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A potential buyer peruses numbers at a sidewalk stand in Yangon selling tickets for the state lottery yesterday. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

MP submits motion to hike state lottery jackpots by 10 per cent

Aung Naing, Aye Aye Thant, Mi Mi Phyo (MNA)

AT THE 12th day meeting of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 4th regular session yesterday, U Win Aung, parliamentarian of Momauk constituency put forward a motion urging the Union Government that out of 40 per cent of the sale of lottery tickets, 10 per cent should be added to the win-

ning prizes, that is, only 30 per cent of the sale of lottery tickets should be collected as state revenue, with four Hluttaw representatives seconding the motion.

Dr Daw Kyi Moe Moe Lwin of Singaing constituency was one of the seconding representatives.

“State revenue collected from the annual sale of state lottery tickets amounts to Ks28 billion, with the amount of annual

sales amounting to Ks60 billion, equivalent to US\$0.05 billion. It is learnt that the sale amount of the lottery in a year in Thailand, which has a similar population to Myanmar, amounted to 76 billion Thai baht, equivalent to US\$2.3 billion. As regards the state lottery in Myanmar and Thailand, there is no difference in state revenue, as the 60 per cent is distributed to winners

and 40 per cent is collected as revenue. It was found that a significant percentage of the Thai population played the state lottery. On analysis of the situation, 19.2 million out of 67 million of Thailand’s population tried their luck at the state lottery. It can be assumed that one in three Thai nationals tried their luck at the lottery.

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Limited depth in oil drill bill hurts workers

MPs of the Amyotha Hluttaw debated over the controversial artisanal oil drill bill, warning that the new depth allowed by the bill would adversely affect the livelihood of workers and small-scale operators.

During the debate at the parliament yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, U Kyaw Swe of Magway Region Constituency-11 pointed out that the bill the shortened the depth for drilling from 1,800 feet to 1200 feet.

Crude oil can usually be struck at a depth of 1,800 feet, 1,900 feet and 2,000 feet in Myaing and Pauk townships, said the lawmaker, quoting the workers he met in the oilfields during a field trip.

“It can be assumed that the designation of the depth for drilling in the bill can cause job losses, corruption and loss of taxes for the country and hinder the development of the private businesses,” said U Kyaw Swe.

The MP also expressed his hope that the Union Government would provide technical assistance to the murky industry of artisanal oil drilling so that the people can do their work under the umbrella of the law.

He suggested a depth of not more than 2,000 feet in the bill instead of not more than 1,000 feet.

MP Dr Kyaw Ngwe of Magway Region constituency-10 also suggested the allowance of a depth between 1,500 feet and 2,000 feet.

Two other MPs also debated the bill, suggesting to amend the depth allowed by the bill.

The parliamentary bill committee decided to hear the bill again.

Hand-dug wells are widespread in Magway, Sagaing, Aya-yarwady and Yangon regions.—
Myanmar News Agency



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

MP submits motion to hike state lottery jackpots by 10 per cent

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It is learnt that Thai nationals think of the state lottery as dream that can solve many financial problems. We should imitate the lottery system, which attracts a larger percentage of the people. The Thai government seemed to endorse the lottery. It was found that arrangements are being made to extend the lottery market of Thailand and to amend the existing laws for implementing the E-lottery system. On studying the history of the Myanmar lottery, U Po Hlaing, Yaw At-wunwun introduced the lottery system in 1878, in the reign of King Thibaw by copying the French lottery. In 1880, it stopped due to various reasons. But it restarted again in 1938. Concerning reforms of the system, there were only small

changes of raising lottery prices, changing amounts of highest and lowest prizes and increasing and decreasing amounts of lottery tickets' alphabets preceding the lottery numbers from 1938 to 2017. Nothing special was found about changes of lottery system. Hence, in implementing changes that can attract people, people's wishes and voices should be listened. In the period of organising people to get accustomed to the culture of paying tax, only taxes which will make a burden to the people should be reduced, with successful implementation of business such as state lottery possible to catch more taxes. If people can be actually attracted, it will help eradicate illegal gambling and simultaneously it will be able to stand as

powerful economic industry as it can make the nation's income increase too much."

U Tin Ko Ko Oo of Bilin constituency suggested: "The topic we are discussing is 10 per cent tax of the lottery sale. Generally, the presently discussed 10 per cent tax goes to bridges, hospitals and schools, as it is the tax collected by the State. The motion presenter had a desire to improve the socio-economic lives of the people who tried their luck at lottery, the actual price of a ticket is not the fixed price of 200 kyats, instead costing Ks300 and above. A lottery winner will get 60 per cent as the capital, with the remaining 40 per cent to be received by the State for bridges and roads. Presently, we are feeling that unidentified

persons are enjoying 50 per cent. It made us think whether it is a test of one's luck or one's acumen, concurrently whether it is being tested of one's acumen or practising bribery and corruption. It is urgently needed to reassess whether law is dilapidated or implementation is weak. In the period of spending 100 per cent by sharing between the State and people, above-said 50 per cent went in vain, destroying the trust to the government from the people. This made poor management clear. As for me, it made me think as to which losses will occur to us as in 200 kyat-lottery if 500 kyat-lottery is introduced. The Ministry should extend the official lottery with good intentions for alleviating gambling."

Over the motion, U Myint

Lwin of Twantay constituency and U Myint Lwin of Pazundaung constituency made suggestions respectively.

U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance replied to the motion, submitted to the Hluttaw to put it in record.

Speaker of the Hluttaw, announced to put it in record with the approval of the Hluttaw.

Afterward, discussion of Hluttaw representatives according to paragraph or sub-paragraph, over revised motion concerning the bill of repatriating culprits, submitted by the ministry of home affairs; submission for approval and getting the decision of the Hluttaw were made.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw raises publication of laws, approval for fire services depts

PUBLICATION of laws and approval for fire departments were discussed at yesterday's meeting of the Amyotha Hluttaw.

U Htay Oo of Yangon Constituency (2) asked: "Are there plans to portray the recently ratified laws in the annual publication of law manual?" to which Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint replied that through the years, national organisations have compiled all ratified laws, rules and regulations and in this endeavor there has been annual publishing and compilations of not only laws and rules and regulations, but also announcements and notifications and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office has annual publishing.

Schedule for publishing is determined by the department or ministry in charge of publishing and the Union Supreme Court takes in consideration the amount of ratified legal documents in the year before publishing.

Dr. Pe Myint further stated the Ministry of Information distributes the ratified legal documents in accord with the national ordination and that national departments and ministries concerned publish their own ratified laws, and other legal documents.

The Ministry of Information communicates with concerned ministries and departments wishing to feature their ratified legal documents in the publication.

U Win Maung of Magway constituency (6) asked: "Is there consideration for approving the appointment of a fire services department and fire engines in Faunglim Village in Salin Township, Magway?" to which Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Major-General Aung Soe replied of the 69 fire services department bases in the Magway Region, fire services department buildings have been constructed in 18 bases with 51 bases left for construction, and fire en-



Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint. PHOTO: MNA

gines have been appointed to 23 of the bases with 46 bases awaiting.

The Magway Fire Services Department is working in line with the allotted national budget to build residential buildings for staffs and appoint vehicles and machineries in areas approved by the constitution. The Faunglim village, Sa-



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

lin Township in Magway has not received constitutional approval, therefore construction of fire services department building and assigning of fire engines will have to wait.

U Mya Min Swe of Magway constituency (9) asked: "Is there consideration for transferring

the 25.20 acre Myakantha Park (No.235) Light Infantry Division in Pakkoku into the hands of the City Development Committee?" to which Deputy Minister for Defence Major-General Myint Nwe replied due to possible security issues for the regiment in Pakkoku, the 25.20 acre Myakantha Park (No.235) Light Infantry Division is not under consideration for transference, but that there are other viable parks in Pakkoku, and the Ministry of Defence deposits the payment for land lease in its revenue receipt.

Afterwards, Bill Committee member U Kyaw Kyaw presented the committee's findings and deductions concerning the "Bill for amendment of the 1973 Law concerning the Union of Myanmar Examination Department." Hluttaw Chairman then verified the drafted bill according to the decision made by the Hluttaw and amendments of the Pyithu Hluttaw.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Sweden's Speaker of the Parliament arrives in Yangon

At the invitation of Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, a goodwill delegation from Sweden led by Mr. Urban Ahlin, Speaker of the Parliament, arrived Yangon at 8:50 am yesterday.

The delegation was welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Yangon Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint, Region Hluttaw repre-



Dr Thant Myint U explains U Thant's biographies displayed to the Speaker of the Parliament and delegation from Sweden. PHOTO: MNA

sentatives, chargé d' affaires ad interim of the Swedish embassy in Yangon and officials.

In the afternoon, the Speaker of the Parliament and delegation visited the house of former Secretary-General of the United

Nations U Thant at No 31 Pan-wa Road, Kamayut Township in Yangon. U Thant's grandson Dr Thant Myint U explained the historical photos, books and biographies displayed at the house.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Yangon Myothit project to start on the other side of Kyimyindine by February

YANGON Myothit project will be started on the other side of Kyimyindine at the end of February, according to Yangon region government.

To implement the project, Yangon Metropolitan Development Public Company was formed by the Yangon region government jointly with Myanmar construction entrepreneurs.

"Yangon Myothit project will be started at the end of February. The project will be implemented on the other side of Kyimyindine," said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein.

The project will be jointly implemented with contractors.

Over 2,000 construction enterprises from Yangon Region have to co-operate for implementation the project.

Yangon Myothit project and new special economic zone project will be submitted to the National project for 2017-2018 fiscal year. Also, there are plans to seek approval from regional Hluttaw which will be held in March. Yangon region government will investigate the lands which are owned by the government. Also, low-cost housing projects are being implemented for those living in the squatters and those having difficulty in housing problem.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw visits general hospital, Nursing and Midwifery School in Kalay

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and his entourage visited the general hospital and the Nursing and Midwifery School and Chindwin Bridge (Kalewa) in Kalay yesterday morning.

The President and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, together with Union Ministers, the Sagaing Region Chief Minister and the Chin State Chief Minister, inspected the progress of projects in Chindwin Bridge (Kalewa).

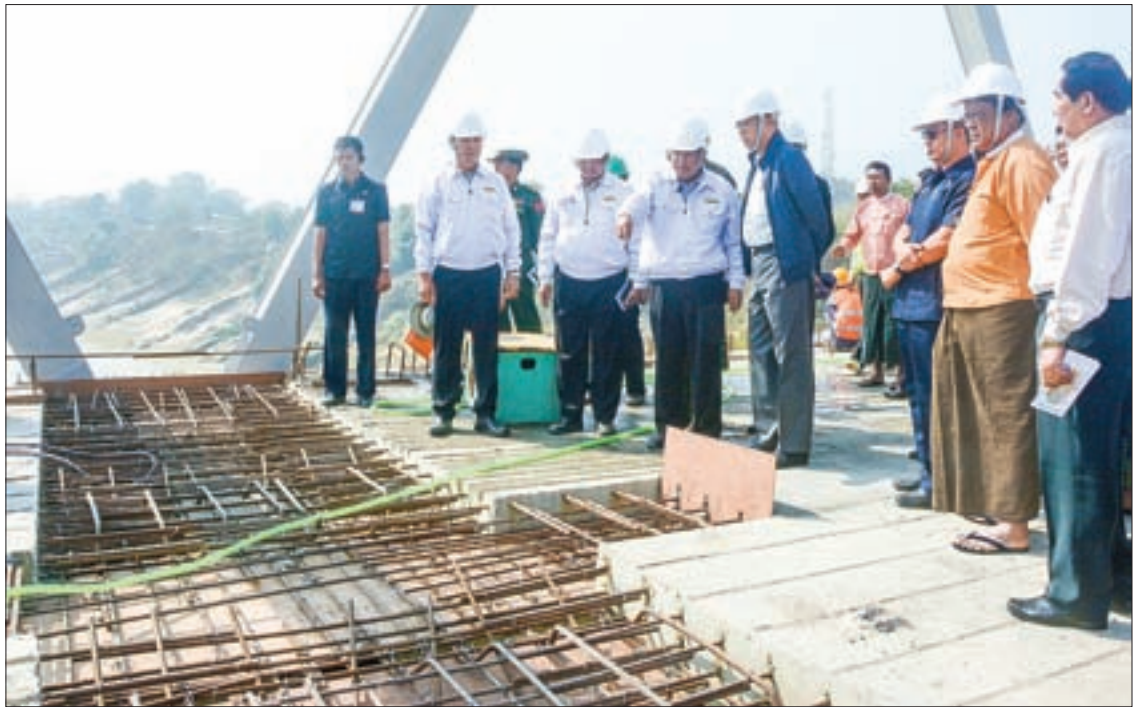
Later, Union Minister of Construction U Win Khaing reported on the progress of the project concerning the Chindwin bridge (Kalewa), gave an update on the production and fixture of steel beams, progress of flooring of the main bridge, and construction of a chronological museum of the construction of the Chindwin Bridge (Kalewa) to the President in the Project Hall.

The President inspected the construction site of the Chindwin Bridge, and then inspected the construction of Myitar Bridge.

Afterwards the President met with local residents of Kalay in the town hall. In the meeting, Kalay District Administration Committee Chairman U Aung Zaw Moe spoke of the need for building

bridges and roads for developing Kalay and repair of farmlands destroyed by natural disasters. Sayar U Thaung Shwe made a presentation on the necessity for construction of a maternity and children's hospital in Kalay, expansion of the Kalay Market, expansion of roadways in the city, paving of a road around the city and safeguarding measures from erosion by the Myithar and Nayazara rivers. Regional Hluttaw Representative Daw Thant Wai Kyaw spoke of the necessity for preventive measures for dwindling water resources in villages east of the Myithar River, construction of roadways connecting the villages and a bridge over the Myithar River, building a hospital in Letpanchaung and making improvements for smoother river transportation. Local residents reported on regional development requirements.

Regional Chief Minister Dr. Myint Naing then gave a presentation on the planning and requirements in fulfilling the developmental processes, while Union Ministers Dr. Myint Htwe, Dr. Aung Thu, U Win Khaing and Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo explained the strategies being implemented in supporting the afore-



President U Htin Kyaw inspects the progress of projects in Chindwin Bridge in Kalay. PHOTO: MNA

mentioned development projects.

The President then explained how criminal cases and injustices can be reported directly to the President's Office and that the perpetrators will be swiftly dealt with and, if found guilty, given corresponding punishment in accordance with the law. The President stressed that there is no room for prejudice or bribery in today's world.

Although efforts are being made in developing all regions of a new nation, not all development projects can be done at the same time due to budget constraints, and the government would like to request its citizens to have patience in the government's administration, as there are cases that can be dealt with immedi-

ately while other cases require an extended period of time, the President said.

The President also urged all civil service personnel to diligently and dutifully perform their assigned duties and responsibilities, and that it is not enough for oneself alone to be correct but to monitor the surrounding people and elevate those not in line so as to avoid harming the progress and livelihood of other people, as doing so will also harm one's future and that it is the responsibility of all citizens to shoulder their responsibility with good intentions, truthfulness and compassion.

Afterwards, the President and entourage visited the Kalay Nursing and Midwifery Training School. There, the headmistress

explained the situation of the school and the number of enrolled students as well as required apparatus for practical teaching. Then, the President instructed the importance of effectively applying the valuable skills learned in their related fields after which he donated cash assistance to the school. Later he toured the school campus.

The President and entourage then visited the general hospital in Kalay and warmly consoled the patients and gave cash donations to the hospital chairman to provide for the nutritional needs of the patients. Finally, the President and entourage left from Kalay airport by air and arrived in Nay Pyi Taw in the evening.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Vice President receives US Ambassador



Vice President U Myint Swe welcomes Ambassador of the United States to Myanmar Mr. Scot Marciel. PHOTO: MNA

CHAIRMAN of the investigation commission on Maungtau, Rakhine State Vice President U Myint Swe, received Ambassador of the United States to Myanmar Mr. Scot Marciel at 10 am yesterday at the Credential Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the Vice President explained matters relating to the measures taken to investigate and report on the programmes of the investigation commission on Maungtau that

has required three separate trips to Maungtau and recommendations of short- and long-term activities to report to the President. Secretary of the investigation commission U Zaw Myint Pe and commission members U Tun Myat, Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, U Nyunt Swe, U Tha Nyan, U Saw Thalay Saw, Daw Kyein Ngaik Man, Police Chief Zaw Win and U Aung Naing were present at the meeting.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Government to help preserve cultural heritage

The government has taken steps to make a law for preservation of the country's tangible and intangible traditional cultural heritage, with a call from Vice President U Henry Van Thio for doing research and adopting policies on the efforts.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, in his capacity as the Chairman of the National Cultural Central Committee at the committee's first meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, also stressed the need to explore the hidden traditional culture of the country's ethnic peoples.

He also said that was something to be proud of; for example to possess cultural heritage sites everywhere across the country, adding that the government was committed to put Bagan in central Myanmar and MraukU in Rakhine State on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Maha Lawka Marazein Kuthotaw Pagoda's stone inscriptions in Mandalay, Myazedi (Yazakuma) stone inscriptions

and ancient Pyu ancient cities have also been included in the list.

Inscriptions on the Bayintnaung great bell at Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan and Arnanda Chandra inscriptions are being proposed to be put in the World Heritage List.

"All Myanmar people are obliged to preserve Myanmar's cultural heritage, and thanks to preservation works done by the country's ancestors, the cultural heritage owned by all indigenous peoples still exist today," he said.

He urged central committee members at the meeting that the committee members need to participate in the cultural and historical development tasks in the States and Regions, in formulating policy to draw rules and regulations for research works to be carried out in line with the needs of the local people, in preserving and exploring ethnic culture and traditions, in the Myanmar cultural heritage sites in the cultural

zones.

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko, Vice Chairman of the Myanmar National Cultural Committee, explained the committee's organization and responsibilities.

The Director General for the Department of Archeology, National Museum and Library and responsible persons presented forest conservation in the cultural heritage zones and a draft law for Myanmar museums.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio discussed how all the tasks should be coordinated and encouraged them to participate in the coming meetings which could promote cooperation among the related ministries, based on the issues presented at the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, and

Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Expressway accident that killed eight due to careless driving

An accident on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway that killed eight people was due to carelessness, for which the driver will be put on trial, according to information released yesterday by the Myanmar Police Force.

A fire that broke out in a car near milestone 4/2 on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway on 21 February was found to be careless accident, and it is learnt Aung Khant Zwe Myanmar, alias Aung Khant, was put on trial, filed under section 304/A of the penal code.

One of the tyres on a rented Toyota Hiace traveling to Yangon from Nay Pyi Taw burst near milestone 4/2 on the expressway and hit the railing of the traffic island, causing a puncture of the petrol tank and a resulting fire.

The blaze claimed eight lives — one man and seven women on board. The driver Aung Khant, son of U Zaw Moe Kyaw, had a case opened against him by the No. 3 Junction expressway police-station. The incident was investigated by the crime investigation police force, it was learnt.

The crime investigation police force interrogated Aung Khant Zwe Myanmar and 20 main eyewitnesses, seizing 17 pieces of evidence.

In the investigation, it was learnt that on January 18, U Win

Tun, the CEO of Hexagon Myanmar Construction in Thingangyun township, hired a Toyota Hiace van for 70,000 kyats per day, with Aung Khant as the driver. Passengers in the vehicle were company staff: Ma Myat Myat Aye, Ma May Thu Ko, Ma Khin Thida, Ma Khine Myat Oo, Ma Thin Thin Maw, Ma Yu Yadanar Lin and Ma Win Pa Pa Htay. On the evening of 20 February, they left Bagan for Yangon, and he and Aung Khant drove in turns. At 11:30 pm, they arrived at the Denko station in order to refill the vehicle with petrol. They left and made a brief stop on the roadside near the Taungoo signboard at about 3:15 am or so, on February 21 to take a short nap in the car.

They resumed their trip and arrived at the 39 mile, 4 furlong mark at 7 am or so, refilling petrol at the Nilar Yoma station and had breakfast at the Thabyeyek restaurant. At about 7:30am, they resumed traveling with Aung Khant at the wheel. At the time, U Win Tun sat to the left of the driver with seven women in the rear part of the van. Upon arrival at milestone 4/2, the van tried to overtake the car ahead, hitting the 91-foot long guard rail at full speed. The sensor system in the bumper automatically locked the doors. Aung Khant was able to open the driver's door and got

out. At that time, the passenger door was found open but U Win Tun could not exit because his leg was trapped under the dented dashboard, preventing Aung Khant from pulling him out.

U Win Soe Aung, driving a white Probox, saw the accident in his rearview mirror and stopped the car to rush to the Hiace to help. At that time, the petrol tank burst into flames, causing him to jump backward.

Soon after a Toyota Safari driven by U Ne Lin Oo arrived and helped extinguish the fire. They tried to break the back door with concrete stone, but the flames hindered their efforts. With the Hi Ace still on fire, Khun Yan Naing Oo and his family arrived to help.

Khun Yan Naing Oo gave a mobile phone to survivors of the accident so they could inform their families. Aung Khant made a call to his mother.

The case was found to be a careless accident. The true situation was explained to respective families of the dead by the crime investigation police force.

The case was sent to Yangon Region's Chief Legal Office, and Aung Khant was put on trial at the Hlegu township judicial court under section 304/A, according to the Myanmar Police Force. The trial continues.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Crime NEWS

Electrical fire destroys homes, no injuries reported

TWO residential houses were destroyed yesterday by fire in Kyaukpyu, a township in Rakhine State, according to the township fire services department.

The electrical fire broke out at the home of U Soe Yan Naing, located near clock the clock tower on Bogyoke Street in Alepie Ward in the township at 1.30 a.m. on that day. The flame quickly spread to the house of U Thauang Shwe Maung.

Both homes were destroyed by the blaze, but no injuries have been reported, an officer said.

The fire happened because of problems in the wiring of the house. The department estimated that the loss will be about Ks1.5 million.

Action has been taken against the owner of the house, according to the Penal Code.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



Two houses destroyed by fire in Kyaukpyu Township.

PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

Five died, 17 injured as vehicle overturned

A vehicle driven by U Sai Thein, 58, with 22 passengers who are faculty members, students and their parents, overturned due to brake failure en route to HamNgai village to PanKaytu township, Shan State, at 9:30 am on Monday.

The accident occurred near milepost 141/2 on HamNgai-Pankaytu-MongKai road,

leaving five victims dead. The driver was also injured.

The 17 injured passengers were taken to Mongkai General Hospital for receiving medical treatment. The dead bodies were sent to the hospital for post mortem.

Police filed charges against U Sai Thein under section 304 (A)/338/337/279 of the Penal Code.—*Myanmar Police Force*



The vehicle overturns due to brake failure in Mongkai Township.

PHOTO: MPF

Property expo targets Myanmar citizens in Singapore

A NEW overseas real estate exhibition mainly targets Myanmar migrants working and staying in Singapore, said U Nay Min Thu, managing director of iMyanmarHouse.com, an online property trading website.

The 3rd Myanmar Biggest Property Expo is planned to take place on 25-26 February at Peninsula Excelsior Hotel near Peninsula Plaza, an area known as Little Myanmar. The website connects the Myanmar commu-

nity in Singapore to their hometown.

This will be the third time iMyanmarHouse.com will organise the real estate expo in the Lion City, where over 300,000 Myanmar people reside, for the purpose of selling flats and condominium apartments as well as land in Myanmar at discount prices, U Nay Min Thu said.

Flats worth over Ks10 million, over Ks15 million worth of land and quality condomin-

ium apartments will be displayed at the upcoming expo for sale through an installment plan.

Since 2015, the organiser has held similar events in Singapore, attracting more than 5,000 visitors. Apartments and condominiums worth Ks16 billion were sold through these overseas exhibitions.

For further information, visit www.imyanmarhouse.com/expo-singaporee.—*GNLM*

80,000 students in Ayeyawady Region register for matriculation exam

OVER 80,000 students across Ayeyawady Region have registered to take the matriculation examination to be held next month nationwide, an increase of over 20,000 students compared to the same period last year, according to the regional education office.

More than 68,000 students sat for the matriculation examination last year, but only about 10,000 students can join higher education, said U Win Maung,

director of the regional education office.

The region had a 17 per cent pass rate in 2015-2016. It had the second-lowest percentage of students passing the exam.

The region hopes to get better results in the coming examination as students have already received good preparation for the exam, said U Win Maung, adding that the education office continues to offer

necessary refresher trainings to teachers in collaboration with Patheingyi University in an effort to increase the pass rate.

There are many challenges and difficulties to improve the pass rate for non-formal education schools because of poor education status of children relied on those schools, said U Kyaw Nanda, headmaster of Pyinnyaparami free education.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

LOCAL Business

Tax earnings from cigarette and alcohol increase year by year

TAX earnings from cigarette and alcohol have increased year by year in part because the department concerned is trying to ensure there is no tax avoidance as it hikes up the tax rate, stated U Maung Muang Win, the Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance.

Regarding the Bill on Union Tax Law 2017, the rate of the tax levied on cigarettes and alcohol should increase in keeping with the analysis of international studies, reported by U Myo Win, Amyotha Hluttaw representative at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 4th Regular Session held on 20th Feb.

Increasing the tax rate on special goods tax aims to reduce cigarette and alcohol consumption, which will not affect the addicted consumers. But some might use cigarette and alcohol of poor quality which can damage the health. In addition, the illegal inflow of cigarettes and alcohol may rise. Therefore, the tax rate is set at a reason-

able rate to be adaptable with the current situations. The tax rate on the Bill is set upon a prevailing market price, not on the basis of sales income, in order to help the producer prevent tax evasion. The tax collection is being conducted transparently, U Maung Muang Win replied.

The commercial tax on alcohol production and sales received Ks13.587billion in 2014-2015 FY and Ks69.715billion in 2015-2016 FY. With the alcohol added on special goods tax, both tax earnings as of end of Dec in 2016-2017 FY reached Ks63.295billion.

The income from the commercial tax on cigarette production and sales amounted to Ks8.185billion in 2014-2015 FY and 15.572billion in 2015-2016 FY. The tax earnings as of end of Dec in this FY 2016-2017 was Ks44.476billion, plus the special goods tax, it is learnt.—*Thura Zaw (Myanmar News agency)*

High US dollar index hiked up exchange rate

THE high US dollar index hiked up the exchange rate in the domestic currency market, fetching Ks1,368 per dollar on 21st February.

The US dollar index reached a high of 101.65 points on 15th Feb and slipped to 101.42 on 17th Feb. The index turned upward with 100.97 points on 20th Feb and 101.51 on 21st Feb. During this year, the US dollar index reached a recorded high of 103.78 on 3rd Jan and low of 99.25 on 3rd Feb.

The US currency fluctuation in the global market affected the domestic exchange market. Dollar US exchange rates in the domestic currency market are Ks1,360 on the 15th, 1,363 on

the 16th, Ks1,265 on the 17th and 1,367 on the 18th, Ks1,368 on the 19th and 20th Feb, according to the external exchange market.

The buying rate of a US dollar on 22nd Feb was Ks1,362, whereas a US dollar sold for Ks1,365, according to a local bank.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) scaled up the exchange rate at Ks1,360 from Ks1,358 set on 16th to 20th Feb, according to a figure of CBM.

The US dollar exchange rate in the domestic market hit a recorded high of Ks1,438 on 16th Dec 2016, whereas the rate plunged to its lowest level of Ks1,346 on 16th Jan, it is learnt.—*Ko Htet*



US dollar. PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar's mango planned to penetrate Russia market



A file photo of Sein Ta Lone mangos. PHOTO: GNLM

MYANMAR's mango is being planned to penetrate the Russian market, said a local association for technology and market promotion of Myanmar's mango.

Sein Ta Lone (Diamond Solitaire) and Yingwe varieties of mango will be exported to Russian market, and the dried mango and other mango products will also be exported to South Korea, Thailand and Dubai, it is learnt.

Mango is mainly sent to the China market through border

trade camps. Myanmar's mango also receives orders from Hong Kong and Malaysia.

In a bid to export mango to foreign countries, a certificate is required to ensure that the fruits are produced in keeping with Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) guideline.

The businessmen are keen on producing the value-added products as there are wastages in exporting the mango as a fresh fruit, with little profit, said U

Myint Oo, the vice chairperson of Southern Shan State Mango Growers Association.

There are over 200 varieties of mango in Myanmar and only 191 varieties are being cultivated. Sein Ta Lone, Shwe Hintha and Padanmyar Ngamauk local mango varieties are the most favourable varieties in the market and so they are shipped to the foreign countries. And the remaining varieties are distributed only in the domestic market, it is learnt.—*200*

Sacha Inchi experimentally cultivated in Sagaing Region

SACHA inchi (*Plukenetia volubilis*) is being experimentally cultivated on a manageable scale in Kanbalu, Kyunhla, Monywa, Bamauk, Pale and Homalin townships in Sagaing Region, and there are about 25 acres of Sacha Inchi plantations, said a farmer from Monywa.

The Sacha inchi sells for Ks2,000 in the size of condensed milk can. A kilo of quality Sacha Inchi fetched about Ks3,000, according to the news released by the Commerce Ministry.

Sample products of Sacha

Inchi (*Plukenetia volubilis*) have been already exported to some European countries beyond the countries in Asia, according to a local body.

Currently, the members of Myanmar Sacha Inchi Growers and Manufactures Association are manufacturing the finished products of Sacha Inchi on a manageable scale. Sacha Inchi, also called sachapeanut, mountain peanut or Inca-peanut, is distributed only in the domestic market.

Sacha inchi is a perennial

plant with fleshy, hairy leaves whose seeds have antioxidant qualities. There are wide varieties of Sacha Inchi products in the market: Sacha Inchi dried tea leaf, dried sachapeanut, fried sachapeanut, sachapeanut cosmetics such as shampoo, soap and facial foam, sachapeanut oil and food products like sachapeanut cookie.

The association is exerting efforts so that Myanmar's sachapeanut products are marketable in foreign markets, it is learnt.—*Mon Mon*

Over 167 tonnes of turmeric shipped abroad in Feb

A total of 167.99 tonnes of turmeric were shipped to foreign countries through normal trade between 5th and 11th Feb, according to news from the Commerce Ministry.

This export volume was up by over 30 tonnes against that from the previous week. From 5th to 11th Feb, 61 tonnes of turmer-

ic was sent to Singapore, 31.99 tonnes to the UAE and 75 tonnes to Malaysia.

A tonne of turmeric fetched US\$670-675 and so, the turmeric export totaled US\$113,393, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Turmeric is a key ingredient in many Asian cuisines as spice

or color or curry powder and is also used in traditional medicine for its health benefits. In addition, it is used in canned beverages, baked products, dairy products, ice cream, yogurt, yellow cakes, orange juice, biscuits, popcorn color, cereals, sauces, gelatins, etc, it is learnt.—*Mon Mon*

Humanitarian aid arrives in Sittway

THE Pyi Taw Aye 2 naval vessel loaded with humanitarian aid from Malaysia arrived in the Phaungtawgyi jetty in Sittway on Tuesday. Arrangements are being made to deliver the aid to villages in Maungtaw, Rakhine State.

Rakhine State Minister for Security and Border Affairs, officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettle-

ment, officials from the Ministry of Border Affairs and district management committee and representatives from International Organizations in Maungtaw will provide humanitarian aid to 190 villages by 25 February. Rakhine State Social Affairs Minister and responsible officials will also provide aid to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Sittway. —*Myanmar News Agency*



Workers unloading aids from Malaysia from a ship in Sittway. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION COMMITTEE.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin arrived back after attending ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Boracay, the Philippines

MINISTER of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin arrived back in Yangon on Tuesday after attending the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat held on the island of Boracay, Republic of the Philippines.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was the first ministerial-level meeting convened under the Philippines' ASEAN Chairmanship to discuss the priorities to be undertaken in 2017. The Retreat was chaired by H.E. Mr. Perfecto R. Yasay, Jr., Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines, and attended by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and senior officials.

The attendees were briefed on the six thematic priorities of her Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017, namely: a people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN; peace and stability in the region; maritime security and cooperation; inclusive



ASEAN Foreign Ministers pose for photo in ASEAN way before the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Boracay. PHOTO: MNA

and innovation-led growth; ASEAN's resiliency; and ASEAN as a model of regionalism and a global player.

The ministers further discussed the follow-up to the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits, imple-

mentation of the ASEAN Community's Vision 2025, effective cooperation among the three ASEAN Community Pillars and commemorative activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the association.

The meeting also deliberated on the importance of maintaining and promoting ASEAN's centrality in the evolving regional architecture and ASEAN unity in addressing domestic and regional challenges at the time of uncertainty in the global political landscape as well as the need to further deepen cooperation and engagement with dialogue partners and other external parties.

The ministers also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest and concern, including non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, piracy, cyber-security, natural disasters, climate change, trafficking in persons, illicit drugs, maritime security and cooperation as well as developments in various regions, including the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea, among others. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Meeting called for Student's Union building

CENTRAL executive committee members of the National League for Democracy met with several generations of former students at the headquarters of the NLD in Bahan to talk about the re-establishment of a student union building.

Central Executive Committee members of NLD, U Nyan Win, U Han Thar, U Own Kyaing, also known as U Aung Wint, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyto Min Thein and Yangon Region Ethnic Affairs Minister Naw Pan Thinzar Myo and old student representative in 1957-58- U Khin Maung Nyunt, U Lay Myint, 1962 student Kjat Hla Shwer, also known as U Aung Thar, 1974-75-76 generation U Kyaw Htet Aung, U Tin Win(Bo Zin Kaw),88 generation peace and open society – U Mya Aye, U Soe Tun, university student Pai Ye Thu, Ye Zar Ni Tun, Zayyar Tun, Zayyar Lwin, Min Thu Kyaw were attended at the coordinating meeting.

During the meeting, the team was set up to form a committee for the new building construction for the student union.—*Myanmar News Agency*

UEC Chair U Hla Thein receives US ambassador

U HLA THEIN, Chairman of the Union Election Commission (UEC), received Mr Scot Marciel, Ambassador of the United States to Myanmar, at the UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Commission members U Aung Myint, U Soe Rei, U Tun Khin, U Hla Tint and secretary U Tin Tun were also present at the

meeting.

Preparatory measures being taken for the by-election to be held on 1st April and situations of cooperation with international organisations for holding the by-election successfully were discussed, with the ambassador pledging that the U.S. will continue to help the UEC.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Myanmar signs Paris Principles and Commitments protecting children in wartime

IN Paris, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Win Myant Aye on Tuesday signed the Paris Principles and Commitment agreement, with the French Foreign Minister and French Ambassador to Myanmar in attendance.

Later on the same day, U Win Myant met Ms Laila Bokhari, Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway and United Nations Secretary-General's Special Repre-

sentative for Children in Armed Conflicts to discuss activities of concern in Myanmar.

The Union Minister U Win Myat Aye was in Paris to attend the 10th anniversary of the Paris Commitment Conference on 21 February, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Tun Tun Win from the office of Commander in Chief of Defence Services.

On the occasion of the international "Protect Children

from War" conference, organised jointly with UNICEF, France will host 120 delegations representing states, international organisations and civil society. The French President will open the conference.

It will be co-chaired by M. Jean-Marc Ayrault, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development, and Anthony Lake, Executive Director of UNICEF. Ms Leila Zerrougui, the United Nations Secretary-General's Spe-

cial Representative for Children in Armed Conflicts, will also take part. The initiative builds on the "Free Children from War" conference held in Paris in 2007. It led to the adoption of the Paris Principles and Commitments, aimed at protecting children from recruitment by armed forces or groups. Those principles and commitments received the support of 105 states. Ten years later, France intends to broaden the international

mobilisation. The participants will present a progress report on the situation of children in armed conflicts, recall existing standards in order to promote their implementation and identify possible ways forward.

The conference provides an opportunity to register states' voluntary commitments on the issue, particularly the endorsement of the Paris Principles and Commitments by new countries.—*GNLM*

S Korea summons Japanese diplomat to protest over disputed islets

SEOUL — South Korea on Wednesday summoned a senior Japanese diplomat to lodge a complaint over Tokyo's dispatch of a government representative to an annual ceremony in Shimane Prefecture pressing Japan's claim to Dokdo, a pair of South Korean-controlled islets known as Takeshima in Japan.

The protest was delivered after Chung Byung Won, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Northeast Asia Affairs Bureau, summoned Hideo Suzuki, minister of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.

South Korea "strongly protests" against the Japanese government's repeating the "illegitimate claim" over the islets by sending once again a senior official to the annual ceremony, ministry spokesman Cho June Hyuck said in a statement released on Wednesday.

"The Japanese government should immediately stop the futile attempt (to claim) over Dokdo, which is clearly an integral part of our territory historically, geographically and in terms of international

laws, and also show an attitude of looking squarely at the historical truth in a humble manner," Cho said.

Earlier in the day, South Korean civic groups held a series of rallies in front of the Japanese Embassy in central Seoul, protesting against Japan's territorial claim to the islets in the Sea of Japan.

"Japan should immediately stop making the nonsensical claim over South Korean territory," a statement released at the rallies said.

In 2005, Japan's Shimane Prefecture designated 22 February as Takeshima Day, a century after the islets were declared Japanese territory and the prefecture incorporated them based on a Cabinet decision in the country.

Shunsuke Mutai, parliamentary vice Cabinet Office minister, attended this year's Takeshima Day ceremony in Matsue, Shimane Prefecture, marking the fifth year in a row that the Japanese government has sent a senior official to the event.—*Kyodo News*



Members of South Korean civic groups stage a rally in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on 22 February, 2017, protesting against Japan's designation of the day to promote its territorial claim to Dokdo, South Korean-controlled islets in the Sea of Japan that are known as Takeshima in Japan. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Two more nuclear reactors effectively clear regulator's safety

TOKYO — Japan's nuclear authority on Wednesday paved the way for the restarting of more reactors, effectively determining that two units at Kansai Electric Power Co's Oi plant on the Sea of Japan coast have met the country's post-Fukushima safety standards.

The number of reactors that have met the standards, adopted after the 2011 nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, reached 12 at six power stations. After soliciting public opinion, the Nuclear Regulation Authority is expected to give its final approval as early as April, officials said.

Ahead of the planned restart as early as this summer of the Oi plant's No 3 and 4 reactors in Fukui Prefecture, Kansai Electric is expected to take disaster-prevention measures, including construction of a wall to protect against tsunami by May. The operator still needs to obtain local approval.

Kansai Electric said it hopes to proceed with the remaining review process "sincerely and promptly." All of the nuclear reactors that Kansai Electric hopes to restart will have passed the regulator's screening.

Most of the country's nuclear reactors remain offline amid safety concerns among local residents. The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been promoting the restart of nuclear reactors.

Kansai Electric has been

seeking to bring the two reactors at the Oi plant back online since July 2013 when Japan adopted stricter safety standards. But it has taken time to assess seismic motions that could affect the reactors. In June, seismologist Kunihiro Shimazaki, who was one of the five commissioners of the NRA, warned that the regulator may have underestimated the biggest potential earthquake around the Oi plant.

The NRA, however, concluded that there was no need to change the estimate after a recalculation.

In Fukui, two reactors at Kansai Electric's Takahama plant were brought back online last year after clearing the safety requirements, but faced a court injunction in connection with safety issues and there are no clear prospects for their restart.—*Kyodo News*



File photo taken in January 2017 shows the No 3 (front) and 4 reactors of Kansai Electric Power Co's Oi nuclear plant on the Sea of Japan coast. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Khmer Rouge cadre's war crimes charges dismissed in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH — A UN-backed war crimes tribunal in Cambodia dismissed charges against a former cadre of the 1970s Khmer Rouge regime on Wednesday, saying the Buddhist nun had not played a senior enough role during a period when some 1.8 million people died.

The decision in the case of Im Chaem, who was suspected of running a forced labour camp, was a boon for veteran Prime Minister Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge soldier who opposes further trials.

Critics said the decision undermined the credibility of the court, which has found just three people guilty after a decade of work at a cost of over \$260 million.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia said in a statement that Chaem, in her 60s, did not fall under their jurisdiction because she was not a senior leader of the Khmer Rouge or one of the most responsible officials.

Most of the victims of the Khmer Rouge died of starvation, torture, exhaustion or disease in labour camps or were bludgeoned to death during mass executions.

Pol Pot, "Brother Number One," died in 1998. Chaem, a former Khmer Rouge district commander, was charged with

murder and crimes against humanity.

She did not appear in court because Cambodian police would not arrest her or other senior Khmer Rouge cadres charged. Hun Sen, in power for 30 years, has warned that more trials could see Cambodia spiral into civil war.

"As long as the judges followed the rules and the evidence, we must accept the decision, but it can be difficult sometimes to swallow," said Youk Chhang, who said he suffered at Im Chaem's camp at the age of 15.

His team has spent more than 20 years documenting the horrors of the regime and provided half a million documents to the tribunal.

The court faced a test of its credibility and would need to explain its decision to survivors, said Panhavuth Long of the Cambodian Justice Initiative, which monitors the trials.

"We've seen concerns by people in general about interference," he told Reuters.

The court has been plagued by infighting, political interference, resignations and funding shortages since it was set up to bring to justice "those most responsible" for the deaths of a fifth of the population from 1975-1979.—*Reuters*

Opinion

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

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.

Fighting against bribery and corruption!

Khin Maung Oo

STARTING from the first 5-year-period of the transition into democracy, the tasks of eradication of bribery and corruption were emphatically carried out for the emergence of a clean government through good governance. After the new government took office, bribery and corruption were more effectively dealt with, due to the accuracy and completeness of the information in the complaints. This is a good sign for the country.

In making an effort to make a country develop in the right way, it is necessary not only for the civil service personnel to be free from bribery and corruption, but also for the people to take care not to get involved in these malpractices. Every individual has greed more or less; hence, they are apt to commit bribery and corruption easily. Committing such a crime causes an undesirable harm to people or

the country. So, we need to be careful not to commit any bribery and corruption.

If we get involved in a kind of malpractice, legal action is likely to be taken against us. If so, it will be a great harm for civil service personnel. In carrying out services for the benefit of the people, we should be satisfied with officially-granted benefits and salaries. We need to provide service for the people with honesty and good intentions, without exchanging our honesty and integrity for any form of bribe, big or small, in cash or in kind.

In fact, the task of fighting against bribery and corruption is not easy. It can be said to be a pandemic social disease found in Myanmar and across the world. As regards bribery and corruption, we usually tend to regard that only government service personnel get involved in these offences.

But, in some cases, involvement of private businesses and enterprises has been found.

Although most countries made attempts for the eradication of bribery and corruption, countries free from the malpractice has not been found yet, until now. As it is deep and broad, we need to take great care about how we perform our duties, depending on respective categories of business.

Bribery and corruption does not mean only the receipt of bribe money, gifts, drugs or monetary benefit. It is also concerned with failure to perform, unfair performance, biased performance in favor or against, over a task which is already underway, a task done or a task to be done by us or our superiors.

Besides, we must notice that a leak, unofficial use of government property, negligence about government secrets, disclosure of

bank secrets without permission, theft or misappropriation of properties from government services, violation of trust, failure to inform, destruction and harm are also bribery and corruption.

We have a tendency to commit the crime of bribery and corruption. Giving money or a favor to someone, especially a serviceman to make them perform the task as desired by us, is a kind of bribery and corruption. It is a social disease. Accordingly, if we want it to be removed out of our society we should give them a livable salary or income linked to the cost of living index, conduct in-service training courses on the bad effects of these malpractices, share knowledge of ethics and code of conduct for government service personnel, besides arresting and punishing those who have committed bribery and corruption in accordance with the law.

Asian agrobiotechnology growth threatened by private-public sector conflicts and NGO activism



Mahaletchumy Arujanan

A number of factors are expected to challenge Asia's food security status in the next few decades. For the past 25 years, Asia's economy, led by India, China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore, has grown by around six percent a year and already accounts for 40 percent of the global economy (Lagarde, 2016). However, with 60 percent of the global population and two-thirds of the world's poor, many countries are not food secure and climate change and traditional farming practices are threatening its agriculture sector.

As incomes rise, people's calorie demands will increase as diets come to include more resource-intensive food products such as meat, dairy, eggs, fruits and vegetables, and thus resulting in a rapid increase in demand for raw agriculture commodities (Teng, 2015). But the agricultural sector is not well positioned to meet this demand for a number of reasons:

1. It is not growing in tandem with the population growth. For example, the agriculture performance in South Asia has declined, with GDP falling from 43 percent to 18 percent between 1961 and 2009 (World Bank, 2011).
2. Farming community is ageing.
3. Climate change has led to an increase in extreme weather. The International Food and Policy Research Institute predicts that Asia's wheat and rice production will be 14 percent and 11 percent lower respectively in 2050 than in 2000 due to climate change (Teng, 2015).

What Role Can Biotechnology Play?

While not all challenges can be addressed through crop biotechnology. Asia is fast adopting biotech crops as one of the solutions. Of the 179.7 million hectares of global biotech crops, 11 percent is in Asia. Currently, eight countries in Asia grow biotech crops while a few others only import them:

If used more widely, biotechnology would be able to increase yields and reduce loss due to pests and diseases; reduce costs of production (labor and chemicals); develop crops resilient to abiotic stresses and climate change; and develop crops richer in nutritional values. To meet global food security challenges, Asian countries will have to embrace biotechnology

through science-based policies and regulations and also by combating activism against GM technology and crops.

Asian Agrobiotech Situation

China is the largest economy and is emerging as a world epicenter in biotechnology research, driven mostly by the government. Agriculture makes up 43 percent of the Chinese workforce. The sector has reached maximum production capacity with current agriculture practices and land area. Scarce arable land, growing population, rapid urbanization, the impact agriculture footprint and a history of rationing are all putting pressure on the government.

China invested heavily in modern biotechnology research as early as the 1980s. Government researchers developed Bt cotton varieties, approved for cultivation in 1997 (Huang, et. al., 2002). Monsanto collaborated with local companies and the Chinese National Cotton Research Institute to release other Bt cotton varieties in the late 1990s. Prior to the adoption of Bt cotton, Chinese farmers struggled with the infestation of cotton bollworm. They were heavily reliant on pesticides that left them with many problems. They used a cocktail of organophosphates, pyrethroids and other chemicals, including DDT and the farmers' struggle ended with the adoption of Bt cotton.

The country is gearing up to be a GMO powerhouse now, but in its own style. In 2014, President

Xi Jinping said, "We cannot let foreign companies dominate the GMO market. ... China must boldly research and innovate, and dominate the high points of GMO techniques." This was followed by the release of US\$3 billion to develop bioengineered seeds.

Bangladesh is moving aggressively into building a domestic GM seed market that is not dependent upon multinational foreign companies. In 2014, Bangladesh became the first country to cultivate genetically engineered eggplant (Choudhary et. al. 2014), a crop heavily infested by fruit and shoot borer, which cannot be controlled effectively using conventional insecticides. It is a critical staple grown by 150,000 small resource poor farmers. A socioeconomic study conducted by the World Vegetable Centre showed 98 percent of eggplant farmers using conventional non-GMO seeds rely on insecticides and 60 percent spray their crops 140 times or more in the 6-7 months cropping season (Alam et. al, 2003).

While the benefits of Bt eggplant are enormous, the adoption rate has been slow because the seeds are only produced by Bangladesh's public research institutes, which are unable to keep up with the demand. Like China, Bangladesh aspires to keep biotech crops in the hands of public sector.

India adopted Bt cotton in 2002, six years after the United States. Before the arrival of Bt cotton, the country faced stagnat-

ing production, decelerating cotton yields and overreliance on cotton import. India achieved an adoption rate of 95 percent in 2012, before the US (James, 2015). In 2015, India displaced China as the number one cotton producing country in the world. Farm income in India was enhanced by an estimated US\$18.3 billion from 2002 to 2014. India has also been conducting research on GM mustard, chickpea, rice, cotton, corn, sugarcane and eggplant for decades, but these crops will only see the light of day if it musters the political will to rebuff the anti-GM activist movement.

The Philippines was the first country to adopt a biotech crop, Bt corn, in Southeast Asia, in 2003. The country faces a range of opposition, vandalism and court cases while the farmers are enjoying economic, agronomic and environmental benefits from Bt corn. It's the only country where major church leaders have opposed biotech crops.

Farm level economic gains from Bt corn was estimated at US\$89 million for 2014 alone (James, 2015), benefiting, 350,000 resource-poor farmers. Northern Philippines Bt corn growers have witnessed a significantly higher population of beneficial insects such as flower bugs, beetles, and spiders than those farms planted with conventional hybrid corn (Javier et. al., 2004).

To be continued

'Wa' Liberal Democratic Development Party presents policy and programmes



U Hsaing Paung Natt, Chairman of 'Wa' Liberal Democratic Development Party.

U HSAING PAUNG NATT, Chairman of 'Wa' Liberal Democratic Development Party, presented policies, attitudes and programmes of his party on 22 February 2017, on radio and TV programmes. The translation of his presentation is given below:

Esteemed citizens and brethren,

I wish all of you health and happiness.

I am Chairman U Hsaing Paung Natt of 'Wa' Liberal Democratic Development party from 'Wa' Self-administered Division.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks on behalf of the members of our party to the people for having an opportunity to present our party's political attitudes, ideologies and procedures before you.

Esteemed citizens and brethren,

Based on the political landscape we have experienced in the past to this age, we firmly believed that the ideologies and procedures of our 'Wa' Liberal Democratic Development Party should be a political policy that is in conformity with the existing nature of lifestyle.

Therefore, we, in accord with our concept, have vowed to realize our political goals, objectives and beliefs.

The objectives of our party are

equal development of socioeconomic life of the respective regions through the unified strength of all the nationalities residing in Myanmar; emergence of genuine federal union which guarantees the basic rights desired by the majority of people; and flourishing of democracy.

To realize these goals, we will focus on regional stability, law enforcement and building and preserving national unity; emergence of genuine federal union which guarantees the basic human rights; thriving of democracy and democratic practices; enjoying justice, equality and liberty; elimination of oppression using inappropriate power on people like feudal lords; promoting education, health, economy and transportation which are part of socioeconomic life of people including uplifting religion, literature, arts and culture; encouraging all the nationalities including youths, women and people of any class to actively participate in national development undertakings.

We accept that unified strength and active spirit of party members and nationalities, their right concepts and conceptual skills, and their goodwill play a leading role in effectively implementing such

objectives.

Therefore, we vow to realize these objectives with unyielding spirit based on our party's attitudes, aims and objectives.

Esteemed citizens and brethren,

Let me introduce our party's name, headquarters, flag and logo.

The name of our party is 'Wa' Liberal Democratic Development.

In abbreviation, it can be called 'Wa' Liberal Party.

The headquarters is located at No. (1/A) University Avenue Lane, Byuha Road, Area (2), Ward (1), Lashio.

The contact number is 082 30604.

The flag of the party is a cloth of five feet in length, three feet in width with white, red and blue colours which depicts 16 white stars representing 16 nationalities residing in 'Wa' Self-Administered Division and the Lwe Mu Mountain which is a famous symbol of 'Wa' people on the blue colour.

The logo of the party depicts a gong and a stick to invite, organize and exhort people with a stick and traditional equipment of a sword and a spear.

Esteemed citizens and brethren,

Let me continue our party's political policies, ideologies and procedures. We, upholding national unity, have laid down the policy of paying mutual respect to national brethren; living in harmony with them; recognizing the significant features of national brethren; ensuring self-determination; encouraging enjoying of the basic privileges and human rights; sharing benefits from natural resources; promoting socioeconomic life of farmers and workers and ensuring their basic rights; promoting law enforcement; ending the arm conflicts; promoting participation of women and youths in political, economic and social affairs by promoting socioeconomic life in the region and cooperating with any party and individual whose policies and procedures are common to us recognize them as partners



Party Logo.

to carry out appropriate tasks.

We will ever strive for flourishing of multiparty democracy and emergence of a federal union which guarantees basic rights.

Regarding international affairs, we will cooperate with global countries.

Taking into consideration the regional interest, we will cooperate with others in implementing projects which will be beneficial to the region.

We will welcome and support communication among community-based organizations.

We will encourage entrepreneurs making investment in the region.

We will ease centralization and encourage the private sector.

We will encourage the government servants to harbour goodwill at work, honesty and integrity, duty-consciousness and the cooperative spirit by paying attention to their work site pleasantness and enabling them to enjoy full rights from their work. We will assist in health care for children, and the disabled to enjoy their rights fully.

Regarding national defence and strength, we accept that the Tatmadaw is an organization which is essential to national defence.

We also accept that it is a major force which protect the lives and property in accord with the law including flourishing of democracy and a federal union.

Regarding religious affairs, we recognize the religious freedom of all nationalities and we recog-

nize media persons and celebrities are the community of role models who encourage the entire people to be vigilant.

In conclusion, I would like to present that to build a peaceful and prosperous Union of Myanmar, our 'Wa' Liberal Democratic Development Party:

- (1) firmly believes that it is a must to build national unity by showing love, sympathy, understanding, tolerance and forgiveness to each other with making sacrifice, providing assistance and showing magnanimity.
- (2) firmly believes that eternal unity among nationalities can only be built through the emergence of genuine federal union which guarantees basic human rights.
- (3) accepts that it is essential to flourishing of practical democracy and democratic practices in the Union of Myanmar.
- (4) accepts that recognizing justice, liberty and equality and the birth rights of nationalities and transforming them into reality is the basic move.
- (5) firmly believes that only when all the national brethren, fellow colleagues who uphold the State's affairs and all the government servants serve the interests of the nation with right attitude and faithfulness, will the peaceful, prosperous and developed motherland be perpetuated forever.

(Unofficial translation)

Japan grants US\$ 501,075 for three school constructions and road upgrading in Rakhine and Mon States, Magway Region

AMBASSADOR of Japan to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi HIGUCHI and Chairpersons of the Construction Committees from States and Region signed the grant contracts for four projects on Monday.

Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme will provide a total of US\$ 501,075 to the project for construction of Shwe Ze Ti Monastic Post Primary School in Sittway, Rakhine State; the project for construction of Sasana Yaung Chi Monastic Post Primary School in Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State; the project for upgrading of Tat Kone Village Access Road in Aunglan Township, Magway Region; and the project for construction of Zay Yar Thi Ri Monastic Post

Primary School in Mawlamyine Township, Mon State.

The government of Japan will support the construction of a three-storey Reinforced Concrete Construction (R.C.C.) building with 9 classrooms, full furniture and lavatories to Shwe Ze Ti Monastic Post Primary School in Sittway which is not able to accept all prospective students due to the insufficient number of classrooms. The project will benefit 1,195 students of the school.

In order to provide an appropriate educational environment the Government of Japan will support construction of a two-storey R.C.C building with 8 classrooms with full furniture to Sasana Yaung Chi Monastic Post Primary School which has been

using a monastic building as a temporary school building due to the lack of school building. The school needs to be closed whenever the monastery holds the religious ceremonies or events. The project will benefit 101 students of the school.

The government of Japan will support upgrading of the 4.8 km - long road with 2 pipe culverts to an earthen road located in Tat Kone Village connects to the highway to the nearest city.

Using this road, the villagers are transporting their agricultural products, transferring patients to hospital and sending students to the high school in the city.

However, during the rainy season, the road becomes muddy and 4 emergency patients died in the past 3 years due to the late



Japanese Ambassador Mr. Tateshi Higuchi exchanges mutual contracts with a representative. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

treatment.

The project will benefit 3,610 local residents. The Government of Japan will support construction of a two-storey R.C.C building with 8 classrooms, full furniture, walkway and lavatories to Zeyathiri Monastic Post Primary School. The primary school

built a temporary school building which is built with used timber and bamboo.

More than 170 students have to study in congested hall-type classrooms with exposure to rain and wind. The project will benefit 191 students of the school.—GNLM

Malaysia names North Korean diplomat wanted for questioning in murder case

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian police on Wednesday named a North Korean diplomat along with a state airline official who are wanted for questioning over the murder of Kim Jong Nam, the estranged half-brother of North Korea's leader.

Kim Jong Nam, 46, was killed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on 13 February, while preparing to board a flight to Macau, where he lived in exile with his family under the protection of Beijing.

South Korean and US officials believe the killing of the elder half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was an assassination carried out by agents of the North.

Kim Jong Nam had spoken out publicly against his family's dynastic control of the isolated, nuclear-armed state.

Giving an update on an investigation that has already angered North Korea, Ma-

laysia's police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said the diplomat wanted for questioning was 44-year-old Hyon Kwang Song, a second secretary at the embassy.

Police also want to interview Kim Uk Il, 37, an employee of the North Korean state-owned airline Air Koryo.

Khalid said both were in Malaysia but could not confirm they were in the embassy.

"They've been called in for assistance. We hope the embassy will cooperate with us and allow us to interview them quickly or else we will compel them to come to us," Khalid told reporters.

"We can't confirm that they are hiding in the embassy," he told Reuters.

So far, police have identified a total of eight North Koreans suspected of being linked to killing.

One, Ri Jong Chol, has been in custody since last week, and another, Ri Ji U, remains at large. Khalid said



Malaysia's Royal Police Chief Khalid Abu Bakar (C) speaks next to a screen showing North Korean Kim Uk Il during a news conference regarding the apparent assassination of Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of the North Korean leader, at the Malaysian police headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 22 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

police "strongly believed" four others were back in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, having fled Malaysia on the day of the attack. Police have not stated Ri Jong Chol's role in the

killing. He lived in Malaysia for three years without working at the company registered on his employment permit or receiving a salary.

Police are also holding two women — one Vi-

etnamese, one Indonesian — who are suspected of carrying out the fatal assault on Kim Jong Nam using a fast-acting poison.

Police chief Khalid said both women wiped a liquid,

containing an as yet unidentified toxic substance, on Kim Jong Nam's face.

"Yes, the two female suspects knew that the substance they had was toxic. We don't know what kind of chemical was used," he said, dismissing speculation that the women had thought they were part of a prank.

"They used their bare hands," he said, adding that they were instructed to wash their hands afterwards.

The women had rehearsed the attack at two shopping malls in central Kuala Lumpur before assaulting Kim Jong Nam, he said. An Indonesian foreign ministry official Lalu Muhammad Iqbal said it was premature to draw conclusions about its citizen's involvement.

"The fact that investigators have asked for an extension to the remand shows that the evidence so far is not enough to bring charges or prosecute," he said in a statement.—Reuters

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Thai army claims breakthrough pact with separatists in restive south

BANGKOK — Thailand's army has reached a breakthrough pact with a Muslim separatist group to create a safety zone in restive southern provinces, the lead negotiator said on Wednesday, but analysts queried if it could succeed without support from other groups.

A decades-old insurgency in the Muslim-majority southern provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat has claimed more than 6,500 lives since it escalated in 2004, says independent monitoring group Deep South Watch.

The government has been negotiating with Mara Pattani, a longstanding umbrella group that claims to

speak for the insurgents.

"Both sides have agreed to the creation of a safety zone in one of the three southern provinces to show their good faith," negotiator Major General Sithi Trakulwong told Reuters.

"This is the most progress we've made in over two years of negotiations."

Mara Pattani officials were not immediately available for comment.

Sithi said the agreement would be finalized next week in neighbouring Malaysia, which has facilitated the discussions, once senior army officials arrive to conclude the talks.

The safety zones would be an area where

fighting is off-limits, but precise details of its location or size have not been made clear.

Talks between the government and the insurgents began in 2013 under then Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, but stalled after the military overthrew her government in 2014.

Analysts say the government is negotiating with a group comprised mostly of exiled fighters that does not carry weight on the ground.

The insurgent group Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), which has been left out of negotiations, is now the main actor in the three provinces, they say.

"Any agreement on the implementation of safety zones that does not include the military wing of BRN will very likely result in an escalation of violence," Anthony Davis, a Bangkok-based security analyst with IHS-Jane's, told Reuters.

A string of bombings killed four Thais and wounded dozens of people, including foreigners, in tourist towns in August, raising fears that insurgent violence was spilling out of the far south.

Mara Pattani said in negotiations with the Thai government that it was not responsible for the attacks. BRN made no comment on the attacks.—Reuters

57 monkeys at Chiba zoo culled for carrying invasive alien species genes

CHIBA (Japan) — A city in Chiba Prefecture has culled 57 monkeys at a zoo after finding they were cross-breeds of Japanese monkeys and rhesus macaques, which have been designated as an invasive alien species in the country and apparently pose a threat to the natural environment.

Takagoyama Nature Zoo in Futtsu, Chiba, had

considered the monkeys to be pure Japanese monkeys and had been housing them with 107 others. The culling, however, was conducted after the city found them to be cross-breeds.

The law on invasive alien species prohibits rearing of rhesus macaques and their mixed breeds.

The zoo is located only 2 to 3 kilometres from the

habitat of Japanese monkeys, called "Nihonzaru" in Japanese and designated as a protected species in the country, prompting concerns about the impact on their habitat.

On the Boso Peninsula, where the zoo is located, rhesus macaques have bred after escaping from a now-defunct separate tourist facility. Having found

some cross-breeds with Japanese monkeys, the city commissioned DNA checks to Kyoto University and a local research institute last autumn. According to Futtsu city officials, Japanese monkeys are believed to have slipped in and out of the zoo through an opening in an old cage and cross-bred with rhesus macaques.—Kyodo News

Netanyahu blasts UN 'hypocrisy', Australian PM opposes 'one-sided resolutions'

SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull offered a staunch defence of Israel on Wednesday, criticising the United Nations and vowing never to support “one-sided resolutions” calling for an end to Israeli settlement building on occupied land. Turnbull welcomed Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday as the first Israeli prime minister to visit Australia and reiterated Australia’s support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

However, he also made it clear Australia would not support any resolutions such as the one approved by the United Nations Security Council in December calling for an end to Israeli settlement building on land occupied by Palestinians.

“My government will not support one-sided resolutions criticising Israel of the kind recently adopted by the UN Security Council and we deplore the boycott campaigns designed to delegitimise the Jewish state,” Turnbull wrote in an editorial in *The Australian* newspaper.

The UN resolution was approved in the final weeks of Barack Obama’s administration, which broke with a long tradition of shielding Israel diplomatically



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L) walks with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull upon their arrival at Admiralty House in Sydney, Australia, on 22 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

and chose not to wield its veto power.

“Australia has been courageously willing to puncture UN hypocrisy more than once,” Netanyahu said.

“The UN is capable of many

absurdities and I think it’s important that you have straightforward and clear-eyed countries like Australia that often bring it back to earth,” he said after meeting Turnbull.

Israel has long pursued a

policy of constructing Jewish settlements on territory it captured in a 1967 war with its Arab neighbours including the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Most countries view such activity in the West Bank and

East Jerusalem as illegal and an obstacle to peace but Israel disagrees, citing a biblical connection to the land.

Washington’s ambassador to the United Nations has said the United States still supports a two-state solution to the conflict, although new US President Donald Trump has also said he is open to new ways to achieve peace.

The two-state solution has long been the bedrock of the international community’s policy for a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians but Trump’s apparent loosening of that main tenet, at a joint news conference with Netanyahu last week, stunned the international community. “We support an outcome which has two states where Israelis, the Israeli people, the Palestinian people live side-by-side as a result of direct negotiations between them,” Turnbull told reporters in Sydney. Netanyahu said any solution would need Palestine to recognise Israel, which would also have security control of the territories.

While in Australia, Netanyahu is scheduled to sign agreements fostering closer economic and defence cooperation. —Reuters

South African court says govt’s ICC withdrawal is unconstitutional

JOHANNESBURG — A decision by South Africa to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC) is unconstitutional, the country’s High Court ruled on Wednesday.

The ICC, which launched in July 2002 and has 124 member states, is the first legal body with permanent international jurisdiction to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

South Africa notified the United Nations of its intent to withdraw from the Rome Statute, the 1998 treaty establishing the Hague-based court, last October. The withdrawal would take this October.

High Court Judge Phineas Mojaelo on Wednesday ordered the government to withdraw the notice to quit the ICC, according to a ruling broadcast on television.

“We have won in our application to have SA’s withdrawal from the #ICC set aside,” the opposition Democratic Alliance party, which challenged the withdrawal, said on its Twitter feed.

It was not immediately clear whether the government would appeal the court ruling.

The ICC has had to fight off allegations of pursuing a neo-colonial agenda in Africa, where most of its investigations have been based.

Three African states — South Africa, Gambia and Burundi — last year signalled their intention to quit the ICC. Gambia’s President Adama Barrow, elected in December, said earlier this month it will remain in the ICC.

South Africa said it was quitting the ICC because membership conflicted with diplomatic immunity laws.—Reuters



The entrance of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is seen in The Hague, Netherlands, on 3 March, 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

British suicide bomber in Iraq had won compensation for Guantanamo stay

LONDON/CAIRO — An Islamic State suicide bomber from Britain who blew himself up in an attack on Iraqi forces this week had been given compensation for his detention in the Guantanamo Bay military prison, Western security sources said on Wednesday.

Islamic State militants said Abu-Zakariya al-Britani, a British citizen who was originally known as Ronald Fiddler and then cast himself as Jamal Udeen al-Harith, detonated a car bomb at an Iraqi army base southwest of Mosul this week.

The militants also published a photograph of the smiling bomber surrounded by wires in

the seat of what appeared to be the car in which he blew himself up.

The Islamic State statements could not be independently verified by Reuters but three Western security sources said it was highly likely that Britani was the bomber and now dead.

Britain made a civil damages settlement with British former Guantanamo Bay inmates in 2010 but did not disclose the size of the payouts, citing confidentiality agreements, then-Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke told parliament at the time.

The Daily Mail reported that Britani had been awarded \$1.25 million by the British gov-

ernment after claiming British agents knew or were complicit in his alleged mistreatment.

Originally from the northern English city of Manchester, he converted to Islam in his 20s. He was detained in Afghanistan by US special forces and taken to Guantanamo in 2002.

He was released in 2004 after the government of then-Prime Minister Tony Blair lobbied for his release. He later travelled to Syria to fight with Islamic State.

Britain’s foreign ministry declined to comment on the death of Britani but said it had advised for some time against all travel to Syria and large parts of Iraq.—Reuters

Turkey detains 35 suspected Islamic State members in Istanbul — Haberturk

ANKARA — Turkish authorities on Wednesday detained 35 suspected members of Islamic State in raids across Istanbul, broadcaster Haberturk said.

Police carried out simultaneous raids in 41 locations across the city and collected several documents linked to the jihadist group, it said.

The group has been blamed

for at least half a dozen attacks on civilian targets in Turkey over the past 18 months, prompting the authorities to intensify efforts to break up its suspected networks.

Thirty-nine people, mainly foreigners, were killed on New Year’s Day when an Islamic State militant opened fire inside the Reina nightclub Istanbul. Is-

lamic State said the attack was revenge for Turkish military involvement in Syria.

NATO member Turkey is part of the US-led coalition against Islamic State and launched an incursion into Syria in August to drive the jihadist group and Kurdish militia fighters away from its borders. —Reuters

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Dated 23 February 2017

lmm@kcyangon.com

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE**MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO ()**

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Japanese firms offering health-care service to elderly Japanese in Thailand

By Anna Masui

TOKYO — Japanese companies are offering nursing-care and health-care goods and services in Chiang Mai for elderly people from Japan spending their post-retirement life in the northern Thai city.

Friend Co, an operator of group homes for the aged in Oyama, Tochigi Prefecture near Tokyo, operates two stores in Chiang Mai to sell or lease walking sticks, chairs, beds and other nursing-care goods.

Friend began the business in 2015 after Keisuke Yamaguchi, chairman of the company, found a large presence of elderly Japanese in Chiang Mai through local volunteer activities he had started earlier.

"We first sought to create an extensive lineup of nursing-care goods for home use and set up places of consultations" for Japanese elderly in need of advice, Yamaguchi said.

According to the Japanese consulate general in the city, there are about 3,100 Japanese on extended stays in northern Thailand, half of whom are 60 and older.

Friend is now making preparations to open a welfare facility for Japanese retirees in Chiang Mai in 2017. The home is intended to serve the needs of Japanese with dementia and those who cannot return



Photo taken on 20 October, 2016, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, shows a health-care goods shop run by Friend Co, a Japanese firm operating group homes for the elderly, to cater to elderly people from Japan spending their post-retirement life in the Thai city. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

to Japan for one reason or another, said Kazumi Mochizuki, who is in charge of Friend's overseas operations.

Green Life Support Co, a Chiang Mai-based visa support company, has tied up with a Japanese IT firm to offer a health-care service for Japanese elderly using a smartphone app.

Under the service that began in July 2016, its members send their medical data, such as weight and blood pressure, to Green Life every day and can receive advice if necessary. If any of the users fails to send data for three straight days, they are contacted by

a company official.

The service also includes the installation of small sensors to detect human movements in clients' homes so as to prevent lonely death.

Sayoko Toida, 70, who uses the service, said, "As I have recently developed bronchitis, it (the service) gives me a sense of safety when I am left alone in Thailand during my husband's trips to Japan."

The Tokyo-based Asian Medicare Exchange Foundation Association has embarked on a project to build a remote medical support system for Japanese living in Asian countries.

The project is intended to enable Japanese living in Asian countries to directly contact medical institutions in Japan to get advice on their health, said Akira Mizoo, a medical doctor who is an executive of the association.

Friend, meanwhile, is seeking to expand their products and services to cater to local wealthy people in Southeast Asia where the population is aging.

The company is also considering developing services that enable Japanese in the region to check the safety of their aged parents in Japan. —Kyodo News

Lawyers for SKorea's Park accuse court reviewing impeachment of bias

SEOUL — Lawyers for South Korean President Park Geun-hye accused one of the judges reviewing her impeachment of bias on Wednesday and asked him to excuse himself, in a dramatic twist in a case engulfing members of the political and business elite.

The Constitutional Court rejected the request, drawing objections from the lawyers who have argued that parliament's vote to impeach Park in December has no legal justification.

Park's lawyers said one of the court's eight judges, Kang Il-won, had consistently shown bias in his questioning of witnesses and had admitted questionable evidence.

"If this judge participates in this case ... it could harm the fairness of the trial, which is the basis of our request to remove him," a lawyer for Park, Cho Won-ryong, told the hearing.

"According to our analysis, Judge Kang mostly asks questions to the defence's witnesses," Kim Pyung-woo, another lawyer for Park said. "And his questions for the defence witnesses always start off with criticism."

Park has not appeared before the court. It can not order her to appear — she retains presidential immunity while in office — and her lawyers have said she has not decided whether to attend.

The corruption scan-

dal erupted late last year over accusations that Park colluded with a friend, Choi Soon-sil, to pressure big businesses to donate to two foundations set up to back the president's policy initiatives.

Park, 65, was impeached by parliament in December and she has been stripped of her powers while the Constitutional Court decides whether to uphold the impeachment.

The daughter of a former military ruler, Park has denied wrongdoing, as has Choi.

If the impeachment is upheld, Park would become the first democratically elected leader to be removed from office and a new election would have to be called in 60 days to

pick a new leader for a full five-year term.

The court says it would conclude oral arguments on 27 February. It has not said when it would deliver a verdict but according to past practice, a decision could be expected after about two weeks.

For the impeachment to stand, at least six of the eight judges must rule in its favour.

The seat for the court's ninth judge was vacated when its chief retired at the end of January.

In a case linked to the scandal, the chief of South Korea's biggest conglomerate, Samsung Group, was arrested on Friday on suspicion of bribing Park's friend to gain government favours. —Reuters

Japan school operator with ties to PM's wife could face parliament questions

TOKYO — Japan's largest opposition Democratic Party has demanded that the head of a school operator with ties to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's wife, Akie, appear before parliament to explain its purchase of government-owned land, it said on Wednesday.

The operator, Moritomo Gakuen, last year bought an 8,770-square-metre plot of government-owned land for 134 million yen (\$1.2 million), or 14 per cent of its appraisal price, to build a new elementary school, Kyodo news agency has reported.

Akie Abe is set to be honorary principal of the new school in Japan's western region of Toyonaka, Moritomo Gakuen says on its website.

Prime Minister Abe told parliament on Friday neither he nor his wife had been involved in the transaction.

Although the appraisal price of the land was 956 million yen, an estimated



Students line up in front of Japan's national flag at the morning assembly at Tsukamoto kindergarten in Osaka, Japan on 30 November, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

cost of 822 million yen for land cleanup activities was deducted from the sale price, Kyodo said.

"The focus is whether the cost estimate of 800 million was truly right," Democratic Party lawmaker Yuichiro Tamaki said on Wednesday, following a visit to the site and meetings with finance ministry officials the previous day.

"During the field trip, no evidence has emerged to support construction work worth 800 million yen was actually carried out or such work was nec-

essary in the first place," he told reporters.

No officials of the finance ministry or Moritomo Gakuen were immediately available for comment on the land transaction.

Fellow Democratic Party lawmaker Kiyomi Tsujimoto told the same news conference the party was demanding that Yasunori Kagoike, the president of Moritomo Gakuen, appear before a parliamentary committee to give an explanation of the purchase.

Moritomo Gakuen has been in the media spotlight in recent weeks following online comments by its kindergarten that domestic media described as possible hate speech against Koreans and Chinese people, for which the school then apologised.

Kagoike heads the Osaka branch of Nippon Kaigi, or Japan Conference, a nationalist lobby group with close ties to Abe and his cabinet.—Reuters

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Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt arrive at the screening of her directorial debut "In the Land of Blood and Honey" in New York on 5 December 5, 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

Angelina Jolie says 'we'll always be a family' despite divorce

LOS ANGELES — Angelina Jolie said on Tuesday she hoped her family would be stronger after her divorce from Brad Pitt, but that the actress still thinks of him as a wonderful father.

"We are focusing on the health of our family, and so we will be, we will be stronger when we come out of this because that's what we're determined to do as a family," Jolie told ABC Television's "Good Morning America" in an interview.

Jolie, in some of her first comments on the divorce from Pitt, was asked if she still thought of the actor as the "wonderful father" she had called him several years ago.

"Of course," she replied. "We will always be a family, always."

Jolie and Pitt's surprise split last September after more than 10

years together turned bitter after fights over custody of their six children and accusations of child abuse against Pitt involving one of the children after the "Moneyball" star lost his temper.

Pitt has since been cleared of any wrongdoing but Jolie has primary custody of their children pending a final settlement of the divorce.

Jolie, in Cambodia to promote her new movie "First They Killed My Father," told the BBC in an interview at the weekend that the split with Pitt has been difficult.

"Many people find themselves in this situation. My whole family have all been through a difficult time. My focus is my children, our children," she said.

All six of the children flew to Cambodia for Saturday's world

premiere of "First They Killed My Father," which is a real life account of the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s in which more than one million people died of starvation, exhaustion, disease or in mass executions.

Jolie, who adopted her eldest child Maddox, now 15, from Cambodia, directed the film and said she made it to better understand the recent history of Cambodia.

"Forty years ago this war affected every single individual here, and I wanted to understand myself. I don't know much of my son's (Maddox) birth parents, but I believe they would've gone through this war. I wanted to understand him and his culture in a deeper way, and I wanted to bring this story to this country in this country's language," she said.—Reuters



Hollywood star George Clooney. PHOTO: REUTERS

Clooney plans to be more responsible after welcoming twins

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood star George Clooney says he is planning to be "much more responsible" after welcoming twins with wife Amal Clooney.

The 55-year-old actor said he is already thinking about some lifestyle changes, reported E! online.

"We decided to be much more responsible, to avoid the danger. I will not go to South Sudan anymore and in the Congo, Amal will no longer go to Iraq and she will avoid places where she knows she is not welcome," Clooney said.

"Before, I did not care, I would even say that there was a pretty exciting side to going where no reporter had ever been. We have the chance to live between three countries: Italy, America and England," he added.

The Oscar-winning actor said once its time for the twins to enroll in school they will "choose where to settle."

"In the meantime, we will continue to move according to our respective schedules. People think we were never together, but we have not been separated for more than a week," Clooney said.—PTI

Lights! Camera! Action! Getting ready for the Oscars' red carpet



Heidi Klum, Cate Blanchett and Emily Blunt pose on the red carpet before the 2016 Academy Awards. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — It's not just women who are getting ready for the Oscars' red carpet on Sunday.

Employing everything from paint to cosmetic procedures, Hollywood's leading men are increasingly getting a little help to look their best on the most high-profile red carpet in the world.

"I tell my male clients, this is not your sister's make-up. This is a cosmetic collection that's been tailored for men," said dermatologist Dr Janine Hopkins.

Hopkins created the Minerals Black Tie collection to help men cover up severe skin blemishes, but it's also being used by celebrities who walk the red carpet.

"On the red carpet it would help to make the actor look just more youthful, more bright eyed and not have those dark circles showing up on camera," Hopkins said.

"Even though most of our male celebrities are quite flawless, they're still not immune to the occasional breakout," she said.

Estheticians say that to get the best results, it's best to start any procedures at least a week ahead of Sunday's ceremony, where more than 60 photographers will be positioned on the 500 foot-long (152-metre) red carpet outside the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.

An IV vitamin infusion is one of the latest offerings for achieving glowing skin.

"Initially it's internal because you're getting the hydration and you're getting all of the vitamins. But the effects of the vitamins are on the skin, on the immune system," said Joy Edwards, a nurse specialist at Cassileth Plastic Surgery and Skin Care in Beverly Hills.

As for the eyes, celebrities are moving away from fake eyelashes and opting for a more natural look with lash extensions, which are attached one by one to one's own lashes.

"The strip lashes, they look fake, they don't look real," said Candi Maldonado at Lash Loft in New York. "Lash extensions create more volume and extend the client's lashes ... that's why it gives a more natural look."—Reuters

I'm terrified of weddings, jokes Anna Kendrick

LONDON — Anna Kendrick has said she is so scared of weddings that she avoids befriending single friends.

The 31-year-old actress, who appeared on the "Today" show to promote her upcoming film "Table 19", joked the weddings get to her so she now avoids being a bridesmaid, reported FemaleFirst.

"I've only been a bridesmaid once... I'm, like, so terrified of that (weddings) that I feel like I'm waiting till girls get married and then we can be really close friends," quipped Kendrick.

The "Pitch Perfect" star added she would rather sit at the back in a wedding than have a role in the bridal party.

Kendrick is currently filming the third installment of the musical.—PTI



Anna Kendrick. PHOTO: REUTERS

Obituary

Al Haj Tun Aung

(Chairman – Gensecon Myanmar Pte. Ltd.)

(Supervisor (Rtd.) – The Guardian Newspaper House)

(Aged 69 Years)

This is to inform all friends and relatives of far and near that Al Haj. U Tun Aung (a) Shahul Hameed residing at 156, Theinbyu Road, Botataung Tsp., Yangon, (son of Al Haj U Abbas and Al Haj Daw Mariam Bi), Son in Law of (Al Haj U Yasin and Al Hajah Daw Mi Mi Gyi – Principal B.S.C College), beloved husband of Al Hajah Daw Myint Myint Sein @ Violet Yasin (Vice Chairman – GMPL), father of Ma Aye Aye Tun and Mg Soe Wunna (Diamond Group Construction) and also father of Al Haj Arkar Tun (Aywaratt Paper and Printing Inks Distribution) and beloved grandfather of Mg Soe Thurein Tun (Grade 1, B.E.H.S. (5) Botataung) and Ma Soe Yatti Tun, passed away this morning (21-02-2017) at 03:58 AM. Burial Rights have taken place at the Yeway Sunni Muslim Garden at 5:00 the same day today.

The Bereaved Family

Bao Bao the panda departs to new home in China from National Zoo

WASHINGTON —

Bao Bao, the 3-year-old giant panda who rose to fame while growing up on live video at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington, left for her new home in China on Tuesday under a long-standing breeding and research programme.

Bao Bao could be seen in live video provided by the zoo being loaded, inside her crate, onto a Boeing 777F aircraft at the Dulles International Airport in Virginia for Chengdu, China.

The freighter, customized with an image of a giant panda emblazoned on its side, took off just before 2 pm ET (1900 GMT).

"Today is bittersweet," zoo Director Dennis Kelly said in a statement. "We've

watched Bao Bao grow up during the past three years, and she has charmed people all over the world with her independent and playful personality."

The giant panda now enters "the next chapter of her life," Kelly said.

Traveling with Bao Bao will be her handler and veterinarian, as well as 55 pounds of bamboo and several more pounds of biscuits, sweet potatoes and sugarcane. She will be greeted by her new keepers upon arrival in Chengdu.

Bao Bao was born at the zoo on 22 August, 2013 to mother Mei Xiang and father Tian Tian, who were loaned to the zoo as part of an agreement with the Chinese Wildlife Conservation Association.—Reuters

Away from the catwalks, edgy London street style garners its own attention

LONDON — The London catwalks may be showcasing designers' latest trends at Fashion Week but outside the runway venues, an array of eclectic outfits are also grabbing photographers' attention.

Posing, pouting and describing their looks, the fashion fans proudly display their wardrobe choices for bloggers and photographers snapping pictures of the Londoners' street style.

From the luxurious to the high street and the vintage to the recycled, the mix of looks is what makes the British city stand apart from fellow fashion capitals Milan, Paris and New York, fashionistas say.

"Here you can basically create your own style and no one will bat an eyelid," fashion blogger Zokaya Kamara, 35, said.

"No one is critical, people are appreciative of the effort that you make. This is the best place where your individuality can shine and be expressed and embraced ... and give inspiration to fashionistas." Each season editors, bloggers and buyers descend on the four fashion capitals for the catwalk shows, but online pictures of outfits on the pavements outside have become as key to style followers as what is seen on the runways.

In London, which does not showcase as many major luxury brands as the other cities but is home to famed fashion schools, residents' edgy sartorial looks are particularly lauded.

Bloggers, students and fashion fans mill around show venues and pose for pictures like models. On display are torn shirts worn under belted jackets, PVC coats, floral trouser suits, vintage dresses as well as plenty of quirky sunglasses.

"In Paris it is very strict, classical, glamorous ... here in London you have many people throwing colours and prints," said French fashion student Philippine Ponsar, dressed in a yellow fringed jacket, striped top and dress wrapped around her waist.

"Other fashion capitals have become very international and look the same; in London, you still see the street vibes, the punk and rock," one Israeli fashionista, who gave her name as Cheri, said. From colourful 1960s mini-skirts to punk, London has championed ground-breaking styles, and is particularly known for its creative talent. Fashion designers such as Alexander McQueen, Stella McCartney and John Galiano all studied in London.

"London has an amazing sense of ideas and freshness," British accessories designer Anya Hindmarch said. "People are prepared to be different but also you



Musician 'Girli' poses for a portrait during London Fashion Week in London, Britain, on 21 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

look at the streets, you go to parts of London and you see fresh raw ideas, people experiment here and push boundaries."

Outside one fashion show, student Ella Light, 18, caught bloggers' attention with her pink anorak, check chef's trousers and blue circular sunglasses.

"London has quite a rock 'n' roll edge to it, like it just doesn't care," she said. "And there is something amazing about that."

—Reuters

Americans eat out less as higher menu prices take a bite from restaurant visits: Reuters/Ipsos poll

LOS ANGELES — A third of US adults are eating out less frequently than three months ago, mostly because of cost, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos survey that illustrates the challenge for US restaurants seeking to revive traffic after zero growth in 2016.

Penny-pinching diners and intense competition from supermarkets, meal kit

sellers like Blue Apron and upstart grocers such as Amazon.com (AMZN.O) have been a growing problem for restaurants.

Annual traffic to US restaurants has been flat or up just 1 per cent since 2009, when there was a 2 per cent drop in the wake of the debilitating financial crisis, according to data from the NPD Group. One-third

of respondents to the Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll of more than 4,200 US adults from 14 to 25 January said they were eating out less often than three months ago. Of those diners, 62 per cent said cost was the primary reason.

Recent minimum wage increases have prompted some US restaurant operators to raise menu prices

while less labor-intensive grocery stores have been able to pass lower food costs on to shoppers. The gap between grocery food prices and restaurant prices is at an historic high. The consumer price index for food away from home was up 2.4 per cent year over year at the end of January compared to a 1.9 per cent drop for food at home.—Reuters

MRTV

Programme Schedule
(23-2-2017, Thursday)

6:00 Am

◆ Paritta by Hilly Region
Missionary Sayadaw

7:00 Am

◆ Breakfast News

7:35 Am

◆ NRC Programme

8:35 Am

◆ Documentary

9:10 Am

◆ Documentary

9:25 Am

◆ Beautiful ASEAN

9:30 Am

◆ ASEAN Spotlight

10:30 Am

◆ MRTV Worker Programme

11:00 Am

◆ 2017 Matriculation
Examination Lessons
(History)

11:30 Am

◆ Teleplay

12:35 Pm

◆ TV Drama Series

1:05 Pm

◆ Myanmar Movie

2:35 Pm

◆ Documentary

3:05 Pm

◆ Teleplay

3:35 Pm

◆ Weekly Sport Info

4:15 Pm

◆ 2017 Matriculation
Examination Lessons
(History)

5:05 Pm

◆ NHK Programme
"The Wander of Water
of work"

5:30 Pm

◆ Applied Financial
Knowledge

6:15 Pm

◆ Football Magazine

6:30 Pm

◆ Current Affairs

7:15 Pm

◆ TV Drama Series

8:00 Pm

◆ News/International
News/ Weather Report

8:35 Pm

◆ Documentary
(Fire Talk)

◆ Talk on Old Film
(Part- 1)

◆ Myanmar Video

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

mitv

Myanmar
International
Programme Schedule

(23-2-2017 07:00am ~ 24-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Paper Products... Plain but Pretty
07:47	Am	A Historic Town: 9 Pagodas
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	The Man and The Elephant
08:57	Am	Dances of Myanmar "Gaybar Kayin Traditional Dance"
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Myanmar Handicrafts
10:03	Am	News
10:27	Am	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture Novicehood in Myanmar
10:52	Am	Myanmar Masterclass: ARTIST SOE HNIN AUNG

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	Travel to The Southern Part of Shan State (Kalaw)
07:46	Pm	Shan Novices to Be...
08:03	Pm	News
08:27	Pm	Exquisite Myanmar Silk
08:46	Pm	Living in Off-Season

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

Too many foreigners managing Premier League teams — Giggs

LONDON — There are too many foreign managers in the Premier League and little opportunity for local talents, according to former Manchester United winger and assistant manager Ryan Giggs.

Giggs, who was the caretaker boss for four games at United in 2014, was linked with a return to management at Swansea City before American Bob Bradley's appointment in October and was considered again before Englishman Paul

Clement took charge in January.

"I don't think there's enough (British managers) at the moment," Giggs told the BBC. "I think it is (important British coaches get a chance). There's a lot of top quality foreign coaches in the Premier League, but there's also a lot of quality British coaches and managers out there."

Seven of the 20 Premier League clubs have British managers, but the current top-seven sides are all managed by for-

eigners, with Welshman Tony Pulis' West Bromwich Albion the highest-placed team with a British manager. "If you don't get the chance, you don't get the chance to prove what you can do and see what you can do with a talented team," Giggs added.

"As I say, there are quality foreign coaches as well. I just think on the balance, there's too many foreigners at the moment and British coaches probably just don't get the chances." —Reuters



Manchester United assistant manager Ryan Giggs. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sato wins gold, Iwasa silver in normal hill ski jump

SAPPORO — Yukiya Sato and Yuken Iwasa won the gold and silver, respectively, to give Japan a 1-2 finish in the individual competition in men's normal hill ski jumping at the Asian Winter Games on Wednesday.

A day after the event was delayed due to strong winds, Sato recorded jumps of 98.5 and 94.5 metres at the K-90 Miyanomori Ski Jump Stadium, scoring a total of 254.0 points.

Iwasa earned 251.0 points for his leaps of 94 and 97.5 metres, ahead of Sergey Tkachenko of Kazakhstan, who leaped 93.5 metres in both attempts for a total of 238.0 points. —Kyodo News

Possible Mayweather-McGregor bout 'a joke' — Alvarez

NEW YORK — A possible bout between Floyd Mayweather and mixed martial arts champion Conor McGregor is getting lots of buzz but two fighters that are getting in the ring said the crossover tilt would be a black eye on boxing.

Irishman McGregor has been challenging Mayweather to a fight for months but the two have yet to reach terms while both have been doing their part to drum up interest with plenty of

back and forth in the media.

"It's a joke for boxing if that happens," two-time world champion Canelo Alvarez, who fights fellow Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez Jr in Las Vegas in May, told Reuters on Tuesday.

Mayweather, who retired in 2015 after compiling a perfect 49-0 record, has said he would require a guaranteed \$100 million to make the fight with McGregor happen.

"It is a businessman fight,"

Chavez said during Tuesday's promotion stop in New York for the Cinco de Mayo weekend bout with Alvarez on May 6. "I like to fight a serious fight."

Famed boxing trainer Freddie Roach believes the much-hyped Mayweather-McGregor showdown will happen and that he may get involved himself.

Roach, who prepared Manny Pacquiao for the "Fight of the Century" against Mayweather, said in an appearance on The MMA Hour show on Monday that the 12-time boxing champion visited his Wild Card gym and told him that he will fight McGregor.

"According to Mayweather, yes. He told me he would fight him. Everything is pointing in that direction right now," said Roach, who added that he would consider training McGregor if asked. "I think Mayweather is the favorite, yes, but I wouldn't count anyone out. Because (McGregor) throws, he throws hard and he's not afraid to throw." —Reuters



Floyd Mayweather. PHOTO: REUTERS

Western Sydney ban 14 fans after offensive banner display

SYDNEY — Western Sydney Wanderers have banned 14 fans for 18 months after a section of their 'Red and Black Bloc' supporters group displayed an "offensive" banner during their A-League clash with Sydney FC on Saturday.

Football Federation Australia (FFA) have issued a 'show cause' notice to the club in response to the banner, which they described as "offensive to any reasonable member of the public", and the club may face severe penalties from the governing body.

The banner, depicting a blue-faced man said to resemble Sydney FC coach Graham Arnold performing a sex act, was held aloft by Wanderers' fans during their 1-0 A-League victory at Sydney's Olympic Stadium.

Wanderers Chief Executive John Tsatsimas said in a statement on Tuesday the supporters group had shown disdain for the club. "Following a thorough review of the incident on Saturday including review of CCTV footage at the venue and examination of those involved ... we have acted to remove them from our club," Tsatsimas said.

"This incident involved key leaders of the RBB who have shown no remorse for their actions of bringing our club and the game of football into disrepute and have continued to flaunt their disdain for the club and our diverse and inclusive membership family further on social media." —Reuters

Liverpool gained from mid-season camp in Spain, says Mane

LONDON — Liverpool will reap the benefits of their mid-season training camp in Spain when they travel to relegation-threatened Premier League champions Leicester City on Monday, forward Sadio Mane said.

With the Merseyside club devoid of any domestic cup or European commitments, Juergen Klopp's charges took advantage of their fortnight break and went for a four-night camp in La Manga in a bid to rediscover their best form. "It was just like one (a pre-season)... The last few weeks

have been quite difficult for obvious reasons, but we didn't stop working during that period and that was important," Mane told the club website (www.liverpoolfc.com).

Liverpool's league victory over Tottenham Hotspur on Feb. 11 marked their first league win of the year and was also just their second victory in 11 games.

Liverpool's title bid has faltered in recent weeks as they have dropped to fifth, 11 points behind leaders Chelsea with 13 games remaining.

"But re-finding our form against Tottenham and the way we did it, we thought 'we're back now and we've got to maintain this'. We have to play the match against Leicester with the same attitude," Mane said.

"We had a good time (in Spain) but we also worked very hard, we trained together well and we also had a friendly game amongst ourselves. The weather wasn't brilliant but a bit better than here." —Reuters



Liverpool's Sadio Mane.

PHOTO: REUTERS