



■ NATIONAL

State Counsellor receives Dr. Karl D. Jackson from Johns Hopkins University

► PAGE 3

■ NATIONAL

VP assists in building infrastructures in Maungtau

► PAGE 6

■ LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar CMP garment exports to touch \$1.8 billion in FY 2017

► PAGE 5



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Friday, 17 February 2017

Less than 8% of voters checked by-elections electoral roll in Yangon

Zaw Gyi (Panita)

JUST 7.87 per cent of eligible voters checked their names on the electoral roll for 2017 By-elections in Yangon Region, said Yangon Region Election Commission Secretary U Tin Win yesterday.

"The number of eligible voters who checked the electoral roll is very low compared with total eligible voters. Maybe because of our door-to-door collection of eligible voters," said U Tin Win.

Out of more than 990,000 eligible voters in Yangon Region, just over 70,000 voters had come and checked the electoral roll by 13 February. There are 19 vacant seats nationwide: three in Amyotha Hluttaw, nine in Pyithu Hluttaw and seven in region/state hluttaws.

In Yangon Region, the candidates will contest in 11 townships: Kamayut, Kyimyindine, Seikan, Latha, Hlaing, Lanmadaw, Ahlon, Hlinethaya, Dagon Myothit Seikan, Dagon Myothit (East) and Kawhmu. The by-election is slated to be held on 1st April.



Voters check their names on the electoral roll in their district for this year's by-elections on 1 April. PHOTO: ZAW GYI

“The by-election is slated to be held on 1st April.”

KNU, KIO discuss participation in nationwide peace process

KAYIN National Union (KNU) delegations and the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) discussed the current political situation and the status of peace yesterday morning at KIO headquarters in Kachin State.

The discussion included finding a way to be inclusive of all groups in political dialogues, in accordance with commitments in the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

Yesterday's main objectives were to continuously co-operate for peace and to find out how to establish common ground between the two because there were disagreements over signing the NCA, said Saw Mutu Say Poe, Chairman of KNU.

"We want a big group like KIO to participate in political dialogues. Which is why we are still in touch with KIO and share peace-related information among the Kachin and Kayin people which we believe can support the peace process," he said. After discussions, the two groups made an announcement.

"We will change the view for peace, finding what would be a common agreement through meeting among groups who did not sign yet, Tatmataw and government. We aim to do better for improvement. What we importantly see is that the public will get benefit without disagreement, although they had decided for signing on NCA based on their situation and its people. We deeply say all-inclusive political dialogues will bring sustainable peace," he said.

SEE PAGE 3 >>

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee

Notification 2/2017

5th Waning of Tabodwe 1378 ME

16 February 2017

Formation of Working Committees

1. Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee will form working committees for systematic implementation of the tasks based on the subjects to be discussed at the dialogues, as follows:
 - (A) Work Committee for Discussing Political Affairs,
 - (B) Work Committee for Discussing Social Affairs,
 - (C) Work Committee for Discussing Economic Affairs,
 - (D) Work Committee for Discussing Security Affairs,
 - (E) Work Committee for Discussing Policies on Land and Natural Environmental Affairs

2. In forming these committees, it has been agreed and decided each working committee shall comprise of four representatives each from Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong, from the government, ethnic armed groups and officially organized political parties and UPDJC's secretary 3 members, 15 altogether.
3. Now, respective groups have submitted approved list of names of representatives to be assigned in working committees, accordingly, working committees of the UPDJC have been formed as follows:
 - (A) **Work Committee for Discussing Political affairs**
 - (1) U Khin Zaw Oo (Tatmadaw)
 - (2) Dr Hlyan Hmon Sar Khaung (Ethnic armed group)
 - (3) Sai Kyaw Nyunt (Political party)
 - (4) Brig-Gen Tin Aung (Tatmadaw)
 - (5) Brig-Gen Hla Than Maung (Tatmadaw)
 - (6) U Htay Win Aung (Pyithu Hluttaw Representative)
 - (7) U Kyaw Kyaw Han (Director-General, President's Office)
 - (8) Dr Sai Oo (Ethnic armed group)
 - (9) Saw El Kalu Say (Ethnic armed group)

SEE PAGE 6 >>



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

Creek maintenance discussed in 10th day of 4th regular section of Pyithu Htuttaw

U Aung Kyaw Kyaw, MP for Hlaing constituency, asked a question about the creek maintenance programme and the Union Minister for Transport and Communications, U Thant Zin Maung used a drainage map of three creeks to answer.

The Thamine Creek starts flowing from Konemyintthar in Mayangone township and passes through Mindama street to Innsein street to Boho and Bay-in street to the Hlaing River. Its total length is 13,800 feet. Another creek named Padauk originates in Panchan Street and passes through three wards to the

Hlaing River, a total of 5,700 feet. The Kamayut creek passes through four quadrants to the Hlaing River, a distance of 8,500 feet. All the creeks are annually maintained, the minister said.

"The drainage system of the three creeks will be improved in the open season of 2017 as the Yangon mayor has responded that Yangon City Development Committee is annually working on maintenance, taking rubbish out from the creeks, removing squatters on the creeks, setting up marks and defining the creek's areas," the minister said, adding that the creeks are not used for

transportation but for wastewater drainage.

Question about promotions reveals conflict in health ministry

U Min Thaing, MP for Bogelay Constituency, asked yesterday what the rules and regulations were for the promotion of civil servants in the Department of Public Health and the Department of Medical Services under the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The question by U Min Thaing on the tenth day of the fourth regular section of the Py-

ithu Htuttaw revealed a rift that is occurring in the department of health.

The Minister of Health and Sport, Dr Myint Htwe said that there is a conflict between laboratory experts trained by the Ministry and Bachelor of Medical Technology degree holders from the University of Medical Technology.

"One-hundred and forty-one graduates from the University of Medical Technology do not agree that someone can be directly promoted after being tested for qualification of level-3 experts without having received a degree

from the Medical University. They are aggrieved. For instance, 106 laboratory level-3 experts (without university degrees) had also appealed to National Health Committee to be promoted to the position of laboratory level-2 on 12 July 2015," said the Minister.

"We will have to promote those qualified servants who pass through the qualification test," he answered, adding that he thanked the questioner for raising the question in the Pyithu Htuttaw. Dr Myint Htwe said that the ministry will act to improve the promotions process. —Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw

4th annual Amyotha Hluttaw meeting 10th day proceeding

THE 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 4th Annual Meeting 10th day continued today at 10 am in Nay Pyi Taw at Amyotha Hluttaw Convocation Hall.

In the meeting, Deputy Ministers addressed questions raised by Hluttaw Representatives on strengthening the agricultural crop market, developing roads and bridges (transportation) and construction projects on a new Banking Building and Town Hall. The Bill on Statistics was submitted to the Hluttaw and reports were debriefed.

Daw Than Than Aye of Magway constituency (7) raised the question of whether construction of a bridge in Kanpaing Community Village in Thayet County, Mindon Township will be approved in the 2017-2018 Fiscal year, to which Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw replied that the total cost of the 250-feet, iron-and-timber clad bridge in Kanpaing Community Village

is estimated by the ministry to cost Ks350 Lakhs, therefore the ministry is unable to include the construction of the bridge in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year and the project will be submitted for the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year and, if the budget permits, will be considered for construction.

U Aye Cho of Bago constituency (9) raised the question of whether there could be an upgrading of the road connecting Mayarman to Nyaungsar in Pyi District, Shwetaung Township to a cement road. Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw replied: "The Shwenatung-Nyaungsar road project to upgrade to a cement road was not included in the Country Development General Department 2016-2017 Fiscal Year, therefore, depending on the line up of Regional and District rankings, the project will be put up for consideration.

U Man Law Maung of Chin constituency (8) raised the question of whether there could be

consideration for rebuilding 40 market stalls destroyed by fire in Mindat District, Mindat City from the Union Budget. Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win from Ministry of Planning and Finance said that Ks315.800 Million Lakhs for the reconstruction of the Mindat City Market has been submitted by the local government in Chin to the Union Government and in (17/2016) Union Government meeting has been approved under Union Budget Code 4, Reserve Budget Act 27, Subcode(A), subcode(2) as an important matter that requires the use of the union budget with approval from the Union Government and Pyithu Hluttaw. The case concerned has been approved by the Union Government as a result of a natural disaster and the Local Government in Chin can proceed under the regulations of the reserve budget.

U Soe Thiha of constituency (10) asked in which fiscal year will construction of a new Town Hall in Paung Township be con-

sidered, to which Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win from Ministry of Planning and Finance replied on behalf of the Local Government in Mon.

"No suitable plot of land for construction of a Town Hall has been located in Paung Township, therefore a suitable location needs to be settled and the budget for the project will be calculated and be submitted in the appraisal of the nearest Fiscal Budget Year," said U Maung Maung Win.

Questions raised by U Baw Ye Soe Wai of Kayah constituency (3) and U Tin Aung Htun of Magway constituency (5) were answered by Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw from Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win from Ministry of Planning and Finance.

Afterwards, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win from Ministry of Planning and Finance submitted the Budget Bill to the Hluttaw for approval and Bill

committee member U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Magway Constituency (4) read the Committee's report concerning the Draft Law.

The Bill Committee report detailed Rule (13), Code 45 should be modified to Code 46 and it should be added in detail that Whosoever is found guilty of breaching restrictions in Code 42, be it an individual or family establishment with a penalty not exceeding Ks10 Lakhs, be it a corporation or company with a penalty not exceeding Ks100 lakhs, be it a civil servant with a penalties from Civil Law and related penalties form the Law concerning the perpetrations involved, will be punished before the Law.

Amyotha Hluttaw Chairman announced Hluttaw Representatives wanting to discuss on the Budget Bill can register themselves. The 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 4th Annual Meeting 11th day is submitted to be continued on February 21st.—Myanmar News Agency

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman receives Vietnamese, Chinese ambassadors

PYIDAUNGSU HLUTTAW Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann received Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar Mrs. Luan Thuy Duong yesterday at 11am in Nay Pyi Taw Hluttaw Building Ward (I-11) Guest Hall.

In the meeting discussions were made on cooperation between the two countries' law commissions, legal support on amending Investment Laws, and



Thura U Shwe Mann welcomes Mrs. Luan Thuy Duong in Nay Pyi Taw Hluttaw Building yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

the status of Vietnamese companies investing in Myanmar.

Later the Commission Chairman received the People's Republic of China's Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang yesterday at 2pm.

Reports on performances by

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, collaborative efforts between the two countries and progress on Union Peace, Stability and Development were discussed.—Myanmar News Agency

12th Myanmar-Lao Border Authorities Central Meeting held

THE Myanmar-Lao Border Authorities Central Meeting co-chaired by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, was held in yesterday at the Sedona Hotel in Yangon.

The two authorities exchanged views on the strengthening of all sectors of cooperation, particularly on border security, economy, education, health, trade and tourism promotion, which can support the

life of the border area. Also discussed was the strengthening cooperation between the two countries' authorities.

Afterwards, the Deputy Minister shared lunch with the Foreign Minister of Lao People's Democratic Republic at the Sedona Hotel.

The high-ranking official meeting led by Deputy Director General of the Political Department and Director General of Lao National Border Affairs Committee was held on Wednesday. —Myanmar News Agency

MoU signed for Collaborative Development of Communication Sector

THE Ministry of Information of Myanmar and the Ministry of Telecom and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation signed yesterday a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of mass communications between the two countries.

According to the MoU which was signed at the Ministry of Information yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, the two countries, agreed to contribute to the creation of favourable conditions for a broad and free dissemination of information, to facilitate wide and free exchange of information between information agencies and the editorial offices of the mass media, to support and encourage mutually beneficial cooperation between the editorial offices of the mass media, to promote the equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation between professional organizations of journalism, to provide assistance in the organization of the broadcast of television and radio programs, to facilitate accredited representatives of the mass media editorial offices on the basis of reciprocity, to encourage exchange of experts in the field of broadcasting, print media, scientific and technical fields related to information, to provide mutual assistance in the training of personnel in the field of mass media and to

encourage cooperation between educational and research institutions and organizations, to cooperate and exchange experiences in the field of legal regulation of the mass media and to create favourable conditions for the work in the mass media field.

In the signing ceremony, Deputy Minister for Telecom and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation H.E Mr. Alesky K. Volin and Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung of the Ministry of Information signed the MoU and exchanged notes.

Afterwards Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint and Russian Deputy Minister Mr. Alesky K. Volin delivered key notes addresses and took documentary photos with all participants.

The Russian Deputy Minister and his entourage then met with members of the press.

Following the event, the Russian Deputy Minister and his entourage held talks with officials of Myanma Radio and Television and the News and Periodicals Enterprise over collaboration between the two countries' media sectors.

Earlier in the day, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint and Russian Deputy Minister H.E Mr. Aleksey K. Volin met at the Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Mr. Alesky K. Volin (Left) and U Myo Myint Maung (Right) sign the MoU in the presence of Union Minister Dr Pe Myint. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor receives Algeria Ambassador Mr. Mohammad Birra



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Mr. Mohammad Birra, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to Myanmar, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. Present at the meeting were the Permanent Secretary of MoFA and responsible officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor receives Dr. Karl D. Jackson from Johns Hopkins University

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received a delegation led by Dr. Karl D. Jackson, Prof. Emeritus, Southeast Asia Studies Program, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of Johns Hopkins University in Washington D.C., United States, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed bidding the Johns Hopkins University's scholarships for the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as matters concerning the infrastructure projects in Myanmar.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Dr. Karl D. Jackson from Johns Hopkins University in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Vision Zero Fund to launch first project on OHS in Myanmar

MYANMAR representatives from tripartite institutions in the labour sector who are attending the 2ndEmployment Working Group Meeting in Hamburg, Germany welcomed the Vision Zero Fund's first project in Myanmar to assist in the country's occupational health and safety (OHS).

The VSF is established by the seven leading industrial nations of the G-7.

"We expressed out strong commitment to success of the project," said Daw Khaing Khaing New, a representative of the employers, one of the three members of the delegation of Myanmar, to the Global New Light of Myanmar in a telephone interview yesterday.

The move comes from the 15-17 February working group

meeting about six months ahead of the enactment of the OHS law in Myanmar.

"We welcome the Vision Zero Fund's project and we also discussed about promoting OHS in Myanmar," said U Win Shein, Director-General of the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department, who is also participating the meeting.

Under the project, the Vision Zero Fund, which is working with the tripartite institutions in Myanmar will also provide technical assistance to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to improve the occupational health and safety in Myanmar.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the Vision Zero Fund has planned to clarify the project to MPs and government officials in Nay Pyi

Taw on 27th February.

A project on OHS was carried out at seven factories in 2016 conducting training on raising awareness of the OHS and the report of the project showed results of higher productivity and lower cost, said Daw Khaing Khaing New.

The Vision Zero Fund conducted a political launch in Yangon in July last year as a first step to assist in OHS in the country.

During the dialogue, government labour officials suggested the VZF consider the capacity building of its officials and the worksite safety and health of workers at small and medium enterprises while representatives of employers stressed the need to assist in OHS at factories with a high labour force such as garment

factories.

Representatives of labour unions suggested paying attention to the lot of workers for whom nothing is currently being done.

U Maung Maung, President of the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar, suggested looking into many sectors, stressing the need to take workers in the Yangon Municipal services and mining sector into consideration when forming policy.

G7 has selected Myanmar as their first country for development programmes, focusing on several issues including the prevention of work-related accidents, insurance and compensation, rehabilitation as well as capacity building programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population.—*GNLM*

KNU, KIO discuss participation in nationwide peace process

>> FROM PAGE 1

In the co-announcement, peacefully finding a solution in accordance with the commitment of a ceasefire, and all armed groups not being regarded as terrorist, being as groups who are trying to get peace nationwide, urging them to work till peace is attained, KNU and KIO co finding a solution are included.

The meeting were attended by KNU Chairman and delegations, KIO central committee and two consultants of Shan state rebuilding council RCSS and SSA.

Myanmar Gazette

Confirmations and appointments heads of service organizations

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointments of the following persons as head of the organizations shown against each on the expiry of one-year probationary period.

Name	Position/Department
(a) U Tin Myint	Director-General General Administration Department Ministry of Home Affairs
(b) U Kan Chun	Managing Director No 1 Heavy Industry Ministry of Industry

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as head of organizations shown against each on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Position/Department
(a) U Myo Tint Deputy Director-General Planning and Administration Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director-General Consular and Legal Affairs Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(b) U Min Swe Deputy Director-General Legislative Vetting and Advising Department Union Attorney-General's Office	Director-General Legislative Vetting and Advising Department Union Attorney-General's Office

Nine on board motorboat arrested in Myanmar territorial sea

NINE PEOPLE on board a motorboat who are assumed to be citizens of Bangladesh were arrested in Myanmar waters by security forces on Wednesday. Found on board was the body of a man. Security forces found the motorboat adrift about two nautical miles from Zee Gone village beach, 18 miles North of Gwa town, Rakhine state. The motor boat is 25 feet long, 6 feet wide and 8 feet high.

When interrogated, the nine suspects admitted that they are Bangladeshis and that they left



Illegal fishermen are seen after they are detained by security forces. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Kolkata on 13 January. Their motor boat broke down on 28 January. One of the 10 men died from starvation. The nine arrested Bangladeshis were detained at the

Gwa township police station and the corpse was sent to Gwa township general hospital for postmortem examination.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar National Association of the Blind receives grant

A GRANT was awarded by Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Welfare Foundation to Myanmar National Association of the Blind (MNAB) for the purchase of braille displays, desk-top magnifiers, and other equipment.

Mr. Keiji Okada, Chief Representative of Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc., Yangon Office, handed over the grant to U Aung Ko Myint, President of MNAB, at the award ceremony held yesterday at MNAB's head office in Insein Township, Yangon. This donation, intermediated by an international NGO "Peace Winds Japan," aims at strengthening the operational capacity of the grantee, which was first established in 1996 and is managed by persons with visual impairment themselves with a membership of 530 individuals/groups.—*GNLM*



Mr. Keiji Okada hands over grant to U Aung Ko Myint at MNAB's head office in Yangon. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Crime NEWS

Motorcyclist killed in crash with farm truck

A MOTORCYCLIST was killed on Wednesday in a crash with a farm truck, which had stopped near Inwaing Sugar Factory in Nawnghkio Township, northern Shan State, police reported yesterday.

A motorcycle being driven by Nay Aung, 18, a worker at the sugar plant, with Ye Wai Aung, also known as Wai Aung,

on board, crashed into the back of the farm truck, which had stopped on the right side of the road near the factory.

Nay Aung died on the spot, while the passenger sustained serious injuries.

Action has been taken against the reckless driver under Section 304 (a)/338.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

One dead in motorbike accident

ONE man died when two motorcycles crashed into each other on Yangon-Mawlamyaing Road near Theinzayat village-tract in Kyaikhto, Mon State yesterday.

"One motorcycle ridden by Win Htut Oo, 17, turned without giving a signal and crashed into another motorcycle ridden by Naing Ko Moe, 22, with Maung Phyu, 20, on board. Maung Phyu fell off the motorbike and

succumbed to serious injuries while being taken to Theinseik station hospital. Both riders of the two motorcycles didn't follow the traffic laws and an accident occurred," said a police officer from Theinzayat police station.

Police filed charges against the reckless riders under section 304 (A) of the Penal Code.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Police corporal killed by hooligan

A POLICE corporal was killed in the line of duty by a hooligan early Tuesday morning. The victim was on patrol with three other policemen in Ward F in North Okkalapa. As they found four young men sitting, drinking alcohol on Thandar 6th street, they told them to return home as it was too late to be on the road.

The four young men are: Zaw Thant, Phyu Toke, alias Htet Kyaw Ko, Ange Lay, alias Thant Zin Aung and Nyan Lin. Among them, That Zin Aung heeded the advice of the police and went back home, whereas the remaining three including Zaw Thant went to the petrol station to fill his Toyota Super Custom wagon. Nyan Lin was dropped off en route to the filling station. After filling his vehicle with petrol, Zaw Thant dropped off Phyu Toke, alias Htet Kyaw Ko, at his Thandar Street home. Instead of returning to his home in Shwe Paukkan, Zaw Thant drove along Maydawi street and arrived at the corner of Waziya street, where he met with the patrolling police again. Out of anger, Zaw Thant hit the police



Zaw Thant. PHOTO: MPF

corporal Nyi Nyi Htwe, who was on board his motorbike, from behind, police said.

The policeman was seriously injured and taken to North Okkalapa General Hospital, where he died of his injuries. He was pronounced dead at 3:20 am. Zaw Thant has had action taken against him under sections 302/333/279 and 202 of the Penal Code.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Raw opium, yaba pills seized

POLICE from Natmauk Myoma Station seized 1,700 yaba pills at mile posts 72/5-6 on Natmauk-Magway road near Padauk Ngotelay village in Natmauk Township on 12 February.

A motorcycle ridden by Zaw Win crashed into a side car which was parked beside the road. Motorcyclist Zaw Win was injured and taken to Natmauk General Hospital, where police found the drugs inside Zaw

Win's shirt.

On the same day, an anti-narcotics squad from Taunggyi searched a house owned by Maung Wai at Sein Thauung village in Pin Laung Township and seized 21,400 yaba pills and one kilo of raw opium.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business

FMI share price rebounds to Ks15,000

The share price of First Myanmar Investment (FMI) was on the decline for a month but then rebounded to Ks15,000 on Wednesday at Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX), according to the market statistics of YSX.

FMI share price hit its highest mark of Ks41,000 on 29th and 30th March 2016. The price hit a low of Ks15,500 per share on 25th Nov 2016. FMI's share price then started a downward trend in December, plunging down to Ks13,500 per share on 30th Dec 2016.

The share price climbed back up to Ks15,000 on Wednesday. The FMI share price remained unchanged at Ks15,000 yesterday.

There are four companies trading shares on YSX; FMI, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank



People seen outside the Yangon Stock Exchange on 6 January 2017. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

(MCB) and First Private Bank (FPB).

The total stock trading volume yesterday hit a low of 12,061 shares when compared to those during this week, with

share volumes of 14,770 on Monday, 18,186 on Tuesday and 17,689 on Wednesday.

Yesterday, FMI traded 1,669 shares while 9,513 shares of MTSH, 25 shares

of MCB and 854 shares of FPB were traded on YSX, with the share price of Ks15,000 for FMI, Ks4,100 for MTSH, 8,900 for MCB and 31,000 for FPB at closing time.—*Mon Mon*

Rubber price hits recorded high of Ks1,300 per pound

THE price of rubber hit a recorded high of Ks1,300 per pound, according to producers.

With the high price of global rubber and a higher price offered by China, the rubber price reached a recorded high in early 2017. The domestic rubber price has been on the rise starting from October 2016. Ninety

per cent of rubber is exported whereas only ten per cent are locally consumed, said the rubber producers.

Myanmar's rubber is exported mainly to China and is also shipped to Malaysia and Japan. Over 80,000 tonnes of rubber are exported annually, according to the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers As-

sociation.

Local rubber growers who were forced to halt operations due to low prices since 2012 recently resumed their operations as rubber prices started an upward trend at the end of 2016. The rubber price hit a four-year record high of around Ks1,300 per pound, said the rubber businessmen.

To maintain the price, quality needs to be controlled so that Myanmar's rubber meets the export market's criteria. However, the quality of Myanmar's rubber is inconsistent. Also, quality rubber varieties are needed to cultivate so as to boost the quality and the production rate, merchants said.—*Ko Khant*

Auction of unclaimed cars at Yangon port turns out to be false

MYANMA Port Authority denied the news that over 2,000 imported vehicles which have not been claimed for more than 60 days at Yangon port will be sold at auction.

The false news stated that unclaimed, imported vehicles found to be in non-compliance with the model year limit, some of

them high-end cars of well-known brands, would be auctioned in order to solve space problems in Thilawa port.

But the news is completely incorrect, officials said.

"It is a false release and we have not confiscated them. In addition, there is no plan to auction

off those cars. We confiscate imported cars which was not claimed for over a year, in line with the law. The auction news was incorrect," said the official from Myanmar Port Authority.

It could not be determined from where the false news originated.

There are a total of

seven ports which can be approached by ships with motor vehicles: Myanmar International Thilawa Terminal, No. 4 Thilawa Port, Myanmar Industrial Port, Sule Port Terminal, Bo Aung Kyaw Port Terminal, Asia World Port Terminal and Htee Tan Port Terminal.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Real estate rentals in central Mandalay rose after Chinese New Year

The rental price on real estate at central points in Mandalay began an upward trend after the Chinese New Year. The rate is higher than that of the previous years, according to the real estate businessmen.

The Mandalay land market overall has been cool, but the market of

houses for rent has increased. The rental price varies depending on the places. The number of house renters rose after China New Year, said U Win Myint, a real estate agent in Mandalay.

The low-cost housing apartments located in sub-

urban Mandalay are highly rented when compared to those in downtown. Companies and restaurants are exclusively renting vacant plots of land.

Middle-income people cannot afford to rent the houses due to the skyrocketing prices. The rental

prices in Mandalay range from Ks500,000 to Ks5million per month depending on the places. Those who used to rent the house worth Ks1million turn to the house worth Ks500,000, according to the local real estate agents.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Myanmar CMP garment exports to touch \$1.8 billion in financial year 2017

THE cutting, making and packaging (CMP) garment industry in Myanmar is expected to earn about \$1.855 billion in the ongoing financial year 2016-17 that ends this March, according to the ministry of commerce. Myanmar exports around 33 per cent of its CMP products to Japan, 25 per cent each to EU and South Korea, and 2.4 per cent each to the US and China.

Last fiscal, Myanmar earned \$627 million from its CMP garment exports, and this fiscal its earnings has already crossed

\$1.4 billion, Myanmar media said quoting permanent secretary of the commerce ministry, Khin Maung Lwin. Myanmar's CMP garment industry includes the manufacturing of shoes, garment and bags. The CMP system is being practiced since last 20 years in the country.

though there are over 100 garment factories in Myanmar employing about 400,000 workers, these units are yet to adopt complete manufacturing from start to finish.—(*RKS*) *Fibre2Fashion News Desk-India*



A file shows an employee works at a garment factory in Hlaingthaya, Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Sales licenses now available online for growing number of commodities

THE Ministry of Commerce is making a concerted effort to grant licenses for more items under the Fully Online Licensing System and has been experimentally issuing licenses for 10 garment factories in cooperation with the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association since 23 January.

Using the online system, companies will be able to submit applications for export/import licences and make e-payment anywhere with internet access.

The Commerce Ministry will grant some relaxation on unnecessary items in keeping with international procedures. As a first step toward implementing

the online system, the commerce ministry will issue harmonised system (HS) codes for commodities.

Additionally, the ministry has discussed with the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UM-FCCI) so that importers and exporters can suggest to HS Line items they want to incorporate, according to an announcement of the Commerce Ministry.

The Fully Online Licensing System was launched in June 2016. In a bid to facilitate trade, the Commerce Ministry has issued exemptions for some export and import items along with HS codes.—*Ko Htet*



Vice President U Myint Swe comforts the patient receiving health care at Maungtaw Hospital. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President assists in development infrastructures in Maungtaw

CHAIRMAN of the Investigation Commission on Maungtaw Vice President U Myint Swe has assisted in establishing an industrial zone, a highway terminal and a hospital in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, yesterday.

The Vice President visited the sites chosen for the infrastructures for the development of Maungtaw and fulfilled the re-

quirements.

Following the visit, U Myint Swe and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu visited the 50-bed hospital in Maungtaw and inspected the health care services at the hospital.

Vice President U Myint Swe also visited the Kanyinchaung Trade Zone and assisted in ongoing construction works including

a jetty. Kanyinchaung Trade Zone is aimed at promoting border trade volume, with handling cargo ships at its Kanyinchaung Jetty. Maungtaw District has possessed good prospects for development as the trade zone is expected to support export rather than import due to high demand from the neighbouring country.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Formation of Working Committees

>> FROM PAGE 1

- (10) Saw San Nyein Thu (Ethnic armed group)
- (11) Saw Ku Ku (Ethnic armed group)
- (12) U Zam Za Mone (Political party)
- (13) Sai Bo Aung (Political party)
- (14) Dr Tu Jar (Political party)
- (15) U Aung Kyi Nyunt (Political party)

(B) Work Committee for Discussing Social Affairs

- (1) U Zaw Htay (Acting Director-General, Ministry of State Counsellor's Office)
- (2) U Sai La (Ethnic armed group)
- (3) U Naing Ngan Lin (Political party)
- (4) Maj-Gen Nay Lin (Tatmadaw)
- (5) Daw Zin Mar Aung (Pyithu Hluttaw Representative)
- (6) U Naing Swe Oo (Acting Director-General, President's Office)

(7) Dr San San Aye (Acting Director-General, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement)

- (8) Mi Su Pwint (Ethnic armed group)
- (9) Saw Sae Bwe (Ethnic armed group)
- (10) Khun Thomas (Ethnic armed group)
- (11) Naw Sandar Paing (Ethnic armed group)
- (12) Daw Aye Thidar Myint (Political party)
- (13) U Tint Swe (Political party)
- (14) U Sam Saung Kar (Political party)
- (15) U Shwe Min (Political party)

(C) Work Committee for Discussing Economic Affairs

- (1) U Hla Maung Shwe (Peace Commission)
- (2) Daw Saw Mya Yarzar Lin (Ethnic armed group)
- (3) Min Kyaw Zeyar Oo (Political party)
- (4) Brig-Gen Thaik Soe (Tatmadaw)
- (5) Mi Kun Chan (Pyithu Hluttaw Representative)
- (6) U Barat Singh (Director-General, President's Office)
- (7) U Aung Naing Oo (Director-General, Ministry of Planning and Finance)

- (8) Salai Htalar Hay (Ethnic armed group)
- (9) Pado Saw Tar Do Mu (Ethnic armed group)
- (10) Sai Hlyan (Ethnic armed group)
- (11) Khun Tin Shwe Oo (Ethnic armed group)
- (12) U Tun Naing (Political party)
- (13) U Thein Tun (Political party)
- (14) U Marcos (Political party)
- (15) U Thar Tun Hla (Political party)

(D) Work Committee for Discussing Security Affairs

- (1) Maj-Gen Soe Naing Oo (Tatmadaw)
- (2) U Myo Win (Ethnic armed group)
- (3) U Tar Hla Pe (Political party)
- (4) Maj-Gen Tin Maung Win (Tatmadaw)
- (5) Brig-Gen Sein Tun Hla (Tatmadaw)
- (6) U Inhton Khar Naw Sam (Pyithu Hluttaw Representative)
- (7) Dr Chaw Chaw Sein (Professor, International Relations Department, Yangon University)

- (8) Sao Baung Khay (Ethnic armed group)
- (9) Pado Saw Aung Win Shwe (Ethnic armed group)
- (10) Pu Htet Ni (Ethnic armed group)
- (11) U Khaing Tun Win (Ethnic armed group)
- (12) Dr Aung Myat Oo (Political party)
- (13) U Saw Tun Aung Myint (Political party)
- (14) U Myint Naing (Political party)
- (15) Daw Nan Khin Sein Myint (Political party)

(F) Work Committee for Discussing Policies on Land and Environmental Affairs

- V(1) U Aung Soe (Pyithu Hluttaw Representative)
- (2) Khun Myint Tun (Ethnic armed group)
- (3) U Myint Soe (Political party)
- (4) Brig-Gen Aung Thein Oo (Tatmadaw)

- (5) U Soe Win (Amyotha Hluttaw Representative)
 - (6) U Zaw Min Latt (Amyotha Hluttaw Representative)
 - (7) Dr Wah Wah Maung (Director-General, Planning and Finance Ministry)
 - (8) U San Ni (Ethnic armed group)
 - (9) Saw Delnald (Ethnic armed group)
 - (10) Saw Hlay Say (Ethnic armed group)
 - (11) Sai Sai Ngin (Ethnic armed group)
 - (12) Daw Dwe Bu (Political party)
 - (13) U Hla Khaing (Political party)
 - (14) Khun Tun Shwe (Political party)
 - (15) U Aik Saw (Political party)
4. Responsibilities and Authorities of the above-said working committees are as follow:
- (A) Working committees are required to compile suggestions and proposals concerning the matters assigned to them to submit to the secretary of Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.
 - (B) Working committees are required to scrutinize and compile proposals on policy without more than 3 ways to be chosen after negotiating repeatedly over suggestions and proposals submitted by national-level political dialogues, to submit to the secretary of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.
 - (C) If needed, co-operation can be made between working committees.
 - (D) In case, there appear disagreements that cannot be solved within a working committee or among working committees, the matter must be submitted to the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee via secretary of the UPDJC for the decision.
 - (E) Working committees must perform in accord with the prescription in the nationwide ceasefire agreement and the framework on political dialogue, in implementing the works in their respective subjects.
 - (F) Working committees must perform meetings of the subjects to be discussed, in accord with the principles of the aims of the framework on political dialogues.
 - (G) Working committees are required to discuss negotiations concerning their respective subjects repeatedly and find solutions, at the working committee level. If necessary, working committees can invite responsible persons who can answer in consultation with respective departments and organizations; intellectuals, scholars and experts assumed to know well about the subject, for negotiation.
 - (H) Working committees are to serve the duties assigned occasionally by the UPDJC.
 - (I) Working committees must supervise and give guidance by forming necessary sub-committees with the approval of UPDJC.
 - (J) Discussions and meeting records discussed in the meetings of working committee must be kept secret by the members of the working committees, so as not to disclose to anyone, without permission to release the news.
 - (K) Working committees must record and approve all the discussions in detail.
 - (L) Work report of respective working committee must be submitted to the UPDJC.
5. The tenure of working committees is similar to that of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong. If desired to substitute working committee members, the respective representative group can replace with the approval of UPDJC.
6. Working committee members are eligible to have travelling allowance, daily allowance and other necessary subsidies when they have to travel on duty for carrying out the duties of the committee.

Sd/ Aung San Suu Kyi

Chairperson

Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee

(Unofficial Translation)

Free cleft lip, palate surgery provided at University of Dental Medicine, Yangon

AS part of a Myanmar-Japan Education Cooperation Programme, Japanese dental surgeons performed surgeries for patients with cleft lip and cleft palate deformities free of charge at the University of Dental Medicine in Yangon.

Members of the faculty from the Orthodontics and Oral Surgery Department, University of Dental Medicine in Yangon and the six-member delegation led by Dr Takishi Mitsurasu from Japanese Cleft Palate Foundation, Kyushu University, Japan jointly performed surgeries on 26 patients with cleft lips and palates from 14 to 16 February at the 50-bed hospital at the University of Dental Medicine, Yangon.—*Myanma Alinn*

YBPC Co plans to add 30 new buses to YBS service by Feb

YANGON Bus Public Company (YBPC) is planning to add 30 new buses to YBS service this month, said an official from YBPC.

The new buses for the YBS bus line arrived in January, but have to be reconditioned to be operational, officials said.

The YBPC company previously operated under the name of BRT Lite and ran three routes: Pyay Road, North Okkalapa and Kaba Aye Pagoda Road. Under the new BRT system, No. 34 YBS buses are operating between Htaukkyant and San Pya.

These buses will allow passengers to place cash into collection boxes or use prepaid cards.

These modern buses have already received positive reviews from passengers when they operated under the name of BRT Lite.—200

Bullet News Journal apologises for incorrect description of facts

THE 16 February issue of the Bullet News Journal included an apology concerning a 2 February news item, captioned, "National Gazette Board is responsible for not including the investigations over objections of the Election Commission in the National Gazette."

In the news item, it stated that U Nyunt Tin, director of the Office of Union Election Commission, said to BNJ as follows, with statistics:

"Starting from January 2016 till now, 44 cases were investigated. All the full text of investigations of the cases with dates described had been sent to the Ministry of Information. It is responsible for the Ministry of Information to

have the texts released in the gazette, not responsible for the UEC to do so. It was found that cases which were investigated over one year ago, sent to the Ministry of Information were not released yet so far."

U Nyunt Tin added, "It is also described that UEC has been ready to pay for the expenses to be spent for necessary documents."

Out of 46 cases, 44 cases had gone to the department of publishing and publication. Seven decisions included in these 44 cases had been published in the national gazette. All the decisions had been described, so none of the decisions were left to be described in the national gazette. The remaining 37 cases were not decisions,

just orders and judgements, according to the department of publishing and publication.

According to U Aung Myo Myint, director-general of the publishing and publication department, decisions made by Union Election Commissions Tribunal and election commission tribunals are required to be released in the national gazettes under section 74/B and 75/B of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law and under section 24/B and 25/B of the Region and State Hluttaw Election Law.

U Myo Myint Maung, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Information, informed BNJ of the description of the actual

performances of the Ministry of Information in accord with the existing laws, describing that legal references and statements described in the news item were found false, and it can cause unnecessary problems between the UEC and Ministry of Information, and misunderstanding of the People towards the Union Level Organisations of the Government of the State.

U Myo Myint Maung added, "Without making any complaints to the News Media Council for describing falsely in the journal, we made contact with the BNJ Journal directly to describe the true account of the event again, as a convenient approach. Hence, the Journal described the

apology in today's issue on page 6. We have no plan to deal with this further."

In the interview with U Nyunt Tin, expert of the UEC on 4 February, he said, "The statement that I said the account is not true. The writer of the news item was Khaing Min, the reporter with U Hla Swe acting as the interviewer. Khaing Min made no contact with me to write the news. I spoke about with U Hla Swe nearby the trial. I contacted U Hla Swe to say that the news included what I did not disclose. I recounted that the president told me the news harmed his image, as did toward us. So I told him to solve the problem. U Hla Swe replied to me, "Yes" only. This must be dealt with be-

cause I am a serviceman."

It is also learnt that there is only Pyithu Hluttaw Election. There is no Pyithu Hluttaw Election Commission Law, as described in the Bullet Journal, according to the responsible officials of the Ministry of the Information.

The National Gazette is being published and distributed every Friday, containing 56 pages sold at Ks 350 per piece. Departments and companies can subscribe the copies by order with one-year payment in advance. Those who want to buy one copy only are able to purchase at Sarpay Beikman Book-shops in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon, it is learnt. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Strengthening Social Cohesion Capacity Building Programme held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Ministry of Ethnic Affairs and Search For Common Ground Myanmar (SCGM) collaborated on a strengthening social cohesion capacity building programme and skill development in Nay Pyi Taw's

Amara Hotel yesterday.

Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs U Nai Thet Lwin opened the convention with a speech that addressed the importance of resolving adversity through unity rather than

confrontation, and that this responsibility rests upon each individual and organisation involved. The Union minister expressed his hope that all the functionaries in attendance would be able to utilise the new

insights and skills from today's convention to reduce the conflicts between ethnicities as much as possible.

Jennifer Link, the US-AID Representative Deputy General, and Search for

Common Ground country director Isla Glaster also delivered speeches.

At midday the programme proceeded to discuss about understanding social cohesion, its key elements, good managerial

techniques, and information on social cohesion capacity.

The programme will be held for three days in Nay Pyi Taw's Amara Hotel.—*Myanmar News Agency*

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Yangon. 17th February 2017

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WAVE MONEY

YOMA BANK

FOREVER GROUP

THE STRAND

NOVOTEL

PIZZA

LE PLANTEUR

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synapse

BLACK

Opinion

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

Are we willing and ready to forgo our selfishness?

Khin Maung Oo

Some may argue with the statement which says that men are selfish. They may claim that they do not belong to the group. However, if we observe the everyday activities of people in our surroundings, we can see that the statement is actually true. By nature, selfishness is inborn in us. In other words, we might call it an inborn gift of nature. For saying so, it may be tantamount to saying that we need not worry about this inborn gift, and that we should let it be alone. Although it is a thing concerned with every individual, we should not condone its potential bad effects. "After you" culture is something we should develop. We should act in a gracious way and let the other person go before us. In civilized societies, that cul-

ture can be found everywhere all the time. This kind of culture is very rare in our country. To coin a phrase, "After me culture" can be found in our surroundings, instead. Especially, at bus-stops and on buses, we see people dashing helter-skelter to get a seat. Most do not even bother to give their seats to monks, expectant mothers or even the aged.

In this frenetic age, people seem to think that they have enough hours to accomplish all the things on their to-do-list. In fact, they are hiding the truth by giving the wrong pretext that they are too exhausted with their daily routines to abide by social ethics. We can see such "After me cultures" at bus stops, businesses, at the workplace and even in some schools.

In some cases some people are deliberately destroying persons in positions of authority and power by dubious ways. In this way, rule of law is deteriorating, before we know it. Unqualified and morally corrupted persons are taking offices, misappropriating power and authority to get bribes. The worst of all, a spirit of wanting to do nothing unless they are paid money or opportunities is spreading like a very dangerous virus in our country.

We experienced evil things throughout our lives and we expected for the best. Then, what shall we do for the betterment of our nation? Will we look at the current miserable conditions with arms akimbo or with arms crossed without doing anything? The first thing to do is

to remove our old bad habits and practices. Concerning this, the State Counsellor has highlighted to us what to do and what not to do. She often stresses that we need to think about what we can give to others, without pondering what we will get back. Pondering one's interest only is selfishness. It may take time to change the mindsets of the whole populace. At a time, when the whole nation wants "Peace," if all our national ethnic leaders can sit at the peace negotiation tables, keeping the noteworthy words of our national leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in their minds, the Peace we greatly want will be achieved as soon as possible. Are we willing and ready to forgo our selfishness for the future of our youths?

Norway supports the move towards closer regional cooperation in Asia

Børge Brende, Foreign Minister of Norway

Over the past generation, the global economic centre of gravity has been moving towards Asia. This economic shift is now accompanied by deepening cooperation in the region. Norway supports this development, and over the past few years we have actively sought to strengthen relations with Asia. Here I would like to outline the main reasons for this, and describe the areas where we see the greatest potential for future cooperation.

Norway has made an effort to join some of the most important arenas for political and economic cooperation in Asia. In 2012, we were accepted as a member of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the principal meeting place for political dialogue between Asia and Europe. ASEM is a valuable and effective arena for political discussions with our Asian and European partners. Then in 2015, Norway gained sectoral dialogue partner status with ASEAN, the first medium sized economy outside the region to do so.

One of our main reasons for approaching Asia has been to increase trade and investments. Asia currently accounts for 30 % of the global gross domestic product, and the Asian Development Bank estimates that by 2050 this

will have increased to over 50 %. In countries like India and China, growth has been accompanied by the lifting of hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Moreover, at a time when free trade is under pressure, many countries in Asia are taking laudable steps towards removing trade barriers between them. Norway is a strong supporter of free trade, and we recently gathered over 20 countries in Oslo to move the free trade agenda of the WTO forward, in preparation of the WTO ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires in 2017.

Norway's trade with Asia is both deepening and widening. ASEAN is today our fourth largest trading partner. And we want to increase our trade with Asia even further. As a member of the European Free Trade Association, Norway has given priority to negotiating free trade agreements with a number of Asian countries, including Hong Kong, Philippines, Singapore and South Korea. Negotiations are also underway with India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

Norway's economic links with Asia date back several centuries. In the 1850s, when China and India accounted for around 50 % of global GDP, and Tokyo was a capital with several million in-

habitants, the Norwegian merchant navy was the largest in the world. Norwegian ships, together with thousands of Norwegian seamen, played an important part in the economic growth of Asian countries 150 years ago.

Still today, Norwegian companies in the maritime sector continue to play a vital role in many Asian countries. At the same time, there are also important investments in fisheries, hydropower, and oil and gas. In total, around 500 Norwegian companies have been established in Asia, increasing foreign direct investment in the region. The Norwegian public sector is also investing in Asia. The Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global, one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds with almost USD 900 billion invested abroad, has placed over 20 % of its equity investments in Asia. As a sign of our commitment to further regional integration in Asia, Norway became a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) earlier this year, providing USD 550 million in capital. It is no coincidence that the two most recent Norwegian diplomatic missions to be opened are in Asia, in Yangon and Mumbai. Myanmar's abundant resources, its growing domestic market and steadily improving business environment are attracting increasing

interest from Norwegian companies, many of which are setting up operations there.

Another key area in our cooperation with Asia is the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. We are united by a common interest in solving global challenges such as education, health and climate change. Norway is engaged in extensive cooperation with Indonesia on reducing deforestation through REDD+, and we have pledged USD 1 billion for these efforts. In Myanmar, Norway has a comprehensive bilateral cooperation programme with the Government in the environmental sector, as well as on natural resource management. Other areas where we can make a difference are the maritime sector and fisheries. World-leading Norwegian companies in these sectors have already invested in Asia.

Drawing on the extensive experience of the Norwegian Government, we hope to stimulate green shipping and sustainable fisheries and fish farming in the region. Ensuring that the oceans are healthy and productive for future generations is a key priority for Norway's foreign policy, and we are currently working on a new government strategy to move this agenda forward, including in Asia.

A third broad area of interest

in our cooperation with Asia is the promotion of peace and stability, international law and human rights. Norway has acted as facilitator in peace processes in a number of Asian countries, with particular focus at present on the Philippines, where formal negotiations are now taking place. Norway has also been engaged in the peace process in Myanmar for several years, in close dialogue with the parties. From 2016 we have been providing funding for the Joint Peace Fund, the implementation of the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC), and a wide range of other initiatives related to the peace process. We are a strong defender of human rights, and earlier this year Norway hosted the sixth World Congress Against the Death Penalty, which was attended by representatives from over 80 countries.

Global change is profoundly affecting Asia – in terms of economic development, in the tectonic shifts of global politics, and in the increasingly serious impacts of climate change. We are part of the same international community, and are all affected by these developments. We therefore stand ready to work with Asian nations both directly and through regional arenas for cooperation to seek sustainable solutions and stable development in Asia.

Arakan National Party presents policy and programmes



Dr Aye Maung, Chairman of Arakan National Party.

Dr Aye Maung, Chairman of Arakan National Party, presented policies, attitudes and programmes of his party on 16 February 2017, on radio and TV programmes. The translation of his presentation is given below:

Esteemed voters,

I wish all of you health and happiness. I am Chairman Dr Aye Maung of the Arakan National Party.

Our Arakan National Party (ANP), looking forward to the interests and unity of all Rakhine nationalities, emerged after merging Arakan League for Democracy (ALD) which won 11 seats representing Rakhine ethnic group in 1990 elections and Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) which won 35 seats in 2010 election.

I would like to express the three basic policies of ANP as follows:

- For emergence of genuine federal union (that is to say "To establish genuine federal union formed with 'ethnic-based states' which guarantees rights of self-determination of Rakhine nationalities and equality of all nationalities including Bamar.")
- For promoting the interests of all Rakhine nationalities and other nationalities living in Rakhine state and to safeguard these interests perpetually
- To strive for flourishing of democracy

Esteemed voters,

The entire people had suffered hardship bitterly for over sixty years due to internal strifes and mismanagement since independence and are suffering till today. The innocent people are facing difficulties as a result of internal armed conflicts

which demand national liberation. We believe that the basic cause of internal armed conflicts is due to lack of equality among nationalities, lack of self-determination and self-administration. Therefore, we, daringly and magnanimously, need to strive for gaining eternal peace by ending the internal strifes. With this end in view, we, hands held together, are to focus on emergence of a constitution that guarantees democracy and based on genuine federal union.

Esteemed voters,

According to the policy of membership of our party, we definitely prescribe that the Arakan National Party is not just for Rakhine nationality. All the nationalities residing in Rakhine state including Rakhine people and Rakhine nationalities can apply for membership in Rakhine National Party, and the party will stand for all the nationalities in Rakhine state. Moreover, we will actively take part in the affairs of the entire union.

We will also strive for building infrastructures for education, health and culture including job opportunities which are essential to the interests of nationalities living in Myanmar including all Rakhine nationalities and other nationalities living in Rakhine state.

Based on the above-mentioned three basic policies, we have laid down 18 procedures as future tasks of the party.

Esteemed voters,

The election to be held on 1 April 2017 is just the bye election. It is one of the important steps to be taken for our Rakhine people to be able to march towards the goal of our self-determination. As our Arakan National Party won majority seats in Rakhine state Hluttaw in 2015 elections, we are in a position to lead the state Hluttaw and march forward. For the sake of Rakhine

people and to be in accordance with the desire of Rakhine people, the Arakan National Party earnestly and democratically made demand for forming the Rakhine state government playing a leading role. But, it is known to the entire people that the desire of the Arakan National Party and the Rakhine people was ignored with the loopholes in the existing constitution taken advantage of.

As regards Bengali affairs which is directly related to Rakhine state, we come to see that we need a strong opposition system in Myanmar these days because we have seen no strength to repulse the pressures of various forms coming from forces outside Myanmar and remedy the weaknesses in check and balance system among Hluttaw and the government. Therefore, leaders of Arakan National Party decided that it is a time to include in Pyidaungsu Hluttaw candidates who can point out strongly.

In successive ages, Rakhine people have risked their lives to regain the lost national privileges resorting to various ways and means. Our Arakan National Party also is striving with our utmost efforts to regain these privileges. This bye election is one of the efforts for such privilege. The Arakan National Party will contest the bye election for two seats. I, Dr Aye Maung, will contest a seat at Pyithu Hlataw in Ann Township constituency and U Aye Kyaw, a seat at Pyithu Hlataw in Hlinethaya Township constituency.

All the people know that whenever Rakhine people face difficulties, Arakan National Party has tried to overcome these difficulties together with the people and hand in hand with organizations which serve the interests of Rakhine people.

With such a tradition, Rakhine people together with Rakhine National Development Party could have made history in the 2010 elections as the third most winning party in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. As RNDP won 2010 elections as the third most winning party, Myanmar government, national race leaders, international governments and international organizations had to acknowledge "the guts of the entire Rakhine people".

Out of 77 seats contested by ANP in 2015 elections, the party won 45 seats and again stood as the third most winning party. Moreover, the independent candidate who won a seat in Rakhine state Hluttaw sided with us.

We strongly believe that it is a historic duty of Rakhine people



Party Logo.

for ANP to win landslide victory at the contested two seats at the bye election to be held on 1 April 2017.

Esteemed voters,

ANP will not waver from the first and important goal of the party's three objectives namely "emergence of genuine federal union" and we will not give up in marching towards this goal. During the Union Peace (21st Century Panglong) Conference, we read a paper thoroughly stating that what is the genuine federal union which we want standing firmly on our attitude.

Excerpts from the paper are as follows:

- Nationalities including Bamar form nationality state and power sharing between the nationality state and central government must be sharing through the essence of the genuine federal union. In sharing power, we proclaimed that the principle of the sovereignty of the whole federal union to be vested in the central government must be derived from the states, and the principle of excepting the power vested in the central government by the states needed for running the union, all the remnant powers must be vested in the states.
- The two hluttaws at the Union level must be separate hluttaws with equal rights. The two hluttaws should not be convened together. In electing the Head of State (the President) of the federal union, alternative system must be practiced based on ethnicity.
- International and domestic investments and projects in states are to be directly managed by state governments. The benefits and revenue coming from these projects are to be fully managed and enjoyed by states.
- States national armies formed in the respective states are under the control of the respective states. The federal union army is to be formed proportionately with troops sent from state national armies.
- The state is the owner of natural resources and it has the right

to manage them. The income from these natural resources must be controlled by states and sharing of the income with the federal government must be in the hands of state governments. The fund to be provided to the treasury of the federal government must be approved by the respective state hluttaws.

We read this paper to make others know our desire of the genuine federal union and we made presentation that only when such a union can be built, will the civil war end and will we be able to reach the goal of federal union with equality and dignity.

To establish such a genuine federal union, the ANP will seek all ways and means such as amending the constitution, participating in union peace process and making proclamation through our elected hluttaw representatives.

Esteemed voters,

If the incidents that happened these days in our country are retrospectively we can see that due to a concept not based on national security but the management and executive branches based on indiscriminate liberal concept, the country is on the verge of backwardness as General Aung San once said that the country was like a person who had to deal with everybody behaving humbly. If we look at the acts of encroachment upon Myanmar's sovereignty and putting pressure on her, we should not tolerate such acts and we can make a conclusion that only with a mechanism that includes strong opposition, will we be able to hand down more prosperous Myanmar to the generations to come.

Therefore, I would like to urge you to cast your vote in favour of us. By voting Arakan National Party, strive to save Rakhine state and all nationalities. By voting us, save the Union of Myanmar not to fall into the hands of neocolonialists.

May all the voters be free from all danger. May a genuine federal union of Myanmar based on democracy emerge.

(Unofficial Translation)

More foreign travellers riding the circular train in Yangon City

THE number of international travellers who tour Yangon city by circular train has steadily increased year-by-year, according to the Myanma Railway, the state-owned railway transport enterprises.

Between 100 and 200 for-

eigners are using the Yangon circle railway line on a daily basis, said U Zaw Lwin, one of the transport manager from the MR.

In previous years, about 50 foreign visitors used the railway transport service offered by the MR.

U Tin Maung Lwin, a commuter residing in Hlawga, said;

"The majority of foreign commuters are middle-age people from different countries and they rode the train without local guides with the purpose of taking photographs of domestic com-

muters, especially hawkers and other busy people".

The MR are disseminating train timetables in English to foreign customers beginning February 2, promoting the English language proficiency skills of staffers through effective

courses with the aim of providing better service to international travellers.

Myanma Railways runs its transport service business daily with 23 circular trains. The MR operates 215 times a day. —Myitmakha News Agency

Indonesia ranked world's 6th most beautiful country

JAKARTA — Indonesia is ranked as the world's No. 6 most beautiful country compiled by the London-based travel guide website Rough Guides, making it the best among Asian countries.

According to the results of voting submitted by Rough Guides readers, Indonesia was famous for myriad of islands and volcanoes that span across its vast territory.

The nation was also rich in cultural heritages from ethnic groups inhabiting thousands of islands in the country.

In the voting process, Indonesia left behind two other Asian countries voted by readers, India and Vietnam, at ranks of 13 and 20 respectively.

Scotland tops the list followed by Canada, New Zealand, Italy and South Africa. A total of 20 countries ranked on the list.

Rough Guides said Indonesia has ethnic, cultural and language diversity that is correspondingly great.

The tropic nation in equatorial line between Asia and Australia continent has an almost 2 million square km area, filled by over 17,000 islands and inhabited by over 250 million of population who speak over 500 different languages and dialects.

"The largely volcanic nature of the islands has created tall cloud-swept mountains swathed in the green of rice terraces or rain forest, dropping to blindingly bright beaches and vivid blue seas, the backdrop for Southeast Asia's biggest wilderness areas and wildlife sanctuaries," the prominent travel guide website said in a statement. Thanks to its geographical condition, Indonesia provides an endless resource for adventurous trekking, surfing and scuba diving, the website said. Indonesia also earned prestigious awards from prominent diving magazines for its diving sites with distinctive features. —Xinhua

Firefighters battle to contain New Zealand wildfire as 1,000 evacuated

CHRISTCHURCH — Hundreds of firefighters and dozens of aircraft fought a massive wildfire threatening New Zealand's third largest city Christchurch on Thursday.

The wildfire in Christchurch's Port Hills district spread rapidly overnight to cover more than 1,800 hectares (4,447 acres), emergency workers said.

More than 1,000 people were evacuated from their homes, 11 properties were destroyed and a state of emergency was declared.

"There's a whole lot of people here who have been traumatized by the events, some who have lost their homes, many have been evacuated," Prime Minister Bill English told reporters in Christchurch after cancelling all his engagements to fly to the South Island city. He said it could take up to a week before the fire was fully under control, but that the blaze had been contained



Wildfires threaten a suburb of Christchurch on New Zealand's South Island taken after sunset, on 15 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

on Thursday and was not spreading further.

Seventeen helicopters and fixed wing aircraft were dispatched amid forecasts for winds that could fan the flames.

The crew from a US coast guard ship which had been docked in the nearby port of Lyttleton were helping local defense forces.

"The situation remains very serious," said David

Adamson, Christchurch Civil Defence Controller. "Police and the Defence Force have had a huge job overnight with evacuations, the setting-up of cordons around key areas and security patrols of areas that have been evacuated."

A change in the wind direction is predicted for later in the week that will lower temperatures and humidity and could slow the

fire's progress, emergency workers said.

A helicopter pilot died on Tuesday after crashing while tackling the blaze. The cause of the fire was not yet known and authorities were investigating. The prime minister said two fires had started at the same time which he described as "suspicious" but that he did not want people to "jump to conclusions".—Reuters

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Digital device recycling drive for Tokyo 2020 medals begins

TOKYO — The Tokyo Metropolitan government on Thursday started accepting cell phones and other digital devices from the public in order to recycle their components for use in the medals handed out to athletes at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

The Tokyo government installed a box on the

ground floor of a metropolitan government building in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward to collect nine types of small digital devices, such as digital cameras and portable music players, containing metals that can be used to produce the medals.

Gov. Yuriko Koike attended the ceremony marking the start of the

collection drive, which she has billed as an effort to make use of an "urban mine."

In April the 2020 Tokyo Olympic organizing committee plans to make a nationwide call for the used devices.

The metal collected through the effort will be donated to the organizing committee.

Eight tons of metals are expected to be necessary to produce approximately 5,000 medals for the sporting event.

Donations will be accepted between 9:30 am and 5:30 pm on weekdays. No mail-in donation is accepted. Donors are to receive a thank you message from the governor in return.—Kyodo News

China's Yunnan reports another H7N9 fatality

KUNMING — Southwest China's Yunnan Province has reported another death from the H7N9 strain of bird flu.

The female patient, 23, was mother of the three-year old infant girl who died of H7N9 earlier this month, according to the Health and Family Planning Commission of Yunnan Province Wednesday.

The family of three went to east China's Jiangxi Province for the Spring Festival holiday on 21 January, and had contact with live poultry there.

The patient, who has only been identified by her surname Yang, developed symptoms on 4 February.

She was hospitalized four days later as she had close contact with her

daughter, who tested positive for H7N9 virus and died on 7 February. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and she died in hospital Tuesday night. Other people who had been in close contact have all tested negative for the virus so far. H7N9 bird flu has been reported in several provinces in China so far this year, with 79 people died in January from the

virus nationwide, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission. The live poultry trade has been suspended in cities across the provinces of Sichuan, Hunan and Zhejiang.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in China in March 2013. Infections usually occur in winter and spring. —Xinhua

Hong Kong, Indonesian Customs sign cooperative arrangement

HONG KONG — Hong Kong Customs Thursday signed a Customs Cooperative Arrangement (CCA) with the Directorate General of Customs and Excise of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Customs

said in a statement that the signing of the CCA marked the common wish of both customs administrations to strengthen all forms of co-operation through mutual administrative assistance including the exchange of information and enforcement of customs laws for the fight

against transnational crimes such as smuggling of endangered species, narcotics and tobacco products.

Apart from law enforcement fronts, the administrative assistance under the CCA also covers information sharing for the proper application of cus-

toms laws such as the trade facilitation procedures, import and export control and formalities streamlining, which aims at contributing to an efficient trade facilitating environment to expedite the flow of all legitimate trade between the two sides.—Xinhua

Trump calls on Netanyahu to 'hold back' on new settlement

WASHINGTON — Israel should “hold back” on building new settlement “for a little bit,” US President Donald Trump told visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday.

“As far as settlements, I’d like to see you hold back on settlements for a little bit. We’ll work something out but I would like to see a deal be made,” Trump said at a joint press conference with Netanyahu at the White House before their meeting.

In response, Netanyahu played down the issue of settlement building.

“I believe that the issue of the settlement is not the core of the conflict, nor does it really drive the conflict. I think it’s an issue that has to be resolved in the context of peace negotiations,” Netanyahu said.

Israel approved last month the construction of 3,000 housing units in West Bank settlements, amidst a spate of settlement expansion in the wake of Trump’s inauguration.

Israel’s settlement-building in disputed territory is a major dispute between the Israelis and Palestinians. The settlements are illegal under international law because they are built on lands seized by Israel in the 1967 Mid-east War, where the Palestinians wish to form their future state.

The former US administration criticized Israel’s continuous expansion of the settlements, which it considered as a major obstacle to peace.

In a White House statement earlier this month, the Trump administration said “the construction of new settlements or the expansion of existing settlements beyond their current borders may not be helpful” in achieving Middle East peace.

On Wednesday, Trump also said that he is open to either a one-state or two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a departure from US stance in previous administrations.

“I’m looking at two-state, one-state, and I like the one that



US President Donald Trump (R) gestures at a joint press conference with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House in Washington DC, the United States, on 15 February, 2017. PHOTO: XINHUA

both parties like. ... I can live with either one,” Trump said.

The previous US administrations have pushed for the two-state solution to the Middle East peace process, an idea of establishing an independent Palestinian state that lives side-by-side with Israel.

On another controversial issue of moving US embassy from

Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Trump said, “as far as the embassy moving to Jerusalem, I’d love to see that happen. We’re looking at it very, very strongly.”

But he added that the US is looking at the issue “with great care.” Israel claimed all of Jerusalem as its “eternal and undivided capital.” But the international community has never recognized

East Jerusalem, a territory Israel seized in the 1967 Mideast War and later annexed.

The Palestinians see East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. The idea of moving the US embassy to Jerusalem was discussed in the past but never carried out for fear it will spark fresh tensions in the region.—Xinhua

Assad says Trump travel ban targets terrorists, not Syria’s people



Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad speaks during an interview with Yahoo News in this handout picture provided by SANA on 10 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIRUT — Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad said President Donald Trump’s ban on Syrians entering the United States targeted terrorists, not the Syrian people, appearing to defend the logic of the measure in an interview broadcast on Thursday.

Trump last month issued an executive order, since suspended by a US district judge, that temporarily barred travelers from seven mostly Muslim countries including Syria, as well as imposing an indefinite ban on all Syrian refugees.

“It’s against the terrorists that would infiltrate some of the immigrants to the West. And that happened. It happened in Europe, mainly in Germany,” Assad said in the interview with Europe 1 radio and TF1 tele-

vision which was recorded on Tuesday in English. “I think the aim of Trump is to prevent those people from coming.” It was “not against the Syrian people”, he said. Trump said his order, which triggered protests at home and abroad and confusion at US and international airports, was intended to prevent militants from entering the United States. His administration is challenging the suspension ruling, which was upheld last week by appeal court judges. Assad’s government has often criticized Western states for their support for Syrian rebel groups, all of which are regarded by Damascus as terrorists, and has warned that such backing will lead to militant attacks around the world.—Reuters

Displaced people of Syria’s ‘beehive’ villages dream of return

ALEPPO, (Syria) — The sculpted mud domes of the villages southeast of Aleppo are collapsing from war damage and neglect after years on the front line between Syria’s army and Islamic State militants, their inhabitants long since gone.

But in Aleppo’s Jibreen shelter, home to refugees who have been unable or unwilling to return to their houses or flee further afield, the inhabitants of Qalayah, one of the villages from that area, swear they will one day recover their land.

“We raised sheep and had land. We sold everything when we left. God willing we shall return. It’s our village, we can’t leave it,” said a lean man in his 40s, traditional headdress worn over a long robe, who identified himself as Abu Mohammed. Syria’s “beehive villages”, so-called for the distinctive conical shapes

of their mud houses, have long attracted the attention of outsiders, but many have been deserted during the waves of conflict that have rolled across the country.

The plight of Syria’s rural districts has received less attention than that of its bomb-shattered cities. But with their wealth tied up in livestock or land, village folk are often less able to start afresh when forced to new surroundings.

The Syrian army captured the last rebel enclave in east Aleppo in December after months of siege and years of intense bombardment, and have made some gains against Islamic State to the east of the city, but fighting continues nearby. In Jibreen, the villagers now live in a freezing industrial zone where large puddles in the muddy streets were iced over even at midday during a recent visit, and toddlers in bare feet chased chickens between warehouses.

However, whether they are ever able to make good on their hopes of a return to the villages, one of which appeared almost entirely uninhabitable last week, will most likely depend on how long Islamic State can hold out.

The jihadist group has been losing ground in northern Syria to three separate — and rival — forces: The Syrian army, Turkish-backed rebels and a US-backed coalition of Kurdish-led militias. Pillars of smoke rising behind the al-Jaboul salt lake near Abu Mohammed’s village of Qalayah as well as Rasm al-Nafl, an abandoned village visited by Reuters, indicated where Islamic State and the Syrian army were fighting.

A group of women in Jibreen who asked not to be named, standing with Abu Mohammed, said they had fled Qalayah in 2012 when Islamic State insurgents arrived in the area.—Reuters

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MYANMAR CONVENTION CENTER (MCC)



Clouds of tear gas surround people during a protest against police brutality after a young black man, 22-year-old youth worker named Theo, was severely injured during his arrest earlier this month in Bobigny, at a demonstration in Paris, France, on 15 February 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Scuffles, tear gas as anti-police protests reach Paris

PARIS — Anti-police protests in the aftermath of alleged police brutality in a Paris suburb earlier this month descended into violence in the French capital on Wednesday night.

The protests, which have led to over 200 arrests around France, follow allegations that a young man arrested on 2 February was

beaten and raped with a police baton. An investigation is under way.

Protesters in the 18th District in the north of Paris lit piles of rubbish and rubbish bins on fire in the streets as riot police threw tear gas canisters, which were in turn thrown back at them.

A policeman has been

placed under formal investigation for the suspected rape, and three others are under investigation for violent conduct during the arrest of the 22-year-old man in Aulnay-sous-Bois. The young man, Theo, whose family name has been withheld by authorities, remains in hospital with injuries to his anus and head.—Reuters

Venezuela pulls Spanish-language CNN from air for 'distorting truth'

CARACAS — President Nicolas Maduro's government ordered the suspension of CNN's Spanish-language service from Venezuela's airwaves on Wednesday, accusing it of distorting the truth in coverage.

US-based 'CNN en Espanol' became unavailable on Venezuela's major cable providers minutes after a statement by telecommunications regulator Conatel announcing the suspension.

The network had irked the socialist government with various reports, including one alleging passports and visas were being sold illegally at Venezuela's embassy in Iraq.

Maduro at the weekend told CNN to "get out" of Venezuela after accusing it of manipulating comments by a girl who told him on live TV some school students were fainting from hunger.

"They defame and distort the truth...inciting

aggression against the sovereignty of Venezuela and its institutions," regulator Conatel said in its statement.

Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez also lambasted CNN, saying the whistleblower in the passports' story was an opposition-linked Venezuelan working for "imperialist" agencies.

CNN said the Maduro government was unfairly denying Venezuelans a 20-year news service they had enjoyed, but added that its signal would be available for free on YouTube.

"At CNN en Español we believe in the vital role that freedom of press plays in a healthy democracy," it added.

The spat with the network has come at a delicate time in US-Venezuelan ties after Washington this week blacklisted Maduro's Vice President Tareck El Aissami on drug charges in the first bilateral flare-up under new US

President Donald Trump.

Venezuelan officials have reacted furiously to that, though they appear to be trying to avoid provoking Trump.

"I don't want problems with Trump," Maduro said on TV on Wednesday, adding that CNN had become "an instrument of war."

About an hour later, Trump called for the release of prominent jailed Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez in a tweet, posing in a photo with Lopez's wife Lilian Tintori.

In various calls with Latin American leaders, Trump has expressed concern over the Maduro government, yet it remains to be seen whether Trump will prioritize Venezuela.

Rodriguez responded on Twitter late on Wednesday.

"Venezuela rejects the interference and aggression of US President Donald Trump," she said.—Reuters

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO (022)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO (022) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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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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Four famines mean 20 million may starve in the next six months

GENEVA — More than 20 million people — greater than the population of Romania or Florida — risk dying from starvation within six months in four separate famines, UN World Food Programme chief economist Arif Husain says.

Wars in Yemen, north-eastern Nigeria and South Sudan have devastated households and driven up prices, while a drought in east Africa has ruined the agricultural economy.

“In my not quite 15 years with the World Food Programme, this is the first time that we are literally talking about famine in four different parts of the world at the same time,” he told Reuters in an interview.

“It’s almost overwhelming to comprehend that in the 21st century people are still experiencing famines of such magnitude. We’re talking about 20 million people, and all this within the next six months, or now. Yemen is now, Nigeria is now, South Sudan is now,” he said.

“Somalia, when I look at the indicators in terms of extremely high food prices, falling livestock prices and agricultural wages, it’s going to come pretty fast.”

The global humanitarian system is already struggling with a historic surge in migration, huge operations in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and serious situations in Ukraine, Burundi, Libya and Zimbabwe.

“Then you have places like DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), CAR (Central African Republic), Burundi, Mali, Niger,



A woman uses a stone grinder to make flour in her house in the mountains, in the Jafariya district of the western province of Raymah, Yemen, on 21 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

where people are chronically food insecure but ... there’s just not enough resources to go around.”

Humanitarian aid is at record high levels but demand is growing even faster, creating a huge gap. “In northeast Nigeria we’re feeding more than 1 million people and just a few months ago we didn’t even have an office there,” Husain said.

There is a glimmer of hope that Somalia’s drought will not be as severe as feared, but in the capital Mogadishu food prices have already risen by a quarter since January and forecasts for the rainy season from March to May are not optimistic.

In 2011, Somalia suffered a famine that killed 260,000 people. The famine was declared in July, but most people had already died by May.

“When we declare famine, it means many lives have already been lost,” Husain said. “If we wait to find that out for sure, people are already dead.”

Moreover, the 2011 famine followed a good agricultural season. This year’s drought follows two bad seasons that have already sapped people’s resources.

In Yemen and South Sudan, economic collapse means people simply cannot afford the food that is

available. Prices in South Sudan have risen two to four times in a year, and traders from Uganda and Kenya consider the local currency valueless.

Yemenis, whose family wealth may be stored in gold or silver or weapons, are being forced to sell off those assets.

“I was in Yemen just a couple of weeks ago. There is food in the markets. But people have not been paid, especially the urban population, which is about a third of the total population,” Husain said.

“Once they’ve lost their economic assets, it’s almost impossible for them to recover, and that just perpetuates long-term pov-

erty.”

Yemen is officially still classed as an “emergency”, but famine could be declared within about three months, Husain said.

In Nigeria’s Borno state, where millions of people have fled Boko Haram militants, there is simply no commerce, no markets and no movement, leaving people dependent on emergency aid.

“They survive outside in camps, 50 degree Centigrade temperatures, living in huts with metal sheets on top, with one water point, with communal kitchens, with one meal per day,” Husain said.

“And there’s no end in sight.”—Reuters

Antarctic sea ice hits record low as temperatures soar

NEW YORK — Sea ice in the Antarctic has shrunk to its lowest level since records began nearly four decades ago, preliminary US satellite data has shown.

Figures from the US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) on Wednesday show that sea ice in the frozen continent covered just 2.26 million square km on Tuesday, lower than the lowest level seen around this time in 1997.

Mark Serreze, director of the NSIDC, told reporters that the new data still need to be confirmed with a few days of measurements.

The sea ice is likely to decrease further as it usually melts to its smallest for the year at the end of February in the summer of southern hemisphere.

Sea ice at both poles has been expected to decline as the Earth heats up due to man-made global warming.

However, the conditions in the Antarctic are much more variable.

The average extent of sea ice around the South Pole has tended to expand in many recent years and hit a record high of around 20.16 million square km in September 2014.—Xinhua

Brexit bad for Britain, Ireland, Europe: Irish PM

DUBLIN — Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Enda Kenny said on Wednesday that he continued to believe “Brexit is bad for Britain, for Ireland and for Europe.”

“Brexit is a British policy, not an Irish policy or a policy of the European Union (EU),” Kenny said in a keynote address to the think-tank Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin. “But I respect the referendum result, and I recognize that Brexit is now going to happen,” the Irish prime minister said.

“Unfortunately, its

most severe impact could well be felt on this island,” he said.

“That is why protecting the peace process and the Common Travel Area between Ireland and Britain are priority objectives for the government,” he added.

For many people in Northern Ireland, there is deep concern at the prospect of being removed from the EU, Kenny said.

“It is not just that there was a strong “remain” majority of over 55 percent in the North. Fewer than 350,000 people voted for

Brexit in Northern Ireland, out of a total population of over 1.8 million,” he said.

“But every man, woman and child in Northern Ireland will be affected by the outcome. And the vast majority of those affected are entitled to be Irish, and therefore EU citizens,” he added. The Irish government will oppose a hard border, argue for free movement on this island, seek EU funding for cross-border projects and protect the rights of EU citizens, whether from North or South, Kenny said.—Xinhua

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Big B celebrates 48years in films, shares nostalgic photos



MUMBAI — Amitabh Bachchan has spend 48 glorious years in the Indian film industry and the megastar shared a series of nostalgic pictures to mark the occasion.

The 74-year-old actor took to his blog where he posted on-set pictures clicked during the shooting of his debut film “Saat Hindustani”.

“There is an avalanche of events related to this date the 15th of February... For on this date in the year of the Lord 1969... Yes that is nineteen sixty nine... I became an official entrant to the film industry, by signing my very first film, ‘Saat Hindustani,’” Bachchan wrote. The star also shared photos from the premiere of the film for which he sported a Persian jacket which his friend

got from Iran.

“At the premiere of the film. Mr Gujral was the I&B Minister, later to become PM for a short while, Abbas saheb and yours truly, dressed somewhat in Persian attire. ‘I was shooting for ‘Reshma Aur Shera’ in Jaisalmer with Sunil Dutt and Waheeda Rehman and had come down for this event ... The Persian jacket is a borrowed one from a friend who had either just come back from Iran, or was presented one from one who had just returned from there,” he wrote.

Bachchan also celebrated 44years of his film “Bandhe Haath”, 27years of “Agnepath” and 10 years of “Eklavya”. All the three films were released on 16 February. —PTI

Unemployment in Portuguese movie ‘Colo’ is one reason for populism, director says

BERLIN — The unemployment portrayed in a movie competing at the Berlin Film Festival is a factor behind growing support for populists such as US President Donald Trump and French right-winger Marine Le Pen, the film’s director said.

“Colo” shows a Portuguese family’s struggle to make ends meet while the father is unemployed and the mother is exhausted from working long hours in a country still recovering from an economic depression earlier this decade.

Unable to pay their bills, the family’s electricity gets cut off and they resort to using candles and charging their mobile phones at a neighbor’s apartment. The father eats food he finds in the rubbish and their daughter dodges fares as she does not have money for the school bus.

While the characters in the film do not show their political views, director Teresa Villaverde said it was likely that



Director Teresa Villaverde attends a news conference to promote the movie ‘Colo’ at the 67th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin, on 15 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

people like Marine Le Pen,” Villaverde said after the film’s premiere on Wednesday.

“There are many countries that have had a long democratic tradition and to our surprise we see the return of right-wing parties across Europe - we thought we’d never see this again,” she said.

The film seeks to portray a family crisis and loneliness by showing how people who live together in a small apartment still do not really know each other and how existing problems are exacerbated by their lack of money, Villaverde said.

The mother loses her evening job and her relationship with her husband breaks down as she wonders whether he will ever get work.

They end up going to live with different relatives while their daughter moves into a fisherman’s hut by the sea. “Colo” is one of 18 films in competition at the festival that runs until 19 February. —Reuters

people in such situations could swerve to the hard right.

“With unemployment and everything like that, people get lost and then comes someone like Donald Trump or, in Europe, ... these new right-wing

Disney plans midnight ‘Star Wars’ event to unveil ‘Last Jedi’ toys

LOS ANGELES — Walt Disney Co and major retailers will release the galaxy’s newest “Star Wars” toys at a Sept. 1 midnight event ahead of the holiday debut of the next film in the saga, “The Last Jedi,” company executives told Reuters.

The marketing push called “Force Friday II” is a sequel to an event Disney used to build buzz for merchandise tied to the 2015 movie “The Force Awakens.”

Star Wars products were a big contributor to the financial success of the series reboot. BB-8 droids, lightsabers and other playthings made “Star Wars” the U.S. toy industry’s top-selling property for 2015 and 2016, with \$1.5 billion in sales over the two years, research firm NPD said.

Hasbro Inc cited “Star Wars” sales when it reported its biggest quarterly revenue rise in nearly five years for the December 2015 quarter. Mattel Inc also posted a surprise rise in sales for the same period with help from “Star Wars”-based Hot Wheels toys. And at Disney, licensing income from “Force Awakens” merchandise drove record quar-

terly operating income in the consumer products unit.

Force Friday II will begin just after midnight on Sept 1. Lego, Hasbro and others will release the first toys, apparel, books and other products tied to “The Last Jedi,” both online and in stores at retailers including Wal-Mart Stores Inc, Target, Toys R Us, Kohl’s, Amazon.com Inc and Disney Stores.

Disney will incorporate new technology to its “Last Jedi” products like it did with the popular BB-8 droid, said James Pitaro, chairman of Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media. New products will feature returning characters such as Rey and Finn, plus new ones, and will span a broad range of categories for male and female fans, he said.

“One of our top priorities is to expand the audience,” Pitaro said.

“The Last Jedi,” the eighth installment in the “Star Wars” movie saga that began in 1977, debuts in theaters Dec. 15. Toys typically hit shelves closer to a movie’s release, around four to six weeks in advance. —Reuters

Spanish film about bar shooting shows how people react in extreme situations

BERLIN — A Spanish film that depicts a shooting in a Madrid bar explores how people react in extreme situations - a scenario that is a reality in Europe as militants have staged attacks in Paris and other places.

“El Bar”, directed by Alex de la Iglesia and screened at the Berlin Film Festival on Wednesday, shows a man being gunned down as he leaves a bar and another man who goes to help also being shot.

“If you’re confronting death, your very basic instincts are aroused and in this film it’s really about survival for all of us,” said Blanca Suarez, who plays one of the bar’s customers.

Director de la Iglesia said the film - which is peppered with humorous moments - was a “comedy of terror” and reflected a situation faced by people in Europe and elsewhere in which they are trapped with no exit route as fear and anxiety increase.

After the shooting, the remaining customers wonder whether there is a gunman on a nearby roof, if a terrorist is going to kill them all, and if this attack will end up like the attack on Paris in 2015 in which 130 people were killed.

They panic and turn on each



Actor Secun de la Rosa (L-R), actor Jaime Ordonez, actress Blanca Suarez, actor Mario Casas and director Alex de la Iglesia attend a news conference to promote the movie ‘The Bar’ at the 67th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin, on 15 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

other — sometimes with a gun — as they attempt to work out who the killer is. Police seal off the bar, a sick man found in the bathroom dies, the bar is torched and they are forced into the sewers to retrieve medicine.

De la Iglesia said he was already writing the script for “El Bar” when Islamist militants attacked the Bataclan concert hall, cafes and bars in Paris in Nov.

2015. But he said the attack was on his mind while he worked on the film.

“It’s come closer to us in a very violent way and we felt we were protected before but the fear and the terror are always there in life and there are times in our life maybe when you’re not aware of it every day but you cannot deny the fear and the terror now,” he said. —Reuters

Tired of screen addicts, Vienna cafe says phone juice costs extra

VIENNA — Grumpy waiter service is as traditional as apple strudel in Vienna, but a cafe in one of the city's most recognisable landmarks has caused disquiet with what seems to be an Austrian first: charging customers for charging their phones.

Tired of tourists powering up batteries for hours, cafe owner Galina Pokorny has introduced a 1 euro (0.85 pound) fee for those who plug in their

mobiles for too long.

"Tourists — always electricity, electricity, Sorry but who is going to pay me for it?" said Pokorny, owner of the Terrassencafe in Hundertwasserhaus — located inside a colourful patchwork of apartments designed by artist and architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser.

Customers who charge up during a 15-minute coffee can still do so for free,

she said. An hour, however, is beyond the pale.

"I run a cafe, not an internet cafe," she said, adding that she knew of no other cafes that levy a similar charge. "It's getting more and more extreme. People come and think everything is accessible and free... You don't even open your eyes in the morning for free."

Pokorny introduced the charge last year, she said, but it gained attention

on Wednesday when tabloid Oesterreich published the "bizarre bill" one of its reporters was presented with, featuring the 1 euro charge for "electricity".

The fee also applies to laptops and tablets, and for those using more than one outlet is multiplied by the number of devices plugged in. Disgruntled customers can take some comfort from the fact that wireless internet access is still free.—Reuters



Tourists spending the Chinese New Year holidays in Japan arrive at Kansai International Airport in Osaka Prefecture on 27 January, 2017. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Foreign visitors to Japan hit 2nd-highest monthly total in January

TOKYO — The estimated number of foreign visitors to Japan in January soared 24.0 per cent from a year earlier to 2,295,700, marking the second-highest monthly figure after last July, a government body said Wednesday.

Visitors mainly from China and Taiwan flocked to Japan during the Lunar New Year holiday season, according to the Japan National Tourism Organisation.

The January figure came close to the record monthly total of 2,296,451 logged last July.

A rise in international flights and port calls by cruise ships from abroad also boosted tourism to Japan.

"We will continue efforts to enhance accom-

modation and sightseeing resources in local areas so that we can maintain the pace of increase and shore up" economies in those areas, said Akihiko Tamura, commissioner of the Japan Tourism Agency.

By country and region, visitors from China ranked top at 630,600, up 32.7 per cent, followed by South Korea at 625,400, up 21.5 per cent, and Taiwan at 350,800, up 9.3 per cent.

Referring to the sharp growth rates of visitors from Malaysia and Indonesia, which topped 70 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively, Tamura said Japan's tourism promotion efforts are producing a result. "There is still a room for further growth." —Kyodo News

Rumor has it! German shepherd takes top prize at dog show

NEW YORK — Rumor, a German shepherd, was named best in show at the 141st Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show on Tuesday, besting more than 2,800 other dogs that competed in New York this week.

It marks the second time a German shepherd has won the top prize at the show. The breed last won in 1987, which also represents the only other time a dog from the herding group has won at Westminster.

"She's got a lot of beautiful details," Rumor owner, breeder and handler Kent Boyles, from Edgerton, Wisconsin, said about the features that make Rumor a winner.

Boyles, who said he became "German shepherd crazy" as a child, has been breeding the dog for 35 years.

Boyles said he and his family will drive back to Wisconsin with Rumor, where she will be retired from shows. "This was definitely the ultimate type of win for her," Boyles



Rumor, a German shepherd and winner of Best In Show at the 141st Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, poses for photographers at Madison Square Garden in New York City, US, on 14 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

said. Rumor, whose favorite snack is prime rib, will likely begin bearing puppies, Boyles said.

Rumor won the herding category in 2016 as well, but lost the top prize to a German shorthaired pointer. "She is just magnificent," Judge Thomas

H. Bradley III said, in an interview with broadcasters about his pick.

Adrian, an Irish setter from the sporting group, was named runner-up.

A total of 200 breeds vied for the blue ribbon at Westminster, which began in 1877, making it

the country's second longest-running sporting event behind the Kentucky Derby horse race, launched in 1875. Devlin, a boxer, won the working group on Tuesday, while Tanner, a Norwich terrier, was the winner in the terrier group.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(17-2-2017 07:00am ~ 18-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	A Day Life of Kayan Padaung Tribe
07:55	Am	Dances of Myanmar "Lisu Traditional Dance"
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	The Stories of The Great Souls (Daw Saw Mone Nyin-A Living Literary Legend of Myanmar)
08:53	Am	Kayah
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Applied Myanmar Traditional Martial Art (Part-1)
09:50	Am	Writer
10:03	Am	News

10:26	Am	The Green Corner (Epi-13) Decorating Things
10:36	Am	He can do it
10:49	Am	Grow Back for Posterity "The down of development"

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Journey to Southern Shan State (Ep-3)
07:42	Pm	Jade Pagoda: Weirawsana
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Stories of The Great Souls (U Pyae Son)

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

MRTV

Programme Schedule
(17-2-2017, Friday)

6:00 Am	◆ Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw	2:50 Pm	◆ Applied Financial Knowledge
7:00 Am	◆ Breakfast News	4:15 Pm	◆ 2017 Matriculation Examination Lessons (English)
7:30 Am	◆ People Talks	5:00 Pm	◆ Analysis For Myanmar Movie
8:30 Am	◆ Current Affairs	5:15 Pm	◆ Documentary
9:15 Pm	◆ Documentary (MRTV)	5:30 Pm	◆ Hyper Sport
9:30 Am	◆ Weekly Entertainment News	6:20 Pm	◆ HUMAN DIGNITY FILM INSTITUTE (The Scoop) (Suppose)
10:30 Am	◆ Weekly Sport Info	7:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
11:00 Am	◆ 2017 Matriculation Examination Lessons (English)	8:00 Pm	◆ News/International News/ Weather Report
11:30 Am	◆ MRTV Worker Programme	8:35 Pm	◆ Political Parties Campaign Speeches
12:30 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series		◆ Songs In Myanmar Movies (Par-29)
1:05 Pm	◆ Myanmar Video (Part-2)		◆ Teleplay
2:15 Pm	◆ Talk on Old Film		

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Regal Real fight back to beat Napoli 3-1

MADRID — Casemiro's stunning volley crowned a superb display from Real Madrid, who fought back to beat Napoli 3-1 at the Bernabeu in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie on Wednesday.

The Brazilian midfielder thundered a spectacular right-foot shot into the net early in the second half to complete Real's comeback, adding to efforts either side of halftime from Karim Benzema and Toni Kroos.

Napoli, the top scorers in Serie A, grabbed an early goal when Lorenzo Insigne spotted keeper Keylor Navas out of position to curl the ball home from distance, but when Real clicked into gear they created chances at will.

Holders Real, who are chasing a 12th European title and eyeing a seventh straight quarter-final appearance, will travel to Naples for the return leg on 7 March.

"We'll go there to a difficult ground where we'll suffer and it's still an open game," Real coach Zinedine Zidane told reporters.

"We need to go there and finish it off with our 3-1 advantage."

Real were defending an enviable home record in the Champions League, having gone 11



Real Madrid's Casemiro celebrates scoring their third goal with team mates during UEFA Champions League Round of 16 First Leg at Estadio Santiago Bernabeu, Madrid, Spain, on 15 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

games undefeated at the Bernabeu, but were facing a Napoli side in form, unbeaten in their last 18 matches in all competitions.

The hosts were at the throats of their opponents within moments of the kickoff as Benzema forced a reflex save from Pepe Reina with barely 20 seconds on

the clock. At that point it looked like it could be a long evening for Napoli, but the Italians were in no mood to lie down and took the lead to cap a frenetic opening after eight minutes.

Insigne was fed through by Marek Hamsik and spotted Real keeper Navas out of position. Quick as a flash and with two de-

fenders closing in, he bent a shot into the corner from 35 metres.

The lead lasted 10 minutes as Real drew level when Dani Carvajal's arrowed cross was headed powerfully into the net by Benzema, his 51st Champions League goal, lifting him into fifth on the all-time scorers list.—Reuters

AFC bans 22 individuals from Laos, Cambodia for match-fixing

KUALA LUMPUR — Twenty-two players and officials from Laos and Cambodia have been banned for life from football-related activities for their involvement in match-fixing, Asian soccer's governing body (AFC) said on Wednesday.

The individuals were involved in the manipulation of matches involving the representative teams of Laos and the club side Lao Toyota FC, the AFC said.

Fifteen of the banned individuals are current or former Laos or Lao Toyota FC players.

In November, the AFC provisionally suspended four Laos soccer internationals over their involvement in the scandal.

The four, Saynakhonevieng Phommpanya, Chintana Souksavath, Moukda Souksavath and Phatthana Syvilay, are among the 22 who have now been banned for life.—Reuters

Whirlwind Bayern rout sorry Arsenal

MUNICH — Bayern Munich crushed Arsenal 5-1 in their Champions League round of 16 first leg on Wednesday, scoring three goals in a dazzling 10-minute spell in the second half to extend their record to 16 consecutive home wins in the competition. Thiago Alcantara struck twice and Arjen Robben, Robert Lewandowski and substitute Thomas Mueller were also on target as the Bavarians inflicted Arsenal's first defeat of the season in Europe's premier club competition.

Alexis Sanchez had equalised for the visitors, scoring on the rebound after Manuel Neuer saved his 30th-minute penalty but the Gunners suffered when captain Laurent Koscielny limped off injured to leave the defence exposed.

"We should score in London but it is a good starting position," said Bayern captain Philipp Lahm, who will miss the return leg through suspension. "It should be enough for us to go through. "We played very good until the penalty and then the second half was sensational."

Robben said Bayern had proved their recovery from a recent dip in form. "If this was not an answer, then I don't know. I

am a bit surprised by the score but it is the Bayern mentality. When it matters we are always there," Robben added.

Bayern, who knocked out Arsenal at this stage of the competition in 2005, 2013 and 2014, got off to a perfect start when Robben curled an unstoppable trademark left-foot shot into the top corner of David Ospina's goal. Arsenal levelled after being awarded a penalty for a handball by Lewandowski and Sanchez hooked home on the rebound after Neuer saved his spot-kick. The game looked to have lost its pace early in

the second half before Bayern stepped on the gas to fire three goals past the English side who collapsed when Koscielny went off injured in the 49th minute. Lahm floated a perfect cross into the box and Lewandowski rose high above defender Shkodran Mustafi to drill in a header in the 53rd minute.

The Poland striker set up Thiago with a perfect flick for Bayern's third goal three minutes later and the Spaniard grabbed his second with a low drive before substitute Mueller completed the rout two minutes from time.—Reuters



Bayern Munich's Thomas Muller celebrates after the game with Mats Hummels at Allianz Arena, Munich, Germany, on 15 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



Jamaica's Nesta Carter. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jamaican sprinter Carter files CAS appeal

KINGSTON — Embattled Jamaican sprinter Nesta Carter has filed an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) after he was retroactively found guilty of doping at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, his lawyer said on Wednesday.

Carter is awaiting a date to come before the CAS for his appeal, lawyer Stuart Stimpson told Reuters after confirming the appeal had been submitted to the Switzerland-based body within the 21-day deadline.

"Yes, they were sent electronically today and the hard copies (sent by courier) will get there tomorrow, so they (documents) have been filed," Stimpson said. "We've paid our fees

and we met our time line."

Carter retroactively tested positive for the banned stimulant methylhexanamine in 2008 and on 25 January was stripped of his 4x100 gold medal along with team mates Usain Bolt, Asafa Powell, and Michael Frater. The filing of the appeal came four days after the 2013 world championship 100m bronze medallist made his competitive return by anchoring his MVP track Club's 4x100m team to second place at the Milo Western Relays in Montego, ending 17 months of inactivity.

That came after clearance was given to him by the IAAF, the world track and field governing body.—Reuters