Lapine, with music and lyrics written by Stephen Sondheim.

"I'm thrilled, thrilled to be making my Broadway musical debut here at the Hudson Theatre, and in a Sondheim and Lapine musical, so there's no pressure," Gyllenhaal said, to laughter from a crowd gathered outside the theater for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday night.

Gyllenhaal portrays Seurat as he paints his most famous work, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grand Jatte". Tony Award-winner Annaleigh Ashford, plays Seurat's neglected lover Dot.

The production opens on 23 February, and is scheduled to run through 23 April.—Reuters

Vietnamese movie star to appear in US film starring Will Smith

HANOI — Vietnamese movie star and music producer Ngo Thanh Van, known as Veronica Ngo in English, plays the role of a killer named Tien in a US film starring Will Smith, Joel Edgerton and Noomi Rapace.

Van arrived in Los Angeles late last year to begin filming her scenes in the 90-million US dollar "Bright", a production directed by David Ayer and written by Max Landis, who involved in the hits "End of Watch" in 2012, "Fury" in 2014 and "Suicide Squad" in 2016, Vietnam News Agency reported Thursday.

The fantasy thriller is about a policeman, played by American actor Smith, and a humanoid called Orc, played by Australian actor Edgerton, who work together to protect a magic wand from evil forces.

"Bright" is the second US film in which Van has appeared. In 2015, she played one of the supporting roles in a sequel to the 2000 Hollywood blockbuster "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

Van learned kungfu with experienced martial artists before filming her scenes in New Zealand and China. "I'm confident of my ability to work beside foreign colleagues," said the 39-year-old actress.—Xinhua

Akshay thanks Arshad for making it to 'Jolly LLB' screening

MUMBAI — Actor Akshay Kumar is grateful to Arshad Warsi as he finally made it to the screening of "Jolly LLB 2".

The 49-year-old actor, who plays advocate Jagdishwar Mishra AKA Jolly in the film, took to Twitter to give a shout-out to Warsi.

"And a mix it was — Jolly 1 with Jolly 2. Thank you so much @ArshadWarsi for all your support for #JollyLLB2. So glad u made it to the screening," tweeted Kumar, alongside a picture of both of them at the show.

To which Warsi tweeted that he had a great time with the ac-

tor and he did a great job with the character.

"It's always a pleasure meeting you @akshaykumar & you make a fantastic Jolly," wrote Warsi.

Warsi played the titular character in the first installment of the film and passed on the baton to

Kumar for the sequel.

In recent interviews with the media, Kumar said he did not have to work hard on his character as Warsi had already made "quite a few things easy for him" by doing a great job in the first movie.

The Subhash Kapoor film releases on Friday.—PTI

Sports gear makers trying to attract kids to physical exercise

TOKYO — Sports gear makers are promoting products and programmes to get children fond of physical exercise, hoping to increase the sports-loving population.

A Mizuno Corp. group company has developed a product to help elementary school kids perform back-hip circles on horizontal bars in physical education classes — an exercise they often dislike.

Mizuno showed the product off at a sports event in Tokyo's Meguro Ward in November last year that attracted some 150 children and their parents.

Hinami Oya, 8, performed the tricky exercise with the help of the product. "As I found how my body rotates, I think I can now do it in physical education class," she said.

"We want to eliminate

even one factor that makes children hate physical exercise for the sake of expanding the market for sports gear," said Masahiro Nakagawa, Tokyo branch head of Senoh Corp., the Mizuno subsidiary that developed the product in cooperation with an associate professor at the University of Toyama.

Senoh, manufacturer of sports and exercise equipment, will market the product, which costs 27,000 yen, to elementary schools and teachers' colleges across Japan.

Asics Corp. has launched a "Kids Sports Challenge" programme to measure the sporting ability of children aged 3 to 6 in six areas, including the 10-meter dash, kicking a soccer ball and throwing a tennis ball.

The event is held at kindergartens and commer-



Photo taken on 27 November, 2016 shows an elementary school girl practicing a back-hip circle on a horizontal bar with the help of a device developed by a Mizuno Corp. group company. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

cial facilities throughout the country around 20 times a year to help judge the type of exercise a child is good

at. "To broaden sports-related markets, we will help parents recognize the importance of physical exercise

for small children," an Asics official in charge of the programme said.

Moves to attract chil-

dren to physical exercise are not limited to sports gear makers.

Nestle Japan launched in November last year a table tennis game combined with dietary education for elementary school pupils. In the game, children hit a table tennis ball at cards with images of nutritional foods.

The game is a part of Nestle S.A.'s worldwide Healthy Kids Global Program, which is designed to raise nutrition and health knowledge and promote physical activity among school-age children around the world. To help children learn the importance of physical exercise in addition to nutritional food, the new programme involves table tennis because it is a "handy sport for anyone," a Nestle public relations official said. —Kyodo News

The show must go on: New York Fashion Week braves massive storm

NEW YORK — New York Fashion week got off to a snowy start on Thursday with celebrities and the de-

sign world's elite braving a massive storm to watch models strut street-wear and gowns at some of the most

important runway shows.

Luxury brand Nicholas K opened the Fall/Winter 2017 shows with a homage to 1990s hip hop.

Dozens of models paraded down the catwalk wearing vibrantly coloured over-sized pants and big hooped earrings with metallic make up.

Christopher Kunz, who comprises half of the sibling duo behind the street-wear label, said he was surprised to see so many guests show up for his show during the storm, which dumped roughly 14 inches (36 cm) on the city, turning Manhattan into a slippery mess. His sister, Nicholas Kunz, said they chose a hip hop theme because they felt the 1990s represented communal ac-

tivism and ethnic diversity, issues that are increasingly relevant after the recent election of US President Donald Trump. "I think there was some strong messages in the 90's hip hop era. It was all about communal activism, ethnic diversity, equality," Kunz said. "We've always been about diversity and environmental things. It's really disheartening to see things going backwards in those two areas for us."

Several celebrities, including fashion maven Anna Wintour, donned pink pins for the first day of Fashion Week to show their support for Planned Parenthood, which has come under attack from anti-abortion advocates. —Reuters

Hottest cut of all — Gaza barber wields blowtorch

GAZA — In Ramadan Odwan's barbershop in Gaza, hair isn't just blow-dried, it's blowtorch-dried.

"People have gone crazy about it, many people are curious to go through the experience and they are not afraid," he told Reuters. "People here love adventures."

Odwan, 37, is not the first stylist in the world to use flame to straighten hair, but his craft is unique in the Gaza Strip.

In his salon in the southern Gaza town of Rafah, Odwan applied what he described as a protective liquid coating to a customer's hair — he declined to

disclose its contents — before aiming for the head and pressing the button on a small blowtorch.

"I control how long I apply fire, I keep it on and off for 10 seconds or 15 seconds. It is completely safe and I have not encountered any accident since I started it two months ago," Odwan added. Odwan charges 20 shekels (\$5.20) for a haircut and fire-straightening.

A barber for the past 18 years, he said part of the reason he uses the technique is to show that Palestinian barbers are as "professional as those out there around the world". —Reuters



Models present creations from the Tadashi Shoji Autumn/Winter 2017 collection during New York Fashion Week in the Manhattan borough of New York, US, on 9 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(11-2-2017 07:00am ~ 12-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon-The Prayer Halls and Buddha Images (Part-1)
07:52	Am	Culture Shows: Composer Ma Mya Lay
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	Let's Celebrate Making of Htamane in the Month of Daboudwe
08:38	Am	Discovering Tribes: Tai Khun (or) Gon: their life and customs (Part 1)
08:55	Am	Black Gold (P - II)
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Snake Catcher
09:38	Am	Geographic Center of Myanmar
10:03	Am	News

10:27	Am	Next Generation (Thin Wai Khaing- Golfer)
10:35	Am	On the River
10:56	Am	A Photographer's Life at Shwedagon Pagoda

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Friday 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	New
07:25	Pm	Yathe Taung Township In A Nut-Shell
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar: Classic Car Show
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Hanthawaddy U Win Tin: A Fearless Man (Ep-1)
08:49	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Than Kywe

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Friday 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)



Palestinian barber Ramadan Odwan styles and straightens the hair of a customer with fire at his salon in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, on 2 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

UEFA to ask for 16 places at expanded 2026 World Cup

BERLIN — Europe wants 16 places at the expanded 48-team 2026 World Cup finals, Aleksander Ceferin, the president of the continent's soccer organisation UEFA, said on Thursday.

The game's governing body, FIFA, decided last month to add 16 teams at the finals with a first round of 16 groups of three. The top two in each group would qualify for the knockout stage.



UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin. PHOTO: REUTERS

"...we think, to ask for 16 slots at least (for European teams), plus another condition that each European team is in a different group," Ceferin told a news conference after UEFA's executive committee meeting in Nyon, Switzerland.

"Then if it's true that we are so good, that the quality is on our side, then I think that all 16 (European teams) can qualify in the second round..."

Thirteen European teams qualified for the last World Cup in

Brazil in 2014, which was won by Germany.

FIFA is expected to confirm the quotas for each continental governing body at meetings in Bahrain in May.

Meanwhile, future UEFA presidents will be limited to a maximum of three terms and a total of 12 years in the job, the European soccer body said after its executive committee approved a set of governance reforms.

Past presidents of the organisation had no such restrictions, with former chief Lennart Johansson in charge for a full 17 years.

Ceferin, who replaced disgraced Frenchman Michel Platini in September, has pledged to reform the organisation.

UEFA said part of the reforms approved by the executive committee was the "introduction of term limits for the UEFA President and members of the UEFA Executive Committee, with the possibility to serve for a maximum of three four-year terms."

Other changes include granting two member positions on its Executive Committee to representatives of the European Club Association (ECA).—Reuters

Murray to return to Davis Cup action against France

LONDON — Britain's world number one Andy Murray will play against France in the Davis Cup quarter-finals in April after missing the first-round victory against Canada last weekend.



Britain's Andy Murray. PHOTO: REUTERS

"The tie against Canada was tricky," Murray, who was surprisingly beaten by Germany's Mischa Zverev in the fourth round of the Australian Open, told Sky Sports.

"I needed to have a break, I was definitely tired when I got back from Australia and my body was pretty pleased I took some time off. But away to France, after Miami, I'm into the swing of things and I've had enough rest."

Murray was instrumental in Britain winning the Davis Cup in 2015 when he won all 11 rubbers in four rounds.

In Murray's absence Britain beat Canada 3-2 last weekend while France defeated Japan 4-1.

The two nations met at the same stage in 2015 with Britain winning at home on grass at Queen's Club.

France are likely to choose clay for the tie.—Reuters



Argentinian soccer legend Diego Armando Maradona attends the Italian soccer Hall of Fame 2017 event in Florence, Italy, on 17 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Maradona given FIFA ambassadorial role

BUENOS AIRES — Former Argentina captain Diego Maradona has been handed an ambassadorial role by the game's global governing body FIFA.

"Now it's official," the 1986 World Cup winner said on his Facebook page on Thursday. "Finally I can fulfill one of the lifelong dreams; to work for a clean

and transparent FIFA alongside people who really love football."

The ex-Boca Juniors, Napoli and Barcelona forward, 56, was a harsh critic of disgraced former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who is serving a six-year ban for ethics violations.

The world body is recovering from the worst graft scandal in its

history, with dozens of people, including ex-FIFA executive committee members, indicted in the United States since May 2015.

Maradona, who has 91 caps, has been invited back into the FIFA fold thanks to a warm relationship with Blatter's successor Gianni Infantino, who was elected in February last year.—Reuters

Revived Clement eyes third hurdles world title

MELBOURNE — Kerron Clement's run in the mixed 400 metres relay at the Nitro Series would be unlikely to make his career highlights reel but he was glad to take a modest step towards London where he will bid for an unprecedented third hurdles world title.

The Olympic 400m hurdles champion came to Melbourne as a member of Usain Bolt's 'All-stars' for the inaugural team-based event at Lakeside Stadium, a glitzy, brash and ultimately low-pressure affair for many of the athletes.

Clement's relay team, boasting only one other 400m specialist in Jamaican Christine Day, was always up against it and the American crossed the line 19 seconds after Christine Ohuruogu's England won the mixed relay during the second instalment of the three-meeting series on Thursday.

Like many of the participating athletes, Trinidad-born Clement is some distance from reaching peak form and a trip Down Under was an unusual starting point for his season.

But the invitation from eight-times gold medallist Bolt was too hard to resist and 31-year-old Clement was curious about the unorthodox mix of sport and entertainment the event promised.

"Today was fun. I love my team, we finished last but it's just great to be here," Clement



Kerron Clement of USA. PHOTO: REUTERS

told Reuters trackside as a troupe of dancers stomped on a nearby stage to electronic music.

"It's a privilege. Any time Bolt gets attached to anything, you need to give it your best shot."

"I honestly love (the atmosphere). It's new to track and field and it's great to be a part of it."

"Hopefully other people take notice and do the same thing. Track and field needs to be fun for athletes because we don't need more stress."

Clement is enjoying a second flowering of his career, having captured a 400m relay gold and 400m hurdles silver at the 2008 Beijing Olympics before a litany of injury problems set in.

He came close to hanging up his spikes during a lean period in 2013 as he struggled to reach peak form after undergoing hernia surgery and missed out on a medal at the London Games.

He took a break in 2014 and a holiday in the Caribbean with friends to freshen the mind before coming back in 2015 with renewed determination.

It culminated in a brilliant race in the 400m hurdles final in Rio where he dipped toward the line to edge Kenya's Boniface Mucheru Tumuti by 0.05 of a second.

The win was gratifying for an athlete whose appearance in a music video for American singer Beyonce generated more buzz than his achievements on the track in the few preceding years.

Back in his first halcyon period, Clement won back-to-back 400m hurdles titles at Osaka in 2007 and Berlin two years later, joining fellow American Edwin Moses (1983, 1987) and Felix Sanchez of the Dominican Republic (2001, 2003) as the only men to win the event twice at the world championships.

"I'm really psyched for the world championships, that's my main focus for the season," said Clement, who also owns two world gold medals in the 400m relay.

"Getting that third world title would be amazing. I'll be chasing history. I'm already on the team but I just have to peak at the right time and pick my races very smartly. "It should be a fun season."—Reuters