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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Local women demonstrate making life-saving flotation devices with empty water bottles and string at a ceremony to raise awareness of disaster preparedness in Yangon's southern area of Kungyangon, where Cyclone Nargis struck in 2008. **FILE PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

Disaster preparedness for states and regions

WITH the pre-monsoon season approaching in February, region and state governments are being urged to draw up year-end planning for disaster preparedness, emergency response and recovery, reviewing the disasters that occurred in

their regions in 2017.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, chairman of the Natural Disaster Management Committee (NDMC), made the remark at the NDMC meeting 2/2017 held in the meeting hall of Ministry of Social Welfare,

Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, U Henry Van Thio said NDMC had managed matters relating to natural disaster management starting from May 2016 for nearly two

years and had much experience in handling various disasters. With this experience, disaster management works are to be conducted to reduce the damages that can be caused by natural disasters.

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Freezing temperatures hit hilly areas

MYANMAR has been experiencing unseasonably cold weather, with evening and early morning temperatures of minus 2 degrees Celsius recorded in some areas of Chin and Shan states.

The hill areas of Myanmar in particular have been experiencing sub-zero weather over the past several days.

"In fact, extreme cold weather hit the whole country. The temperatures dropped below zero in hilly areas of Chin and Shan States because a cold wave came over Myanmar two days ago," said U Kyaw Lwin Oo, Director of Mandalay Region Meteorology and Hydrology Department. "The temperatures are expected to rise again in two or three days," he added.

The freezing areas in Barus Village, about 20 miles from Mog-ok in Mandalay Region, are presently attracting about 30 visitors daily who come to see the ice that has formed in some lakes.

"We have to make a fire in our home and battle with the cold weather at night. In the day time, we have to dress in layers," said Ko Byar Sai from Barus Village. More than 20 townships in Loilem, Taunggyi and Linkhae Districts, in southern Shan State are also experiencing extreme cold weather. Meanwhile, Kayah State also saw record-breaking cold weather on Thursday.—

Myanmar Digital News ■



BEST BANK IN MYANMAR

Awarded by EUROMONEY 2017

Vice President U Myint Swe attends coord meeting to hold 2018 Union Day

U Myint Swe, Vice President and Chairman of the 2018 71st Anniversary of the Union Day Convening Central Committee attended and addressed the co-ordination meeting held at the Office of the President yesterday.

The Central Committee Chairman Vice President U Myint Swe said the present first co-ordination meeting was being held for the successful organizing and holding of the 2018 71st Anniversary Union Day with full political essence. The 2018 71st Anniversary Union Day Convening Central Committee was formed with 14 members including the Vice President under order no. 95/2017 dated 7-12-2017 of the President's Office. A management committee and 14 sub-committees were formed to hold the Union Day event according to the national aims.

All need to work together for the success of the event and the main aims are to hold the event for national unity and peace. All ethnic nationals are to work together in unity said the Vice President.

Leaders of ethnic nationals led by Bogyoke Aung San met and held the Panglong Conference, signed the Panglong Agreement on 12 February 1947 and achieved independence. The day shows the firm unity of the ethnic nationals and Union Day was celebrated every year to reach the 71st Anniversary this time.



Chairman of the 2018 71st Anniversary of the Union Day Convening Central Committee Vice President U Myint Swe addresses the co-ordination meeting held on 22 December 2017. **PHOTO: MNA**

Due to armed conflicts after independence, the country was left behind in development compared to neighboring countries. Once peace yearned by everyone is achieved in the country, it can stand proudly in the world for sure.

Development of a country is linked to both politics and economy and the most important foundation stone based on economic policy is national reconciliation. To form a democracy federal union the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong had been held twice already. The essence of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong is the establishment of a single unified democratic federal union and union spirit is most important for a federal union. Having a

firm union spirit that is thriving and alive is very important. All are urged to work together with the Government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw, ethnic national organizations, armed groups, political parties, civil society organizations in national reconciliation and peace process and form a democratic federal union.

Myanmar is a union that has many ethnic nationals, languages, culture, traditions and beliefs. Ethnic nationals living in different geographical locations are to maintain their cultural heritages and traditions so that it is not lost. That is why the cultures and traditions of ethnic nationals were shown on Union Day for future generation to know and study.

The coming Union Day will

be held in two parts like past years. The morning session will include a flag hoisting ceremony and reading of messages and the evening session will be a dinner party in honor of the event. Relevant management committee and sub-committees are urged to take lessons from weaknesses of the previous years and work together to make this year the best, concluded the Vice President.

Next, Union Day Convening management committee Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung and committee joint secretary Nay Pyi Taw municipal committee permanent secretary U Myo Aung explained about forming of sub-committees, status of work conducted in previous years, preparations made

for flag hoisting ceremony and dinner.

Afterwards, Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, and officials from sub-committees explained about their respective works.

The Vice President listened carefully to their reports and gave his comments after which he delivered a concluding speech.

The meeting was attended by Union Ministers U Win Khaing, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Dr. Myint Htwe, Nai Thet Lwin, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung, Deputy Ministers Maj-Gen Aung Soe, U Win Maw Tun, and U Maung Maung Win, Nay Pyi Taw Council members and officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Notification of disbursement of loan to SMEs

As small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are in the main sector of national economic development, the government is encouraging their development. Accordingly, the State-owned Myanma Economic Bank (MEB) will disburse loans to entrepreneurs who are actually running the businesses and in need of capital investments under this special programme.

Loan eligible enterprises

The businesspersons who want to apply for a loan must be an SME recognised by the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (DISI),

Ministry of Industry. The MEB will grant loans to export sector business, import-substitute businesses, technical-based production businesses, service businesses which directly help economic development, and organisations and individuals that have been recommended by regional, state or union governments. The loans will be disbursed to the SMEs which are eligible in accord with the prescribed rules and regulations.

Interest Rates and Periods

Interest rate is 9 per cent,

and periods are from 3 to 5 years.

Loan Volume

Maximum loan volume will be Ks300 million for an individual SME or an organization's SME, and MEB would grant 50 per cent of a loan to SMEs as working capital and the rest as fixed capital.

Collateral

Borrowers can give fixed assets such as land and buildings, movable assets such as machineries, vehicles, gold wares and gold bullion, money, treasury bills, treasury bonds, stocks, debentures, bank insur-

ance, government insurance and Credit Guarantee Insurance as surety and collateral for the loan. Currently, the loans with the Credit Guarantee Insurance (CGI) will only be disbursed at a maximum of Ks20 million.

Loan repayment period

For three-year loans, the first year is a grace period and the repayment is in four instalments over the last two-year period. For four-year loans, the first one year and six months is a grace period and the repayment is in five instalments in the last two and a half year period and for five-year loans, the first two

years is a grace period and the repayment is in six instalments over the last three-year period.

Loan scrutinising

Regions and states Manager Offices will scrutinise the loans below Ks100 million and the headquarters of Myanma Economic Bank (MEB) will scrutinise loan applications above Ks100 million. Businesspersons who would like to apply for a loan can receive detailed information and can apply for the loans at the nearest branches of the Myanma Economic Bank (MEB). —Myanma Economic Bank ■



President U Htin Kyaw (2nd Right) and Mr Fernando Julio Antonio Quiros Campos, Ambassador of Peru to Myanmar (2nd Left), pose for a documentary photo at the Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of Ambassador of Peru

H.E Mr Fernando Julio Antonio Quiros Campos, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Peru to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence

to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 3:05 pm yesterday.

Present on the occasion

were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Thant Sin of the Protocol Department.— Myanmar News Agency ■



President U Htin Kyaw receives the credentials of Mr Andrii Beshta, Ambassador of Ukraine to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials from Ambassador of Ukraine

H.E Mr Andrii Beshta, the newly-accredited Ambassador of Ukraine to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi

Taw at 2:30 pm yesterday.

Present on the occasion were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Thant Sin of the Protocol Department.—Myanmar News Agency ■

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady attend Christmas ceremony

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin attended the Christmas Ceremony and Ceremony for Praising the Virtues of Jesus Christ held at the residence of Vice-President U Henry Van Thio yesterday.

U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, Vice President U Myint Swe and his wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint and his wife Daw Cho Cho, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than and his wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Chairman of the Constitution Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein, Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat, Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers of Regions and States, the Union

Attorney-General, Deputy Ministers and their wives, Chairmen of Hluttaw Affairs Committees, departmental officials, bishops from Christian Churches and invited guests were welcomed by Vice President U Henry Van Thio and his wife Dr. Shwe Hlwan.

The ceremony was opened by Bishop Dr. Zothan Mawia with Christmas prayers, with Vice President U Henry Van Thio giving Christmas greetings to the guests and Sang Pi praising the virtues of Jesus Christ with psalms.

Afterwards, President U Htin Kyaw extended his Christmas greetings, followed by the reading of a Christmas message from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe.

At the ceremony, Jesse Van Bawi and Jennifer Ngun Sui Par



President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin slice the cake to mark the Christmas ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

sang Christmas psalms, whereas Reverend Fathers Dr. Aye Min and Mahn Palmerston sent prayers for Myanmar citizens and State Leaders.

Mr. Steven Thant Myint U, Chief of Churches in Myanmar explained about the essence of Christian teachings from the

Holy Bible, with Dr. Samuel Ngun Ling reading aloud from the Holy Bible. The President and those present at the ceremony then enjoyed the friendship dinner feast given in honour of the birth of Jesus Christ, during which the vocalists entertained with Christmas carols.

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay and Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr. Shwe Hlwan lighted the Christmas candle, after which Reverend Father Dr. J Ral Buai sent Christmas prayers.—MNA ■

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Poultry farmers face difficulties with rising price of poultry feed

POULTRY farmers are facing difficulty with the rising price of duck feed although the price of duck eggs has declined in the Thaton Township, Mon State, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

"We don't get good price for the duck eggs because the eggs from Thailand are entering into the local market these days. Thailand duck eggs are big. But it cannot keep for long time. Also, the duck feed is likely to increase. Therefore, we are facing difficulty to increase the duck egg price," said U Win Naing, a duck breeder for eggs as a manageable scale farmer.

"Ducks bred for eggs are fed broken rice and shrimp powder. Last year, the price for broken rice was Ks11,000 per bag, and



A farmer herding ducks in the creek. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

the price of shrimp powder was Ks28,000 per bag. This year, the price of broken rice is Ks14,000 per bags and the price of shrimp powder is Ks29,000 per bag. The

price of duck eggs was Ks130 per egg last year. But, the price of chicken has declined to Ks 125 per egg this year," he added. About 40 people are breed-

ing the duck for eggs as a manageable scale in Thaton Township. Currently, some of the duck breeders suspended their business, it is learnt.—GNLM

Fire breaks out in three Yangon townships

THREE separate fires broke out in Dawbon, Ahlone and Dala townships of the Yangon Region around 8:30 pm last night, one of them resulting in a fatality, according to the Yangon Region Fire Brigade.

At about 8:50 pm yesterday, a fire was reported at a home on Mya Lay New-2 Road, Nwe Aye ward in Dawbon Township. According to the police investigation, the house started to burn when an electric panel being pushed beyond its capacity emitted a spark. The fire caused over Ks200,000 in damages. At

the time of the electric spark at the house, homeowner U Ba Aye, a father, was alone in the house. He suffered severe injuries to his face, back and arm and was rushed to the hospital by Fire Brigade department. He died from his injuries at about 4 am, it is learnt

Earlier on the same evening, a fire broke out at about 8:40pm at a house on Bayintnaung-1 Road, Anngyi western ward, in Dala Township. The fire was believed to have started from a candle. The blaze spread to the house of Daw Ann Ja Mar.

The fire caused damages estimated at Ks5,000. No one was injured in the accident.

The third fire occurred at about the same time at a house owned by U Khin Maung Win on the fifth floor of Royal Yaw Min Gyi Condominiums in Dagon Township. The fire started with an electric short-circuit caused by an overheated electric curry pot. Property losses were estimated to at over Ks180,000. No one was injured in the accident. The fire was controlled by the fire staff within 10 minutes. —ZarNi Maung

Fire outbreaks decline this year but losses are high

A total of 1,681 outbreaks of fire were recorded across the country from January to November, which a significant drop compared to the previous three months, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

Even though there were fewer fires, Myanmar had record-high losses due to the fires this year. Most of the outbreaks of fire were based on negligent acts of users.

As of October, fire destroyed 2,787 buildings, six factories and 30 warehouses. An estimated Ks40 billion worth of properties were lost to fire, according to Myanmar Fire Services Department.

One of the most costly and high-profile outbreaks of fire this year was the Kandawgyi Palace Hotel blaze in October. Major financial losses from the Kandawgyi Palace Hotel fire made 2017 one of the costliest for losses due to fire. In 2015, about Ks2,303,508,975 worth of properties were damaged by fire throughout the country while about Ks 41,640,648,500 worth were damaged in 2016.—GNLM

No injuries in Hopong Town kitchen fire

NO injuries were reported from a fire that broke out in Hopong, a town in Pa-O Self-Administered Zone in Shan State on Friday morning, according to a police report.

Located in Katonkham Ward in area-4 of the town, a two-storey house owned by U Myat Lin, 26, and his wife Daw San Nu was badly burnt in the blaze at around 10.30 p.m. on 22 December.

According to a police investigation, the fire started in the kitchen because someone was careless with cooking equipment. A firefighter said

the majority of kitchen fires begin with cooking equipment.

Thanks to the assistance of residents and police, the blaze was brought under control by

firefighters within 30 minutes.

Action is being taken against the house owners by township police under the existing Penal Code.—Township IPRD



Fire destroys a hut in Hopong Town in Shan State. PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD



PHOTO: THANT ZIN (MUSE)

Border exports of watermelon to China increase

THE sales volume of domestically-produced watermelon through border gates during the week ending 8 December increased significantly, according to border trade authorities.

According to ministry statistics, the country exported over 25,000 tonnes of watermelon to China, earning more than US\$2 million. The exports included 23,100 tonnes from Muse (105-mile) trade zone

and 22 tonnes from Kanpaiktee cross-border gate. Local exporters sent 19,256 tonnes of watermelon from Muse, Lwejel and Chinshwehaw border gates in the previous week before 2 December. Border merchants say that the prices of fruit were between Yuan 2,600 and Yuan 3,000 last month in Muse. It decreased to Yuan 1,700 and Yuan 1300 at the end of November. The prices are mainly based

on the quality and freshness of the fruits. Watermelons, rice, maize, sugar, fruits, vegetables, marine products and fuel have been exported to Myanmar's largest neighbouring country from borders. Bilateral exports between Myanmar and China through border trade stations were worth \$3.412 billion till the end of this October, according to the ministry's monthly trade report.—Khine Khant ■

External trade with international countries tops \$22.6 billion in current FY

MYANMAR'S external trade with foreign countries valued at US\$22.615 billion as of mid-December, increasing \$3.784 trillion in comparison with the same period of last year, according to the Commerce Ministry's weekly report.

Despite increase in value of foreign trade this financial year, a \$3.1 billion trade deficit was reported, which is over \$2650

million more than that of the similar period last FY.

From April to mid-December, the country exported local products amounting to \$9.755 billion to the international trading partners, including about \$3,445 billion from cross-border points and \$6.3 billion from normal trade. This year's imports of foreign-made commodities exceeded \$12.8 billion, consist-

ing of \$1.944 billion through border gates and \$10.9 billion from normal trade.

Myanmar predominately imports capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods whereas it chiefly exports six groups of commodities, covering agriculture products, animal and fisheries products, forest products and manufacturing goods.—Swe Nyein ■

About 700 tonnes of condensed milk imported in early December

MYANMAR imported US\$889,612 worth of different brands of condensed milk weighing over 679 tonnes from foreign trade partners by sea, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The imports of condensed milk by sea between 3 and 9 December increased by 320

tonnes compared with the previous week ending 2 December. However, the country reduced its imports of milk powder during the aforesaid week. According to the ministry, more than 160 tonnes of milk powder were imported from New Zealand, Malaysia and Poland, a decrease of over

180 tonnes against last week.

For the time being, Myanmar imports dairy products mostly from Malaysia, Singapore, United Kingdom, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Australia, Ireland, Poland, Indonesia, Germany and Thailand.—Shwe Khine ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့တိုင်း: **"Sunday Special"** အချုပ်ပို (၈)
မျက်နှာပေါင်သော The Global New Light of Myanmar
နေ့စဉ်ထုတ် သတင်းစာကို ငါးဘက်ပါမြို့များတွင် ဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

"Sunday Special"
အချုပ်ပို (၈) မျက်နှာ
ပေါင်သည့်

နေပြည်တော်
ပြန်ကြားရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ် (၇) နေပြည်တော်၊
သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်)၊
စီမံခန့်ခွဲမှုဌာန၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၄၁၂၁၁၈

နေပြည်တော်
နေပြည်တော်သတင်းစာတိုက် (တပ်ကုန်း)
ဇယားသိမ်းပြီးနောက်၊ ခရိုင်လမ်းဆုံ၊ နေပြည်တော်၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၃၆၁၄၈၊ ၀၆၇၃၆၁၂၉

ရန်ကုန်
The Global New Light of Myanmar သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊
ဦးထင်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း၊ ဗဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊
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မန္တလေး
လမ်း (၂၀ x ၂၀) ကြား၊ (၁၂ x ၁၂) လမ်းကြား၊ ပုလဲခွေ
ရောင်ရမ်း၊ မန္တလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၂၃၂၇၂၉၊ ၀၂၃၂၇၅၀

တောင်ကြီး
ရုံးကြီးလမ်း၊ သစ်တောရပ်ကွက်၊ တောင်ကြီးမြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၈၁၂၁၁၆၄၊ ၀၉၅၂၁၄၄၄၄

မကွေး
နတ်မောက်လမ်း၊ တပ်မ (၈၈) တပ်နယ်ဈေးအနီး၊
မကွေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၃၂၇၇၀၂

ကျိုင်းတုံ
မြို့ပေါ် (၃-၁)၊ အမှတ် (၁) လမ်းသွယ်၊ မြို့ပေါ်လမ်း၊
ကျိုင်းတုံမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၄၂၂၇၉၂

ကလေး
အောင်ဇေယျာရပ်ကွက်၊ မြို့နယ်အားကစားကွင်းအနီး၊
ကလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၃၂၂၁၃၃

မြင်းကြီးများ
အမှတ် (၄၁)၊ ရေစက်ကွက်၊ အောင်ဆန်းလမ်း၊
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စစ်တွေ
ရဲဘော်လမ်းနှင့် တက္ကသိုလ်ရိပ်သာလမ်း၊
မိမိတက်ကြီးအနီး၊ မန်ကျည်းမြိုင်ရပ်ကွက်၊ စစ်တွေမြို့၊
ဖုန်း - ၀၄၃၂၃၀၆၈

လားရှိုး
ဟူးမွန်ကျေးရွာထိပ်၊ ဟူးမွန်ဆည်ဘယ်ဘက်ခြမ်း၊
(၁၂) ရပ်ကွက်၊ မန်ကျည်းမြိုင်ရပ်ကွက်၊ စစ်တွေမြို့၊
လားရှိုးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၂၂၄၀၆၇

ဇွတ်
မေတ္တာလမ်း၊ ရှမ်းချောင်းရပ်၊ ကလေးကျေးရွာအုပ်စု၊
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Disaster preparedness for states and regions

FROM PAGE-1

“Natural disasters will definitely occur. Lately, the frequency of natural disasters occurring has risen, as well as its destructive power. If the level of disaster management remains the same while the power or strength of natural disaster rises, there’ll be an increase in damages and losses. Therefore, we are striving for better and more effective disaster management as the strength and power of natural disaster increases. Not only individuals, but the whole world is being threatened by natural disasters and the world’s countries need to work together as well as individual country to put emphasis on the works of mitigating and reducing (the effect of) natural disasters”, said the Vice President.

At the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan from 14 to 18 March 2015, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was set. The four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks of Sendai framework are understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster reduction for resilience and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

“Our country is following the Sendai Framework and the priorities of Sendai Framework are to be considered in the management stages of national level, state and region level, district level and township level”, remarked the Vice President.

At the national level, the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction (MAPDRR) is drawn according to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the Natural Disaster Management Committee meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). As the 23 work projects included in MAPDRR are the responsibility of relevant ministries, States and Regions governments there is a need for the relevant ministries, states and regions governments to take responsibility and work together.

“Annual projects need to be drawn for natural disasters, states and regions-wise. All round the year, we know the time, place and the type of disasters that could occur in our region, and we should be prepared for what to do. We also need to be prepared on response programmes and follow up programmes after the disaster happens. If things like required human, material, financial and technological resources to implement the programs are sourced and ready, arrangements to communicate and cooperate on requirements up and down as well as laterally are made, there’ll be readiness to respond to and face natural disaster in a region and further

requirements will be known”, he said.

The NDMC is leading one of the natural disaster preparedness works of building cyclone shelters. A total of 85 will be built -- 56 in Ayawaddy Region, 26 in Rakhine State, two in Chin State and one in Shan State. States/Regions Governments members have selected the locations. Each work committee and States/Regions Government members need to follow global agreements and policies set by the nation in conducting natural disaster management works in the region and work sector where each are responsible for and implement programs that are appropriate to their respective region. All need to suggest good ideas and discuss together on requirements for the natural disaster management work to be effective. There is a need for all to work and coordinate together with an aim to prevent and reduce the damages and losses caused by natural disasters to the people said the Vice President.

The NDMC Vice-Chairman Dr. Win Mat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, said by setting up and conducting effective disaster management work programmes, the ministry is ensuring that the society becomes one that could withstand and respond to natural disasters.

When the evolution of natural disaster management is observed, it was first conducted with a view to managing works programmes after a disaster has occurred. But in later years, based on the experience gained, preparations were toward readiness to face a natural disaster, and a policy of response to natural disaster was made.

Now the preparation works focus on prevention, preparedness, and emergency response works while preparation on recovery works were also being made.

In conducting recovery or reconstruction works, it is conducted not only to make normal recovery or reconstruction works but also include pro-

grammes to prepare and withstand against future natural disasters. Furthermore, cooperation with the people in the natural disaster management has progressed from a normal process to a Community-Based Disaster Risk Management process.

Preparations against earthquakes, erosion of river banks and landslides are high capital, high-cost works. But as per the saying, “Invest today for a safer tomorrow,” prevention is better than responding and investing in natural disaster preventive/preparation works not only reduces damages and losses but the cost of reconstruction and redevelopment will also be lower, explained the Union Minister.

NDMC received nearly Ks32 billion in funding, out of which Ks14 billion was used, leaving Ks18 billion left. Funding received in US dollars was about 1 million, out of which 817,711.15 was used and 188,166.19 remains in balance according to the committee. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Muse police searching for Myo Ma Pawn Shop attackers

AUTHORITIES in Muse are searching for two suspects in a shooting in front of a pawn shop in Shan State that resulted in one death.

Three men shot two security guards at Myo Ma Pawn Shop on Thursday evening. One security guard was killed and the other guard was wounded. Police were

able to apprehend one culprit, but two remain at large.

The shooting occurred in front of the Myo Ma Pawn Shop at about 8:30 am on Thursday in Kaung Naung Ward, Muse Township, northern Shan State.

Three people arrived in front of the Myo Ma Pawn Shop by car and were urinating in

front of the shop. They were told by security guards to stop. The three men became furious and threatened to kill the security guards. After departing, the three men returned and shot Yan Yin Chan, 18, and Aik Aung, whose age could not be determined. The gunmen then ran away.

Yan Yin Chan suffered four gunshot wounds, two under his left armpit and two more under the right armpit. Aik Aung was wounded in the thigh. Yan Yin Chan died of his injuries at 10:45 p.m at Muse Hospital.

Police searched for the attackers and were able to apprehend one of the culprits, Myo

Aung, 30, in his car in Taung Ward, Muse.

As a result of Myo Aung’s confession, police are continuing their search for the remaining culprits, identified as Man Kyaw Hein and Ah Hope. It was learnt that a Glock pistol was used in the shooting.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Mro ethnic men build their houses in Thit Tone Nar Kwa Sone Village. PHOTO: NAY WIN TUN

Enjoying peace and stability in Mro ethnic villages

FOUR months after the terrorist attacks in Maungtaw, it is witnessed that residents of Mro ethnic groups are enjoying peace and stability in their villages. Moreover, they can settle in their villages and lead a normal life. The authorities concerned are making concerted efforts to restore the normal lives of the residents.

The following are excerpts of interviews with local Mro ethnic people.

Maung Zone, a village administrative officer

The village I live in is Thit Tone Nar Kwa Sone, which is composed of 300 households. The population of the village is about 1,696. As far as I know, Mandalay region and Ayeyawaddy Region governments are building new houses in the villages including Myauk Khaung Taung, Pan Chaung, Khayu Chaung and Auk Inn Chaung. I am sure that this can strengthen unity among us by merging many villages. I am much obliged to the government for this.

Ko Than Naing, resident of Thit Tone Nar Kwa Sone

Most of the villagers in this region are farmers and cultivators, and they mostly rely on cultivation and farming. For the time being now, the new families from Myauk Gaung Taung and Pan Chaung villages are building 45 makeshift tents made of bamboo.

U Tun Pone, a villager of Nan Yar Kine

I came from Nan Yar Kine village. The authorities have already approved to build 50 new houses and 3 bridges in my vil-

lage. But the construction hasn't started yet. That's why I'd like to urge the authority concerned to resume these constructions before the rainy season.

Under the supervision of the Ministry for Border Affairs, a Mro ethnic village is under construction near Thit Tone Nar Kwa Sone village. According to the data, there are 16 Mro ethnic villages, and we can witness the scene of winnowing the paddy seeds in the farm, studying the lessons at the schools, building new houses and carrying out the new village plans respectively.—Myint Maung & Zeyar ■

Murder, theft cases in Maungtaw and Buthidaung

Authorities have opened a murder investigation after a villager from Buthidaung Township was found dead with a rope around his neck on 15 December.

Laung Shwi, 65, of The Ni (Mro) village in Buthidaung, left his village on the morning of 13 December to collect cows that had been left grazing about four furlongs east of the village. When he didn't return for two days, his son Chache, 30, and

another villager went to search for Laung Shwi. He was found dead with an 8-foot long nylon rope tied around his neck.

He was apparently dragged along by the rope and possibly died of asphyxiation. Authorities were called and the body was sent to Buthidaung Hospital to conduct a post mortem. A case has been opened in the Taung Bazar police post and an investigation is underway.

In another incident on 13 December, authorities were conducting security measures in Maungtaw Township and found Saw Thein Maung and San Aung, both of Aung Zeya Village, in possession of prawns and fishing nets they took from a prawn pond at the edge of Thatkepyin Village. A case was opened against the two for theft.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Establishment of Kanyinchaung Economic Zone in Maungtaw tsp

MERCHANTS from Maungtaw region and Rakhine State Government planned for establishment of Kanyinchaung Economic Zone in Maungtaw in October 2015.

Two concrete jetties, a 420 ft. long earth approach road, a single storey reinforced concrete warehouse and 20 sales rooms have already been completed so far.

Kanyinchaung Economic Zone is about 2 miles northwest of Maungtaw Town where Kanyin creek flows into Naf River. A port in Bangladesh is only about 4 miles away. The jetty of Kanyinchaung Economic Zone can handle vessels of about 1000 tons.

When it was started as the trade zone, 49.6 acres was earmarked for it and it is currently being expended to an economic zone on 100 acres.

Goods can be sent by water way from Kanyinchaung Economic Zone port to Maungtaw Town and once the roads in the economic zone and Maungtaw town are upgraded, border trade can be promoted.

Remaining works of earth filling 49.58 acres in the zone, constructing a 1.8 mile hard surfaced road to Maungtaw, upgrading 1.55 miles of road in the zone, constructing 1.18 miles of brick wall to fence the zone, concrete surfacing of the loading/unloading yard and parking area, constructing two buildings for security personnel, rest room for workers and a store, installing a generator, setting up poles for power distribution and laying of distributing wires, and piping work for water distribution are underway.—Myanmar News Agency ■



An official receives cash donation from a donor. Photo: MNA

Cash donation ceremony held in Rakhine State

A cash donation ceremony organised by a group of young people working in Busan, South Korea, was held in Sittway, yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, the chairman of UEHRD U Min Aung received the cash donations, in the amount of Ks1,000,000 and awarded certificates of appreciation to them.

On behalf of the donors, U Htin Lin and U Mg Mg Win, who live in Ponna Kyun Township, handed the cash donations to the committee.

The donation aims at providing assistance and rehabilitation to the locals who were attacked by the terrorist group ARSA on 25 August.—Myanmar News Agency ■

One who knows nothing can understand nothing

THE top United Nations human rights official said that he would never be surprised in case an action was taken against Myanmar concerning ethnic cleansing committed against the Bengali minority in Rakhine State. On another occasion, he made a comment regarding acts of genocide, “The elements suggest you cannot rule out the possibility that acts of genocide have been committed.” He went on to say that “It’s very hard to establish because the thresholds are high”. There is a Myanmar saying that the truth follows what one says. If so, his statement shows that he cannot take responsibility for what he himself disclosed, that is, he himself was not sure as to whether his statements were accurate to which extent.

Though the top official said he was worried about the possible danger of those extremist terrorists he completely neglected the atrocities of ARSA extremist terrorists.

would appear religious extremist jihad groups within refugee camps in Bangladesh and they would attack religious edifices in Myanmar as a target. It must be likened to a case of crocodile’s tears. Though the top official said he was worried about the possible danger of those extremist terrorists he completely neglected the atrocities of ARSA extremist terrorists. Here, we would like to say that this is tantamount to pointing out at the potential danger of a lachrymose crocodile. In fact, ‘One who knows nothing can understand nothing. There are no solid evidences concerning the allegations that Myanmar Tatmadaw is committing the offence of ethnic cleansing. As Myanmar is not a member country of the international criminal court, referring Myanmar to this court can only be done by the United Nations Security Council. But, this line of approach is practically impossible because genuinely friendly nations are in the UN Security Council. This incident shows that our human society abounds with such kinds of naive persons, as the Myanmar saying goes, “No matter how many silk threads are used up, Maung Pone can never learn to play the harp.” ■

Despite the fact that he said solid proof could rarely be shown, he alleged that the Myanmar Tatmadaw’s security operation was a textbook example of ethnic cleansing. “Speaking too much shows one’s true character,” as the Myanmar saying goes. The top UN human rights official said they had credible reports of Myanmar Tatmadaw’s offences of committing ethnic cleansing. Simultaneously, on the other hand he admitted that it was impossible to strictly prove the offence as said above.

The top United Nations human rights official reiterated that he felt concerned there



Photo: Thiha Soe

Lovable Traditional Courting Patterns Existed among Mon Youths

By Maung Aung Mon

WHEN grown-up, it is natural for youths to find marriage partners. Mon national lads and maids meet with each other while fetching water or firewood, enjoying entertainment shows and contributing voluntary labor. At that time, they have an access to chat or introduce to each other, thence trying to be acquainted and to get the affection of the maid the lad falls in love, in accord with their traditions or by visiting the belle’s house to convey words of betrothal to the maid’s parents, according to the traditional ethics.

Now, let us take a glimpse at the ways of courting/wooing of Mon national youths in former times. Ways of the then courting are totally different from the present situations. Though based on direct contact between youths, wedlock must be said to mainly depend upon parents’ attitudes.

Every national ethnic living in the Union lays great stress on monogamy, living in separation

with parents, in the sphere of social relation. Only if parents marry their adolescent offspring to suitable spouses, will their lineage be no longer extinct. Parents of sons will find brides of virtues, as will parents of daughters.

In trying to woo belles of Mon nationals, lads would have already known that they would have to undergo the test of parents-in-law-to-be. For this they have already prepared.

Having already known that they will have sons-in-law one day, parents of the maids usually accept the proposals for betrothal from the lads’ sides just after careful study about sons-in-law-to-be so that their daughters can enter wedlock based on pleasant monogamy. It is very interesting to see as to how the girls’ parents assess whether the boys are fit to be chosen as sons-in-law or not.

As usual, a lad has to pay a visit to the maid he loves for courting. Provided that he is not yet acquainted with the girl he has affection toward, firstly he has to



Photo: Thiha Soe

find boys who are familiar with the girl. Accompanying these boys, the lad has to visit the girl. The very first visit may be paying the mere call, that is, at this time the boy may not be introduced to the girl. Just by a visit, the girl may not recognize him. But several visits will make her recognize the lad for sure.

Had they met frequently at entertainment shows or at religious ceremonies or at Thingyan

festivals the lad may have ventured to visit the girl alone. The girl usually receives the boy with hospitality out of decorum, regardless like or dislike.

Every parent of a grown-up daughter would have expected for such an occasion of wooing toward their daughter; preparing for this beforehand. A suitable location for a boy coming to woo their daughter to chat with the girl has to be arranged, for example

a living room or a couch/bamboo bedstead in front of the resident with a betel box for the lad to chew and cigars to smoke.

The lad can be satisfied with being near to the maid while chewing betel or smoking on one condition—that the lad needs to notice a sharp knife, thin bamboo strips for weaving mats or baskets placed nearby. Usually, the girl’s father is not at home at the time when a lad visits. Had he been at home, if ever he usually left home when the lad came, whereas the mother would perhaps work a chore or something nearby. While weaving a mat or yarning threads, her senses of hearing and seeing were wandering near to the couple.

In fact, the mother is marking the answer paper of the lad, in the wooing exam. It is incumbent upon the lad to get high marks. If he had to chew despite himself, she would have laugh at him. If he had to smoke despite himself, she would have frowned. If he had talked excessively, she would have noted that the lad preferred talks to work. If so, he unfortunately failed in the first test, it must be assumed.

In case he had picked up the knife to strip the bamboo after cutting it, the mother would have been satisfied with the lad. Provided that he continued to weave a mat or a basket, the mother would have been more satisfied with him. On his return home back, the mother would examine his craft and recount to her husband to negotiate with him.

By exposing his skills, the son-in-law would have disclosed to himself in him that he could manage to lead a family. Here, someone may question if a person can become a good leader of a house just by learning to strip a bamboo or to weave a mat. They may think that it will be enough for them just by knowing how to strip or how to weave. Youths in former times are very simple and their guardians as well are very astute.

Since ancient times Mon nationals eked out their living by farming. Stripping and weaving mats and baskets can be done just by manipulating the bamboo craft, which was regarded to be a part of farming.

Parents always want their daughters to live in better conditions of life. Accordingly, they are required to carefully ponder economic situations which are vital for a family, that is, careful consideration as to whether a man is capable of earning money to support a family or not.

A lad needs to be good at speaking, humble, polite and prudent because the maid’s mother is

always within the audible reach. He also needs to be knowledgeable. At the time of wooing, a girl always talked in riddles to the boy. Mon nationals used to have been fond of talking in riddles, according to records. In talking riddles a girl questioned in verses, not in colloquial style. And, verses are spoken out randomly. The lad who knew answers had to reply in verses.

One cannot regard himself to have got affection from the maid just by getting an access to woo. It can be said to be at the stage of having an access to sit for the exam. As regards talking in riddles, there may be ambiguous answers. Though one thinks that his answer is right, it is not sure which answer the girl will choose as the right answer. Right answers need to be given consecutively. In this way, he should try to get her love through impression. As the second step, he must try hard on to get the consent of the parents.

It is endless to say about betrothal and wedding. It must be separately written. Now is only about courting or wooing for a lad toward a maid to get permission to get married. In fact, every race has its particular way of courting. Among Myanmar ethnic races, it is said that Chin’s way of wooing is the most exiting one.

According to a researcher’s records, patterns of Mon youths’ courting can be categorized into six. More researches should be made. Now, let us return to talking in riddles.

Not only the couple—the lad and the belle but also many relatives and colleagues are eagerly waiting for the results which will come out of a lad’s courting to a maid, especially their peers. Other fellow girls will perhaps have known the result later, but male fellows are waiting for their mate’s return, itching to know whether his return is the victory or retreat. If he won victory, they will enjoy the pleasure of the victory. Or otherwise, some may be eager to substitute his place.

The lad who replied to the riddle will be excited. Had the maid been satisfied with his answer he has to carry a flat circular stone for grinding “Thanakha,” feeling ambivalent about the result—success or failure, joy or sorrow. If the belle tells him to coat Thanakha on her cheeks, he has done it as said by her and left the place with his smiling face, which is as if saying to others, to feel happy for his success, or to give up their intention to woo in substitution for him. He has become the winner of the belle’s love! ■

Translated by Khin Maung Oo

Protection for Southeast Asia’s Rarest Wildlife through Community Engagement

ON December 19, Rainforest Trust local partner Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN) announced the declaration of the newly formed Kaydoh Mae Nyaw Wildlife Sanctuary in Myanmar.

Located in Karen State in eastern Myanmar along the Thai border, this newly protected area boasts large swaths of remote pristine forests containing a plethora of species assessed as threatened on IUCN’s Red List. The reserve protects 66,965 acres of subtropical broadleaf forest and provides a safe haven for 64 mammal species such as the Asian Elephant, Tiger, Dhole, Banteng, Phayre’s Leaf-monkey and two species of Pangolin – the Sunda and Chinese – both of which are Critically Endangered. There have also been 122 bird species, 12 amphibian species and 20 reptile species (including the Endangered Big-headed Turtle and the Endangered Elongated Tortoise) recorded in the area.

As the area is little explored, further field studies are sure to reveal new species yet to be described by scientists. Mounting demand for illegal wildlife products has created an increasingly more urgent need to protect these unique and biologically rich forests. Rainforest Trust’s local partner aims to ensure both national and global recognition of their protected areas and wildlife protection strategies through the Karen Wildlife Conservation Initiative (KWCI). The KWCI identified Kaydoh Mae Nyaw as an area urgently needing protection due to the number of high value species in the area.

The new protected area will be managed by the indigenous Karen community, and conservation efforts with KESAN will focus on collaborative management and capacity building in the form of patrolling and law enforcement, protected area infrastructure and awareness programs.

Rainforest Trust has supported community outreach activities with the local Karen community, such as the employment of local villagers to assist in wildlife and forest conservation surveys. Community development and education programs as well as agricultural assistance and alternative livelihood programs ensure ongoing community commitment to conservation. Villagers living within and around the protected area feel a great sense of ownership and buy-in to protect their resources and have even established their own informant network to report illegal hunting.

Long-term protection efforts will continue to emphasize community integration, further empowering local Karen people as stakeholders in conservation efforts through regular biological monitoring and development programs. By strengthening community-based conservation efforts on Karen lands, one of the most intact and wildlife-rich ecosystems remaining in all of Myanmar and Southeast Asia will receive the protection it so urgently needs. —Taylor Robb-McCord/ Rain Forest Trust Organization ■

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

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

“ Myanmar is a country where different national races live together and where diverse cultural traditions and religions co-exist. Building harmony and unity out of diversity is of the utmost importance. As we thus unite, the emergence of a federal union acceptable to all is of the essence.

Excerpt from the message sent by U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, to the 7th International Day of Democracy on 15 September, 2017.

The Beauty of Myanmar's Traditional Dance



Photo: Min Min Tun

One attacker and three suspects arrested in Maungtaw, Rakhine

SECURITY personnel conducted law enforcement measures yesterday and caught one attacker who involved in terrorist attacks, and three suspects yesterday.

Security forces caught Zar Paw Ar Long (a) Zar Paw Ar lom, who lives in Oo Shay Kya village at 5p.m, December 19, and Sharp (a) Bain Khu and Adu Shaw Yee, who tried to en-

ter illegally into Myanmar from Bangladesh.

Another incident took place in the Oo Shay Kya Creek, while police forces found a suspicious boat together with a handset with two Bangladesh SIM cards and two swords. Measures are being taken to expose the crime and to take action against those involved. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Tourists visit Myanmar via Tachilek border gate

INTERNATIONAL tourists are visiting Myanmar through international gateways and cross-border points to observe Myanmar's beautiful landscapes, scenery, tourist attractions, traditions, and social lifestyles.

In addition to traditional tourist destinations, there is now culture-based tourism, by which tourists can observe the traditions and cultures of ethnic people. Traveller statistics

reveal this is an increasingly popular draw.

Day-trip tourists visited Tarlot market, Bayintnaung Statue, Maha Myatmuni Pagoda, Shwedagon Pagoda, the National Landmark Gardens, Arrkhar Market, and the Chinese monastery, all of which are popular places in Tachileik.

Tourists who stayed overnight visited Buddha Footprint Pagoda, Maha Myatmuni Pagoda

in Kyaing Tong, Soon Taung Pagoda, and other famous pagodas and attractions in Maing Phat.

From 1 April to 21 December, there were 703,419 day trip tourists who entered via the Tachileik border gate, 11,428 visitors of whom traveled to Maing Phat and Kyaing Tong. Tourist arrivals for those with a visa who traveled by air via Tachileik totalled 5,341.—GNLM ■



Tourists seen at Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/ PHOE KHWAH

Myanmar Investment Commission Meeting 17/2017

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) meeting 17/2017 was convened in Yangon on 22nd December 2017 and reviewed investment proposals consistent with the Myanmar Investment Law.

U Kyaw Win, Chairman

of MIC and Union Minister of Ministry of Planning and Finance and 10 members of MIC attended the meeting.

The Submission of proposals and endorsement applications from investors and post-permit activities of

MIC-permitted companies were discussed in the meeting.

The MIC meeting (17/2017) decided to issue 9 investment permits and 2 endorsements in relation to the investment proposals.—Myanmar News Agency ■

China increases imports of rice, corn, vehicle fuel against last year

CHINA increased its imports of rice, corn and vehicle fuel from Myanmar mainly through the Muse border trade camp in the current fiscal year, according to a report of the Myawady Daily's Friday edition.

According to figures released by the Ministry of Commerce, this year's exports of rice to China totalled 747,559 tonnes, increasing over 500,000 matched against the last year's total of 232,721 tonnes.

The export of Myanmar's corn also saw an increase in de-

mand from the People's Republic of China. The ministry's data shows that more than 697,000 tonnes of locally produced corn went to the world's populous nation this year, which is over 250,000 tonnes more than that of last year.

"The country's corn market is currently active because of new production of fresh corn this winter season. We have a good export demand for rice and vehicle fuel too," said one of wholesalers from Yangon's Bayintnaung Wholesale Market.

Although the country saw an increased demand for rice, corn and fuel, this year's re-export of sugar decreased to 550,386 tonnes compared with last year.

Myanmar mainly exports melons, rice, corn, fuel, fruits and vegetables and marine products to China and imports consumer goods, beverage, seafood, clothing, electronic devices, construction materials, IT-related products, agricultural equipment and motorbikes.—GNLM ■

Pence visits Afghanistan, says US will 'see this through'

KABUL — Vice President Mike Pence made an unannounced trip to Afghanistan to meet its leaders and underscore US commitment to the country four months after President Donald Trump agreed to an open-ended war against insurgents here.

Pence arrived on a military plane at Bagram Airfield under the cover of darkness on Thursday night after leaving Washington on Wednesday night. He then flew by helicopter to Kabul, where he met President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah at the presidential palace.

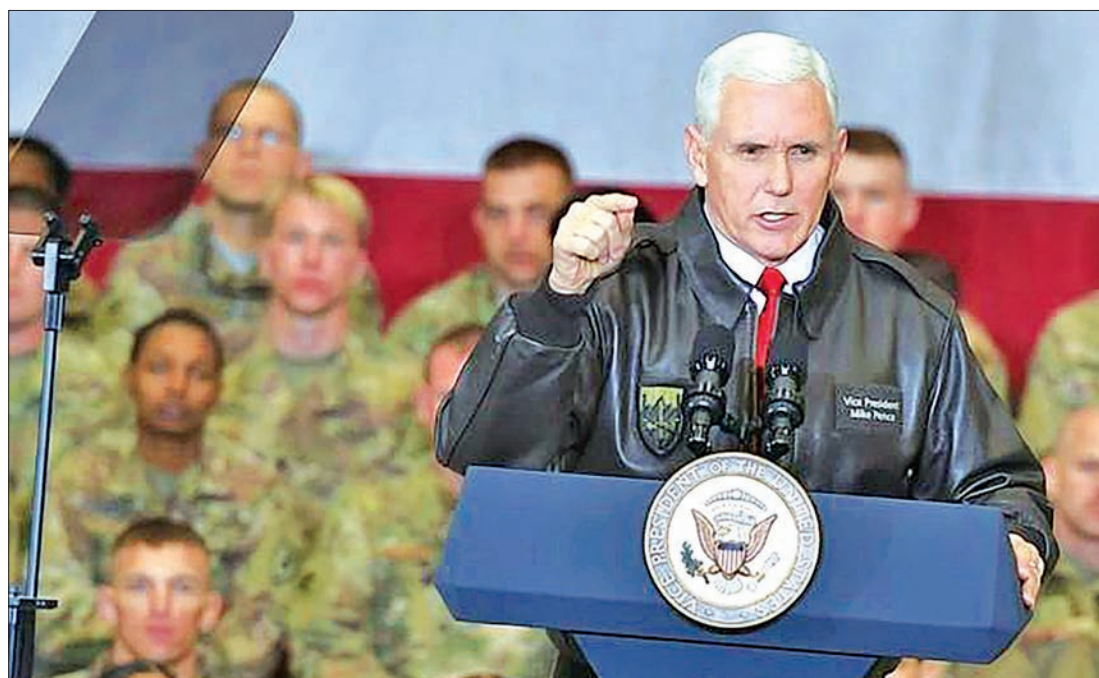
Pence told the leaders he hoped his presence there was tangible evidence that the United States was "here to see this through."

In a reversal of his campaign call for a swift withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, Trump in August pledged a stepped-up military campaign against Taliban insurgents and signalled the United States would send more troops to fight in what is the longest war in its history.

At the end of August, there were some 11,000 US troops in Afghanistan and more have since arrived.

Ghani expressed gratitude to the US government and said Afghanistan's partnership with the United States was cemented in sacrifice.

Pence told reporters the strategy of increased troops on the ground and greater authorities for military leaders was



US Vice President Mike Pence arrives on stage to address troops in a hangar at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan, on 21 December 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

paying dividends.

"The results are really beginning to become evident around the country," he said, adding that Ghani and Abdullah had said "they've begun to see a sea change in the attitudes among the Taliban." Pence said their hope was that "eventually the enemy will tire of losing" and be willing to talk peace.

Asked if more troops would be needed, Pence said that would be a decision for Trump in the days ahead.

Pence said he pressed the Afghan leaders for political reforms and Ghani assured him that an election commission was developing a framework for parliamentary elections in 2018.

Pence had originally

planned to travel to Israel and Egypt this week, but he postponed that trip to remain in Washington while Congress passed legislation to overhaul US tax law.

The short visit to Afghanistan, originally part of the Middle East trip, was shrouded in secrecy for security reasons. Reporters travelling with the vice president were asked not to reveal his whereabouts until after the delegation arrived back at the air base from Kabul and Pence had addressed US troops.

Pence almost did not make it to the presidential palace. The helicopters he and others were flying in came close to turning back to Bagram because of poor visibility, but the pilots were

able to find a route in the end, a White House official said.

Pence, who coordinated the process that resulted in Trump's new Afghanistan policy, has been one of the main interlocutors between the White House and the Afghan leadership since Trump entered office in January.

He repeated his promise of US commitment to the region during remarks to troops at Bagram.

"Under President Donald Trump, the armed forces of the United States will remain engaged in Afghanistan until we eliminate the terrorist threat to our homeland, our people once and for all," Pence said. —Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Iran denies British-Iranian aid worker might be released soon

LONDON — Iran's justice ministry confirmed on Friday that authorities have opened a new case against British-Iranian aid worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who has been sentenced to five years in jail, and denied she might soon be released.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a project manager with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, was arrested in April 2016 at a Tehran airport as she was heading back to Britain with her two-year-old daughter after a family visit. —Reuters ■

Eight killed in car bombing attack on police station in S. Afghanistan

KANDAHAR, (Afghanistan) — At least eight people were killed and many others wounded after a Taliban suicide car bombing struck a district police station in Afghanistan's southern province of Kandahar, local police said Friday.

The attack occurred roughly at 04:30 am local time (0000 GMT) Friday, after a Taliban suicide bomber drove a hijacked explosive-laden military vehicle into the Maywand district police station, a local police official told Xinhua anonymously. —Xinhua ■

Japan, South Korea envoys for 6-party talks agree to press Pyongyang

TOKYO — Japanese and South Korean representatives to the six-party talks on North Korea's denuclearization reaffirmed Friday the need to continue to press Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear and missile development programmes.

Kenji Kanasugi, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and Lee Do Hoon, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, also confirmed that denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is indispensable for peace and security in the region, according to the Japanese ministry. —Kyodo News ■

UN General Assembly adopts resolution on status of Jerusalem

UNITED NATIONS — The General Assembly on Thursday adopted a resolution on the status of Jerusalem that will make US President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the Israeli capital have no legal effect.

In a rare emergency special session, the draft resolution tabled by Turkey and Yemen was adopted 128-9 with 35 abstentions.

The nine countries that voted against the text were Guatemala, Honduras, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Togo, as well as the United States

and Israel.

The resolution "affirms that any decisions and actions which purport to have altered the character, status or demographic composition of the Holy City of Jerusalem have no legal effect, are null and void and must be rescinded in compliance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council, and in this regard calls upon all states to refrain from the establishment of diplomatic missions in the Holy City of Jerusalem."

It further demands that all UN member states comply with Security Council resolutions re-

garding Jerusalem, and not recognize any actions or measures contrary to those resolutions.

Such a vote at the General Assembly is non-binding but a resounding "yes" reflects the collective will of the international community and carries much political weight.

Before the vote, US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley repeated the threat to cut aid for the countries that would have voted in favor of the draft as well as US contributions to the United Nations.

She said her country will move its Embassy in Israel from

Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. "No vote in the United Nations will make any difference on that."

However, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu showed defiance to US pressure.

"We will not be intimidated. You can be strong, but that doesn't make you right!" Cavusoglu told the emergency special session in clear reference to US threats.

"Before this meeting, a UN member state threatened all the other members. We were all asked to vote 'no' or face consequences. Some were even threatened with development aid cut," said Cavusoglu. —Xinhua ■

Catalan separatists win vote, thwarting Rajoy's bid to solve crisis

BARCELONA/MADRID — Separatists looked set on Friday to regain power in Catalonia after voters rejected Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's attempt to defuse the independence movement, instead re-igniting the country's biggest political crisis in decades.

Spanish markets recoiled at a surprise result that is also a setback for the European Union, which must now brace for more secessionist noise as it grapples with the disruption of Brexit and simmering east European discontent.

By risking an election in the wealthy region, Rajoy appears to have made the same mistake that leaders such as Greece's Alexis Tsipras, Britain's David Cameron and Italy's Matteo Renzi have made in recent years: betting that voters would resolve their troublesome domestic conundrums for them.

With the count from Thursday's Catalan parliament election almost complete, separatist parties had secured a slim majority, sending stocks down around 1 per cent on fears that the euro zone's fourth-largest economy will be hurt by tensions with its richest region.

After several strained months that saw secessionists organise an illegal referendum on 1 October, and police confiscate urns

to try to prevent it from taking place, the regional election has failed to produce a solution to the standoff.

Rajoy is weakened; the secessionists kept a majority, but it was reduced and they may have difficulty forming a government; and support for the unionist Ciudadanos has surged, but not enough to catapult them into power.

"Catalonia is back to square one," said Marco Protopapa, an analyst at JP Morgan, forecasting that tensions would quickly return between Madrid and an "emboldened pro-independence camp eager to exploit the tactical advantage of a favourable election outcome".

With Catalonia accounting for a fifth of its economy, Spain had already trimmed growth forecasts for 2018, and the prospect of prolonged uncertainty worries business leaders.

"More companies leaving, less economic activity there - and worse for everyone," said the chief executive of a major listed Spanish company, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the tense climate of the independence debate.

More than 3,100 firms have shifted their headquarters out of the region since October's referendum.—Reuters ■

Explosion outside Athens court shatters windows, no injuries

ATHENS — A makeshift bomb exploded outside a Greek court in Athens early on Friday shattering windows and damaging the facade of the building, police officials said.

Shots were also fired at a person guarding the Athens Appeal Court building, Justice Minister Stavros Kontonis told state TV. The Justice Ministry suspended the court's operation for one day. There were no reports of injuries.

Two Greek media organisations received warning calls at 2:50 am (0050 GMT), before the explosion, one official said.

Police, who had cordoned off the area, later found a bag which contained the makeshift bomb outside the building.

Police were also investigating footage from



A police officer searches for evidence after a bomb blast at a Court building in Athens, Greece, on 22 December 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

cameras nearby, another official said, and reports of two people leaving the scene in a van.

Small-scale attacks on businesses, state buildings, police and politicians are frequent in Greece, which

has a long history of political violence.

Public anger remains high after seven years of belt-tightening in a crisis that has cut thousands of jobs and eroded living standards

Protesters have repeatedly tried to block foreclosure auctions of home at courts, a key condition of Greece's international bailout. Electronic auctions started in November.—Reuters ■

UN Security Council to vote on new sanctions against DPRK

UNITED NATIONS—The United Nations Security Council is expected to vote on a new draft resolution that would tighten sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in response to its ballistic missile launch last month.

A Security Council

meeting has been scheduled for Friday at 1:00 pm EST (1800 GMT). The US-drafted resolution was circulated among council members on Thursday.

The draft, seen by Xinhua, seeks to ban nearly 90 per cent of refined petroleum product exports, including diesel and kero-

sene, to the DPRK, setting a ceiling of 500,000 barrels a year. It also caps crude oil exports to the DPRK at 4 million barrels a year.

The draft also demands the repatriation of overseas DPRK workers within 12 months.

In addition, the draft resolution bans DPRK

exports of food products, machinery, electrical equipment, earth and stone, including magnesite and magnesia, wood and vessels. It bans the supply of industrial equipment, machinery, transportation vehicles, and industrial metals to the DPRK.—Xinhua ■

Yangon Metropolitan Development Public Co.,Ltd.

Yangon Regional Government

Amendment of Invitation for Tender

The advertisement issued in Column (1,2,3), Page (12), Issue (20.12.2017) of The Global New Light of Myanmar Newspaper has been amended as follows:

Invitation for Tender

Interested Parties for the submission of proposals which are to be selected in a competition format are invited to participate for the renovation/ rehabilitation and ensuring the strength and reusability of the former office building of the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism (Tourist Burma) while maintaining the building's heritage and history which is under the management of the Yangon Regional Government located in Kyauktada Township, Sule Pagoda Road, No. (77/91).

- (1) Application form and rules for proposal release date (20.12.2017)
 - (2) Drawings, designs, models submission date (19.1.2018)
 - (3) Proposals to be submitted at: Yangon Metropolitan Development Public Co.,Ltd. Office: Room (222), Yangon Regional Government Office
- Yangon Metropolitan Development Public Co.,Ltd.
Yangon Regional Government
Ph no. 09-975545595
koko@turquoisemountain.org
(Any Queries will be answered within office hours)

South Korea willing to discuss issues of concern with DPRK without precondition

SEOUL — South Korea's Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon said Friday that Seoul was willing to discuss the issues of concern with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) without precondition. Cho told a meeting with local reporters that if South Korea can talk with the DPRK side, it was willing to frankly discuss several issues of concern to Pyongyang without any precondition. He did not

elaborate on what issues could be on the possible dialogue table, according to local media reports. South Korea will try to take several opportunities, including the upcoming PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games, in a more active manner to encourage the DPRK to come to a dialogue table. Seoul has asked Pyongyang to participate in the South Korea-hosted winter sports event scheduled to begin in

February at PyeongChang in the country's eastern region. South Korea made dialogue overtures in July to the DPRK to hold dialogue of military authorities from both sides as well as humanitarian talks about the reunion of separated families. People from the two Koreas have been banned from exchanging letters and having phone calls since the 1950-1953 Korean War ended in armistice.—Xinhua ■

Australian PM says nine foreigners among those hurt when driver ploughs into crowd

MELBOURNE — Nearly half the 19 people injured when a driver with no known extremist links ploughed into pedestrians in the southern city of Melbourne were foreign nationals, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said on Friday.

Police allege that the 32-year-old Australian man, a refugee from Afghanistan, had a history of mental illness and drove a car into Christmas shoppers on one of the busiest roads in Australia's second-largest city on Thursday.

The incident was a chilling reminder of attacks using vehicles in cities around the world. Four people were killed in a similar incident in Melbourne in January.

Turnbull and police said the driver had no known ties to extremist organisations, although they also said he had spoken of the perceived mistreatment of Muslims after his arrest. Police have yet to interview, charge or identify the man.

Turnbull said nine of the victims were foreign nationals. He did not specify their nationalities but Australian media reported they included people from China, India, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, South Korea and Venezuela.

"This is a shocking incident to occur just on the eve of Christmas but we will not be cowed by it," Turnbull told reporters in Sydney.

Four people were



Australian police and paramedics are seen near the place where they arrested the driver of a vehicle that had ploughed into pedestrians at a crowded intersection near the Flinders Street train station, in central Melbourne, Australia, on 21 December 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

killed and more than 20 injured in January when a man deliberately drove

into pedestrians just a few hundred metres away from Thursday's attack. That

was also not designated as a terror attack.

Police had cordoned

off the area immediately after the incident but roads in central Melbourne were open and trams were operating as usual on Friday morning. Reuters witnesses reported a heavy police presence around exits from nearby Flinders Street train station, with trauma support and Red Cross workers in the area. Department store staff said foot traffic was down from the day before.

"It's definitely quieter," said a saleswoman at a beauty counter in the David Jones department store, who declined to give her name. "More people are coming in from the back entrance. I think they're trying to avoid Flinders Street Station," she said.

—Reuters ■

Philippines' coast guard rescues 252 passengers from capsized ferry

REAL, (Philippines)—The Philippines' coast guard said on Friday it had rescued 252 passengers and crew, including an Australian and his Filipino wife, and recovered five dead people from a ferry that capsized east of the capital Manila.

A Philippine vessel capsized on Thursday because of bad weather, highlighting frequent boat accidents in the Southeast Asian nation that is composed of more than 7,000 islands.

The Philippine Coast Guard has confirmed five deaths while 252 passengers including an Australian and his Filipino wife, were rescued, said spokesman Captain Arm and Balilo.

"All the passengers and crew are accounted for but as I have said we will re-evaluate based on the claims of the families of the missing passengers," Balilo told Reuters. The vessel was carrying

257 passengers and crew.

The boat left the port around 9 am and capsized an hour later due to strong winds and giant waves.

A survivor said the passengers panicked when the boat started to take in water and went to one side, causing the ferry to tilt and capsize.

"The others waited on top of the ship while it was sinking, but I didn't do that because I know the ship will break down and I want to avoid getting hurt by that," Rene Ebuenga, a rescued passenger told Reuters.

"That's dangerous and the big waves can slam debris to your body."

The ferry capsized and sank about 5 miles off Quezon province, east of the capital on the main northern island of Luzon.

The Philippine Coast Guard said it will conduct an inquiry to determine the cause of the incident and to verify possible oil spills.—Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER ABLE VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER ABLE VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-12-2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-12-2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-12-2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SEA PEARL VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SEA PEARL VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-12-2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

Daniel Day-Lewis bows out with twisted romance 'Phantom Thread'

LOS ANGELES — Director Paul Thomas Anderson calls his movie "Phantom Thread" a romance, but its star Daniel Day-Lewis said that filming it made him so sad he decided to quit acting.

Triple Oscar winner Day-Lewis plays fastidious 1950s London fashion designer Reynolds Woodcock whose self-centred life is disrupted when his latest muse, Alma (played by newcomer Vicky Krieps), falls in love with him and matters take an unexpected and sinister twist.

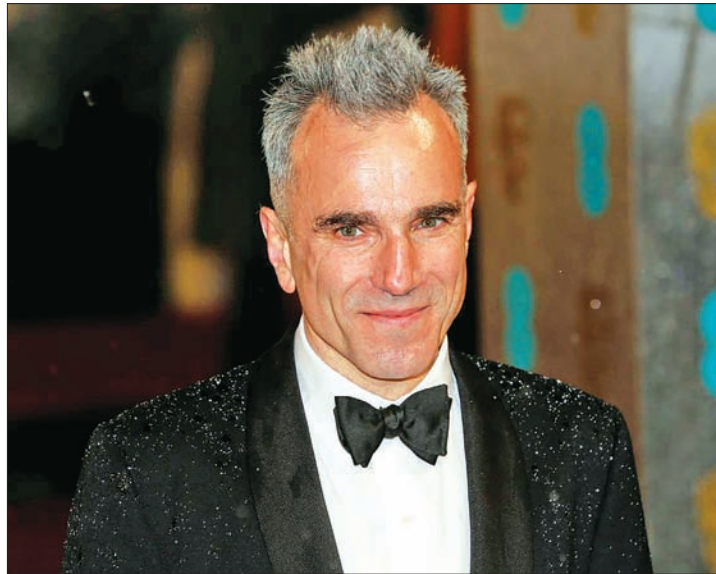
The movie, arriving in US theatres on 25 December, took two years to research and write in what Anderson says was a collaborative effort with Day-Lewis.

"It was always my intention to make a romantic film. The kind of things we talked about are the classic gothic romances like 'Rebecca,' 'Gaslight' and 'Vertigo'," Anderson said.

"'Vertigo' is really about obsession and that fever that comes over you when romance comes your way ... (The movie) gets pretty complicated and peculiar, as love does," he added.

British-born Day-Lewis, known for his meticulous preparation, threw himself into the project, studying for months with designers and making a couture dress himself.

"Everything in the House of Woodcock was so particular



Actor Daniel Day-Lewis poses as he arrives for the British Academy of Film and Arts (BAFTA) awards ceremony at the Royal Opera House in London, Britain, in 2013. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

- what chair, what silverware, what teacup. You have to involve Daniel in every aspect of that. There isn't a piece of furniture or wall covering that hasn't been approved (by him)," Anderson said. Yet after filming was completed, Day-Lewis, 60, shocked the movie world in June by announcing, without explanation, that he was retiring as an actor.

In an interview with W magazine last month, the only man to have won three lead actor Oscars said the decision was directly related to shooting "Phantom Thread."

"Before making the film, I didn't know I was going to stop acting. I do know that Paul and I laughed a lot before we made the movie. And then we

stopped laughing because we were both overwhelmed by a sense of sadness," Day-Lewis told the magazine.

That sadness has stayed with him, he said. "That happened during the telling of the story, and I don't really know why."

Lesley Manville, who plays the fictional Woodcock's co-dependent sister, said the movie's driving theme is "the human condition, and how we all respond to and deal with love and the lack of love."

"Phantom Thread" goes into Hollywood's awards season with two Golden Globe nominations and more than 20 awards from film critics groups in North America. —Reuters ■

Sylvester Stallone 'categorically disputes' claim of 1990s sexual assault

LOS ANGELES — Actor Sylvester Stallone on Thursday denied an accusation that he raped a woman in the 1990s and said the allegation was "completely fabricated."

Celebrity news site TMZ reported on Wednesday, citing law enforcement sources, that a woman had recently reported the allegation dating back to the 1990s against Stallone to Santa Monica police.

Stallone's attorney Martin Singer said on Thursday that a woman had "filed a police report alleging a rape that occurred 27 years ago."

"My client categorically disputes the claim," Singer said in a statement emailed to media outlets. He said Stallone planned to file a claim that the accuser had filed a false police report.

Police in the California beach city of Santa Monica said on Thursday that they were investigating a complaint that was

made in November against the "Rocky" actor.

"We got a complaint that was made in November of alleged sexual misconduct in the 1990s," Santa Monica Police Department spokesman Saul Rodriguez told Reuters by telephone. "We are looking into it and will gather information and whatever we discover will be passed to the district attorney."

Rodriguez did not provide details. Reuters could not independently verify the accusation.

Rodriguez said the accusation could fall within California's complex statute of limitations for criminal prosecutions of sexual abuse. Offences must generally be prosecuted within 10 years. Stallone, 71, skyrocketed to fame in 1976 with his Oscar-winning boxing movie "Rocky" and went on to become one of Hollywood's biggest action stars through the "Rambo" and "Rocky" film franchises.—Reuters ■



Actor Sylvester Stallone waves at the premiere of "The Promise" in Los Angeles, California, US, on 12 April 2017. —Photo: REUTERS

Robot DJ puts the tech into techno for Czech clubbers

PRAGUE — These days artificial intelligence is so advanced that robots trade shares, make restaurants suggestions and diagnose diseases. But can a robot get a dance floor jumping?

It is a question that Prague's Karlovy Lazne Music Club has endeavored to answer by employing a specially adapted former automotive industry robot as a DJ in the popular nightclub.

The robot is shaped like a giant arm capped with a pincer, and has shared deck duties at the club with its human pro-

grammer in an hourly rotation each night for the last three weeks.

"People are excited (about the robot), because they haven't seen anything like this around Europe, and I am not sure if there is something similar in the world," club manager Adam Lipsansky told Reuters.

The DJ robot was created after the club's management challenged a robotics firm to the task.

Equipped with special software to help it choose songs and mounted on a stage above the

club's dance floor, the robot selects discs from nearby racks and puts them into one of three music players in front of it. It can scratch records and also dances.

While some clubbers told Reuters that they enjoyed the robot's musical efforts, others remained unconvinced.

"I don't like the robot," said Marcia Lopes, 24, a tourist from Mexico. "It can't feel what the people want to dance to. There is no emotion behind the music. When there is a real person, they know, what fun is like." —Reuters ■

Release of 'A Star Is Born' pushed back to 2018 fall

LOS ANGELES — The release date of Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper starrer "A Star Is Born" has been pushed to October next year.

Cooper is not only starring but is also making his directorial debut with the film.

The film, which was earlier scheduled to release on 18 May, 2018, will now hit the theatres on 5 October 2018, reported Variety.

The new release date means that the film will be pitted against Sony's Spider-Man spinoff "Venom" starring Tom Hardy, and Fox's "Bad Times at the El Royale", written and directed by Drew Goddard and

starring Chris Hemsworth.

"A Star Is Born" is based on the 1937 film starring Janet Gaynor and Fredric March.

The story centres on a movie star, who helps an aspiring young actress find fame, even as age and alcoholism send his own career into a downward spiral.

Bill Gerber, Jon Peters, Todd Phillips and Lynette Howell Taylor are producing with Cooper. Basil Iwanyk and Ravi Mehta are executive producing.

Cooper also had a hand in crafting the script, with Will Fetters and Eric Roth also writing.—PTI ■

Facebook, Universal Music strike multi-year licensing deal

NEW YORK — Facebook Inc (FB.O) and Universal Music Group on Thursday announced a global agreement that will enable users to upload videos featuring music from Universal's library across the social media network as well as Instagram and Oculus.

Through the agreement, which is Facebook's first with a major record label, the social media company will no longer have to require users to take down videos featuring music from Universal's catalog due to copyright infringement. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Facebook's deal with Universal Music Group comes as the world's largest social media site is making a big push into video to keep users on its site and attract advertisers.

Earlier this year it launched its Watch video service, which features shows from the likes of BuzzFeed, Discovery Communications (DISCA.O) as well as some sports like Major League Baseball.

The partnership comes days after Bloomberg reported that YouTube had signed a long-term agreement with Universal Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment. — Reuters ■

Yangon Christmas



Immanuel Church is illuminated at night before the Christmas in Yangon on 22 December. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**



Saint Mary's Cathedral decorated with Christmas light in Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Yangon. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**



Christmas light installations seen in front of the City Hall in Yangon. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**

'Hamilton' takes centre stage in London's West End

LONDON — They may have been casting off the yoke of British rule, but the cast of Broadway smash "Hamilton" nonetheless received a rapturous reception from a star-studded, 1,500-strong audience at the show's official opening night in London on Thursday.

The show, created by Lin-Manuel Miranda, is an unconventional take on the life of Alexander Hamilton, one of the founding fathers of the United States, featuring a racially diverse cast and a hip-hop-inflected score.

Though the show is rooted firmly in the 18th and 19th centu-

ries, Miranda feels that its themes of legacy and how one spends time on earth still resonate with contemporary audiences.

"That's what Hamilton and (antagonist Vice President Aaron) Burr are wrestling with the whole time, and I think that's what people are responding to," Miranda told Reuters.

Miranda, who played the title role on Broadway, took to the stage after the performance to thank the cast and crew.

Addressing media coverage of the show's runaway success, he said: "I never want to see the

words 'overnight success' associated with this show," saying that his relationships with collaborators on the project dated to 2002.

Thursday's show was attended by many notable public figures, including musical impresario Andrew-Lloyd Webber, Queen guitarist Brian May and London Mayor Sadiq Kahn.

"Breaking Bad" star Bryan Cranston, who also attended the performance, described the show as "a masterpiece," adding that it was "striking a chord with the younger generations and that's what we need in the theatre." The

play is notable for casting black, Asian and Latin actors to play the roles of white historical figures.

The title role, which was originally played by Miranda, who is of Puerto Rican descent, was filled by Londoner Jamael Westman, who has Irish and Jamaican heritage.

The London production, housed in the newly refurbished Victoria Palace theatre, is the show's first foray outside of the United States after successful runs in Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as New York. The Broadway production

won 11 Tony awards and netted Miranda a Pulitzer Prize in 2016.

Any uncertainty about whether British audiences would share their American counterparts' enthusiasm for the show was quickly assuaged by a remarkable demand for tickets, which London's Guardian newspaper reported were being offered by re-sellers for up to 6,000 pounds (\$8,000).

The show's depiction of an effete King George III, Britain's ruler during the US revolutionary war, also drew some of the biggest laughs of the night from the British crowd. —Reuters ■

Myanmar secures bronze in Than Nien Cup by defeating Thailand

THE Myanmar U-21 team secured third place in the international Than Nien Cup by beating Thailand by a decisive score of 4-2 at CanTho Stadium in Viet Nam yesterday.

Myanmar lined up with goalkeeper Phone Thitsar Min, Kyaw Thu Tun, Ye Yint Aung, Win Moe Kyaw, Than Htike Zin, Myat Kaung Khant, Kyaw Myint Win, Shwe Ko, Aee Soe, Hein Htet Aung and Soe Lwin Lwin.

At the 2-minute mark, from the middle of the line, Myanmar's Shwe Ko was able to break free of the goalkeeper Philakhleng and scored the opening goal for Myanmar over the slow defence of Thailand.

Thailand played more aggressively after the opening score, and in the 22nd minute, Thai's striker Nattawut Suksum picked up the ball with the back defender and tied the score at 1-1.

But a lack of concentration by Thailand cost them dearly.

At the 35-minute mark, Myanmar's Kyaw Myint Win took advantage of a beautiful pass to escape from the middle of the field before launching a cross shot into the corner of the goal, lifting Myanmar to a 2-1 lead.

In the second half, Thailand made some substitutions to strengthen their defence. But



Myanmar U-21 football players celebrating their victory at Can Tho Stadium in Can Tho, Viet Nam yesterday as they secured the bronze medal in international Than Nien Cup. **PHOTO:MFF**

the adjustment did not improve their play.

Myanmar players penetrated with quick fading to keep the defenders away, creating a lot of work from Philakhleng, Thailand's goalkeeper.

In the decisive victory, Myanmar's Kyaw Myint Win easily scored at the 85-minute mark.

At 86 minutes, in a quick counter-attack situation, Myanmar's Aee Soe comfortably caught a horizontal line pass

from a teammate and hit the empty net to seal the victory, bringing home bronze for the U-21 Myanmar squad. "I'm glad for our win. I was so focused on my boys' strength and stamina for this match. Our team's fast

and accurate strikers can take advantage over the some weak points of Thai's defence line, so we did win with a decisive result", said Myanmar Head Coach U Kyi Lwin after the match.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Eight teams to compete in KBZ Bank Women's League 2017-2018

A new club has joined the original seven teams for the upcoming season of KBZ-Bank Women's League 2017-2018, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

A total of eight teams -- Myawady FC, ThitsarArman FC, Sport & Education FC, ISPE FC, Gandamar FC, YREO FC, Zwekapin FC and a new team, University Clubs, under the department of higher education, will be competing in the women's professional league, the MFF said.

Under the supervision of MFF and mainly sponsored by Kanbawza Bank, Myanmar's largest private commercial

bank, the KBZ Bank Women's League was launched in Myanmar last year in order to improve the country's female football sector. Other ASEAN countries have had established women's football leagues for years.

The first round of the upcoming season will be from 27 December 2017 to 8 February 2018, while the second round will be played from 13 March 2018 to 10 May 2018.

Myawady FC will play against ThitsarArman FC in the opening match of the League on 27 December at Aung San Stadium, Yangon.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Man United's Smalling looking forward to Vardy challenge

LONDON — Manchester United defender Chris Smalling is wary of the threat posed by Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy but is looking forward to the challenge of keeping the speed merchant in check on Saturday.

Vardy was a key component in Leicester's title-winning campaign in 2015/16 and has scored seven goals in 18 league matches this season, along with a League Cup goal in the mid-week defeat by Manchester City.

Smalling said United's defenders would not be able to relax for a moment at the King Power Stadium. "He is someone who is a bit of a nightmare for defenders because he is often rattling around and chasing with non-stop running. "He runs in

behind which, as a defender, is the hardest thing to deal with, but I will be looking forward to that battle and, hopefully, I'll be ready to keep him quiet."

United are looking for a third consecutive league win to keep in touch with leaders City but will face a Leicester side who have won four of their last five league games to climb to eighth.

"You know their qualities and their wingers - Demarai Gray is coming into the team and Riyad Mahrez is in form as well," said Smalling. "So those are the players we need to keep quiet and, when we get the ball, we need to make sure that we get at their backline." —Reuters ■



Manchester United's Chris Smalling. **PHOTO: REUTERS**