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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Kayin dance troupe performs a traditional dance at the Kayin New Year Day celebration in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday . **PHOTO: MNA**

Kayin New Year celebrations in Nay Pyi Taw

The State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered the New Year address at the Kayin New Year Day celebrations held at 9 am yesterday, at the Myanmar International Convention Center-II in Nay Pyi Taw which falls on the 1st Waxing of Pyatho,

Kayin Era 2757.

Present at the ceremony were Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw, U Myo Nyunt, Chairman of Constitutional Tribunal of the Union, U Hla Thein, Chairman of the Union Election Commission, U

T Khun Myat, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, U Aye Tha Aung, Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw, Thura U Shwe Mann, Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, Union Ministers, Chairman of

Nay Pyi Taw Council, Union Attorney General, Deputy Ministers, Hluttaw representatives, representatives from Kayin National Union, invited guests and responsible officials.

First of all, after sacrificial offering were made to “phibiyaw”

the divine bird, guardian of crops according to Kayin traditions, the ceremony was opened, presided over by Mahn Win Khaing Than, U Saw Valentine, U Saw Tin Win, U Saw Tun Mya Aung and Mahn Tun Kyaing.

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Kayin New Year celebrations in Nay Pyi Taw

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Afterwards, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw addressed the gathering as follows: “Every person living in the countries all over the world celebrate New Year Day in accord with the traditions of their nations and races. New Year Day is the first-ever day just after the end of the old year. Our Kayin race has different sub-groups. Though being different in living locations, language used, literature, and religious beliefs, we all have unity of mind and spirit. We have been celebrating the ceremony for 79 years. Our main vocation is farming. At the time of the new harvest, when the new crops have been reaped, families gather to celebrate the festival. That time had been regarded as the New Year Day. That being so Kayin New Year is not only the sign of changing into the New Year but also the symbol of unity. It had been held in Nay Pyi Taw for the 2nd time. To do so, after negotiation with the Kayin national parliamentarians, the decision was made to celebrate it here. Because we have all worked in unity, we are able to celebrate successfully. PUMA ENERGY ASIA SUM COMPANY also helped us to make the celebrations a success. So, we would like to thank Ko Than Win Kyaw, a Shan national who is the chairman of Puma Company. Accordingly, the Kayin New Year Day depicts national unity and youths’ effort.”

“Successful celebrations of Kayin New Year Day were attributed to unity and friendship among Kayin nationals. Due to the concerted efforts of Kayin national parliamentarians, the 1st Waxing of Pyatho was officially designated as the Kayin National Day. The first-ever Kayin National New Year address was said by Thalay Htaikhokepho on Kayin Era 2678, 1st waxing of Pyatho, AD 1938 December 21. In the address, Kayin nationals will take part in united Myanmar while building up national unity among Kayin nationals, without selfishness and any prejudices for the national interest. The broadcast speech expresses that Kayin national leaders’ efforts to successfully designate the KNYD. We all wished to take part in the nation building with genuine minds for the national progress. We firmly believe that peace is essentially needed for the emergence of a developed and united country as hoped by our leaders,” said Mahn



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the celebration of Kayin New Year Day at the MICC II in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than arrive to attend the Kayin New Year Day Celebration. PHOTO: MNA

Win Khaing Than.

The Speaker added, “As this is the time when the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is implementing the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong, we, all the Kayin nationals on our part must help as much as we can. As known by all, we are facing many challenges while making efforts to build up a peaceful and developed federal democratic union. At such a time, we must solve all the challenges in unity without any grudge and prejudices so that we can remove pressures and challenges as desired our leaders. To sum it up, we will continue to celebrate future Kayin New Year Days like the present 79th ceremony. As a way of showing gratitude to our Kayin national leaders, for emergence of an auspicious Union as desired by our leaders, I deeply urge my

fellow nationals to work for the nation energetically and in unity.”

This was followed by an address by the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in which she said, “Today is the 1st Waxing of Pyatho, Kayin Era 2757 when the New Year ceremony is being held with auspiciousness just after the end of the old year. At the time of new harvest, family members assemble together, bearing good tidings and partaking in bounteous feasts. That is, it is the time full of unity, happiness and good hopes for the future. Nowadays, Union citizens living in the country are trying their best to overcome difficulties and challenges. We firmly believe that we will be successful no matter how many difficulties we may have to face. Looking back into our country’s history we had managed to overcome

obstacles, moving along arduous journeys. In walking towards peace as well, it is evident that Kayins led energetically so much so that we all began to use the term “Kayin Model”. Now, the sound of Kayin drums are echoing on the “Dawna” mountain in Kayin State. The sound of gun fire has ceased; instead the voices of children reciting lessons in their classrooms and school bells have replaced these sounds. Nascent progress of peace is being seen. Those living in regions which are still far from peace look with envy. Kayin nationals from home and abroad who had been there for various reasons will see a brighter future. On such an occasion, I would like to say that I am very pleased for the Kayin State which is building a beautiful future. Our Kayin people are simple, loyal and act with firmness and determination. They had inherited this from their ancestors for 2757 years. There will be no doubt for them to preserve these practices for generations. Kayin dances show swiftness and openness. Songs also are full of happiness. These give us physical and spiritual strength. Kayin nationals will take part in national reconciliation energetically and bravely. For these we would like to thank peace activists on behalf of the Union. Finally, may you bring about union peace with good examples, from now on. May you implement the development of

Kayin State. May you preserve traditional culture, national heritage and lovable characteristics of the Kayin race. May have plentiful food and wealth and be free from dangers.” “One Kayin national came to me to explain about the divine bird while watching the festival. The reason for giving offerings to the divine bird is for the benefit of both sides—farmers and birds coming to feed on crops. Birds usually eat crops and snails. When crops are frequently eaten, it will cause loss for farmers. But as it eats snails, it is better for farmers. Advantage and disadvantages always come together. However we need to make sure that advantages far outweigh the disadvantages,” said the State Counsellor.

Following that the State Counsellor posed for documentary photos with those present at the ceremony.

After that, Colonel Kawkasar Saw Ne Soe, a representative of the KNU read out the message sent by General Saw Mutu Sae Poe, Chairman of KNU, followed by Dr Arrkar Htun [a] Naw Christ Tun who read out a paper on the origin of KNYD in Myanmar with Naw Susanar Hla Hla Soe reading in Sakaw Kayin language.

Then, the audience was entertained with Kayin traditional Done-yein dances after which the ceremony came to a close.—Myanmar News Agency (Unofficial Translation)

VP U Myint Swe attends 2017 International Migrants Day ceremony

INTERNATIONAL Migrants Day was observed in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, which was attended by Vice President U Myint Swe.

U Myint Swe delivered an opening address at the ceremony which was held with the theme of "Safe Migration in World on the Move" at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-2).

The event was attended by Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, heads of departments, diplomats, personnel from United Nations and international non-government organizations and officials.

In his speech, Vice President U Myint Swe called for giving legal protection to migrant workers and giving priority to women and children.

"Women and children are vulnerable to the effects of migration and this point should be taken into consideration when laws or policies are drawn for migrant rights," said U Myint Swe.

He also stressed the need to produce more skilled workers in Myanmar who can meet the changing requirements of the labour market.

Within the ASEAN region, there are about 6.5 million migrant workers and Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are the main destinations. From 1995 to 2015 the numbers of migration within the region increased significantly.

The World Bank's report published in 2017 October said unskilled and undocumented ASEAN migratory workers seek jobs in construction, agriculture and domestic helpers for economic opportunity.

Regional countries and international organizations are cooperating internationally on the matter of migrant workers.



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers the speech at the International Migrants Day 2017. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar signed the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers at 31st ASEAN Summit held in Philippines on November 2017. The declaration was signed with the aim to setup a framework on migrant workers under close cooperation and by working together with ASEAN countries. This reflects Myanmar's firm commitment toward social protection of migrant workers in the region, obtaining justice, health protection, humane and fair treatment of migrant workers, said U Myint Swe.

Furthermore, Myanmar is participating to endorse the global agreement on safe, systematic and legal migration in 2018. In order to include Myanmar's remarks supporting safe, systematic and legal migration with facts and positive suggestion in the agreement, a national level workshop was held in November.

Vice President U Myint Swe also called for ensuring a safe and secure method of transferring money by migrant workers to their homes as money remitted by migrant workers from developing countries to their family is a major source of GDP for their home country.

"More effort is required to

have a safe and secure way of remitting money to their families," said the Vice President.

In conclusion, the Vice President urged all to cooperate in establishing a complete and successful society where migrant workers who contribute towards the economic development of both the host country and country of origin have a safe way of migrating, while being accorded protection and full rights.

A video file depicting activities and movements on migrant workers was then shown to the attendees of the ceremony.

Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe said the ministry has assisted the country's migrant workers, who returned home after working in foreign countries, to be able to use their vocational skills at their best in Myanmar.

For these aims to be achieved 261 employment agencies including one government employment agency is systematically sending workers to Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, some middle east countries and some other countries according to the 1999 Overseas Employment Law.

Amendment to the Overseas Employment Law has been drawn for it to be in accordance

with the time and international standards. According to Myanmar-Thailand Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in employing workers, undocumented Myanmar migrant workers who were in Thailand illegally were legalized by issuing identity, temporary passport, ordinary passport and foreign worker identifications. From 2009 to end November 2017, a total of 2.4 million have been provided with the documents.

Increasing cooperation between the two countries on migrant workers will greatly support the economic and social development of the country. Migrant workers should seek overseas jobs legally and they should understand the work condition, employer/employee agreement, rules, laws and regulations of the respective country and work site requirement.

A gap in the labour market, decreasing in number of legal migrant workers and access to the illegal market have attracted migrant workers. To eradicate the illegal migration, cooperation of not only the host country and country of origin but the employment agencies, international organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) is required.

We are doing our best in doing everything according to the policy on migration on the matter of migrant workers said the Union Minister.

It is to be noted that migration can bring benefits like providing livelihood for the family, increasing the living standard and provide education to the children as well as harms such as facing unfairness and undergoing unforeseeable sufferings.

Furthermore, women and children are especially vulnerable to exploitation. Therefore in providing them with protection, understanding and obtaining the full rights according to the relevant country's labour law depend not only on the government but the cooperation of all stakeholders and CSOs, said the Union Minister.

Next, IOM Chief of Mission Mr. Akio Nakayama read the messages from the United Nations Secretary General and International Organization for Migration (IOM) Director General.

Afterwards, Union Minister U Thein Swe presented certificates of honor to officials of Education and Development Foundation, Group on Cooperating for Myanmar People's affairs and Bangkok based Myanmar Migrant Workers Network who helped the affairs of Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand, including the education, health and social affairs of the family members. The Union Minister also presented education support money for children of migrant workers.

The Union Minister then took commemorative group photo with event attendees and viewed the photo record of activities on migrant workers, displayed books and magazines.— Myanmar News Agency

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www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITORAye Min Soe,
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR**Mark Angeles,
markangeles@gmail.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSKhin Maung Oo,
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Khin Maung Win (Chief Proof Reader),
Zaw Min, zawmin.gnlm@gmail.com**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Khaing Thanda Lwin,
Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTERS**May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team),
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Number of tiger and wildlife species in Hugaung Tiger Reserve collected

POPULATION of tiger and wildlife species dwelling in Hugaung Tiger Reserve and their habitats are being surveyed in cooperation with the Forest Department, said U Aung Kyaw from Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar Programme).

Hugaung Tiger Reserve and Khakaborazi National Park, under the guard of a forest officials, the police and WCS members, are being protected from hunting and cutting trees. Awareness campaigns concerning wildlife conservation activities will also be conducted for public participation in the drive, said U Aung Kyaw. A training

will be conducted with foreign experts in a bid to improve capacity of WCS and Forest Department's staff.

The trainees will receive skills for survey, patrolling and use of camera traps, GPS, compass, clinometers, range finders. They will also participate in oversea workshop and meetings.

The authorities will raise awareness about wildlife conservation in Hugaung Tiger Reserve and Khakaborazi National Park to attract people for activities for Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). —Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

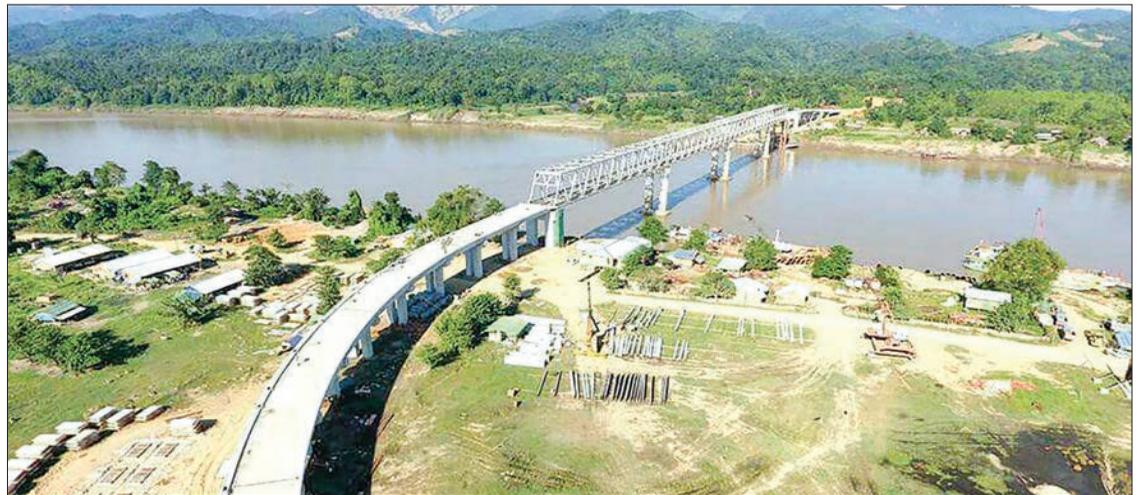


The photo of tiger captured by camera. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Chindwin River Bridge (Khamti) nears completion

A PROJECT to construct a bridge across Chindwin River in Khamti Township in Sagaing Region is currently 80 per cent complete, according to the Bridge Department (Sagaing Region).

Initiated since late 2016, the new project is expected to be finalized by March, said U Myo Khine, one of assistant directors of the Bridge Department. The region government funded Ks19.6 billion to the construction of bridge. Upon completion of the project, socio-economic development of local villages in the upper Sagaing Region and Naga area would be improved. The new bridge will be 809.5-meter long and will include 8.5-meter wide motor road and one-meter wide platforms. The bridge



An aerial view of the bridge across the Chindwin River in Khamti. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

department under the Ministry of Construction has constructed the new RC bridge linking Khamti Town in the east of the Chindwin River and Hsinthay Village in the west of the river.

The new bridge is situated one mile from Khamti and it is

on the route to Lahe Town in Naga area. After completion the project, villagers will enjoy the smooth transportation between Naga Self-Administered Zone and other towns in Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

People in Naga area are fac-

ing difficulties especially in the wet season, because of uneasy access to Sagaing Region.

Residents expect that the new bridge would reduce the travel time between Naga and other areas.—Win Oo (Zeyataing)

Myanmar Navy seizes four boats carrying illegal timber logs in Hainggyikyun Township

A vessel from Myanmar Navy seized four boats carrying illegal timber logs in the Andaman Sea near Zeechaing Village, Hainggyikyun Township in Ayeyawady Region on 17 December afternoon.

The boats were owned by U Thein Lwin, U Ohn Kyin Lay and U Myint Aye from Phaung Toe Village and U Aung Aung from Thamban Village.

A total of 20 people were also arrested along with at least 24 tons of timber logs, said a local.

Arrangement is being made to transfer the seized timbers to local authorities and 20 people on board are being questioned at Hainggyikyun local police station, according to the initial news.—Myanmar Digital News

Endangered Ayeyawady dolphin found dead in Katha

AN endangered Ayeyawady dolphin measuring 7 foot-6-inch-long and four-foot-eight-inch-wide was found dead near Kyaukpon Village in Katha Township on 17 December in the morning. A local fisherman found the dead dolphin while he was catching

the fish in Ayeyawady River, said a villager from Kyaukpon Village. The officials from the township Department of Fisheries examined the dead dolphin and buried it with the help of the villagers.—Myanmar Digital News

Slight earthquake jolts near Rakhine State's An Township

A slight earthquake of magnitude 4.0 Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar about 37 miles Northwest of An, about 203 miles Southwest of Mandalay seismologi-

cal observatory was recorded at 12 hr 15 min 18 sec M.S.T on 18th December, 2017, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.—Myanmar Digital News

Fishery export income up by US\$74 million over past nine months

EXPORT earnings from fishery sector as of 8th December in current FY amounted to about US\$434 million, which is an increase of \$74 million compared to that of last FY, according to the statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

Fishery export at Thai-Myanmar border land points of entry- Myawady, Kawthoung and Myeik increased more than last FY.

Myanmar fisheries are exported to markets of European Union countries, America, Japan, Singapore and Thailand.

Local fishery sector is faced with difficulties due to high price of aquatic feed-stuff.

Also, there has illegal inflow of fishery from Thailand, prompting authorizes to conduct surprise check.

The fishery export sector



Labourers processing fish for export at a marine product factory. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

attained the highest income of over US\$650million in 2012-2013 FY and thereafter, the value of fishery export gradually declined due to erratic weather and scarcity of fish resource caused by illegal fishing methods.

Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF) is exerting concerted efforts to increase fishery export earnings by developing fish farming lakes which meets international standard and adopting advanced fishing techniques. — Htet Myat ■

Seventh Day of the 2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium

THE seventh day of the 2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium continued yesterday morning at Mani Yandana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

Local and foreign gems merchants viewed the Myanmar raw uncut jade and gems displayed inside and outside Mani Yandana Jade Hall, and submitted their tenders.

About 4421 local and foreign merchants attended to buy gems lots through the tender system.

At the 2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium, 2659 Jade lots at the price of 165.323 million euros have been sold under an open tender system on 18 December. The schedule for the sales of lots includes 19 December jade lot no. 3451 to 4600, on 20 December jade lot no. 4601 to 5750, on 21 December jade lot no. 5751 to 6685, will be sold under an open tender system. This emporium will be held till 21 December; it was learnt.—Myanmar Digital News ■



Merchants are seen during the 7th day of the 2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

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State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws and Rector Sayadaw receive China Tibet Research Center delegation

STATE Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws and Rector Sayadaw of Theravada Buddhist Missionary University received a Tibet cultural delegation led by the head of China Tibet Research Center Department yesterday morning and afternoon.

In the morning, head of China Tibet Research Center Department led a Tibet cultural exchange delegation to a meeting with Theravada Buddhist

Missionary University Rector Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Nanda Mala Bivamsa and heads of departments sayadaws in the central hall of Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Mayagon Township, Yangon. Matters relating to teachings conducted in the university and China Tibet culture were explained and discussed. In the afternoon, the delegation met with sayadaws led by State Sangha Maha Nayaka



Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Rector Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Nanda Mala Bivamsa meets with Tibet cultural exchange delegation led by head of China Tibet Research Center Department. **PHOTO: MNA**

Committee member Sayadaw Thanlyin Min Kyaung Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandima Bivamsa and the sayad-

aws explained about the works of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, status of works on promotion and propagation of the

Sasana, Theravada missionary works in Myanmar, teaching of "Pariyatti" and the practice of "Patipatti". —MNA ■



PHOTO: MNA

Vice Senior General receives Chinese PLA Southern Theater Command delegation



Vice Senior General Soe Win poses for a photo together with Chinese PLA Southern Theater Command delegation. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) received a delegation led by Deputy-Commander and Chief-of-the-Staff of the Southern Theater Command of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Lieutenant General Chen Zhaohai at Bayint Naung hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, status of works conducted on becoming an all-round strategic friendly partners relation, implement-

ing the decisions made after the meeting of the heads of the two militaries, resolving bilateral border issues between the two governments and the two militaries openly and in a friendly manner, status of mutual respect, trust and friendly relation between the two militaries and status of works conducted to increase relations between Myanmar military and neighboring countries' militaries were discussed openly and cordially. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Chinese government donates US\$500,000 to JMC-U

Chinese government donated US\$ 500,000 to the Union Joint Monitoring Committee(JMC-U) yesterday in support of the committee's ceasefire efforts with the ethnic armed groups.

Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, handed over the cash to

Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Chairman of Union Joint Monitoring Committee(JMC-U), as he called on the chairman at National Reconciliation and Peace Center yesterday. At the meeting, they discussed the current efforts of JMC-U at all levels together with the signatories and non-signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire

Agreement (NCA).

At the meeting, Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, conveyed the message of Chinese government on its support to the peace process in Myanmar, to the JMC-U. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Local merchants to buy rice from Rakhine

Local merchants has offered to buy rice from Rakhine State at the price of Ks 310,000 for 100 baskets, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation.

"Most of the merchants are from Rakhine State. We are giving priority to the local merchants to buy the rice," said U Thaug Win, the member of Central Executive Committee of Myanmar Rice Federation.

Ripe monsoon rice in Buthidaung and Maungtau region is being harvested by Agricultural Mechanisation Department (AMD) to prevent waste, with the

harvested rice systematically handed over to rice receiving and storing committees.

The Rakhine State government committee will take measures for selling the rice from the paddy farms which were abandoned by ownersp.

"The government committee will give back the money from selling rice to the owners when they come back to their home." said U Thaug Win.

"Currently, the paddy was harvested in Maungtau Township, Rakhine State with the assistance of the Agricultural

Mechanisation Department. There are also many farmland which need harvestors. It can produce maximum 2 million baskets," said U Kyaw Win, the vice chairman of Myanmar Rice Merchants Association.

The Agricultural Mechanisation Department is planning to harvest paddy in more than 20,000 acres in Maungtau region within three months. Myanmar Rice Federation has already made arrangement to provide the storage service for the post harvest paddy, it is learnt. — Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

Three pairs of dryers installed in Rakhine State

Three pairs of dryers which were manufactured in South Korea have been installed in Rakhine State with an aim to prevent wastage of harvested rice, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

Those three pairs of dryers have been established in Alethan-kyaw and Kyeinchaung villages

in Maungtau township and Buthidaung township.

Moreover, 12 KUBOTA Japan brand harvestors have been sent to Saytipyin, Panphawpyin, Gwason, Aukyaungtaung, Theintaung, Thameehla, Kyaunkpaw, Kalarchaung and Htwaylaungtin villages in Yathedaung township to harve paddy timely.

Meanwhile, 10 harvestors have been supplied to villages in Maungtau township. Since October 2017, Myanmar Rice Federation has been provided the assistance to the villages with the cooperation of Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation (MAPCO). —Min Min ■

Kayin New Year ceremonies held countrywide

Kayin national New Year festival organizing committee (Greater Yangon) for the year 2757 continued the second day of traditional boxing competition yesterday afternoon in Insein railway compound football ground, Insein Township, Yangon attracting crowds of (boxing) enthusiasts.

There were 12 ordinary and special bouts with most ending in a knock out or stopped by referee making the bouts enjoyable and interesting for the spectators.

The Kayin national New Year festival was being held in Maha Hsay Wingaba Arlane Nga Hsint monastery, Insein Township from 17 to 19 December and yesterday morning saw a flag raising ceremony, following by saluting the national and Kayin flags followed by Kayin traditional performances and talks. In the evening, in addition to Kayin “don” dance, Kayin traditional culture and music entertainment program were conducted in Myanmar Convention Center – MCC) hall in Mindhamma Road, Mayangon Township.

In Kyonpar Village, Thaton Township, Mon State, 79th Kayin New Year ceremony was held on Kayin Year 2757, 1st Waxing of Pyatho, the Kayin New Year day, yesterday morning. The New Year ceremony was held with an aim to retain Kayin history, literature, culture and language and Mon State Chief Minister Dr. Aye Zan delivered a speech praising the virtues of the Kayin ethnic nationals. This was followed by reading of the New Year message, history of the Kayin New Year explained in Poe Kayin, Sgaw Kayin and Myanmar languages.

Next, respect and homage was paid to elders above 80 years of age with donations and distinguished students of 2016-

2017 matriculation examinations were honored. Dance troupes representing villages in Thaton Township then entertained with dances including “Don” dances.

There are about 80,000 ethnic Kayin nationals in Thaton Township and of the 46 village tracts, 37 village tracts where ethnic Kayin nationals lived held traditional new year festivals consisting of “Don” dance competitions, traditional boxing matches, sports and entertainments, plays and Kayin literature and culture exhibitions.

Hpa-An also held Kayin New Year ceremony yesterday by raising the Kayin flag with blowing of a buffalo horn and striking of a Hpasi (frog drum). The flag was raised by Kayin State Hluttaw Speaker U Saw Chit Khin.

Afterwards, the ceremony was continued with reading of the Kayin New Year message, reading of the messages sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. History of the Kayin New Year was explained in three languages (Myanmar, Poe Kayin and Sgaw Kayin) and then the ceremony was concluded with singing of Kayin song meaning “unity in strength”.

After the ceremony, traditional festivals were continued followed by Kayin traditional lunch. The ceremony and festivals were attended by State Hluttaw Speaker, Deputy Speaker, state government ministers, southeast command commander and high ranking officials from the civil and military, Taiwan, China, Japan, Thailand, Myanmar and other business persons who were attending the Kayin State Investment Forum, representatives of regional peace organisations and Kayin ethnic nationals.—GNLM



Kayin dance troupe performs at the National Races Villiage in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR



Kayin nationals perform to mark Kayin New Year Festival at National Races Village. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR



Traditional fighters take part in the Letai challenge fight marking the Kayin New Year Festival at the Myanma Railways Football Playing Ground in Insein, Yangon. PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)



Kayin New Year celebrations in Thaton. PHOTO: MNA



Kayin New Year celebrations in Hpa-an, Kayin State. PHOTO: MNA



All-Inclusive Conservation of the National Cultural Heritages

VERY recently, a news item was found that authorities concerned put on record the five pieces of stone inscriptions assumed to have been inscribed between circa 688-722 found in the midst of pagodas in critical deterioration, in Sagaing Region. The site is situated near the villages but people seldom go there, it was learnt.

Before this incident, we have heard that ancient utensils, weapons, statues and Buddha images, brick walls, cemeteries, skeletons, pieces of jewelry and many other items were found while farmers ploughed or furrowed fields, or when floods eroded river banks. In news media and social webpages as well, local people across the nation frequently posted that ancient places, edifices and monuments need to be well conserved. This shows that our country has existed as a civilized nation since time immemorial, and there are still many evidences of ancient cultural heritages here and there in the country. Cultural heritages are in fact evidences of historical backgrounds of a country and its people. Sometimes, historically invaluable ancient objects were found even in unexpected places. For example, a parabai (which is a kind of writing tablet made of paper, cloth or metal in the form of an accordion) which recorded about matters from Myanmar side concerning the “Rantabo Agreement,” regarding the ending of the “the First Anglo-Burmese War” was found in a remote and inaccessible village situated in the forests in Sagaing Region. Yet, sorrowfully enough, it was found to be unprotected, covered with dust and gnawed by rodents, according to a researcher.

Here, culture means not only material things such as ancient objects and edifices but also immaterial things such as languages, literatures, arts, ideologies and fine art. Research projects concerning our cultural heritages in our regions should be conducted as a national cause.

The National Cultural Central Committee Meeting 2/2017 was held on December 8, at which Vice-President U Henry Van Thio said, “Natural cultural heritages existed for thousands of years as all the national brethren conserved their traditions and customs to relay them to younger generations. It is incumbent upon all to find out, conserve and conduct research projects concerning them.”

Here, culture means not only material things such as ancient objects and edifices but also immaterial things such as languages, literatures, arts, ideologies and fine art. Research projects concerning our cultural heritages in our regions should be conducted as a national cause. ■

Collective safeguard against human trafficking, the greatest danger for migrant workers

By Khin Yadanar

MYANMAR launched the campaign for eradication of human-trafficking in 1997, now reaching for over 20 years. And, in the ASEAN region, Myanmar managed to have performed the tasks of promulgating Law on Protection against Human Trafficking, forming the Central Committee for Protection against Human Trafficking and establishing the Police Force for Protection against Human Trafficking, taking part in signing the MoUs on Human Trafficking of United Nations and ASEAN.

Yet, likewise other developing countries across the world, amounts of migration are increasing in Myanmar, due to high rise of unemployment, scanty amount of income, many impacts of natural disasters in the country and armed conflicts.

Asian countries and dangers of human trafficking

Myanmar migrant workers are suffering from China-related forced marriages, Thailand-related exploitation of wages, forced labor and forced sex-slavery, Malaysia-related exploitation of wages or labor and Indonesia-related forced labor and exploitation of wage or forced labor.

So as to eradicate human trafficking, the State had accomplished the tasks of the promulgation of the law and formation of human trafficking protection organizations and police forces. Besides, Myanmar is implementing eradication of human trafficking in various sectors by drawing up 5-year plan on human trafficking. Now, 3rd 5-year-plan [2017-2022] has stated to have been launched, implementing the 4 tasks—cooperation with related departments, prevention of all Myanmar nationals including migrant workers from human trafficking, arrangement to promptly sue the culprits if cases happened and giving cares and supports over the victims.

Prevention human trafficking through 3rd 5-year plan

During the period of the project, existing human trafficking protection law is being amended in accord with the present situations. At the same time, a national-level



Myanmar migrant workers cross the border between Thailand and Myanmar by boat near the Thai port city of Ranong on 3 July. PHOTO: REUTERS

implementation mechanism on supporting victims directly and handing over is being carried out. Accordingly, national-level acceptance plans for acceptance and rehabilitation of victims are to be drawn up, it is learnt.

According to the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population, researches are being made for prevention in advance, with sharing knowledge on safe and secure migration, strengthening process of judgment on civil offences, compiling national-level standardized categorization of migrant workers and managing to temporarily accommodate migrant workers, who are subjected to human trafficking also under way.

Presently, ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children was approved early this year 2017, and the promulgations included in the convention was said to have complied with performances currently made by Myanmar. But, it is necessary to effectively take action against money and properties gained from trafficking in persons under the law on eradication of money laundry. Then, human trafficking networks can be uprooted, it was assumed.

Myanmar and Thailand have already signed landmark standard operating procedures on assisting trafficking victims. And, arrangements are being made to sign MoUs with India and Thailand

on trafficking in persons.

Supporting trafficking victims

For eradication of forced labor, Myanmar joined International Labor Organization. Instructions had also been released with a view to effectively perform the tasks of prevention of human trafficking, to cooperate between human trafficking prevention police forces and local police forces and to give instructions for lawyers to abide by, it was learnt. In FY 2016-2017, K 73 million were supported to 57 males and 291 females—victims subjected to trafficking in persons whereas this year also 6 males and 23 females were subsidized with K 18 million, according to the central committee.

Promising conditions for prunage of human trafficking rate

Due to the active performances in eradication of human trafficking, US also upgraded Myanmar to the status of Tier 2 watch list in the report of eradication of human trafficking 2017. Becoming victims subjected to human trafficking while migrating from one place to another is attributed to many reasons. Only if these reasons can be solved, will dangers of trafficking in persons and challenges which will result from migration be able to be found out. Outbreaks of wars cause destruction of the national peace and

stability and underdevelopment in national economy and education. On account of difficulty to survive, migrant workers are facing risks of trafficking in persons, while trying to get out of these problems. Failure to have an access to get academic learning may increase rates of human trafficking. According to the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population, the tasks of sharing knowledge on human trafficking across the world, giving information on employments workers would like to search through labor offices, finding out challenges on migration and dangers of migration without particular documents are being carried out all the time.

U Myo Aung, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry said, “10 per cent of the national population had been in various regions across the world as migrant workers. If they legally depart from the country, helps can be given to them. Most of them are weak in acquisition of rightful facts and information, becoming easy preys to brokers/middle-men. Due to illegal departure out of the country, especially via border areas, they happen to become victims. Had they legally left out of the country, the government can give assistances necessary. Laborer and employment offices opened in 78 townships can help concerning migrant workers. Moreover, MRCs, Migrant Resource Centers had been opened in places migrant workers

are mostly crowded, presently in Yangon, Pa-an, Patheingyi, Sittway, Magway, Mawlamyaing, Mandalay, Kyaukse, Myingyan, Dawei and now in Haka. In Yangon International Airport as well, Myanmar Migrant Worker’s Reporting Counter was opened with a view to knowing the amounts of departures of migrant workers. After 1990 when economic sanction was imposed migrant workers are increasing more and more. With the increasing amounts, there emerged more than 250 overseas employment agencies. Myanmar Embassies in foreign countries are carrying out the acquisition of numbers of migrant workers in foreign countries, it was learnt.

Penalties and prescriptions for human traffickers

In the law on trafficking in persons, it is strictly prescribed that a person who commits an offence to women and children are required to be sentenced to 10 years imprisonment or life imprisonment and fined. If committed to males, the culprit can be sentenced to 5 years to 10 years imprisonment plus fine punishment. If the offence is committed by the group of three and above, the culprits must be 20 years to life imprisonment. In case a culprit commits an offence punishable to 4 years imprisonment, while committing the human trafficking he can be sentenced to 10 years imprisonment to death sentence.

Arrangement or attempt or collusion or organization or act of abetting or provision of monetary support to commit an offence included in human trafficking prevention law are committed and they will be given the punishments as prescribed in the law.

Danger of human trafficking and illegal migration

Just by crossing the border line to emigrate into neighboring countries, legal actions are required to be taken against them by immigration officers concerned and may be fired by border guard security forces. And, if they choose illegal routes they can be abducted or blackmailed or sometimes sexually abused. Every individual should note that they can be completely sold out or as sex slaves.

On study of victims, they are found to have lost memories, suffered from depression and fears, deterioration of health, physical and mental disorders. Some even attempted to commit suicides.

If decided to find greener pasture

If someone has already decided to go abroad or to other places, first of all they must have known all about the caller, such as names, phone numbers, addresses and other facts. Until these have been known, it is necessary not to excessively trust him. Anyone needs to ensure actuality of the employment in time. In case someone is forced to accompany or is paid advance money before departure or is taught to tell lies at check-points, he must know that he is going to be in for; hence the need to inform one’s guardians or relatives or other trustworthy persons.

If someone had been in alien countries and unexpectedly happened to be a prey to human trafficking they should have noted the place of arrival and situation of surrounding area. And, it needs to make acquaintance with people nearby. Moreover, everyone should have linked with social websites such as face-book, viber, we-chat and after then we need to work abroad, according to campaigners for eradication of trafficking in persons including the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population. ■

Translated by Khin Maung Oo

New tourist sites opening in Myanmar

MYANMAR has been working hard to open more tourist sites and areas for foreign tourists to discover a country which has often been called “one of the last frontiers” to open up for tourists. Since beginning of December the “Secretariat building”, which is arguably the biggest colonial building in South East Asia has been opened for the public offering 4 times a day guided tours through this historical building. “Visitors get to see historically significant sites such as Myanmar’s very first parliament, the flagpole where Myanmar flag was raised for the first time on Myanmar Independence day (1948) and the Martyrs’ room where General Aung San and other martyrs were assassinated” says U Kan Win Oung from Asia Tours Myanmar who is operating the tours to travel agents as well as individual tourists. He continues saying “Currently we are open on Mondays to Fridays (slots available at 930, 1130, 1330, and 1530 respectively) and on Saturdays at 930am only.” Entrance fees for this site included a guided tour is 6 USD / person.

This latest tourists site added to the “must visit places” in Myanmar covers an area of 6.5 hectares right in the center of Yangon. Early adapters visiting Myanmar in the beginning of 2000 might remember this as the heavily guarded site which couldn’t be approached or pictures taken of.

The Ministry of Hotel & Tourism also announced that it’s possible again to apply for permits to travel overland from Inle Lake to Keng Tung over highway No 4 which has been called one of the most scenic drives in Myanmar and opens up possibilities for overland road trips to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and China. The area is offering stunning nature and traditional tribes that have come across few western tourists.

The Bago Yoma forests, home to many Myanmar elephants that are in danger of being poached for their skin, has opened the Bago Yoma Eco Resort in an effort to open the area up for tourism. In Southern Rakhine state the Arakan Nature Lodge has started operating an eco-lodge right on the pristine Zikhone village beach making it an excellent opportunity to consider this part of southern Rakhine state as a viable new tourist destination.

The opening of this new tourist attraction comes at a time the number of tourists arriving at Yangon airport (from Jan – Nov 2017) still shows a 7% increase compared to the same period 2016. The number, released on 11 December by the ministry of hotel & tourism show that especially the number of Asian tourists increased with double digit percentage from Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam. The number of tourists from Western Europe, North America and Australia and New Zealand show a slight decrease of 8-9% for tourist arrivals at Yangon International Airport. Not visiting Myanmar is “a big loss for those thousands of people working in tourism in Myanmar who have nothing to do with the issue in Northern Rakhine State,” as May Myat Mon Win, Myanmar Tourism Marketing Chairperson said earlier this year. —Tourismmyanmar.org ■

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Real name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office



Road work in Maungtaw. PHOTO: MNA

Road Construction in Maungtaw

Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin inspected the construction of roads in Maungtaw, yesterday afternoon.

Deputy Minister and party went to the construction site conducted by Asia World Foundation and inspected the paving of Ahngu Maw-Maungtaw road which is 49 miles and 6 furlongs long.

He viewed Buthidaung-Thabeik Taung-Nyaung Chaung-Aung Zeya-Ange Maw earthen road which was constructed in 2017-2018

fiscal year. The road is 46 miles and 5 furlongs long and it can improve smooth and better transportation to eastern villages of Mt. May Yu in Yathedaung Township.

Then they inspected Kyauk Pan Nu-Inn Din-Zedi Pyin Taung Road conducted by No. 17 Special Team, Road Department.

This road is 10 miles and 7 furlongs long and can connect eastern and western villages of Mt. May Yu.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Unidentified corpses uncovered in Indin Village cemetery, Maungtaw Township

ACTING on a tip off provided by a villager on condition of anonymity, security forces discovered several unidentified corpses buried in Indin Village cemetery, Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State. Detailed investigation

is underway to uncover the truth said a news release from the Tatmadaw True News Information Team.

Action would be taken against those who involved in the killing in accordance with the law, said

the statement released by the Tatmadaw.

In conducting the law enforcement measures following the August 25 terrorist attacks in the area, the security forces were ordered to follow the rules of engagement, said

the statement.

After the August 25 terrorist attacks by ARSA, security forces conducted the law enforcement measures to restore the rule of law in Buthidaung and Maungtaw region. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Rakhine traditional 'Kyin' wrestling demonstration in Sittway

Rakhine 'Kyin' wrestling demonstration was made yesterday in Sittway, Rakhine State.

The demonstration, which was organized by AKYAB Co., Ltd and 'Kyin' wrestling lovers, was opened at the Sittway Sports Ground, with demonstration of Kyin wrestlers. The sport game held from December 17 to 18.

Prominent 'Kyin' wrestlers U Maung Tun-Hla, U Seing Maung Hla and U Bu Maung Hla, demonstrated the wres-



Wrestlers demonstrate kyin. PHOTO: WIN MIN SOE

ling skills and it was recorded documentary films in order to raise

awareness of the game among the young Rakhine generation. Kyin or

wrestling contests were held resoundingly in urban and rural areas for the vigorous strength, health and fitness. Every youth of Rakhine national has to preserve Kyin Sport to be skillful from generation to generation.

This demonstration aims to preserve the 'Kyin' wrestling which is nearly die out and to uplift the spirit of the young generation as well, according to the U Maung Maung Gyi, member of the 'Kyin' wrestling committee.— Win Min Soe (IPRD) ■

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS
MYANMA RAILWAYS

INVITATION TO SUBMIT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FROM DEVELOPERS

- In line with the National Development Plan, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been identifying the economic potential to contribute to the country's economic development. As our endeavors for national development, Myanma Railways (MR) is committed to develop Toekyaungkalay Station Area as Rail Concerned Business, High-rise Building, Comprehensive Development in the planned area of (2.08)ha or (5.14)acres and Dagon North & South Junction Road Over Bridge Construction and Transport System also the essential part of the Greater Yangon City development.
- During previous Tendering process Myanma Railways was enable to select successful developer.
- Myanma railways now invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputable local, international or joint venture developers to undertake design and build works for Toekyaungkalay Station Area as Rail Concerned Business, High-rise Building, Comprehensive Development, Dagon North & South Junction Road Over Bridge Construction.
- Interested Developers shall submit EOI documents to prove themselves capable enough for the development. MR shall be in charge of the selection of potential developer as prequalification.
- Developers passing the prequalification shall be invited to prepare and submit Technical and Financial proposal documents.
- The successful Tender (hereinafter referred to as the 'Concessionaire'), shall be responsible for designing, financing, procurement, construction and maintenance of the project and in accordance with the provisions of a concession agreement to be entered into between the successful Tender and the Myanma railways.
- The EOI in original hard copy, one duplicate copy and an electronic copy of the EOI in CD ROM shall be submitted to the Deputy General Manager, Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Corner of 51th Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar, Phone; +95-1-291985, 291994 or 393424 not later than 14:00 hours on (15th) January 2018. Submission by email shall not be entertained.
- Myanma Railways reserves the right to accept or reject any EOI, and to annual the selection process and reject all expression at any time, without there by incurring any liability to the affected Developers or Myanma Railways.

Managing Director
Myanma Railways
Ministry of Transport and Communications

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- In line with the National Development Plan, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been identifying the economic potential to contribute to the country's economic development. As our endeavors for national development, Myanma Railways (MR) is committed to develop Danyingone Station Area as Rail Concerned Business, High-rise Building, Comprehensive Development in the planned area of 1.32 ha (3.26 acres) and Danyingone Road Over Bridge Construction and Transport System also the essential part of the Greater Yangon City development.
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Managing Director
Myanma Railways
Ministry of Transport and Communications

Yemen air strike kills eight women, two children, say residents

DUBAI — Eight women and two children from the same Yemeni family were killed when an air strike by forces of the Saudi-led coalition involved in the country's three-year-old war hit a wedding party, residents said on Monday.

The 10 people were returning on Sunday evening from a wedding in Marib province, an area east of the capital Sanaa held by the Iran-allied Houthi group, when their vehicle was struck, the sources said. A spokesman for the coalition, which denies targeting civilians and says that every report of an attack is investigated, did not respond to an email

requesting comment.

The residents said the victims, all female, were part of the same family, but gave no further details on their ages or if anyone else was travelling with them.

The coalition has been conducting regular air strikes in Houthi-held areas as part of a campaign to restore President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi to power.

The United Nations says that more than 60,000 people have been killed or wounded in the conflict, which also displaced more than two million and triggered a cholera epidemic that has infected about one million people.—Reuters

Lebanon detains suspect in murder of British embassy worker— source

BEIRUT — Lebanese security forces have arrested a Lebanese taxi driver suspected of killing Rebecca Dykes, a British woman who worked at the British embassy in Beirut and was found dead on Saturday, a security source said.

The security source said preliminary investigations showed the motive was purely criminal, not political.

Lebanon's NNA news agency reported that the suspect had admitted to the crime and had picked Dykes up in his taxi in Beirut's Gemmayzeh district on Friday evening before assaulting and killing her.

Police traced his car through surveillance cam-

eras on the highway, NNA reported. Dykes' body was found strangled by a main road outside Beirut, a security source said on Sunday. She had worked at the British embassy for the Department for International Development, her LinkedIn page said.

British ambassador to Lebanon Hugo Shorter said on Sunday: "The whole embassy is deeply shocked, saddened by this news".

Dykes' family said in a statement issued by Britain's foreign ministry: "We are devastated by the loss of our beloved Rebecca. We are doing all we can to understand what happened." —Reuters



Afghan security forces keep watch at the site of an attack in Kabul, Afghanistan on 18 December, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

ISIS claims attack on spy agency centre in Afghan capital

KABUL — Islamic State claimed responsibility for an attack near a training facility of Afghanistan's main intelligence agency in the capital, Kabul, on Monday as gunmen exchanged fire with security forces.

Details of the attack remained unclear after a group of armed men seized a building under construc-

tion in a heavily populated area of the city.

"The number of attackers, possible casualties and their target is not yet clear," said Najib Danish, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior.

The Afshar area of Kabul where the attack was under way is close to a training facility of the National Directorate of

Security, the main Afghan intelligence agency, as well as a private university.

Another government official said the attack was near the intelligence agency training centre.

Islamic State claimed responsibility in a statement on its Amaq news agency, in which it said two of its fighters had attacked an intelligence agency cen-

tre in Kabul.

The group, which first appeared in Afghanistan in 2015, has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in Kabul over the past several months. But much remains unknown about how it operates and many observers are sceptical about its ability to mount complex attacks on its own. —Reuters

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

MYANMA RAILWAYS

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Opened Tender is invited by Myanmar Railways, Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar from reputed manufacturers or their bona fide agents from the Republic of India for the supply and delivery of the following:-

| Sr No | Tender No | Description | Tender Issuing Date | Tender Closing Date and Time | Tender Document Fee(per set) |
|-------|--------------------------|---|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 16/MR/INDIA (E)2017-2018 | (1) <u>Track Recording Car EM 80</u> (1)No Recommended 10% Spare Parts for No.1 (1)Lot (2) <u>Small Track Maintenance Machineries</u> - Rail Drill Machine (70)Nos - Rail Cutting Machine (70)Nos - Hand Tie Tamper(4 Tamping tools and 2.3 KVA Generator) (60)Sets. Recommended 10% Spare Parts for No.2 (1)Lot | 20.12.2017 | 20.2.2018 (14:30)Hr | US\$ 100 |

Tender Documents are Only available at the Office of the Deputy General Manager (Supply), Supply Department, Myanmar Railways, Corner of 51st Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar during office hours on payment of non refundable fee as stated above. Further enquiries about tender can be made to Deputy General Manager(Supply), Supply Department, Myanmar Railways by fax to (Fax No. 95-1-291994, 95-67-77016) or by phone to (95-1-291991, 95-1-291985) during office hours.

Bids are to reach th office of the Deputy General Manager (Supply), Supply Department, Myanmar Railways, Corner of 51st Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar on or before the Closing Date and Time.

All Bid not accompanied by earnest money (Bid Bond) will not (not) be considered. No Telegraphic/Telex/Fax/email proposal will be considered or accepted.

Myanmar Railways reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without furnishing reasons. Tender will be accepted only from Bidder who has purchased Tender Documents officially.

The above Goods are to be purchased by the proceeds of the loan from the Government of the Republic of India

Managing Director, Myanmar Railways
Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

MFI Wanted

Well-resourced foreign fintech enterprise seeks to buy a majority or significant stake in a Myanmar micro-finance institution.

Operation footprint and licence scope important. Branch network in Yangon and/ or Mandalay needed.

Willing to move quickly. Up to USD 20 million for the right match. We are impact investors.

Principals or advisors welcome.

Please respond in confidence to corporate@myanmarmfi.com

Kremlin says US tip-off about planned attack 'saved many lives'



Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. PHOTO: REUTERS

MOSCOW—A US tip-off about a planned attack in St Petersburg helped save many lives and Russia and the United States should try to cooperate in the same way in future, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

Washington provided intelligence to Russia that helped thwart a potentially deadly bombing, US and Russian officials said on Sunday, in a rare public show of cooperation despite deep strains between the two countries.

"It cannot be called anything but an ideal example of cooperation in fighting terrorism," Peskov told reporters at a conference call. "We should aim for such standards."

The tip-off resulted in the detention of seven alleged supporters of the Is-

lamic State militant group in St Petersburg last week, Peskov said.

Russia's Federal Security Service said on Friday that IS had planned attacks in public places on Dec. 16 and weapons and explosives were found when the suspects were searched.

Peskov said Russian and American security services have contacts but this was the first time when their cooperation was so efficient. "This was very meaningful information that helped to save many lives," the spokesman told reporters.

Asked if President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump and Putin had discussed a possible meeting, Peskov replied that the issue "had not been brought up yet".—Reuters ■

US taxpayers rush to claim deductions under threat from tax bill

NEW YORK — Financial advisers and accountants are working overtime as many US taxpayers scramble to pay the rest of their 2017 taxes before 1 January when the proposed Republican tax overhaul would sharply cut the amount they can deduct on federal tax bills.

The tax legislation, which top US Republicans said on Sunday they expected Congress to pass this week, caps the amount of state, local and property taxes individuals can deduct from their federal tax bills at \$10,000.

The average American who itemized his or her tax bill in 2015 claimed more than \$27,000 in deductions. While taxpayers have until 15 January to pay the final installment of their 2017 taxes, Tom Holly of the accounting firm PwC said he received dozens of calls over the weekend from concerned clients eager to pay sooner.

"It's going to be a very busy holiday season for advisers," said Holly, who heads the firm's wealth and asset management division.

Lisa Featherngill, managing director of wealth planning at Wells Fargo's Abbot Downing,

said she was skipping a family trip to the Valero Alamo Bowl football game in Texas on 28 December in order to work.

Featherngill said wealthy clients and their accountants were not just trying to figure out if it makes sense to estimate and pay the rest of their 2017 itemized taxes this year, but also working to see if they should itemize at all.

Some taxpayers, particularly those in high-tax states who have income above \$100,000, may end up paying the alternative minimum tax, which limits the deductions a person can take against his

or her federal income tax.

"People really have to run the numbers because ... if they are subject to alternative minimum tax, some of those taxes wouldn't be deductible anyway," said Featherngill.

Last week, according to media reports, state officials in New York received calls from residents asking to pay their 2018 state, local and property taxes before 1 January in an effort to claim the higher amount of deductions before the Republican tax bill takes effect.

In response, the US Treasury Department is-

sued guidance over the weekend saying that any pre-payments for 2018 tax liabilities would not be deductible on federal tax bills.

If passed, the tax bill would be the biggest US tax rewrite since 1986.

The legislation would cut the corporate income tax rate to 21 per cent from 35 per cent but offer a mixed bag for individuals, including middle-class workers, by roughly doubling a standard deduction that does not require itemization, but eliminating or scaling back other popular itemized deductions and exemptions.—Reuters ■



Copies of tax legislation are seen during a markup on the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act" on Capitol Hill in Washington, US on 15 November, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

| The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation No.(2) Mining Enterprise Invitation for Opening Tender | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. No. (2) Mining Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation invites to submit the tender quotation for the following materials. | | | | | |
| Sr. No. | Materials Classifies | Weight (MT) | Location | Tender Closing Date / Time | Delivery Term |
| 1 | Tin Concentrate | 25.815 | Dawei, Tanintharyi Region | 17.1.2018 / 2 : 00 PM | F.O.B (Dawei) |
| 2 | Tin & Wolfram Mixed Concentrate | 80.801 | | | |
| 3 | Tin Concentrate | 17.720 | Myeik, Tanintharyi Region | 17.1.2018 / 2 : 00 PM | F.O.B (Myeik) |
| 4 | Tin - Wolfram -Scheelite Mixed Concentrate (65% minimum) | 4.856 | Loikaw, Kayah State | 18.1.2018 / 2 : 00 PM | F.O.B (Loikaw) |
| 5 | Tin - Wolfram -Scheelite Mixed Concentrate (55 % minimum) | 111.369 | Loikaw, Kayah State | 18.1.2018 / 2 : 00 PM | F.O.B (Loikaw) |
| 2. No.(2) Mining Enterprise could provide necessary documents to interest companies and contact under mention address within office hours. -No.(2) Mining Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Office Building No.(19), Nay Pyi Taw, Ph:+95-(0)67- 3409391, E-mail; metwo@e-monrec.gov.mm | | | | | |
| Tender Committee No.(2) Mining Enterprise | | | | | |

Germany's SPD warn Merkel: Our members need to be convinced

BERLIN — Germany's centre-left Social Democratic party (SPD) on Monday warned Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives that it would not win approval from its members for a new coalition government if it gave way on key election promises. The SPD agreed only reluctantly to enter talks, after voters rewarded it in September for the last four years of "grand coalition" under Merkel by handing it its worst result since 1933. SPD members will have the final say on any deal to renew the alliance with

Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) and their Christian Social Union (CSU) Bavarian allies.

General Secretary Lars Klingbeil said they would demand distinctive leftist policies, along the lines of the single "citizen's insurance" that the SPD wants to replace Germany's private and public healthcare systems.

"The Union (CDU/CSU) knows that the SPD members have the final say ... and we need to be able to convince them on substance," Klingbeil told the public broadcaster ZDF. The SPD, which

shed support to the far right and to the hard-left Die Linke in the election, says the existing hybrid health insurance system discriminates against the poor. Conservatives, including Merkel, say switching to a unified system would erode competition and worsen services.

SPD members gave leader Martin Schulz the green light at a party congress last week to launch talks with Merkel's conservatives, raising hopes of an end to months of political deadlock created by an inconclusive election result.—Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Russia's Lavrov and Iran's Zarif discuss nuclear issue by phone – Russia

MOSCOW – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif discussed the Middle East and Iran's nuclear deal in a phone conversation, Russian foreign ministry said on Monday.—Reuters ■

Indian markets close higher

MUMBAI – Indian markets closed higher Monday as latest elections results indicated that Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) will form its government in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh.

Equity benchmarks were off day's high a bit in last hour of trading session due to correction in ITC, Infosys and HDFC. Select private banks, too, were off day's high.

The benchmark SP&BSE Sensex closed at 33,601.68, up 138.71 points, or 0.41 per cent, compared to its previous close at 33,462.97.—Xinhua ■

Singapore stocks close 0.06 pct lower

SINGAPORE – Singapore stocks closed lower on Monday, with the benchmark Straits Times Index (STI) closed down 0.06 per cent or 2.12 points to close at 3414.82.

A total of 1.52 billion shares changed hands with a turnover of 1.03 billion Singapore dollars (about 756.5 million US dollars). Gainers outnumbered losers by 224 to 198. The STI index closed down 0.55 per cent or 18.84 points to close at 3416.94 last Friday.—Xinhua ■

Hong Kong stocks close 0.70 pct higher

HONG KONG – Hong Kong stocks closed up 202.30 points, or 0.70 percent, to 29,050.41 points on Monday. The benchmark Hang Seng Index traded between 28,821.19 and 29,143.33. Turnover totaled 92.08 billion Hong Kong dollars (about 11.78 billion US dollars).—Xinhua ■



US President Donald Trump. PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump stresses importance of anti-terror cooperation between US and Russia

WASHINGTON— US President Donald Trump, who had a telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, on Sunday, stressed the importance of the two countries' intelligence services to defeat terrorist, the White House said in a press statement.

"President Trump stressed the importance of intelligence cooperation to defeat terrorists wherever they may be," the White House said.

The Russian president called his US counterpart to thank "for the advanced warning the United States intelligence agencies provided to Russia concerning a major terror plot in Saint Petersburg, Russia," the statement said.

"President Trump appreciated the call and told

President Putin that he and the entire United States intelligence community were pleased to have helped save so many lives."

"Both leaders agreed that this serves as an example of the positive things that can occur when our countries work together," it added.

According to the White House, Putin "extended his thanks and congratulations to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Mike Pompeo and the CIA."

Later, Trump Pompeo to congratulate him, "his very talented people, and the entire intelligence community on a job well done!"

The CIA press service was unavailable for comment.

The Kremlin press service said earlier on Sunday that President Putin had called the US leader to thank

him for CIA information that helped arrest terrorist who had plotted bomb attacks in St Petersburg's Kazan Cathedral and in other crowded places in Russia's second largest city.

"The Russian president thanked his US counterpart for information shared by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that helped trace, expose and detain a group of terrorists who had plotted explosions in St Petersburg's Kazan Cathedral and in other crowded places in that city," the press service said, adding that the conversation was initiated by the Russian side.

According to the Russian president, the CIA information was enough to expose and detain the criminals. Putin asked Trump to convey thanks to the CIS director and intelligence officers who had obtained this information.

The Russian leader reassured the US president that "Russian security services, should they have information about possible terrorist threats to the United States and its citizens, will swiftly and unconditionally share it with the US colleagues via partner channels," the press service stressed.

The press office of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) reported earlier that seven members of a terrorist cell had been detained for plotting terror attacks.

They planned to commit a series of murders and improvised bomb attacks in crowded places in St Petersburg on 16 December.

One of those detained confessed to court he had planned a bomb attack in the city's landmark Kazan Cathedral.—Tass ■

Elton John praises his anti-AIDS talk with Russia's Health Minister in Moscow

MOSCOW — British singer and composer Elton John spoke highly of his meeting with Russia's Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova in Moscow. The two discussed measures to fight AIDS.

The musician posted his joint photo with the Russian minister on Instagram on Friday.

"So delighted to have the chance to discuss with Dr Skvortsova closer collaboration between the Elton John AIDS Foundation and the Ministry of Health to fight AIDS in Russia," the musician wrote. He also called this cooperation "important and urgent work".

The Elton John AIDS Foundation was founded in 1992 to finance AIDS programs. On Thursday, the singer performed in the Russian capital. During the concert Elton John, in particular, noted that his foundation and Russia's Health Ministry had agreed on a closer partnership in order to fight AIDS in Russia.—Tass ■



British singer and composer Elton John. PHOTO: TASS

Hollywood actor Dustin Hoffman accused of exposing himself to a minor

LOS ANGELES — More accusations! Legendary actor Dustin Hoffman is again in the spotlight after three women spoke to US magazine Variety about his sexual misconduct, including exposing himself to a 16-year-old in a hotel room.

Hoffman's attorney Mark A Neubauer called the accusations against the actor "defamatory falsehoods". Hoffman himself hasn't made comments. According to the report, Cori Thomas was a high-school classmate of Hoffman's daughter Karina when she met the actor in Manhattan, New York in 1980. When Thomas was waiting for her parents to pick her up, she was left in the hotel room with the actor alone.

Hoffman allegedly came out of the hotel bathroom with a towel wrapped around him and then dropped it and stood naked. He later put on a robe and sat on the bed and asked her to massage his feet, which she did. She then

took the chance to leave when her mother called her from downstairs. Melissa Kester said the Oscar-winner groped her and conducted unwanted sexual conduct with her while recording audio for the 1987 film "Ishtar".

A third woman who didn't reveal her name told Variety that Hoffman also sexually assaulted her in a station wagon while working on "Ishtar". But she had a subsequent sexual encounter with him, which she didn't know how to define. Earlier, three women stepped forward to accuse the Hollywood actor of sexual harassment which they said happened decades ago. The first was author Anna Graham Hunter, who alleged Hoffman of groping her and making inappropriate comments when she was a 17-year-old intern on the set of the 1985 TV movie of Death of a Salesman. Hoffman had previously denied abusing Hunter.—Xinhua ■

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to marry on 19 May

LONDON — Britain's Prince Harry and his American fiancée, Meghan Markle, will marry on Saturday 19 May, his office Kensington Palace said on Friday.

Queen Elizabeth's grandson, fifth-in-line to the throne, and Markle, who stars in the US TV legal drama "Suits", announced their engagement last month with the marriage to take place in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

"His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales and Ms Meghan Markle will marry on 19th May 2018," Kensington Palace said in a statement.

The couple said they had chosen to marry in Windsor, west of London, because it was "a special place for them", having spent time there regularly since they met in July 2016 after being introduced through a mutual friend. Harry's 91-year-old grandmother, Elizabeth, will attend the ceremony. However, the date they have chosen clashes with English soccer's FA Cup Final which is usually attended by Harry's elder brother Prince

William who, as President of the Football Association, awards the trophy to the winners.

"The couple of course want the day to be a special, celebratory moment for their friends and family," Harry's Communications Secretary Jason Knauft

said last month.

"They also want the day to be shaped so as to allow members of the public to feel part of the celebrations too and are currently working through ideas for how this might be achieved."

The wedding is likely to at-

tract huge attention across the world, as did the marriage of William to his wife Kate in 2011 which was watched by an estimated two billion people.

The royal family have said they will pay for the core aspects of the wedding, such as the

church service and reception.

Markle, 36, who attended a Catholic school as a child but identifies as a Protestant, will be baptised and confirmed into the Church of England before the wedding.

She intends to become a British citizen, though she will retain her US citizenship while she goes through the process.

The Gothic St George's Chapel is located in the grounds of Windsor Castle, which has been the family home of British kings and queens for almost 1,000 years. Within the chapel are the tombs of ten sovereigns, including Henry VIII and his third wife Jane Seymour, and Charles I.

On Wednesday, Kensington Palace announced Markle would join the queen and other senior Windsors for their family Christmas celebrations at her Sandringham estate in eastern England in what commentators said was a break with royal protocol under which such an invitation would normally only be extended to Markle after the wedding.—Reuters ■



Britain's Prince Harry poses with Meghan Markle in the Sunken Garden of Kensington Palace, London, Britain on 27 November, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



The Pentagon is shown with the Air Force Memorial in the foreground in Arlington, Virginia, US, on 11 September, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Does Pentagon still have a UFO programme? The answer is a bit mysterious

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon acknowledged on Saturday that its long-secret UFO investigation programme ended in 2012, when US defence officials shifted attention and funding to other priorities.

But as to whether the Advanced Aviation Threat Identification Program has continued to investigate UFO sightings since its funding ended five years ago could rank as an unexplained phenomenon.

The New York Times reported on Saturday that the hush-hush program, tasked with investigating sightings of unidentified flying objects, or UFOs, ran from 2007 to 2012 with \$22 million in annual funding secretly tucked away in US Defence Department budgets worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Its initial funding came largely at the request of former Senate

Democratic leader Harry Reid, the Nevada Democrat long known for his enthusiasm for space phenomena, the newspaper said. Yet according to its backers, the program remains in existence and officials continue to investigate UFO episodes brought to their attention by service members, the newspaper said.

The Pentagon openly acknowledged the fate of the program in response to a Reuters query.

“The Advanced Aviation Threat Identification Program ended in the 2012 timeframe,” Pentagon spokeswoman Laura Ochoa said in an email.

“It was determined that there were other, higher priority issues that merited funding and it was in the best interest of the DoD to make a change,” she said.

But the Pentagon was less clear about whether the UFO pro-

gram continues to hover somewhere in the vast universe of the US defence establishment.

“The DoD takes seriously all threats and potential threats to our people, our assets, and our mission and takes action whenever credible information is developed,” Ochoa said.

What is less in doubt is former senator Reid’s enthusiasm for UFOs and his likely role in launching the Pentagon initiative to identify advanced aviation threats.

“If you’ve talked to Harry Reid for > 60 seconds then it’s the least surprising thing ever that he loves UFOs and got an earmark to study them,” former Reid spokeswoman Kristen Orthman said in a message on Twitter.

Or as Reid himself said in a tweet that linked to the Times’ story: “The truth is out there. Seriously.” —Reuters ■

Marshall Islands’ traditional handicrafts take on Japanese moniker

MAJURO — The tradition is theirs, but the name is Japanese.

Handicrafting has been with the people of the Marshall Islands, an archipelagic country in the central Pacific, from even before the Japanese occupied it in the early part of the 20th century.

Loretta deBrum of the Marshall Islands Visitors Authority told Kyodo News that before the Marshallese people adapted the Japanese word “amimono” to refer to handicrafts, they used the local word “monakjen.”

“We have this tradition already on our own. We knew how to make ‘amimono.’ I heard it being called ‘amimono’ when I was growing up,” Gradle Alfred, who owns a handicraft shop in the capital Majuro Atoll, said in a separate interview. Alfred, 83, was born in 1934 during the Japanese occupation of the Marshall Islands, a nation in the heart of the Pacific Ocean above the equator made up of 29 atolls and five islands.

The relatively young country of some 60,000 people now is

known as a former nuclear bomb testing site of the United States after World War II, and as among those presently bearing the brunt of climate change.

Japan took military possession of the Marshall Islands in October 1914 when World War I broke out. Prior to that, it was a colony of Germany.

From 1914, Japan expanded its presence in the island nation and went on to establish military fortifications on several atolls in the late 1930s. —Reuters ■

French president Macron celebrates birthday with panda cub Yuan Meng

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday visited Yuan Meng, the country’s first-ever panda cub, while he was celebrating his 40th birthday with family at Beauval zoo in central France, the zoo said in a statement.

“The President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron came to celebrate his 40th birthday at the ZooParc de Beauval, with his family, during a private visit ... to Yuan Meng, the baby panda godson of Brigitte Macron,” the zoo added.

During a naming ceremony on Dec. 4, French First Lady,

new panda’s godmother, announced with Chinese officials that the four-month-old cub’s name was Yuan Meng which means “dream comes true” in Chinese.

Born on 4 August. 4, the baby panda had been called as “Mini Yuan Zi”, referring to his father Yuan Zi, who arrived with his female partner Huan Huan in central France’s Beauval zoo in January 2012.

The panda baby, who will return home at the age of three, can be seen by visitors to the zoo as of 13 January. —Xinhua ■



French President Emmanuel Macron (C, Front) reacts with the panda cub Yuan Meng at Beauval zoo in Saint-Aignan, central France, on 16 December 2017. French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday visited Yuan Meng, the country’s first-ever panda cub, while he was celebrating his 40th birthday with family at Beauval zoo, the zoo said in a statement. PHOTO: XINHUA

Season’s micro-greetings: Scientists claim smallest Christmas card

LONDON — British scientists have created what they believe is the world’s smallest Christmas card, a seasonal greeting so tiny that over 200 million of them could fit into a standard postage stamp.

The card, created by the National Physical Laboratory (NPL), the UK’s national measurement standards laboratory, measures 15 x 20 micrometers. A micrometre is one millionth of a meter.

It is made from platinum-coated silicon nitride, and was illustrated using a focused ion beam.

The card’s cover features an etching of a snowman, above the words “seasons greetings,”

as well as a seasonal message inside.

One of the card’s inventors, NPL’s Dr David Cox, who created the card along with his colleague Dr Kin Mingard, said the technology used in its making had more practical uses.

“We are using the tools that created the card to accurately measure the thickness of extremely small features in materials, helping to unlock new battery and semiconductor technologies. It’s a genuinely exciting development.”

The NPL said that the previous smallest Christmas card measured 200 x 209 micrometers, making their effort over 100 times smaller.—Reuters ■



Barcelona's Lionel Messi misses a penalty during the match of La Liga Santander between FC Barcelona and Deportivo de La Coruna at Camp Nou in Barcelona, Spain on 17 December, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Barca extend Liga lead before Clasico by thrashing Deportivo

BARCELONA — Barcelona moved six points clear at the top of La Liga and warmed up for next week's 'Clasico' against champions Real Madrid by easing to a 4-0 win at home to Deportivo La Coruna on Sunday with doubles from Luis Suarez and Paulinho.

Suarez slotted a generous cutback from Lionel Messi into an open goal in the 29th minute to deservedly put Barca ahead, while Brazil international

Paulinho got the second in the 41st, tapping in on the rebound after Messi had hit the post.

Messi endured a frustrating night in front of goal and was unable to add to his 14 league goals for the season despite hitting the woodwork three times and also having a penalty saved by former youth team mate Ruben Martinez while the score was 3-0.

Suarez then scored his fourth goal in three league

games by firing in a Sergi Roberto cross from inside the area two minutes into the second half and Paulinho completed the rout in the 75th, pouncing after Jordi Alba's shot had come off the post.

Barca hit the woodwork a total of five times in the game, while striker Paco Alcacer was taken off injured in the first half and will miss the 'Clasico' after being ruled out for three weeks.—Reuters ■

China has 20,000 schools featuring football education

BEIJING — China has a total of 20,218 primary and middle schools featuring football education to spearhead campus football development, according to the Ministry of Education (MOE).

Xu Zhen, deputy head of the sport, health and art education division of the MOE, said that football development is taking the lead in physical education reform and will boost the development of other ball

games and campus sports.

According to Xu, 102 counties or districts have been chosen as pilot locations and a four-tier football competition system has been set up.—Xinhua ■

Manchester City to offer Guardiola long-term deal — reports

LONDON— Manchester City will hold talks with manager Pep Guardiola at the end of the season about extending his three-year deal, British media reported on Sunday.

The reports said that convincing the 46-year-old to sign a new contract would top the agenda at next May's end-of-season review traditionally held by City Chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak and CEO Ferran Sorriano.

Sky Sports, citing sources connected to the runaway Premier League leaders, reported that City are confident everything is in place to persuade Guardiola to stay longer at the club.

City are 11 points clear at the

top of the table after extending their English top-flight record winning run to 16 games in a row with a 4-1 victory over Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday that maintained their unbeaten league campaign. Guardiola is halfway through his contract, worth up to 20 million pounds (\$26.63 million) annually according to The Daily Telegraph. Guardiola failed to win a trophy for the first time in his managerial career last season, but as well as being hot favourites to win the league this campaign, his side visit Leicester City in the League Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday and Swiss side FC Basel in the Champions League last 16 in February.—Reuters ■

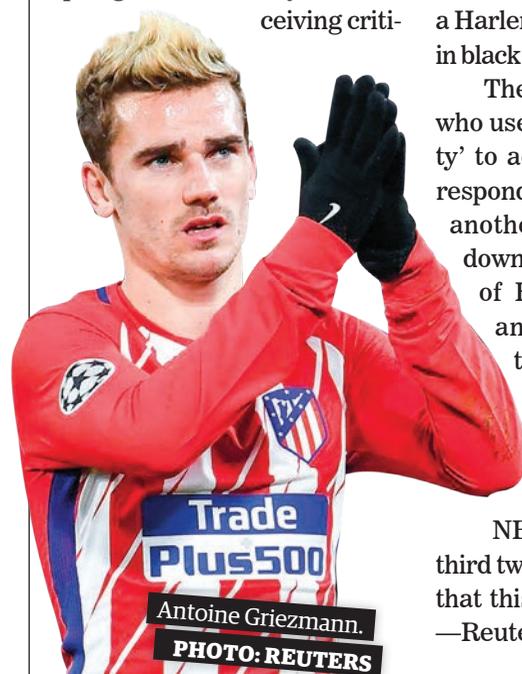
Griezmann apologises for painting himself black for picture

MADRID — Atletico Madrid forward Antoine Griezmann apologised on Sunday after receiving criti-

cism on social media for posting a picture of himself on his official Twitter account dressed as a Harlem Globetrotter, covered in black paint and wearing a wig.

The France international, who used the caption '80's party' to accompany the picture, responded to the criticism with another post saying: "Calm down my friends, I'm a fan of Harlem Globetrotters and that beautiful era, this is a tribute." Griezmann, a passionate basketball fan who has travelled to the United States to watch

NBA games, later issued a third tweet saying: "I recognise that this was clumsy from me.—Reuters ■



Antoine Griezmann.
PHOTO: REUTERS

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