

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IV, No. 252, 8th Waxing of Pyatho 1379 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Monday, 25 December 2017



in
Picture

Merry Christmas!

Santa Clause figures wishing every passer by a Merry Christmas in front of Saint Mary's Cathedral in Yangon. **PHOTO: THANT ZIN WIN**

VP graces Christmas Eve

VICE President U Henry Van Thio attended the Midnight Mass at the Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance (MECA) in Mayangone Township yesterday.

Also in attendance were the Vice President's wife Dr. Shwe Hlwan, Union Minister

for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Leaders of different Christian Sects and other invited guests.

Youth members of MECA opened the ceremony with a musical rendition of the Nativity of Jesus. Afterwards, Rev. Dr. Dorothy Colney gave the

opening prayer.

Next, Rev. Dr. Charity Htoo read out scriptures followed by Rev. Morris Liana delivering a speech and Miss Jenifer Ngun Sui Par singing a song.

Afterwards, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko delivered a speech concerning the cel-

ebration of Christmas. Later, guests were entertained with songs after which they listened to sermons. Next presents were exchanged, followed by Rev. Dr. Aung Mang giving his blessings. The event concluded with a feast for all participants. —Myanmar News Agency ■



NATIONAL

New Naval vessels commissioned into service

PAGE-7

NATIONAL

Union Minister visits 25-year old handicraft industry

PAGE-3



NATIONAL

Rakhine Chief Minister inspects regional development

PAGE-3

NATIONAL

Investing in early childhood development for successful future

PAGE-7



NATIONAL

Rural women development program in progress in Myawady

PAGE-2

YOU CAN FLY!
FLY OR UN

ပြန်တိုင်ခံစားရမယ့် INDOOR SKYDIVING

INDOOR SKYDIVING

INDOOR SKYDIVING

TAWWIN STREET, 9 MILE, MAYANGONE, YANGON. PH +95 9 340062000 , 09 766699111 , 09 766699222

INDOOR SKYDIVING

OPEN DAILY

9:00 AM TO 9:00 PM

INDOOR SKYDIVING YANGON - OPENING PROMOTION

Email enquiry@indoorskydivingyangon.com



in
Picture

Vice President U Henry Van Thio and his wife Dr Shwe Hlwan attend the Midnight Mass at the Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance (MECA) in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**
(NEWS ON PAGE-1)

Christmas of Love and Peace for every country men and women

CARDINAL Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar, prayed for a Christmas of Love and Peace for every country men and women in his Christmas wish for the Union.

"A very blessed Christmas Wishes to all of you. Let all beings be soaked in peace," he prayed..

The 2017 has been a momentous year for the Christians and the people of Myanmar, the Cardinal declared, saying, "Pope Francis, the apostle of Love and Peace, graced this nation with his pastoral visit,

bringing great joy and celebration. Despite all the challenges he visited all stake holders in the country, urging all to continue the pilgrimage of peace.

He has left to the church and the nation an urgent task : Heal the wounds, seek comprehensive reconciliation, repay hatred with redemptive love."

"Genuine Peace is built on Love. This is the message of Pope Francis' visit. Compassionate love needs to become the common religion of this nation. Religions need to come

together for peace," Charles Maung Bo mentioned in his Christmas wish.

"Let us creatively visualize a nation of hope. Christmas is that season hope. I pray for blessings on each one of us, that we can mobilize our spiritual instincts towards building Myanmar as a nation of opportunity, peace, love and healing to all of us," he said.

Finally, Cardinal Charles Maung Bo wished every Myanmar a Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Talks on scouting development given in Bago

OFFICIALS gave talks on development of scouting in Myanmar on 23 December in Bago, in which three octogenarian scouts were honoured.

Chairman of Myanmar Scout Committee and Chief Scout of the nation Dr Tin Nyo explained current functions and future plans for scouting development, and Chief programmer U Aye Kyaing elaborated on school scout trainings with audio visual aids.

After the Bago Region Education Officer Daw Myint Myint Than spoke words of thanks, Dr Tin Nyo presented scout neckerchiefs and commemorative gifts to three elder scouts in



Dr Tin Nyo presents scout neckerchiefs and commemorative gifts to three elder scouts in their eighties. **PHOTO: MNA**

their eighties. The talks held at a basic education school in Bago, about 70 miles north of Yangon was participated by the rector of Bago University, township

education officers of Bago District, school heads, teachers of schools which have scout organizations and scouts. —Myanmar Scouts Federation ■

Pyithu Hluttaw holds seventh regular meeting on 15 January

The seventh regular meeting of the second Pyithu Hluttaw will be held at 10 am on 15 January (Monday), 2018 at the Pyithu Hluttaw Building.

Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw has sent the invitation letters to the Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives to attend the regular meeting.

Whether they receive the invitation or not, MPs must inform at the Pyithu Hluttaw building I-12 not earlier than 13 January, not later than 14 January bringing together with them MP identity cards.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Amyotha Hluttaw holds seventh regular meeting on 15 January

The seventh regular meeting of the second Amyotha Hluttaw will be held at 10 am on 15 January (Monday), 2018 at the Amyotha Hluttaw Building.

Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw has sent the invitation letters to the Amyotha Hluttaw Representatives to attend the regular meeting.

Whether they receive the invitation or not, MPs must inform at the Amyotha Hluttaw building I-19 not earlier than 13 January, not later than 14 January bringing together with them MP identity cards.— Myanmar News Agency ■



Chair of Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (Central) Dr Thet Thet Zin and party explain rural women development program. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG**

Rural women development program in progress in Myawady

CHAIR of Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (Central) Dr Thet Thet Zin inspected progress in the rural women development program in Myawady a town bordering Thailand in Kayin State on 23 December. Dr Thet Thet Zin and party arrived at Whaishan village and met with ten-household representatives of the program.

The chairwoman indicated the importance of implementing the five principal sectors involving environmental sanitation and greening, infectious diseases prevention, nutrition, educational aids and old age care. The five sectors are the foundation for development of

rural women, she said.

After hearing and fulfilling the needs of rural women, Dr Thet Thet Zin and party looked around the village during which they conversed with village women, and surveyed the kitchen cleanliness and environmental sanitation and greening.

They also did the same at Minletpan village. Dr Thet Thet Zin was accompanied by Vice-Chair Daw Khin May Soe, Treasurer Daw Khin Sanda Tun, Chair of Kayin State Women's Association Daw Nu Nu Swe and others. Regional officials explained the progress in implementing the program.— Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) ■



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint gifts a young Shan girl wearing a Kinnari dress. PHOTO: IPRD

Union Minister visits 25-year old handicraft industry

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint visited Shan traditional handicraft industry in Lashio in the northeast of Myanmar yesterday morning.

Accompanied Ethnic Bamar Affairs Minister Dr Than Maung, the Union minister arrived at Ward 12 of the second

largest city in Shan State, and was welcomed by Shan elders, families of the industry and traditional dances.

He then looked into the requirements in making traditional Kinnari and Kinnara figures (mythical bird-like humans), Toeniya figures (drag-

on-like ceremonial creatures) and Shan traditional musical instrument including famous long-drums.

U Sai has been running the industry as a family business in preserving and protecting the Shan traditional heritage for over 25 years. —District IPRD ■

Rakhine Chief Minister inspects regional development



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and officials discuss regional development for Manaung. PHOTO: IPRD

CHIEF Minister of Rakhine State U Nyi Pu and his cabinet yesterday met departmental personnel in Manaung and discussed regional development undertakings.

After the opening speech delivered by the chief minister, the town administrator explained

data on the region in detail, followed by the presentation of rural transport and educational development endeavours by the respective officials.

At noon, the chief minister and party met officials, teachers, parents and students at Thitpon village high school and sought

means to improve the matriculation pass rate. They then inspected tar laying on the a sector of the island circular road, land extension of Samontae airfield and a town road which are covered by regional development undertakings. —Manaung Tsp. (IPRD) ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office Notification 4/2017

7th Waxing of Pyatho 1379 ME
24 December 2017

Summoning Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw seventh regular session

In accord with section 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 13 of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw seventh regular session is summoned at 1:30 pm on the 14th Waning of Pyatho 1379 ME (15 January 2018) (Monday).

*Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than
Speaker
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Pyithu Hluttaw Notification 4/2017

7th Waxing of Pyatho 1379 ME
24 December 2017

Summoning Second Pyithu Hluttaw seventh regular session

In accord with section 126 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the 2012 Pyithu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2013 Pyithu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyithu Hluttaw seventh regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 14th Waning of Pyatho 1379 ME (15 January 2018) (Monday).

*Sd/ Win Myint
Speaker
Pyithu Hluttaw*

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Amyotha Hluttaw Notification 4/2017

7th Waxing of Pyatho 1379 ME
24 December 2017

Summoning Second Amyotha Hluttaw seventh regular session

In accord with section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the Amyotha Hluttaw Law for the 2012 and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2015 Amyotha Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Amyotha Hluttaw seventh regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 14th Waning of Pyatho 1379 ME (15 January 2018) (Monday).

*Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than
Speaker
Amyotha Hluttaw*

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITOR

Aye Min Soe,
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR

Mark Angeles,
markrangeles@gmail.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORS

Khin 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.mmm@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAM

Tun 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

Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

gnlmdaily@gmail.com
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
www.facebook.com/
globalnewlightofmyanmar

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.

About 650 star tortoises conserved at Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary

POPULATION of star tortoises is rising and about 650 star tortoises are under captive-breeding programme at Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary in Minbu Township, Magway Township, according to a recent report of Myawady Daily.

Wildlife sanctuary is their natural habitat but they are critically on the verge of extinction. In 1996, six male and six female star tortoises were conserved, and now, the number of star tortoises has reached about 650.

In a bid to conserve the endangered star tortoises, the state granted allocated fund for breeding programme. Health care of tortoises is provided by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS Myanmar Programme) working with Turtle Survival Alliance.

This star tortoise species are country of origin. This breeding programme aims to conserve them from the brink of extinction, said U Myint Than Khaing, the deputy di-



Population of star tortoises rise in Myanmar under captive-breeding programme. **PHOTO: WCS MYANMAR**

rector of Magway Region Forest Department.

Protected forests in Myanmar's central dry zone are home to star tortoises. To protect them from the extinction,

they are conserved at Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary, Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region, Lawkananda Wildlife Sanctuary in Bagan. Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary is over 100,000 square

mile wide, preserving 14 species of mammals, 43 species of reptiles, 113 species of birds, 39 species of butterflies, 89 species of plants and 26 species of medicinal plants. –GNLM ■

Online booking system for vehicle inspection, registration

THE Road Transport Administration Department will introduce an online booking system to carry out the inspection of registered vehicles in Yangon starting on 2 January.

However, the inspection processes for vehicles from oth-

er regions and states, changes to colour and name and motorbikes remain unchanged. The department is taking measures for the smooth functioning of vehicle registration as people face delays due to traffic jams caused by the long line of ve-

hicles.

According to official figures issued by the Road Transport Administration Department, 999,101 motor vehicles have been registered nationwide. Of the total, more than 530,000 cars are in Yangon, accounting for

53.28 % of the total registered cars.

For those wishing to use the online booking system in five offices in Yangon may register their names at www.rtad.gov.mm starting from 27 December.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Local recruitment agency invites skilled workers abroad to return home

WITH foreign direct investments flowing into Myanmar, online recruitment agency JobNet.com.mm is inviting the skilled workers of professional level working abroad to come back mother country, according to news released by the Jobnet.com.mm.

According to 2017 business

survey of Myanmar, business confidence of the country is seen a sharp decline to 49 per cent from 73 per cent of last year. Shortage of skilled workers contributes to decline of business confidence level.

JobNet is trying to offer job opportunities to persuade them to work in the country. According

to its survey, more than 110,000 visitors to their website are monthly recorded. Of them, 10 per cent are from foreign countries. Mr Matt De Luca, from Jobnet.com.mm said that more job opportunities will emerge as the country is putting forth efforts to the development of economy. Shortage of workers is

one of the challenges. The local workers need to meet criteria of job vacancies.

Accounting and financial management is the most popular categories for job hunters who visited the website this year. The visitors also search job vacancies in engineering and other sectors. –GNLM ■

Over 930 tons of betel nut exported to India within a week

BETWEEN 2nd and 8th December, 931 tons of betel nuts with an estimated value of US\$0.77 million were exported to India through the Tamu and Reed India-Myanmar border gates,

according to the Commerce Ministry.

The previous week's betel nut export surpassed that week as more than 1,430 tons of betel nuts were exported in the pre-

vious week. In addition to betel nuts, India-Myanmar checkpoints saw re-export of gasoline and export of spices, cement, footwear, blankets, snack foods, apparel and cigarettes.

Bilateral trade with India as of 15th December in the current fiscal year amounted to \$50.1 million, a decrease of \$17.4 million from the similar period of last FY. – Ko Khant ■



Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory (MPF) carries out research activities. **PHOTO: MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY**

MPF conducting research to produce
ten more new products this FY

May Thet Hnin

RESEARCH activities are being carried out by the state-owned Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory (MPF), formerly known as Burma Pharmaceutical Industry (BPI) in order to manufacture more than ten products this Fiscal Year, said U Ko Ko Aung, the managing director of MPF.

“Our pharmaceutical production is still in a fragile state and so, we are endeavouring to boost output”, he added.

MPF is conducting the research for production of around 12 new products including medications to relief cancer pain, anti-HIV drug and drugs pre-

scribed for heart disease.

MPF can fulfill only 10 per cent of national requirement and total pharmaceutical production of local factories is still less than 15 per cent of the requirement. Most of pharmaceuticals are imported, said U Ko Ko Aung.

During last FY, MPF's output estimated Ks 28 to 30 billion. Production value this FY increased up to Ks50 billion.

There are two pharmaceutical factories- Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory (MPF) Insein and Kyaukse. MPF provides a total of 287 products and is making efforts to improve new products. Last FY saw 12 new products by MPF.

U Ko Ko Aung suggested that people should raise awareness of counterfeit drugs under the name of BPI brand and prescription mixed with expired drugs. And so, public need to take a special care to check the bearing of BPI brand in the FILM coated tablets and expired date.

A collaborative inspection such as surprise check was made by Special Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of Home Affairs and MPF under the Ministry of Industry at drugstores, warehouses and drug producing factories in September 2016. Fake BPI tablets, vials and ointments with estimated value of Ks2.8 billion were seized. ■

Laboratory to test fuel oil quality to start to run next month

A laboratory for testing of fuel oil quality established by Myanmar Fuel Oil Importers and Distributors Association will start to operate in January, 2018, said Dr Win Myint, secretary of this association.

“Our aim is to ensure the quality of fuel oil both for the consumers and businessmen”, he continued.

This laboratory is constructed in Thilawa Special Economic Zone and it will examine quality of imported fuel oil and fuel oil distributed in the market.

“We led to get public par-

ticipation. Most of the companies agreed to be tested their fuel oil. We will give certificate to those companies, ensuring the quality to the consumers. It also intends to scale down the number of those fuel stations which sell the mixed oil”, said Dr Win Myint.

The consumers can come to laboratory for practical testing besides those respective persons from companies and petrol stations.

The charges for laboratory test are less than a Kyat for a gallon.

Major volume of the im-

ported oil is of quality but the unscrupulous sellers mixed them with locally produced oil and sell them at a bargain price.

Ninety per cent of domestic consumption of fuel oil is heavily reliant on foreign market while only 10 per cent of that are from locally produced.

There are around 70 fuel oil import companies and 2,000 fuel stations, mostly imported through Singapore. Around 200,000 tons of gasoline and 400,000 tons of diesel are monthly imported into the country.—May Thet Hnin ■





SENNNA 2 docks at the MLT factory (1)'s port in Thanlyin Township. **PHOTO: AUNG THURA**

Indonesia sends LPG to aid electric sector

INDONESIA has sent 1,800 tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to Yangon and the shipment arrived via the cargo ship M.T.SE NNA 2 at 9am yesterday.

The ship docked at the MLT factory (1)'s port in Thanlyin Township.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy is importing 4,000

tons of LPG monthly so as to supply homes in Yangon an alternative source of energy for domestic use and lower electricity consumption. The shipment from Indonesia is the first half of the imports for the month.

Households in Yangon use electricity as the main power supply for cooking. The high-

est consumption rate is during the morning and evening. The ministry will be importing LPG, coal and firewood as alternative sources of energy.

Thailand consumes an annual rate of 4 to 5 million tons of LPG while Myanmar consumes a lesser 1 million tons. —Aung Thura ■

Fire in Rakhine State's Taungup Township causes Ks 2 million loss

A fire broke out in a house in Chaungkok Ward, Taungup Township in Rakhine State this morning. The fire is believed to have started from an electric shock.

The fire engulfed one storey wooden house owned by U Myo Myint. Around 300 local people including Township Administrator U Hla Moe Oo, Head of

Township Police Force Police Captain Ko Ko Oo and Chief of Township Fire Services Department U Mya Than put out the fire.

The estimated loss of property in the fire is about Ks 2 million, according to the township Information and Public Relations Department.—Myanmar Digital News ■



Fire breaks out in a house in Chaungkok Ward, Taungup Township, yesterday. **PHOTO: MDN**

Maubin Industrial Zone scheduled to be complete within three years

CHAIRMAN of the Myanmar Investment Commission Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win held a meeting with the entrepreneurs at the briefing hall of Maubin Industrial Zone in Maubin, Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

At the meeting, the Union Minister called for timely completion of the zone and listened to the work progresses, difficul-

ties and future plans concerning the project presented by the industrialists. Maubin Industrial Zone, located beside Yangon-Maubin-Kyaiklat-Pyapon Road and 87 kilometers away from Yangon is being developed with the permission of the Myanmar Investment Commission starting from 10 November. It will have access to Thilawa Port through Toe River and Twan-

tay Canal and is situated in a road network that can connect ten cities including Yangon and Patheingyi in all seasons. The industrial park is being established on 249.28 acres of land and will include textile and garment factories, construction materials manufacturing plants and warehouses. The three-year project is slated to be completed by 2020. —Myanmar Digital News ■

Remote-controlled mine found near 105th-mile Trade Zone in Muse

A remote-controlled mine which may have been planted by unknown armed group was found in a bush beside the Union Highway near Mongyu 105th-mile Trade Zone in Muse Township, Northern Shan State this morning. Military columns led by Second Commander of No. (415) Light Infantry Regi-

ment under Infantry Division No (88), local police force, local anti-drug squad, local people's militia and firefighters rushed to the scene and checked the improvised explosive device. Security personnel from No. (415) Light Infantry Regiment removed the remote-controlled mine.—Thant Zin (Muse) ■

800 acres of farmland to be reclaimed in Kachin State in 017-2018 FY

UNDER the guidance of Kachin State government, 800 acres of farmland will be reclaimed in the fiscal year 2017-2018 with the aim of creating job opportunities for the locals, said U Mya Thein, Kachin State Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation recently.

The regional minister made the remarks during a demonstration of paddy harvesting at a village in Myitkyina.

"We reclaimed 2,100 acres of farmland for the landless farmers in 2016 with the use of Kachin State government fund. Similarly, 200 acres of farmland in Phakant and Momauk Townships have been transformed from conventional farming into mechanized ones. We are planning to reclaim 200 acres in Putao and 300 acres each in Tanai and Shin Bweyan Townships, using 40 tractors and 50 staffs.

The newly-reclaimed farm-

lands will be distributed to landless farmers on a prioritized basis," said U Maung Maung Hsan, Head of Agricultural Mechanization Department.

A total of 300 acres of farmland are planned to be transformed from conventional farming into mechanized ones in Hopin, Waingmaw and Bhamo Townships next financial years with the use of Kachin State government's allotted fund, he added.—Win Naing (Kachin Land) ■



A Bulldozer works in action for 800 acres of farmland to be reclaimed in Kachin State. **PHOTO: WIN NAING**

New Naval vessels commissioned into service

BUILDING its own ships which meet the standard of boats sailing in the open seas is an honour for the Tatmadaw (Navy). Also the Tatmadaw in indeed is honourable as it is the only armed forces in Southeast Asia that can build frigates at its own dockyard. This ability must be maintained while building more powerful naval boats, said Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the commissioning of the naval vessels in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Tatmadaw (Navy) held in Yangon yesterday.

The Senior General wore the Navy uniform in honour of the ceremony.

The chief of staff (Navy) held the commissioning of the vessels in accord with the ceremonial process.

The Senior General and party inspected the commissioned vessels – 56-metre tank carrier landing crafts loaded with armed cars and 29-metre landing crafts.

They then inspected the offshore patrol boat Inlay. From the dais on board the boat, the Senior General took the salute of the Guard of Honour. Afterwards, he delivered a speech.

In the evening, the Senior General and party left for Ayeyawady Naval Region Command headquarters on board the Yadanabon war vessel.

The Senior General and wife formally inaugurated the exhibition commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Navy and visited the booths.

Today's ceremony saw the commissioning of one offshore patrol boat, two tank carrier



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects a tank carrier landing craft. PHOTO: MNA

landing crafts and four landing crafts totaling seven.

In the morning, the Senior

General and party inspected naval equipment produced by the Tatmadaw (Navy), naval

dockyard museum, and naval ship building at the Navy Dockyard.—Myanmar News Agency

Investing in early childhood development for successful future

Dr. Win Myat Aye, the Union Minister for Social welfare, Relief and Resettlement, along with Hluttaw representatives and department officials met with local residents in Kyauktakar Township, Bago Region yesterday morning.

At the meeting, the Union Minister told the people that the objective of their visit was to implement the development of the early childhood development sector.

The Union Minister talked about the importance of caring for a child's development from conception to 8 years old since during that time is when the brain and body are growing. The Union Minister said they will provide financial and technological

support in this endeavor. He also said they will implement the practice of Maternal Circles/Mother Groups for children who do not have access to preschools or nurseries.

Afterwards, Dr. San San Aye, the Director General of the Head Department for Social Welfare, gave further explanations of the Maternal Circles and their likely procedures. She then answered questions put forth by the residents and Hluttaw representatives.

The officials then handed over Ks 39,250,000 as support for implementing the Maternal Circles in the neighboring five villages. Next, U Khin Maung Oo, the Hluttaw representative for Kyauktakar,

thanked the officials on behalf of the residents. The Union Minister and officials then donated toys for the children.

Later in the day, the Union Minister went to inspect a kindergarten school building in Pado Town. The single storey building measures 60 by 40 feet and its construction is funded by Good Neighbors International, an INGO, which had signed a contract with the Department for Social Welfare.

Finally, the Union Minister went to inspect a two-storey multipurpose building in Nyaunglaypin Town. The building is 60 by 60 feet large and is constructed using funds from the Committee for Disaster Management. —Myanmar News Agency

UEHRD provides aids at villages in N Rakhine

VOLUNTEER youths of UEHRD rendered humanitarian assistance at villages in the northern sector of Maungdaw Township in northern Rakhine State yesterday morning.

"We are the third contingent of the UEHRD youths arriving in Maungdaw region. Altogether 23 of us are youths from various parts of the Union and we are joined by 10 local youths. Today we provided humanitarian assistance at five villages in the north of Maungdaw Township. First we collect the household list of each family under our assistance program. The next day we conveyed the aids by trucks to the villages, said Ye Yint Aung, a youth volunteer of the UEHRD.

The assistance program came in two categories – half unit for a three-member family and

the full unit for a family with more than three. The provisions included rice, cooking oil, salt, green gram, onion, potato and canned fish. Nearly 1000 persons of 170 households got aids yesterday.

"Normally, commodity prices are high here. The prices further increased after the incident. We have no time to grow crops. We are happy and thankful for providing personal and kitchen goods, said U Min Swe," a resident of one of the villages.

The volunteer youths of UEHRD of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State will stay at the region till 4 January during which they will make field tours to ascertain that fair share of their assistance reaches the right persons.—Myint Maung Zeya

2nd small industrial products expo launches in Mandalay

UNDER the supervision of Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, the opening ceremony of the 2nd small industrial products expo was launched at Mingalar Mandalay on 73rd street in Mandalay on 23 December.

Chief Minister of Mandalay Region Dr. Zaw Myint Maung and other responsible officials attended and opened the ceremony.

Then, the Mandalay Region Chief Minister delivered his opening speech that talked about how Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) are the strength for Myanmar, the necessity for funds for SME and how Myanmar needs to be ready for implementation in ASIAN Economic Community.

At the expo were loom-woven cotton cloths from Amara-

pura, cosmetics and carved figures, foods and beverages along with booths exhibiting for educating the public about food and drugs safety from Food and Drug Administration Department (FDA). The expo was concluded yesterday with Myanmar traditional dance and songs for entertainment.—Thiha Ko Ko (MDY)



UEHRD render humanitarian assistance at villages in the northern sector of Maungdaw Township. PHOTO: NAY WIN TUN

Effective exploitation of our valuable touristic sites

MYANMAR is a country with fertile lands, a mild climate, natural beautiful scenery and abundant natural resources and touristic sites. Compared to neighboring countries apart from needs in urban development and essential services, Myanmar has a great number of ancient historical sites and places of interest to tourists like Bagan, the Majestic Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon Region, the Royal Palace in Mandalay, ancient Buddhist temples in Mrauk U (Rakhine state) and beautiful beaches like Napali in Thandwe (Rakhine state) and Ngwe Saung and Chaung Tha beaches of Ayeyarwaddy Region to mention but a few. Therefore we realize that much needs to be done to upgrade the hospitality industry for the promotion of tourism and travel industry in Myanmar.

In 2016 over 2.9 million tourists across the world visited Myanmar while 3.1 million visitors arrived in Myanmar up to the end of October this year; increasing by 20 percent compared to a similar period of previous years. Yet, it has not reached a satisfactory stage compared with enormous amounts of tourist influx to neighboring countries and ASEAN nations.

As regards tourist arrivals from foreign countries, the Myanmar tourism industry is neither in a stagnant position nor in decline. Therefore reforms need to be made, focusing on regular customers. After making a careful assessment of certain countries which have a high incidence of potential customers, we can have a massive influx of foreign tourists by adopting sound marketing strategies.

The following actions may be relevant in promoting tourism to Myanmar—making better arrangements in giving out arrival visas at our airports, letting international airlines land directly, making preparations for global flights to land in major locations of tourist attraction, allowing countries designated as tourism markets to be regarded as visa-free countries and carrying out these tasks in cooperation and collaboration with the respective departments and Union ministries.

In the development of tourism, safe travel to any of the tourism sites is of vital importance. As the tourism industry depends upon the image of the country, arrangements should be made to improve tourism areas in terms of road networks, clean and customer-friendly rest places and places for free internet access so that the national image can be improved. In case events occur which have a negative impact on the national image, effective corrective actions need to be taken so that such events will not occur again in the future.

On the other hand, to attract a massive influx of tourists it is necessary to pay more attention to marketing and public relations. We will need to find ways and means so that interested world travelers will see our advertisements on popular TV channels or on Youtube channels. Much can be learnt from how other ASEAN countries are making their tourism destinations popular to world class travelers.

Convenient transportation, attractive accommodations with modern facilities at reasonable prices for visitors, and better arrangements for the existing tour packages are some of the things that come to mind for the improvement of this sector. Being a smokeless industry, the hotel and tourism sector can create job opportunities and earn huge sums of foreign exchange for the national economy. To sum it up, we deeply urge responsible personnel from every sector to collectively take part in the campaign for the development of tourism industries.

Need to Collectively Cooperate in Eradicating Trafficking in Persons

By May Thet Hnin

“EVERY individual may be a victim of human trafficking, regardless of age or sex, that is, adults or minors and males or females. According to the statistics, amounts of the cases are increasing year by year in the country, but many went unreported and unlisted,” said by Naw Kue Kue, a free-lance consultant who started to devote herself since about 1990, as regards human-trafficking offences.

In the years—2015 and 2016 there were nearly 130 cases of human trafficking in the country, with 209 cases in all registered from January 2017 to November, according to the news release of anti-human trafficking forces, Myanmar. This year, 334 in total comprising of men, women and children were victimized by human traffickers. Among them 54 were in Yangon, most of all, followed by 52 in Shan State, 29 in Kachin State, 18 in Ayeyarwady Region and 14 in Mandalay Region, with 609 culprits who were involved in trafficking arrested, according to the statistics.

Naw Kue Kue added, “The government is mainly the most important. In the past there was not any law on trafficking and it was then difficult to accept even the wording, human trafficking. Later on, though some progress was achieved due to MoUs and action plans among countries it did not yet cover over the whole country. There are still many victims of human trafficking in the country. To put it simply, it is dreadful to think about those being tortured in many ways.”

Those trafficked to China were involved with forced marriages, with illegal migrant workers in Thailand becoming involved into sexual slavery by force. In Malaysia, those came from Thailand, after being seduced into sex slavery. Out of them children were made to work in begging for money. Moreover, it was learnt that most of them were employed at lower wages in hard labors such as housemaids, factories, mining sites, deep sea fishing, farming planta-

tion, waiter and waitress services and other low-paid jobs.

Political instability, differences in development and an enormous gap between rich and poor are closely related. Being out of reach toward the legal route toward foreign countries for work, becoming easy preys to fraudulent people and fewer advantages of job opportunities in their locations are the very basic causes of trafficking in

tion, waiter and waitress services and other low-paid jobs. She also added that other matters similar to human trafficking which are happening in the country should be taken into consideration specifically. She added, “Now, people mostly pay attention to cross border. In fact matters similar to human trafficking are increasing more than ever in the country, it was learnt. It should be dealt with

We cannot guess how much the trafficking hurt the victims. Kinds of trafficking are different, so it will be different as to how they are to be cured. And, some people welcome them warmly on their arrival back, with some failing to accept them warmly.

persons. Some experts conclude that human traffickers chose this job and it increased rapidly day by day because it does not need much money to invest for the job, easy to be implemented and the job can be carried out promptly through the use of modern information technology.

“Due to the increasing rate of human trafficking, the Government, Parliaments, civil societies, social organizations and the whole populace should cooperate in the campaigns against human trafficking,” said activists in anti-trafficking in persons.

Naw Kue Kue said that the government, the people and all social societies from ward and village level to the national level need to cooperate in harmony with each other.

Daw Micky Kyaw Myint, Senior Officer of Asia Foundation sharing knowledge on human trafficking among the people in combination with colorful girls consisting of Myanmar Library Association and young girls, said that most people thought human trafficking as sex trafficking, in conducting lectures to them, fail-

more emphasis.”

Police officer of no 6 human-trafficking suppression team, anti-human-trafficking police force, U Khin Maung Kywe said, “Our forces are carrying out our duties as a national cause across the country after finding out those involved in human trafficking to take action against them. But it is necessary for respective departments and the whole populace should protect themselves from dangers with awareness.”

For eradication of trafficking in persons, the government formed the human trafficking suppression police forces, arresting those involved in local and border cross human trafficking under Myanmar Human Trafficking Law 2005. The law was being amended, likely to come out in early 2018.

Anti-Trafficking in Person Police Force are cooperating with the Governments of China and Thailand for fighting against human-trafficking offences, opening liaison offices. Besides, Myanmar is speeding up the cooperation with 6 Mekong Basin Regions’ nations and ASEAN countries

for eradication of the human trafficking.

Social Welfare Department, global organizations, NGOs, civilian associations and ward or village-tract-orientated social societies are helping in the respective sectors by sharing knowledge on prevention from human trafficking and helping in suing against culprits involved in the crimes.

“Rehabilitation is the most difficult part and it costs too much money. Techniques also are too sober to deal with the cases. We cannot guess how much the trafficking hurt the victims. Kinds of trafficking are different, so it will be different as to how they are to be cured. And, some people welcome them warmly on their arrival back, with some failing to accept them warmly. What they urgently need is a warm and helpful social environment. Taking too much time in finding out accurate information and solid evidences & offences of bribery and corruption of some fraudulent judicial staff in suing culprits in courts are also challenges we are facing,” said Naw Kue Kue.

U Khin Maung Kywe asserted, “Besides the Central Committee for Prevention of Human Trafficking, different-level committees were formed in Regions and States, Districts and Town-

persons is a grave offence, being a kind of exploitation by violating human rights, hence the need for all people to energetically take part in the operation. As for the authorities at wards and villages they need to lend their ears to happenings in their surroundings and report to authorities concerning suspects, if ever. As such cases start to be dealt with at the district-level courts of justice so townships judges are required to stand before the courts, but some would not like to. Similarly police forces in the jurisdiction area are also important. For the time being, anti-trafficking suppression police forces cannot be stationed at every police station. In case, an offence occurs and they must inform by phone. Cooperation between police is urgently needed.”

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 of-

“Trafficking in persons is a grave offence, being a kind of exploitation by violating human rights, hence the need for all people to energetically take part in the operation.

ships since 2011, consisting of heads of the general administration departments,

judicial officers, judges, IMPD, department of labor, education officers, IPRD, women affairs associations and maternity and child care associations and anti-trafficking suppression police forces. But, until now cooperation between each other is still unsatisfactory.”

He added, “Trafficking in

fence punishable to 4 years imprisonment, while committing the human trafficking he can be sentenced to 10 years imprisonment or 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.

Naw Kue Kue said, “It needs to arrest the actual culprit. Generally the ones who actually commit crimes went un-arrested. It is a great challenge in judicial sector.”

According to anti-trafficking-in-persons suppression police forces, human traffickers persuaded victims by saying that they would be employed at factories, shops, house-maid jobs or caring for the aged with well-paid salaries and money would be remitted to their parents just on arrival at the other land. Some were persuaded by saying that they would get between K 1 or 1 ½ million just by living together with a Chinese national for six months or one year at the utmost.

In the Myanmar Human Trafficking Report, 2006, it was strictly described that cases concerning human trafficking which broke out in the country can be seen as 7 categories. They are 69.7 percent of forced marriage, 13.6 percent of sex slavery, 10 percent of forced labor, 4.8 percent of child human trafficking, 1.4 percent of forcing enslaved children to beg, 0.3 percent of forced adoption and 0.2 percent of commercial sexual exploitation respectively.

Out of cross border human trafficking, 80 percent had been sent to China, with 10 percent to Thailand, 6 percent to Malaysia and 4 percent in the country respectively. Among the victims, 85 percent had been learnt to be women, with 4.38 percent of children.

U Khin Maung Kywe said, “Most of victims were illiterates and naive ones. Some became cheated by others while trying to hunt for higher career. Human traffickers are waiting for those who would fall for their trap. It needs not to easily trust anyone—friends, boyfriends and even relatives. If there is a doubt, anyone should consult with knowledgeable ones.”

Hot numbers for informing news and information about human trafficking in the country are as follows:

09 49 555 666; 09 49 555 777; 09 49 555 888 and 09 49 555 999.

Translated by Khin Maung Oo

Myanmar Announces ADB-Backed Reforms to Improve Business Climate

THE new Companies Law adopts international best practices on company formation, business registration process, corporate governance, and lifts the threshold on foreign ownership.

The Government of Myanmar announced recently the passage of the Myanmar Companies Law, one of key reforms to improve the country’s business environment supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

“Along with the recently revised Myanmar Investment Law, this reform represents an important step toward creating an enabling business environment in Myanmar,” said Duong Nguyen, an ADB Financial Sector Economist. “ADB has supported these efforts since 2012 as private sector development is the key driver of inclusive growth as it increases productivity, generates jobs, and stimulates investment.”

The new Companies Law adopts international best practices on company formation, business registration process, corporate governance, and lifts the threshold on foreign ownership.

ADB, with funding from the Government of Japan, has supported these efforts through a \$1.5 million technical assistance grant approved in 2014. This grant has provided assistance to Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) to draft the new company law, and to conduct public consultations, advocacy, and public education on the law. In addition, the grant will procure an electronic company registry, train DICA staff to administer the registry, and assist DICA with re-registration of enterprises.

The new law and registry will simplify and reduce the cost of incorporating a business in Myanmar, and thereby support private sector investment. Small- and medium-sized enterprises will also benefit from a more transparent and lower-cost registration system.

“The new law will provide an opportunity for small businesses to formalize, and thus gain better access to finance and public services,” said Ms. Duong. “Moreover, an improved investment environment will support inclusive economic growth through increased enterprise startups and subsequent jobs generation.”

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, ADB is celebrating 50 years of development partnership in the region. It is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2016, ADB assistance totaled \$31.7 billion, including \$14 billion in co-financing.—ADB ■

POEM

Life a dynamic force

Life is an awesome, resilient and dynamic force. We should not make it stagnant by restricting its unique flow, So that it can be spontaneous with its glittering glow. No forces in the world should be allowed to make it go slow, No interruptions should be allowed to set up a negative row. We should treat life as a as an exciting drill, So that sadness can never silence its thrill. Life should be looked as bliss from the heaven, Joys and sadness are two parts of it; that will always happen. Life should be triumphant at every instances of the journey, It should be remembered as a joy ride and not a perilous journey. Life is a thrilling force, It should be enjoyed and not passed in remorse.

*S. K. Basu
Lethbridge AB Canada*

Peru opposition leader skeptical president's victory will last

LIMA — Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski's political troubles will likely continue despite his surprise victory over a bid in Congress to oust him this week, a key opposition leader said on Saturday, citing ongoing graft probes and opposing demands from allies.

Jose Chlimper, secretary general of the right-wing Popular Force, said his party could eventually emerge stronger from this week's political crisis, despite failing to garner enough votes in the 130-member Congress to remove Kuczynski from office.

"For us having 71 lawmakers was an asset but also a liability. Because whatever Congress did

was our fault," Chlimper told Reuters in a rare interview.

The party, which grew out of the populist movement of imprisoned ex-president Alberto Fujimori, sought to remove Kuczynski from office this week over business links he once denied having to a company at the centre of a massive graft scandal.

Ten Popular Force lawmakers broke ranks to keep a "presidential vacancy" motion from succeeding. Chlimper called the defections a painful "betrayal" but said the rest of Popular Force lawmakers have reaffirmed their commitment to staying in the party and voting as a bloc.

Kuczynski, on the other

hand, could see the cross-party alliance that defended him this week evaporate going forward, said Chlimper. "I don't see how he can come out stronger," he said.

Chlimper said Kuczynski lured the rebel Popular Force lawmakers with a promise to free their movement's political leader, Fujimori, from prison - an accusation denied by Kuczynski's government.

The dissident faction was led by Fujimori's youngest son, Kenji, who has challenged his sister Keiko's leadership of their father's following and who could receive a boost if the once-popular patriarch is released from prison.

—Reuters ■



Former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont attends an interview with Reuters in Brussels, Belgium, on 23 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Let me come back, Catalan leader tells Spain

BRUSSELS — Catalonia's separatist leader Carles Puigdemont called on Spain's government on Saturday to allow him to return home in time for the opening session of the Catalan parliament so that he can become the region's next president.

Puigdemont, who ruled in Catalonia until October and faces arrest in Spain for his role in organising an illegal referendum on independence and proclaiming a Catalan republic, is currently in self-imposed exile in Belgium.

Separatist parties secured a parliamentary majority in a regional election on Thursday, though it is still unclear whether Puigdemont and other jailed leaders of the movement will be able to attend assembly sessions.

"I want to come back to Catalonia as soon as possible. I would like to come back right now. It would be good news for Spain," Puigdemont told Reuters in an interview.

Asked if he would be back in time for the opening session which has to take place at the latest on 23 January, he said: "It would be natural. If I am not allowed to be sworn in as president, it would be a major abnormality for the Spanish democratic system."

"I am the president of the regional government and I will remain the president if the Spanish state respects the results of the vote," he also said.

Puigdemont, who has

called for dialogue with the Spanish government to resolve the current tensions between the turbulent region and the authorities in Madrid, said he was ready to listen to any proposal from Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy even if this offer fell short of an offer of independence.

"If the Spanish state has a proposal for Catalonia, we should listen," Puigdemont said, asking for a dialogue of equals.

Rajoy on Friday said he was open to dialogue but implicitly rejected Puigdemont's demand to meet soon, saying he would talk with whoever was Catalonia's president only once they have been elected by the new regional parliament.

Before that, his first interlocutor should be Ines Arrimadas, whose centrist, anti-independence party scored most votes on Thursday, he said. Arrimadas does not have enough seats or allies to form a government, while separatist parties put together have a narrow majority.

Past calls for dialogue on both the separatist and unionist side in the past have failed to yield concrete results and the crisis is likely to keep haunting Madrid, as well as EU leaders, for a long time.

Negotiations to form a government in Catalonia are likely to open after 6 January following the holiday break. Parliament must vote by 8 February on putting a new government into place. —Reuters ■



Lawmakers of Peru's opposition-ruled Congress decide whether to remove Peru's President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski from office in Lima, Peru, on 21 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Libyan PM says elections can solve political crisis

TRIPOLI — Libya's UN-backed Prime Minister Fayez Serraj said Saturday that holding elections can solve the political crisis in

the country.

Serraj made his remarks during a meeting with the Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano

in the capital Tripoli.

Serraj said that the Libyan Election Commission has started registration of voters and preparing for the elections next year, after approving the election law and voting on a constitution for the country, according to the prime minister's media office.

Serraj also said that rejection of certain parties to the political process "complicates the scene, which calls for firm stances from the international community."

Eastern-based army commander, General Khalifa Haftar, announced a few days ago that the UN-sponsored political agreement had "expired" after it was signed by Libyan political factions two years ago. —Xinhua ■



Libyan UN-backed Foreign Minister Mohamed Sayala (R) speaks during a press conference with Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano in Tripoli, Libya, on 23 December 2017. Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano is on a visit to Libya. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

German would-be partners have very different immigration ideas

BERLIN — Leading figures from Angela Merkel's conservatives and the Social Democrats (SPD) outlined differing visions on how their possible government would approach immigration, as Germany's would-be coalition partners prepared for talks in the New Year.

Chancellor Merkel's 2015 decision to open the doors to more than a million migrants, many fleeing war in the Middle East, transformed Germany's demographic landscape and boosted the far right, hurting her bloc and the SPD in September's election.

In separate interviews, Thomas Strobl, deputy leader of Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) and SPD foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel outlined ways of winning back disenchanted supporters.

Strobl told the Heilbronner Stimme newspaper Germany should cap the number of new immigrants at 65,000 a year, the level in 2012, and far below the limit of 200,000 that the conservatives had previously advocated.

But Gabriel, whose party's restive membership would be unlikely to accept such a draconian cap, suggested municipalities around Germany and Europe could be compensated financially if they agreed to shelter refugees.

"That way municipalities would decide themselves how many refugees to take," he told the Funke newspaper group. "That would avoid citizens gain-



Eritrean migrants walk after arriving by plane from Italy at the first registration camp in Erding near Munich, Germany, on 15 November, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing the impression that refugees get everything and we get nothing."

Germany has argued in vain for the stream of migrants fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and Africa to be divided proportionately between the European Union's member states, with poorer, more ethnically homogenous eastern members particularly set against the idea.

"The EU could establish a programme to help municipalities in poorer countries with the financing," Gabriel added.

Merkel, for whom a renewed conservative-SPD 'grand coalition' is her best chance of securing a fourth term as

chancellor, has blamed her 24 September election losses on concern at migration and now favours a tougher stance on deporting migrants accused of crimes.

The SPD's membership, which must ratify any government deal, is cautious about repeating the experience of a grand coalition, for which voters rewarded it with a drubbing in the polling booths.

While Gabriel is not a member of the SPD's negotiating team, his proposal could prove popular with the party's broadly more pro-European rank-and-file, and especially with party leader Martin Schulz, a former European Parliament president.

In a further sign the centre-left party is trying to distinguish itself from the conservatives, party deputy chairman Hubertus Heil said the next government should allocate 12 billion euros (£10.6 billion) more to education over the next four years. The money was needed to fund investment in digital learning methods, he told newspaper Bild am Sonntag, insisting that the federal government had to play a bigger role in education, traditionally a state-level competency.

Exploratory talks between the parties are due to begin on 7 January, and Merkel hopes to reach a deal by mid-January. —Reuters ■

France ready to strengthen force in Sahel fighting Islamists — Macron

PARIS — President Emmanuel Macron said on Saturday France stood ready if needed to strengthen its military force fighting alongside African troops against Islamist insurgents in the Sahel.

France has been seeking to eventually withdraw from the poorly policed scrublands of the Sahel region — which abuts the Sahara to the north and has become a recruiting and training ground for Islamist militants — with the help of a new regional

African force. The G5 Sahel, which began official operations in November, is made up of troops from Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mauritania that will patrol the region in collaboration with 4,000 French troops deployed there since intervening in 2013 to quell an insurgency in northern Mali. But Macron said on a visit to the Niger capital Niamey that the Sahel would remain a focus for the French army, should it be required in the future.

"France is ready, not only to maintain, but if necessary to strengthen its engagement in the region because the fight against terrorism in the Sahel is essential, in my opinion," he said during a joint news conference with his Nigerian counterpart Mahamoudou Issoufou.

"The fight is not won today ... it is essential not only to maintain but to further improve our agility on the ground, to innovate more and to focus our priorities on the regions iden-

tified as the most vulnerable," he added.

Speaking during his visit to Niger, Macron also announced an additional 10 million euros to help educate girls, one of the priorities promoted by President Issoufou to curb migration.

This sum is on top of 15 million euros already invested by France to help education in Niger. Paris pledged in mid-December to spend 400 million euros over 2017-2021 to support Niamey. —Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Fire in Philippine shopping mall kills 37

MANILA — Fire swept through a shopping mall in the Philippines killing at least 37 people, most of them workers at a call centre, city government officials said on Sunday.

The vice mayor of the southern city of Davao, Paolo Duterte, said the chance of survival for any of the 37 people missing at the NCC Mall was "zero".

"Let us pray for them," said Duterte, the eldest son of President Rodrigo Duterte. —Reuters ■

Turkey fires 2,700 more officers over failed coup

ISTANBUL — Turkey has dismissed some 2,700 more officers from their posts over a failed coup last year under two new statutory decrees published on Sunday in the Official Gazette.

According to the decrees, the dismissed officers had links to or were members of terror groups or other organizations that act against national security.

Among the dismissed are more than 630 soldiers from the Turkish Armed Forces and officers from the gendarmerie forces, the national police and the coast guard command. —Xinhua ■

Roadside bomb blast kills seven civilians in Afghanistan

KABUL — At least seven civilians were killed in a roadside bomb explosion in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand on Sunday, provincial government spokesman said.

The incident occurred in the morning after a minibus touched off a roadside bombing in Marja district, Helmand province, spokesman Omar Zwak told Xinhua.

The bus was carrying 10 people, three commuters aboard were also injured after the blast, he said, blaming enemies of Afghanistan, a term referring to the Taliban militant group for the incident. —Xinhua ■

Swiss president wants a vote to clarify country's EU position

ZURICH — A referendum in Switzerland to clarify the country's relationship with the European Union would be helpful, Swiss President Doris Leuthard said on Sunday, after ties between the two sides cooled this week.

Switzerland's frictions with the EU, of which it is not a member, arise as Britain negotiates its withdrawal from the bloc following a referendum in June last year and seeks a new trading relationship with its closest neighbours.

Talks on securing a new "framework" treaty to govern the Swiss-EU relationship have been underway for some time, with Brussels wanting to replace the more than 100 bilateral accords which regulate its relationship with Bern. But relations soured this week when the EU granted Swiss stock exchanges only limited access to the bloc, prompting Swiss threats of retaliation for what it called discrimination.

"The bilateral path is important," Leuthard told Swiss newspapers Sonntags Blick. "We therefore have to clarify our relationship with Europe. We have to know in which direction to go.

"Therefore a fundamental



Switzerland's President Doris Leuthard speaks during a news conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 4 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

referendum would be helpful."

Talks on the an all-encompassing agreement made headway last month after Switzerland agreed to increase its contribution to the EU's budget.

Such a deal would ensure Switzerland adopts relevant EU laws in return for enhanced access to the bloc's single market, crucial for Swiss exports.

But a deal would be opposed by the anti-EU Swiss People's Party (SVP), currently the biggest group in parliament.

Leuthard, who steps down as president at the end of the year, said the latest row had not overshadowed her year in the rotating office. "Of course, the differences with Brussels are now in focus. Here our attitude is clear — for

the EU to link such a technical thing like stock exchange equivalency with a political question like the framework treaty, that is not possible,"

She said some countries were putting Switzerland in the same category as Britain, while others wanted to strengthen their own financial centres at Switzerland's expense. "Others think we are cherry pickers who benefit too much from the single European market, they want to increase pressure for a framework agreement," Leuthard said. Pressure from outside would did not contribute to a beneficial climate in Switzerland over a potential agreement, she said. She said she understood Swiss scepticism towards the EU, but there was no alternative to finding an accommodation with the bloc which generates around two thirds of Swiss trade.

"We can strengthen the cooperation with India and China, but the EU remains central. We need a mechanism and regulated relationship with the EU, that would also prevent political games like we are having at the moment," Leuthard said. —Reuters ■

Russia's ruling party seeks Putin's 'ultimate victory' at 2018 election

MOSCOW — Russia's ruling party United Russia wants the "ultimate victory" of President Vladimir Putin at the presidential election in March, party head and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said on Saturday.

Putin, 65, said earlier this month he would run for re-election as a self-nominated candidate, in a contest he seems sure to win comfortably, extending his grip on power into a third decade.

Speaking at an annual gathering of United Russia, Medvedev said the party was Putin's party, and his key political resource.

Medvedev promised it would support Putin in the election, which is scheduled for 18 March.

"We will give you, Vladimir Vladimirovich, all possible support, now and in the future," said Medvedev, addressing Putin by his first and patronymic names. Putin has been in power since 2000 either as president or prime minister.

If he wins what would be a fourth presidential term, he will be eligible to serve another six years until 2024, when he turns 72.

Putin thanked Medvedev for the support and announced some goals for the future, such as higher economic growth and better healthcare.

"We need to achieve a long-range steady increase in real incomes of citizens, to increase pensions and social support," he said. —Reuters ■

Venezuelan truth commission recommends release of 80 convicted prisoners

CARACAS — More than 80 prisoners convicted of violent crimes during anti-government protests in 2014 and 2017 could be released soon, Venezuela's truth commission said on Saturday.

Delcy Rodriguez, president of the National Constituent Assembly (ANC) and its Commis-

sion for Public Justice, Peace and Tranquility, said the group has recommended that President Nicolas Maduro release certain inmates. "We have recommended (conditional) pardons for more than 80 people, both to the criminal justice system and the president, and we are hoping it becomes effective in the coming

hours," said Rodriguez.

The commission was created in August on the suggestion of the president's office to investigate protests sparked this year as well as the violence that marked the right-wing opposition's protest movement in 2014, known as "The Exit," which aimed to topple Maduro and the ruling socialist par-

ty. "The commission has carried out exhaustive reviews of each criminal proceeding in the past four months," said Rodriguez. Those pardoned will be expected to appear before the commission "to acknowledge the victims," and agree to perform "community service" in lieu of serving jail time, she added. —Xinhua ■

North Korea says new UN sanctions an act of war

BEIJING/SEOUL — The latest UN sanctions against North Korea are an act of war and tantamount to a complete economic blockade against it, North Korea's foreign ministry said on Sunday, threatening to punish those who supported the measure.

The UN Security Council unanimously imposed new sanctions on North Korea on Friday for its recent intercontinental ballistic missile test, seeking to

limit its access to refined petroleum products and crude oil and its earnings from workers abroad.

The UN resolution seeks to ban nearly 90 per cent of refined petroleum exports to North Korea by capping them at 500,000 barrels a year and, in a last-minute change, demands the repatriation of North Koreans working abroad within 24 months, instead of 12 months as first proposed.

The US-drafted resolution also caps crude oil supplies to North Korea at 4 million barrels a year and commits the Council to further reductions if it were to conduct another nuclear test or launch another ICBM.

In a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency, North Korea's foreign ministry said the United States was terrified by its nuclear force and was getting "more and more frenzied in the

moves to impose the harshest-ever sanctions and pressure on our country".

The new resolution was tantamount to a complete economic blockade of North Korea, the ministry said.

"We define this 'sanctions resolution' rigged up by the US and its followers as a grave infringement upon the sovereignty of our Republic, as an act of war violating peace and stability in

the Korean peninsula and the region and categorically reject the 'resolution'," it said.

"There is no more fatal blunder than the miscalculation that the US and its followers could check by already worn-out 'sanctions' the victorious advance of our people who have brilliantly accomplished the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force", the ministry said. —Reuters ■

Rescuers search for Philippine storm victims as toll rises to 200

MANILA — Rescuers in the Philippines searched on Sunday for survivors of a storm that triggered floods and landslides and killed about 200 people, left scores missing and thousands homeless, most of whom apparently ignored warnings to move to safety.

Misery in the largely Christian Philippines was compounded by the death of at least 37 people in a shopping mall fire, officials said on Christmas Eve.

The Philippines is battered by about 20 typhoons a year and warnings are routinely issued, but the level of destruction wreaked by tropical storm Tembin on the southern island of Mindanao from late on Friday came as a surprise.

"The figure could increase as we continue to receive reports from the field as the weather improves," said a police spokesman on Mindanao, Superintendent Lemuel Gonda, referring to the death toll. "We are slowly restoring power and communications in affected areas."

Disaster officials said 159 people were listed as missing



A general view of a destroyed bridge after flash floods in Salvador, Lanao del Norte in southern Philippines, on 23 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

while about 70,000 had been forced from their homes.

Soldiers and police joined emergency workers and volunteers to search for survivors and victims, clear debris and restore

power and communications.

Disaster officials said many villagers had ignored warnings to leave coastal areas and move away from riverbanks, and got swept away when flash floods and

landslides struck.

The storm was moving west on Sunday, over some outlying Philippine islands and the South China Sea towards southern Viet Nam, at a speed of about 20 kph

(12 mph).

It intensified into a typhoon with winds of 120 kph (75 mph) as it moved out of the Philippine area of responsibility, the national meteorological agency said.

The United Nations was ready to help the Philippines, a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement. Last week, 46 people were killed in the central Philippines when a typhoon hit. In 2013, super typhoon Haiyan killed nearly 8,000 people and left 200,000 families homeless.

The south of the Philippines has been plagued by insurgencies by communist rebels and Muslim separatists for years, as well as often bearing the brunt of tropical storms roaring in from the Pacific.

The region was hit by another disaster on the weekend when fire swept through a shopping mall in the city of Davao, killing at least 37 people, most of them workers at a call centre, city government officials said.—Reuters ■

China's first domestic large amphibious aircraft makes maiden flight

GUANGZHOU — China's first large amphibious aircraft AG600 on Sunday completed its maiden flight in south China's Guangdong Province

At 9:39 am, the aircraft AG600, code named "Kunlong" left Jinwan airport in the city of Zhuhai. The flight lasted about one hour.

"The maiden flight makes China among the few countries capable of developing a large amphibious aircraft," said Huang Lingcai, chief designer of AG600.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council congratulated all those engaged in the mission, including those from the Ministry of Industry and Information, the Civil Aviation Administration of China and the Aviation Industry Corporation of China.

The congratulatory message said that the maiden flight was a major breakthrough in developing special-purpose aircraft following the maiden flight of the large C919 passenger jet in May.

The 39.6-meter aircraft is powered by four domestically-built turboprop engines, according to its developer, the



China's first home-grown large amphibious aircraft AG600 makes a smooth landing after its maiden flight in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province, on 24 December 2017. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC). With a maximum take-off weight of 53.5 tonnes and a top cruising speed of 500 kilometers per hour, the AG600 has a range of 12 hours.

Designed to be the world's largest amphibious aircraft, the AG600 will be mainly used for maritime rescue, fighting forest fires and marine monitoring.

It can carry 50 people during search-and-rescue missions, collect 12 tonnes of water in 20 seconds for fire fighting and trans-

port up to 370 tonnes of water on a single tank of fuel.

Its name "Kunlong" stands for a high expectation in Chinese culture with the "Kun" meaning an enormous legendary fish and "Long" a dragon.

The AG600 is the third member of China's "large aircraft family" following the large freighter Y-20 and large passenger aircraft C919, which made maiden flights in 2013 and 2017. The Y-20 entered into service with China's airforce in July 2016.—Xinhua ■

Eating more tomatoes, fruits helps restore lung damage caused by smoking: study

SAN FRANCISCO — Smokers who quit smoking and live on a diet high in tomatoes and fruits, particularly apples, have better chances of restoring their lung functions impaired by smoking, a new study finds.

The study, published in the December issue of the European Respiratory Journal, said former smokers who eat more tomatoes and fresh fruits on a regular basis saw a slower natural decline in lung function over a 10-year period.

According to the study, conducted by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, adults who on average ate more than two tomatoes or more than three portions of fresh fruits and vegetables a day had a slower decline in lung function, compared to those who ate less than one tomato or less than one portion of fruits, respectively, on a daily basis. Lung function starts to decline at around age 30 and poor lung function is linked to higher risks of death from all diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease and lung

cancer.

"A diet rich in fruits can slow down the lung's natural aging process even if you have never smoked," said Vanessa Garcia-Larsen, the study's lead author, who is also an assistant professor in the Bloomberg School's Department of International Health.

Garcia-Larsen and her team examined diet and lung function of more than 650 adults from Germany, Norway and Britain in 2002 and performed lung function tests on the same group of participants 10 years later.

The researchers found a more striking diet-lung-function among former smokers, who had around 80 ml slower decline over the 10-year period because their diets were highly rich in tomatoes and fruits. Such a result suggests that the nutrients in their diets are beneficial to repairing the lung damage done by smoking. "Eating more fruits on a regular basis can help attenuate the decline as people age, and might even help repair damage caused by smoking," Garcia-Larsen said.—Xinhua ■



Kid Rock inducts rock band Cheap Trick at the 31st annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York, US, in 2016. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Circus owner sues Kid Rock for using 'Greatest Show On Earth' slogan

NEW YORK — The company that owns the Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus, which for years had dubbed itself the "Greatest Show on Earth," filed a lawsuit accusing singer Kid Rock of using the slogan unlawfully.

Feld Entertainment, the production company that owns the longtime circus show and associated intellectual property, said in a lawsuit filed Friday that singer Robert Ritchie, known professionally as Kid Rock, and Live Nation Entertainment were infringing the circus' "celebrated and valuable" trademark by using the slogan on the singer's upcoming US concert tour without permission.

The company, in the lawsuit filed on Friday in US district court in Tampa, charged trademark dilution and infringement, unfair competition, injury to business reputation and unjust enrichment.

"We have authorized licensees for Ringling Bros. and The Greatest Show On Earth, but Kid Rock is not one of them," Feld general counsel Lisa Joiner said in a Friday statement.

Among Feld's licensees are restaurant chain Chick-fil-A, telecommunications provider MetroPCS and nonprofit Easterseals, according to the lawsuit.

Representatives for Kid Rock and Live Nation did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Saturday.

The company said it had contacted Kid Rock and Live Nation repeatedly to ask that they stop using the slogan but was ignored.

The lawsuit asked the court to stop the unauthorized usage of the slogan in connection with Kid Rock's tour and merchandise, and award Feld profits derived from the slogan's use and triple

unspecified damages.

In May, Feld Entertainment ended its storied Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus show in New York after nearly 150 years of showcasing animals, clowns and acrobats to millions.

The finale came a year after the company bowed to pressure from animal rights activists and agreed to stop using elephants as its featured attraction in its performances, which it said affected ticket sales amid high operating costs.

Feld earned more than \$50 million (£37.4 million) annually in the last five years from goods and services sold under the trademark, according to the lawsuit.

Kid Rock, who also included the concert slogan on his Twitter profile, will kick off his 2018 nationwide tour on 31 December in Kansas City, Missouri, according to his website.—Reuters ■

Miss America CEO, other leaders resign after report of derogatory emails

NEW YORK — The head of the organisation that stages the Miss America beauty pageant and other leaders with the group resigned on Saturday after a report this week alleging that emails he had sent were derogatory toward past winners.

Sam Haskell's resignation as executive chairman and chief executive of the Miss America Organization was accompanied by the departure of the organisation's president, the chairman of the board and a board member.

Haskell had been suspended on Friday, one day after a Huffington Post report about the internal emails.

The pageant has for years faced criticism that it objectifies women, and the scandal over

the emails has led to renewed scrutiny of the annual event in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

"This afternoon, the board of directors of the Miss America Organization accepted the resignation of Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Sam Haskell, effective immediately," Dan Meyers, interim chairman of the board, said in a statement.

Lynn Weidner, chairman of the 96-year-old organisation's board, also resigned but will remain on the board up to 90 days to ensure a smooth transition to new leadership, Meyers said.

Josh Randle, president and COO, is also stepping down but will remain in his position temporarily, a Miss America Organization spokesman said in a statement.—Reuters ■

Oprah Winfrey alerts fans to financial 'fraud'

LOS ANGELES — Talk show host and media mogul Oprah Winfrey has asked her fans to be wary of an online scam that uses her name and photo.

In a video posted on her social media accounts — Facebook, Twitter and Instagram —, Winfrey said imposters are asking for money for signing up for an OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network) account on Instagram.

"It's a fraud, it's a fraud, it's a fraud," the star sang in the video.

"Don't believe it, don't give up any of your bank accounts or

personal information to anyone posing as me, or anyone else for that matter," Winfrey added.

Winfrey's OWN also issued a statement via its official Facebook page and Twitter handle warning of an impostor.

"Please be aware that social media accounts promising money using OWN and/or Oprah Winfrey's name are false," the statement reads.

"We have notified the social media platforms who are working diligently to deactivate these accounts," it added.

—PTI ■

'Hichki' from generation that thinks different: Bachchan

MUMBAI — Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has lauded the trailer of Rani Mukherji's upcoming film "Hichki" and the actor says the film is an example that the new generation is eager to create something "different".

The 75-year-old actor took to Twitter to praise the effort by director Sidharth P Malhotra and also shared the link of the

recently released first trailer of the film.

"A link to the creative agenda of this generation, of doing different, working different, achieving different. From a generation that thinks different! My wishes as ever @sidpmalhotra," Bachchan wrote.

The Yash Raj Films project marks Rani's first after giving

birth to daughter Adira.

Rani, 38, who is married to Aditya Chopra, was last seen in 2014 film "Mardaani," in which she played a cop.

According to the makers, the movie is a positive and inspiring story about a woman who turns her biggest weakness into her strength.

—PTI ■

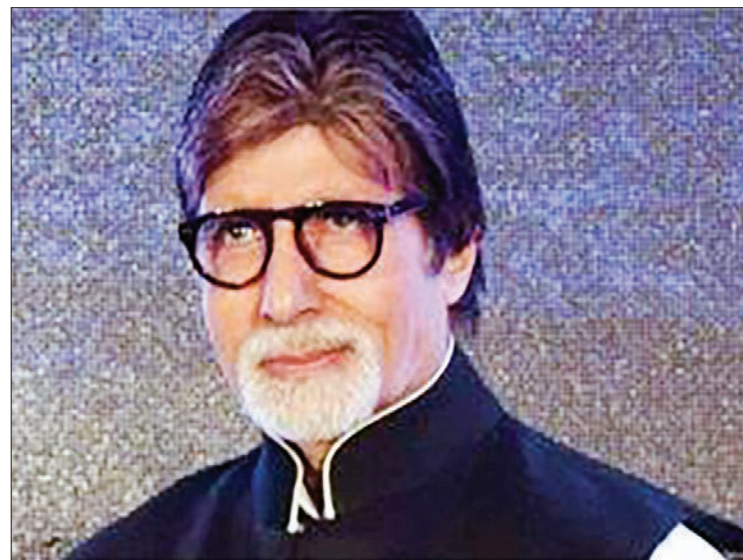


PHOTO: PTI



Christmas decorations at the Immanuel Baptist Church near Maha Bandula Park in Yangon . **PHOTO:ZAW MIN LATT**

Christmas carols flow on the stages of Yangon Christmas

WITH the host of entertainment stages, Immanuel Baptist Church on Maha Bandula Park Road and Saint Mary’s Cathedral on Bo Aung Kyaw Street are abuzz with Christians and other people of various faiths who enjoy the stage entertainments.

“Last year Christmas, we sang the Christmas carols and prayed the verses in the churches. This year, we thank God and the government for letting to host the stages in front of Maha Bandula Park and churches. Christmas activities were opened yesterday. Today we sing the Christmas carols and pray the verses. We are glad for the activities celebrated today. In fact, Christmas is the “Time of giving love”. This is marvelous word. Today, we make good deeds such as distributing the foods to everybody without discrimination in races, religion, color and etc.. Santa Clauses are also distributing gifts among the people, said Senior Pastor Rev Dr Yaw Lah of Immanuel Baptist Church.

Christmas entertainments are seen at Immanuel Baptist Church, Saint Mary’s Cathedral Christmas and Junction City. Moreover, decorated mobile entertainments can also be seen.

— Thant Zin Win ■

Two Cyclists arrives in Kawthoung from Putao

Two Cyclists from Yangon Freedom Cyclist arrived in Kawthoung, Southern part of Myanmar from Putao, northern part of Myanmar yesterday evening.

With the support of Htoo Foundation, the two Cyclists named Ko Myo Myint Bo and Ko Sai Htut Zaw Min, , started their 1735 miles long Cyclsit trip from Puta Oh town of Kachin State and ended in Kowthoung, lasted nearly a month, and they were cordially welcomed by officials and public from the towns they have passed.

“There were no difficulties and we felt overwhelmed as all the publics welcomed us cordially”, said one of the cyclists, Ko Myo Myint Bo.

The trip aims to raise awareness of Cycling, to know the living standard of the ethnics, to reduce fuel and diesel to promote eco-tourism of Myanmar.

—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung) ■



From the northernmost top to the southern end, the two cyclists arrive Kawthoung from Putao. **PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)**

Sedona Hotel Yangon named “Best Business Travel Hotel” by Ctrip

YANGON, MYANMAR — Sedona Hotel Yangon has been named the “Best Business Travel Hotel” by Ctrip at the second Ctrip Global Hotel Partners Summit held on 20 October 2017 in Shanghai, China. This is the first time Sedona Hotel Yangon was presented with the prestigious award. In addition, Sedona Hotel Yangon was the only hotel from Myanmar to be recognised with an accolade at the summit.

Organised by Ctrip, China’s largest online travel agency and the second largest in the world, the annual Ctrip Global Hotel Partners Summit recognises hotels based on unbiased guest reviews from more than 250 million Ctrip travellers. The summit was attended by more than 750 global hotel group executives, industry experts and key opinion leaders.

The award is a strong testament to Sedona Hotel Yangon’s dedicated and passionate hotel staff to deliver excellent quality, thoughtful, and personalised experiences for guests. It is also significant for the hotel, which aims to continue developing its relations with the Chinese travel market.

“We are humbled that Sedona Hotel Yangon has been recognised as the Best Business Travel Hotel by Ctrip, a leader of China’s travel industry. This award will spur us on to continue providing our guests with unrivalled hospitality during their stay Myanmar. We will continue to improve our offerings to cater to the needs of business and leisure travellers as the tourism industry grows in the country”, said Mr. Mok Kok Meng, General Manager of Sedona Hotel Yangon.—GNLM ■



Sedona Hotel Yangon – Best Business Travel Hotel by Ctrip. **PHOTO: SEDONA HOTEL**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

WEATHER

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and a few clouds elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 25th DECEMBER, 2017: Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4 - 7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of scattered rain in Taninthayi Region, Kayin and Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25th DECEMBER, 2017: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25th DECEMBER, 2017: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25th DECEMBER, 2017: Fair weather.

EARTHQUAKENEWS

A slight earthquake of magnitude(4.6) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about (27) miles North-northeast of Mohnyin) about (215) miles North of Mandalay seismological observatory was recorded at (03)hr (12)min (01) sec M.S.T on 24th December, 2017.

Shan United recruits Cameron footballer, Archer

SHAN United FC, which is preparing for the next season of the Myanmar National League, recruited a repatriated player, Archer from Cameron, according to the statement on the official social page of Shan United.

"It is my honour to be here, in such a marvelous team, Shan United. And I do believe the good transforming of Myanmar football with the right speech. I am here for challenging my new opportunities. I will do the best of my abilities with bringing the victories for my team" said Archer on the teams' page. Archer, a 5' 10" footballer, has won the third best player of the Cameron League according to the team's website.

Shan United has also re-



Yadanabon player intercepts Archer's kick, Right in a friendly football match at Thuwunna turf ground on 23 December. **PHOTO:SUFC**

newed the contracts with striker Christoph Chizoba and Myanmar players Soe Min Oo, Goal Keeper Thiha Si Thu, Goal Keeper Myo Min Latt, Tin Win

Aung and Zin Min Htun recently. The recruiting period for the Myanmar National League's team is from 1 November to 13 January.—KyawZin Lin ■

Hanthawady wins a confidence builder in football friendly

IN preparation for the upcoming MPT Myanmar National League 2018, Ayeyawady United FC played a friendly football match with Hanthawaddy at Mee Dhone football field on Saturday.

Hanthawady beat Ayeyawady 3-0 in the match.

The match was played in four 30 min sessions for the convenience of the players.

Hanthawady used its repatriate footballer Michael in an offensive place while Ayeyawady also lined up with its reliable repatriate players in an attacking position.

Both teams played very responsively from the kick-off.

The win for Hanthawady was mostly depended on the well play of its repatriate players along with local players.

Goals for the winning team Hanthawady were scored by Mark, a striker of Hanthawady United by a penalty shoot, the second and third winning goals were scored by Htet Lin Lin.

The win has built the confidence of Hanthawady in dreaming for their upcoming results in Myanmar National League.—KyawZin Lin ■

Kane has Messi tally in sights after latest hat-trick



BURNLEY, (England) — Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane could end 2017 as the top calendar year goalscorer in European football after hitting his seventh hat-trick of the year in Saturday's 3-0 win at Burnley.

His manager Mauricio Pochettino believes he can not only reach that goal but has the capacity to get even better in the coming years. Kane's triple means he has now scored 53 goals in all competitive games for club and country this year, leaving him just a goal behind Barcelona's Argentine master Lionel Messi.

The England forward is level with Bayern Munich's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski, Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo and Paris St Germain's Edinson Cavani.

Unlike any of his rivals for the record, however, Kane

still has a game left to play this year - a home game against Southampton on 26 December. Kane's goals at Turf Moor also took his Premier League calendar year tally to 36, equaling Alan Shearer's record from 1995. "He is amazing, a fantastic player, he needs one more to be above Alan, we will see in the next game. But it is fantastic for him," said Pochettino.

"It's difficult to find words to describe Harry Kane. Even during my time at Spurs I'm surprised by him.

The hat-trick is nice for him but we could have scored more than three. I'm worried when you don't create chances though," he said. Pochettino said Kane's tally was just reward for the effort he has put into his game. —Reuters ■

Barcelona pile more misery on Real Madrid with 3-0 'Clasico' win

MADRID — Barcelona exploited a lacklustre Real Madrid to win the 'Clasico' 3-0 on Saturday as goals from Luis Suarez, Lionel Messi and Aleix Vidal gave the Catalans a 3-0 win and moved them 14 points clear of their biggest rivals in La Liga.

Barca outplayed the champions in Real's Santiago Bernabeu fortress to also extend their lead to nine points at the top over their nearest challengers Atletico Madrid, who were beaten 1-0 by Espanyol on Friday.

Barca's weekend was made complete by third-placed Valencia then stumbling to a 1-0 defeat at home to Villarreal on Saturday which leaves them 11 points off the pace.

Real are 14 points adrift in fourth with a game in hand but their crushing defeat leaves their title hopes looking bleak, even though Barca's coach Ernesto Valverde said afterwards it was premature to write off the champions. After a tense



Barcelona's Lionel Messi in action as Real Madrid's Mateo Kovacic slides in at Santiago Bernabeu, Madrid, Spain, on 23 December 2017. **PHOTO:REUTERS**

but tight first half in the early afternoon sun, Suarez put Barca ahead, capitalising on a wide

open space in Madrid's midfield to knock in a simple pass from Sergi Roberto following

a breakaway move in the 54th minute. Messi hammered in the second goal from the penalty

spot 20 minutes later after Dani Carvajal was sent off for blocking a goal-bound header from Paulinho with his arm after Real were again easily picked apart on the counter attack. Catalan defender turned winger Vidal hit the third in injury time to pile more misery on Madrid, who looked unrecognisable from the side that crushed Barca 5-1 on aggregate in the Spanish Super Cup in August.

Real failed to capitalise on their chances in the first half as Karim Benzema's header came off the post and Cristiano Ronaldo was denied by the flailing leg of Barca goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

However, the European champions collapsed after the interval and Barca took full advantage. "We are feeling very angry because it's a defeat that hurts a lot but we are not going to give up," Real coach Zinedine Zidane told a news conference. —Reuters ■