

■ NATIONAL

State Counsellor receives ambassadors of Denmark, United States of America

▶ PAGE 3



■ LOCAL NEWS

Fugitive suspected of drugs crimes and robbery captured

▶ PAGE 4



■ LOCAL BUSINESS

About 600 private fuel stations seeking permits

▶ PAGE 5



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, front, views photos with Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Education, at the opening ceremony of the Myanmar National Education Strategy Plan (2016-2021) yesterday at the Myanmar International Convention Centre in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

## State Counsellor seeks change in Myanmar's Educational Strategy

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a speech yesterday asking for change in the country's education philosophy within five years at the opening ceremony of the Myanmar National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021) held in the Myanmar International Convention Centre in Nay Pyi Taw.

She said that the Myanmar education system must be changed mainly to create job opportunities and to encourage lifelong learning for young students and adults over the next five years.

"The change must be started in education," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday. "We all need to consider what the main needs are to succeed after the National Education Strategic Plan has been adopted."

The State Counsellor said that the desire to learn is most important in education

SEE PAGE 3 >>

# JCB REACHES SIX AGREEMENTS

THE Joint Coordination Body (JCB) for Peace Process Funding held a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, reaching consensus on six issues, including an amendment on the reformation of JCB and fund allowances to the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) and signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

The six agreements are:

— to reform the JCB with 10 government representatives (one

chairperson and nine members from the government) and 10 representatives from ethnic armed organizations;

— allow the proposed US\$2.5 million to the NRPC;

— allow aid to the Joint Monitoring Committee-JMC through a UN platform, to seek aid for JMC including US\$6.5 million needed for JMC from more than one channel;

— allow US\$4.7 million required for the Coordination Team

“ Seeking solutions in the peace process through debate and negotiations.

(CT) offices of the signatories to the NCA;

— JCB will take responsibility for giving assistance to the Peace Supporting Development Sector. They will also hold talks over the plan for the sector between the two sides and report to the JCB meeting.

— allot a maximum of Ks60 million for the fund allowed by the NRPC for holding the national-level political dialogues and not to cause different spending standards for national-level political dialogues in regions and states.

In her opening address at the

meeting, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who heads the JCB, stressed the need to practice a parallel approach to give protection to and promote the benefits of indigenous peoples of the country while negotiations are being held to ease the conflicts.

In her concluding remarks, the State Counsellor reiterated that the government was making efforts for inclusiveness for the country's peace process, inviting

SEE PAGE 3 >>



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Pyithu Hluttaw

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Pyithu Hluttaw 4<sup>th</sup> regular meeting day 13 commences

ON the 13th day of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 4th regular meeting, Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing stressed the importance of compromising authority of certain parts of appointed land areas for road expansions by Hluttaw Representatives as only when certain ownership is known can the Road Department begin work. This was answered in response to a question posed by U Kyaw Min of Letpadan constituency: "Will the 7-mile Taungkyogone road connecting Letpadan and Minhla be rebuilt to a cement road under the Ministry of Construction?"

The Union minister further explained that the Taungkyogone-Tanarpo road connecting Bago District's Letpadan and Minhla townships is under the authority of the Rural Development Department and length of the road being 6 miles, 4 furlongs in Letpadan Township and 8 miles, 2 furlongs in Minhla Township, a total of 14 miles, 6 furlongs. The Ministry of Construction requires authority over 100 feet of the road area under the Road Department to begin the project.



Speaker U Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

Dr. U Than Win from North Okkalapa constituency raised the question of, "Whether there is a plan to upgrade the main flyover for entering North Okkalapa to be as sturdy as the Parami flyover?" to which the Union Minister replied the original construction was performed by Myanma Railways back in 1976 and to upgrade the bridge requires approval from the national budget, however since the 2017-2018 fiscal year's budget has been allotted to projects with high priorities and in need of ongoing funding, there is no plan for building a new or

upgraded flyover yet.

U Moe Shwe from Putao constituency raised the question of, "Is there any plan to upgrade the 218-mile, state-owned Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putao road so that vehicles of all sizes can drive through in all weather conditions, and how will the adverse boggy stretch of road between the 92/0 milestone to 161/0 milestone be handled?" to which the Union Minister first explained then replied respectively; the Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putao road begins near Myitkyina 0/0 milestone and ends near Putao 218/0

milestone, is 218 miles long and under the authority of the Union Government; there is allotted regional budget to repair the boggy areas between milestone 87/0 to 100/4 and 144/6 to 152/4, by expanding the cliff walls to 6 miles, 5 furlong, 34 feet, paving an 18 mile concrete road and building concrete canals and walls to protect the road from debris and soil invasion.

As to the aforementioned adverse conditions between milestone 92/0 to 161/0, the Road Department is collaborating with Man Pyi Tagon Co. and Zinnis Toe Aung Co. to elevate the cliff walls in various sectors of the road, paving an 18 mile concrete road; the Road Department and Bridges Department are working together to construct bridges and roadways in necessary sectors; a tender calling 9 companies to work on improvements and construction of the roads and bridges; and by the end of the 2016-2017 fiscal year 18 miles of concrete roads, 80 miles, 4 furlongs of coal tar roads, 47 miles, 6 furlongs of cobblestone roads, 81 miles, 6 furlongs of solid roads will be constructed; during the

2017-2018 fiscal year will be upgraded so as vehicles of all sizes can drive through the year round.

Union Minister U Win Khaing also replied to questions raised on road and building construction projects by U Aye Khaing from Dagon Myothit (North) constituency, U U Htun Maung from Ponnagyun constituency, U Tin Ko Ko Oo from Bilin constituency, U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo from Hlaing constituency and U Sai Ngong Saim Hein from Maukmai constituency.

Afterwards, U Thein Soe Aung from Pyinmana constituency proposed the Union Government to urge all Union Ministries, Regional and State Governments, Self-administered Zones to follow the contract system outlining protocols issued by the Ministry of Construction, to which U Kyaw Min Hlaing from Uttarathiri constituency vouched approval.

In conclusion Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint announced Hluttaw representatives wishing to discuss or approve the proposal in the Hluttaw to put down their names on a waiting list.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

## Health care buildings requested in Amyotha Hluttaw

Dr U Myint Htwe, Union Minister for the Ministry of Health and Sports, pledged at the 13th day of the 4th regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw that the standard Health Care Centre building construction in Taung Sunm Kwarla and Arbit village in Chaungson township will be a priority to be funded in the annual budget for 2018-2019.

The Union minister's pledge came from a question of whether there would be a plan to construct rural health care buildings in the villages of Chanugsone township in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, raised by U Lin Tin Htay, the MP for constituency 4 in Mon State.

The Union Minister said the Department of Public Health provided health care service by the Maternal Health Care Centre, 30 Sub Rural Health Care Centres, four Health Care Centres and three township health care centres in Chaungson township. The budget was proposed in the capital expenditure of the 2017-2018 fiscal year to construct sub Rural Health Care centres in Tawkana, DaungOu, Kalar village in Chaungson township.

Then, U Htein Win, MP for No. 4 Constituency in Ayeaywaddy Region, questioned why a new 16-bed hospital in DarKa village in Laikchaung village-tract in Ayeaywaddy Region has not been constructed yet after receiving approval.



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

The Union minister said the budget allocation for new projects is only 12 per cent of the total and it will be long-term project as it requires Ks47 billion more to finish the projects. As for setting priority lists, the townships which have the approved organisation chart will be first priority. The organisation chart for 16-bed hospitals is last in the approved list and not in the budget for 2017-18 fiscal year. The budget for a 16-bed hospital and housing for staff will be requested in the 2018-19 fiscal year. Then, U Kyaw Tote, MP for No. 7 Constituency in Mandalay Region, asked if there was a plan to construct housing for health staff who are serving in a 200-bed Hospital in NyaungU township in Mandalay Region.

The Union Minister explained that the Department of

Medical Services 's budget for 2017-18 included Ks 500 million to construct two two-story buildings for eight apartments and two two-story buildings for four apartments, which will be constructed after being approved.

Then the Union Minister replied to questions from U Aye Min Han, MP for Constituency 1 in Mon State asking if there was a plan for housing for the staff serving the office of public health in Mawlamying Township in Mon State, by Daw Shar Mu, MP for constituency 5 in Kayah State for whether there would be a plan for two-storey building for patients in Pharuso township, by U Kyin Khan Paung, MP for No. 6 constituency in Kayah State for if there is a plan to upgrade township health care centre from rural health care centre.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Coordination body for Rule of Law, justice holds meeting

A COORDINATION body for the Rule of Law Centres and Justice works held a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, focusing on measures to be taken for the rule of law and justice sectors and for achieving success in cooperation between Myanmar and international and local organisations.

U Htun Htun Oo, Union Attorney-General, delivered an opening address, in his capacity as the chairman of the committee, expressed the body's readiness to coordinate with authorities, internal and international organisations in order to effectively implement the tasks for the rule of law and justice in Myanmar.

The body would invite organisations which are taking part in the rule of law and justice sectors to implement its mandate, which includes holding discussions with Rule of Law Centres and Justice Centres and making decisions, coordinating for training, sharing of funds and technical assistance in accordance with directives of the Development Assistance Coordination Unit-DACU and taking measures tasked occasionally by

the Union Government, he said.

Meanwhile, the Union Attorney-General Office has adopted a strategic plan with the assistance of the UNDP under the objective "Moving Forward to the Rule of Law".

Besides, the Union Attorney-General Office, joining hands with the Supreme Court of the Union, has been establishing pilot courts and pilot law officers, and so far rule of law officers has been set up in Yangon, Mandalay, Myitkyina and Taunggyi and plans to establish three more offices in the future.

He also said that My Justice program is being carried out with the assistance of the EU, expressing his hope for achieving success in the rule of law and justice sectors.

During the meeting, programmes for coordination between the authorities and NGOs were discussed extensively.

The meeting was also participated by officials of the UNDP and My Justice Team and invited guests.

The coordination body was formed on 9th February, 2017, with 17 members.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar President's Office

Order 3/2017

12th Waning of Tabodwe, 1378 ME

23 February, 2017

### Resignation of Mon State Chief Minister approved

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 264 (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 52 (a) (b) of Region or State Government Law, U Min Min Oo, Mon State Chief Minister and Mon State Minister for State Development and Construction, has been permitted to resign from the positions of State Chief Minister and State Minister.

*Sd/ Htin Kyaw*

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar President's Office

Order 4/2017

12th Waning of Tabodwe, 1378 ME

23 February, 2017

### Appointment of Kayah State Security and Border Affairs Minister

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 262 (a) (2), (b) (e) (f), article 264 (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 19 (c), section 82 (c) of Union Government Law and Section 8 (a) Sub-section (2) (b) (f) (g), Section 56 (a) of Region or State Government Law, Colonel Zaw Myo Tin, Kayah State Security and Border Affairs Minister, has been returned to unit to perform the original military duties and replaced with Colonel Myint Wai, No 14 Tatmadaw Advanced Training School, who has been appointed as Kayah State Security and Border Affairs Minister.

*Sd/ Htin Kyaw*

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

## U San Lwin appointed concurrently as Ambassador to Albania

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U San Lwin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Austria, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Albania.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## MYANMAR GAZETTE

### Appointment of head of services organization

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Maung Maung Kyaw, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Union Government's Office under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, as Director-General of the Department of Labour on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## State Counsellor receives ambassadors of Denmark, United States of America

STATE Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Ambassadors of Denmark and the United States of America and Deputy Head of Mission of United Kingdom in the afternoon of 23 February 2017 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the discussion, they exchanged views on matters related to Rakhine State and developments on peace and national reconciliation.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi talks to ambassadors of Denmark and US and Deputy Head of Mission of UK. PHOTO: MNA

## JCB reaches six agreements

>> FROM PAGE 1

those who have not yet done so to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to the Panglong Conference-21st Century Panglong.

She expressed thanks to the participants for the negotiation and debate during the meeting, calling for seeking solutions in the peace process through debate and negotiations.

The meeting was attended by: Union Minister U Kyaw Tint

Swe; Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr Tin Myo Win; Lt-Gen Yar Pyai; Lt-Gen Ye Aung; U Htun Htun Oo; Chairperson of the Ethnic Affairs Committee of Amyotha Hluttaw Daw Shilar Nan Taung; Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Saw Tin Win., Also in attendance were representatives of the signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement including: Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, General Secretary of KNU;

U Khun Okka, Patron of PNLO; members of the Delegation for Political Negotiations (DPN) of the non-signatories to the NCA Nai Aung Mangay, Ku Plu Rah and U Tun Zaw, Adviser Daw Khaung Nang, U San Lau, head of the external affairs department of the Wa Special Region-2 and U Kham Maung of the peace and organising committee of the Special Region-4, Mongla.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## State Counsellor seeks change in Myanmar's . . .

>> FROM PAGE 1

so that all the leading implementers who set up policies and teachers must encourage "the desire to learn" mindset and they themselves need to have the desire to learn in order to be able to spread this sentiment widely among the youth. She said that teachers must be desirous of learning and have the desire for life-long learning so that all the learners will become inspired with the similar mood. Therefore, whatever plan is to be developed, all the participants need to lead the vision for success.

She said that it was very important for all the leading implementers of the education project to keep the mindset that they have a lot to learn.

"The people who think they know everything cannot continuously learn," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said. "Only self-learning teachers and the project leaders can lead to a nationwide mindset to be more desirous of learning. The learning will start when we are humble ourselves and say we need to learn a lot more."

We need to have confidence that we are capable of doing matters that we need to know and for the children to have the mindset that they still need to know a lot

of things. However, they would not develop their learning mindset if the parents and teachers do not encourage their desire for learning. The problem of older people is that they think themselves perfect and have no more desire to learn.

The State Counsellor said she will never be finished in pursuing education and everyone should have a mindset to continue learning as long as we live.

"The National Education Strategic Plan would not be difficult for the young and for adults to learn, if we understand well the fact that we must learn, and that we continue to learn. We want to learn, and how to learn," she said.

She wishes the teachers, through self-learning, can support the country, including children and adults who want to continue to learn the matters we need to know efficiently and hopes all the friendly helpers also have the same vision and can help with understanding.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said that she could serve effectively for the benefit of the country only after she had learnt about the needs and the challenges of the country and believed that her friends would also have the same mindset for the country.

She wished the participants would serve the new generation who believe that they must learn by having the "desire to learn" mindset to enable the nation to uplift its education system by all-inclusiveness, which is very important for the development of the country.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Education then handed over a remembrance gift to the State Counsellor to mark the initiatives of the National Education Strategic Plan.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi said that the aim of National Education Strategic Plan, 2016 -2021 was to distinctly improve the learning process of students with better teaching methods and for the development of vocational education, research and innovation.

Mr Nicholas Coppel, Australian Ambassador to Myanmar, and Mr Bertrand Bainvel, the UNICEF Representative to Myanmar on behalf of Allied Educational Organizations, explained the National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021). The State Counsellor, Region and State Ministers and responsible persons from Allied Education Organizations then posed for official photos.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Despite inaccessibility, Pankhaw Waterfall in Lashio crowded with tourists



Photo shows Pankhaw Waterfall in Lashio. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

MORE foreigners are showing interest in travel to Phankaw Waterfall, also known as Chaukhtet waterfall, located in Lashio Township in northern Shan State, according to tour operators.

The waterfall has received more interest not only from foreigners but also from local visitors since it became a travel destination beginning late last year.

Local tour operators estimate that the numbers of visitors are likely to increase during the Thingyan Festival (water

festival), which falls typically in April, prior to the Myanmar New Year Day.

During these days, especially on weekends, residents, students, visitors from other towns and international tourists flock to the waterfall.

Located about nine miles from Lashio, visitors to the waterfall has steadily increased, but transportation to the area is still difficult because of the poor condition of the roads that lead to the site. Visitors usually go

through Konnyaung and Panhome villages.

Another popular time is Chinese New Year, when the natural waterfall becomes packed with visitors, said Daw Garbouk, a local seller.

Khay Ma Yiz, a university student, said; "I visit the waterfall with friends of mine with the help of local guide, planning to come to the natural area again on holidays as we like to see amazing natural environment here." —Myitmakha News Agency

## Second day of 5th and 9th grade exams in Maungtaw continues

STUDENTS from 5th grade and 9th grade all over Maungtaw Township happily participated in the second day of their final exams.

Altogether 51 examination units for the 5th grade and 22 examination units for 9th grade were opened in in the township with 3,705 5th grade students and 1,857 9th grade students participating.

"In previous years there were only 42 units for 5th grade and 14 units for 9th grade but we increased the number to 8 and 9 units respectively for easier access by the students. We also assisted in transportation for the students.

The answer papers will be reviewed and marked by the examination officers and one other official in each unit and the sheets

are to be locked up for security.

We will send those answer sheets to the Rakhine State Education Department immediately if possible and for those villages that cannot easily access to the state department will be collected by departmental officials after the exams," said U Khin Maung, Head of Maungtaw Township Education Department. —Myanmar News Agency

## Maubin to have 30 megawatt of solar power by March

MAUBIN town will be supplied with solar power of 30 megawatts in March, according to Rising Myanmar Development Foundation.

When we get the profit from supplying the electricity, we will build the bridges, open the clinics, dig the wells and build the classrooms for schools from our profit.

"The Thailand company invested in the electricity sector. Many companies have offered to invest in the electricity sector. Among those companies, we will choose the company which can

really support the electricity sector. We have already got the approval from Ayeyawady region government to start the project in accordance with the rules and regulations," said Rising Myanmar Development Foundation CEO U Muang Kwin.

The solar system meter charges will be Ks 200 per unit.

"We need the electricity power in the Maubin industry zone. So, we are conducting the project jointly with the foreign investment companies. We will change the meter charges every five years," he added.

The regional government will use 150 acres of land for a 30 mw solar power system. We will cooperate with the local land owners and we have already got the approval from regional government. The project is a 40-year-old project.

Ayeyawady region government will spend US\$1 billion on buying the bank insurance for the solar power system.

The government will keep diesel engines and spare parts to be used when the solar system breaks down.—Myitmakha News Agency

## Crime NEWS

### Fugitive suspected of drugs crimes and robbery captured

A 37-year old fugitive suspected of drugs crimes and robbery who dramatically escaped on 16 February while police were trying to arrest him in Southern Dagon Myothit in Yangon Region was finally arrested yesterday in Min Bu township, Magwe Region.

The fugitive Nagarlay, also known as Aung Naing Myint, escaped while police blockaded the building in which he was hiding after they were informed that the fugitive was near a car workshop at the junction of Hlawkar street and Oathar pagoda street in No. 20 ward in southern Dagon Myo Thit.

He escaped by driving a car through the blockade as police opened fire. His escape vehi-

cle, a Nissan X-Trail, was later found again in a paddy field in the west of Kyisu ward in Dagon Myothit (SeinKan) township.

Police Deputy Superintendent, Police Captain Nyo Pu from the Crime Assist Department of the Yangon Police Force and his team were investigating the possible places where he could hide and were informed that he was at his aunt Daw Cho Pyone's house in Magyi Chaung 4 ward in Min Bu Township.

Myanmar Police and officers from the Crime Department of Minbu District arrested him as he was driving a Honda Fit at 8:30 am yesterday. The vehicle was confiscated. —Zawgyi (Panita)



Nagarlay shackled beside his car. PHOTO: MPF

### Illegal timber seized in Lashio

FOREST police and employees from the Forestry Department stopped and searched a twelve-wheeled Nissan vehicle driven by Kyaw Tun, 42, en route from Mandalay to Muse at Lashio in Shan State on Monday morning.

Authorities found and seized

18 Padauk logs weighing 1.8840 tonnes and 12 Padauk sawn timber weighing 0.6298 tonnes.

Lashio Police filed charges against Kyaw Tun under the section 6 (1) of the Public Property Protection Act. —Myanmar Police Force

### Buddha statue thieves arrested

PATROLLING police officers from Myomazay stopped two men they considered suspicious on the road near Myomazay police outpost in Lashio, Shan State on Tuesday morning and found six Buddha images from the bags of Aung Sar, 20, and Lauk Phyin, 29, living at Lwai Wein and Lwai Hsa villages, respectively.

The heights of the six Buddha icons are 8.5 inches, 7 inches, 8 inches, 6.5 inches and 3.5 inches. They allegedly stole the Buddha images from a monastery in Lwai Wun village.

Lashio Police have taken action against the two suspects under section 380/295 of the Penal Code.—Myanmar Police Force

# LOCAL Business

## Myanmar specialty coffee to be exhibited in US in April

MYANMAR will take part in an international competition to assess the quality of its coffee beans in April in Seattle, Washington, US, according to the Myanmar Coffee Association.

This will be the second time Myanmar will compete in the US Coffee Championships for specialty coffee status, said U Ye Myint, chairman of the MCA.

A local coffee contest will be held on 23 February in Ywangan, a town in southern Shan State, prior to the international contest. It will be judged by international coffee experts

to ensure fairness. After the competition, the top rated coffee beans will be contested in the championships in the US.

Coffee beans manufactured from Ywangan were exhibited for the first time in the US last year, when 56 coffee samples scored in the specialty. This is a major reason for the country participating in the international contest.

Coffee plants are mainly grown in Ywangan and Nawng-hkio of Shan State as well as PyinOoLwin and Mogok in Mandalay Region, Taungoo in Bago Region and Chin State.—200

## Myanmar Sterculia gums fetched up to Ks40,000 a viss due to demand from China, India

With the demand from China and India, Myanmar Sterculia gum (locally called Saekalamat) fetched up to Ks40,000 per viss, according to the news from the Commerce Ministry.

The prevailing prices range from Ks35,000 to Ks40,000 per viss for A quality, whereas B quality fetched Ks25,000 to Ks30,000 per viss and C quality gum sells for Ks15,000 to nearly Ks20,000 per viss, it is learnt. Myanmar Sterculia comes from deciduous trees grown for their edible roots, wood, fibre and gum.

“The market this year is better than previous years,” said U Aung Aung Soe, who grows Sterculia versicolor on a commercial scale in Mandalay. “Indian merchants even come here to purchase the gum and they offer a good price depending on the quality.

Five to ten ticals of gum

can be yielded from a five-year old plant, which can regularly produce from July to December. Over a viss can be produced from the perennial plant, it is learnt.

The gum is utilised especially in the food and snacks business and also in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, printing and clothing enterprises. It is also used in traditional medicine.

This plant, naturally grown, is mostly found in the Mandalay, Sagaing and Magwe regions but now the plants are becoming scarce from deforestation. Locals have experimentally cultivated the plant in the compound of the farms or the houses, which reaps the fruitful result.

The merchants export Myanmar Sterculia gum to Thailand, China and India through border trade camps.—Zar Lin Thu

## Community funding in Thilawa SEZ planned to use over US\$100,000

THE funding for community supported events for those living in Thilawa SEZ is over US\$100,000, said an official from Myanmar-Japan Thilawa Development Limited (MJTD).

Currently, the community supported events are being carried out in Thilawa SEZ, emphasising environmental conservation in keeping with international criteria.

Additionally, a wastewater treatment plant and factories for managing industrial waste will also be established. The disposed water will be regularly checked, it is learnt.

Thilawa SEZ is the very first special economic zone developed in Myanmar. The permitted companies to invest in Thilawa SEZ have created over 15,000 jobs.—200

## About 600 private fuel stations seeking permits

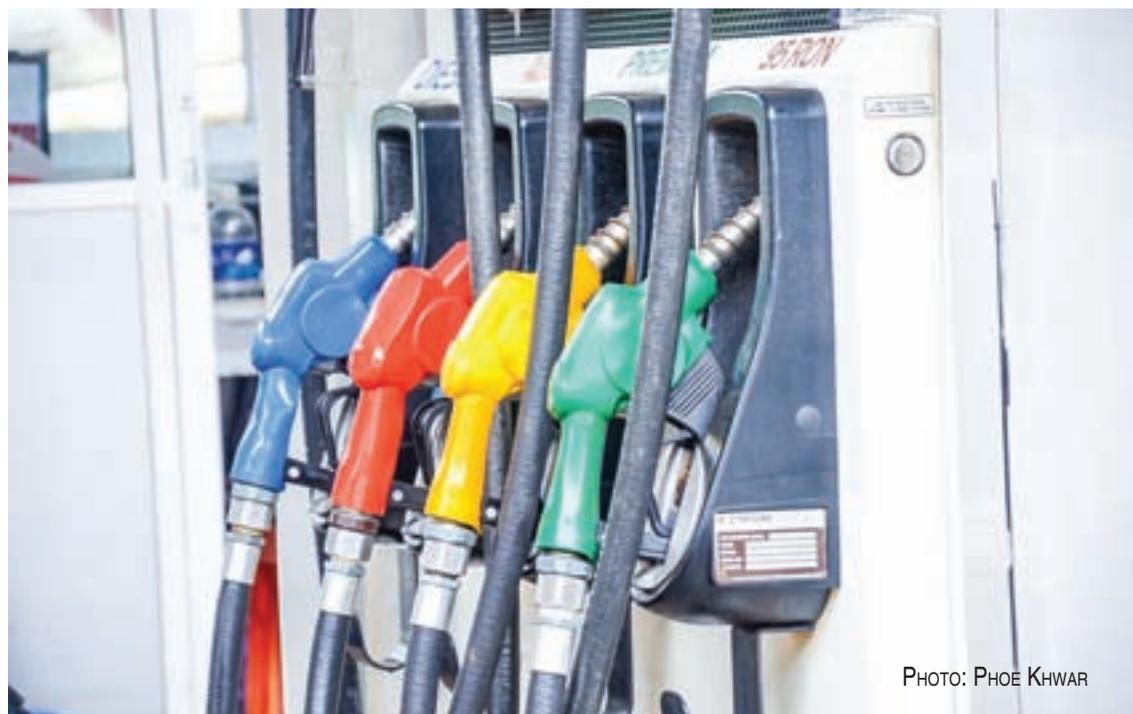


PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

PERMITS to open about 600 private fuel stations in Yangon are being sought, which could alleviate the paucity of petrol stations in the region.

There are currently 2,065 fuel stations across the country, but only about 150 fuel stations in Yangon because the land and real property values in Yangon are excessively high, entrepreneurs said. In addition, there is the necessity of a permit from the

Yangon Region government.

Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPE), under the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy, grants permits for private fuel stations by relaxation so as to meet the fuel consumption, said an official from MPPE. Fuel stations in other regions and states except Yangon are allowed to open as soon as possible after scrutiny. Mandalay is at the top of the list with

about 500 fuel stations, followed by Shan State with over 300 stations.

After privatisation of the fuel distribution, the number of fuel stations has grown. The prices of fuel oil per liter on 22nd Feb were Ks710 for diesel, Ks720 for Octane 92, Ks680 for Octane 95 and Ks730 for premium diesel in the Yangon market, according to a local fuel oil distributors association.—Ko Htet

## Japan to assist in Myanmar's SME development

JAPAN is keen on technology cooperation with Myanmar to enhance human resource services in the SME sector, said Mr. Yoshito Sengoku, the vice chair of Japan Myanmar Association (JMA) at the 4th Myanmar-Japan Business Matching held at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon yesterday.

“The statistics of income, expenditure and logistics is of vital importance in the business. Sharing technology is required for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),” Mr. Yoshito Sengoku said.

In a bid to improve SMEs in Myanmar, high schools that concentrate on industry, trade and agriculture are also required to be opened and the plan should proceed to universities, he continued.

The above statements should be the first priority to conduct the technology awareness, he stated.

Technology and capital is the key role in exerting efforts to effectuate the developments of SMEs. Japan and Myanmar are jointly making efforts to fulfil the requirements in this sector. The SMEs make up 95 per cent of Myanmar's enterprises. The government supported SMEs to improve with the formulation of policies.

Japan's SME network is unlike America's and the European Union's, which make profits in the short term. The SMEs from Japan produce with an aim to long-term benefit. There are 100-year-old SMEs in Japan, said Mr. Yoshito Sengoku.

Japan ranked at 11th in foreign direct investments in Myanmar as of 31st Jan 2017, with a total of 79 businesses investing US\$581.451million, it is learnt from this discussion.

Out of 79 foreign enterprises investing in Thilawa SEZ (A), forty firms are from Japan. According to the new Myanmar

Investment Law, the foreign investors can now enjoy the same opportunities as Myanmar citizens in some businesses, said U Thein Han, a vice chairperson of the UMFCCI.

In addition, JETRO and JICA branch offices are also being opened in Myanmar to help Japanese entrepreneurs who want to invest in Myanmar.

The Ministry of Industry is also striving to improve the private sector and also providing news and information to enhance SMEs. The efforts are being made to be able to produce value-added products. The is also cooperating with local and foreign organisations so that Myanmar SMEs can enter the international market, said Daw Aye Aye Win, the director-general of the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection.

It is the fourth discussion to link local entrepreneurs with Japanese businessmen for SME development.—Win Nanda

## Correction

A story on page 6 of yesterday's Global New Light of Myanmar contained the name U Hla Shwe, also known as U Aung Thar (PPP), in the story headlined "Meeting called for Students' Union building."

In fact, he did not attend the meeting and we apologise for the mistake.—  
*Ko Latt/Myanmar News Agency*

### Philippines' minister says Duterte agrees with ban on mining in watershed areas

MANILA — The Philippines' environment minister on Thursday said that President Rodrigo Duterte had supported her decision to bar mining in watershed areas at a meeting earlier this week.

"He said, 'I agree with you. Don't worry, you are my cabinet secretary and I also believe that there should be no mining in watershed,'" Regina Lopez told reporters

at a briefing, recalling her meeting with Duterte on Monday.

Lopez on Monday told Reuters she's standing by her decision to shut or suspend 28 of the country's 41 operating mines for environmental infractions, despite complaints from the mining industry. Many of them were located in watershed zones, she said.—*Reuters*

## China promised Philippines not to build in disputed shoal — Philippines' FM

MANILA — Chinese President Xi Jinping promised Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte that Beijing would not build structures on a rocky outcrop in the South China Sea, Foreign Minister Perfecto Yasay said on Thursday.

Frosty ties between the two countries have improved as Duterte shifts away from traditional ally the United States and closer to Beijing, though the news came a day after China's commerce minister postponed an official trip to the Philippines.

Yasay said Xi's pledge was made during a meeting with Duterte in Beijing in October, after Manila raised the issue, in response to US intelligence reports suggesting China was sending dredging ships to the area.

"President Xi has promised President Duterte they will not reclaim and

build structures on Scarborough Shoal," Yasay told reporters.

He was responding to a query about a Reuters report that China is close to completing structures on its manmade islets that appear designed to house long-range surface-to-air missiles.

China also allowed Filipino fishermen to return to Scarborough Shoal after Duterte's state visit, for the first time since Beijing seized control of the area in 2012 and denied fishermen access to its rich fishing grounds.

It would be a "game changer" if China broke its promise, Yasay said, but added he was confident Beijing would keep its word.

In Beijing, China's foreign ministry spokesman said the two sides had reached an important consensus during Duterte's

visit to appropriately handle disputes and pursue joint development.

"The two sides have already returned to the correct path of friendly bilateral consultations to appropriately handle the South China Sea issue," Geng Shuang said. "Cooperation between the two countries in all areas is flourishing."

But he criticised Yasay's recent remarks, saying they "run counter to the countries' high-level consensus".

"They do not accord with the current healthy and rapid development of China-Philippines relations," he added.

"They do not accord with the current overall stable situation in the South China Sea or regional countries' joint desire to safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea."

China started reclaim-

ing seven features it occupied in the Spratly islands immediately after the Philippines filed an arbitration case in the Hague in 2013, questioning its expansive claims to almost the entire South China Sea.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam also claim the strategic waterway, through which about \$5 trillion worth of ship-borne goods pass every year. It is also believed to be rich in oil and gas deposits.

China has built three airstrips and had been converting the manmade islands into garrisons, setting up anti-air missiles and air defence radars, against which Manila protested in December. Manila would file another protest if it could confirm China was completing missile sites on its manmade islands, Yasay added.—*Reuters*

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## China, India hold strategic dialogue in Beijing

BEIJING — China and India held a strategic dialogue in Beijing on Wednesday, during which they pledged to enhance cooperation.

According to a press release issued by Chinese Foreign Ministry on

Thursday, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui and Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar co-chaired the dialogue. The two sides agreed to cement coordination on international and regional affairs and prop-

erly deal with differences and sensitive issues. They upheld that China and India have similar national conditions and share common interests, so there is huge potential for bilateral cooperation.

On Wednesday, Chi-

nese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also met with Jaishankar. Wang said the two sides should advance strategic contact and reinforce mutual trust to contribute to regional and global prosperity and stability.—*Xinhua*

## Freight train derails in Hokkaido, disrupts passenger transportation

SAPPORO — A freight train derailed in Hokkaido early Thursday, disrupting passenger train services connecting Sapporo and Hakodate, the train operator said.

The driver of the train found one of its two locomotives had derailed between Toya and Usu stations on the JR Muroran Line around 4 a.m. after noticing an abnormal noise, according to Japan Freight Railway Co.

Several wheels at the rear end of the locomotive in question had come off the tracks, according to the operator and Hokkaido Railway Co., which owns the tracks.

The transport ministry's railway accident investigation panel has sent three investigators to the scene.

The two locomotives were pulling 17 freight cars en route from Tokyo



A freight train seen in this photo taken 23 February, 2017, derailed in Hokkaido in the early morning of that day, disrupting passenger train services connecting Sapporo and Hakodate. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

to Sapporo at the time of the derailment. The train had been running around 70 km per hour before the driver stopped it. The driver was the only person in the train and was not injured in the incident.

The locomotive in question was built in 1997 and last examined at the end of December. The tracks in the area were last inspected early December without any abnormality detected, according to JR Hokkaido.

Both inbound and outbound tracks on the Muroran Line have been closed, forcing over 40 services, including limited express services connecting Sapporo and Hakodate, to be cancelled.—*Kyodo News*

# Indian sungazers keep up family tradition for four generations

KODAIKANAL, (India) — In the early morning darkness, Devendran P. walks up a hill to a solar observatory in India's southern hill town of Kodaikanal, trudging the same path his father and grandfather walked in a century-old family tradition of studying the sun.

Once inside, he pulls a rope to open shutters in the dome and positions a six-inch telescope used since 1899 to photograph the sun and preserve a daily record of its activity.

"The sun, like stars, has a lifetime of 10 billion years," Devendran told Reuters during a recent visit to the observatory in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu.

"If you want to know about any small changes, you need to have a large amount of data."

The observatory run by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics has a key role in providing a



Volumes of observation records are seen inside the library at the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory, India, on 3 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

continuous stream of data on the sun and its influence on Earth and surrounding space, said R. Ramesh, a professor at the institute.

"Some of the discoveries made, based on data obtained in the Kodaikanal observatory, are

so fundamental to solar physics that they vastly improved techniques used at observatories even today," Ramesh said.

The Evershed effect of gas motion in sunspots, discovered in 1909 by the then director of the observatory, John Evershed,

is one such example, he added.

In the observatory library, shelves stretch to the ceiling, packed with volumes of handwritten records and thousands of film plates of the sun. Authorities have launched a project to digitise and preserve the data collected over the past century.

Devendran's grandfather, Parthasarathy, joined the observatory in 1900, a year after it relocated from Madras, the state capital, to Kodaikanal, situated more than 2,000 meters (6,562 feet) above sea level, offering ideal weather to study the sun.

Like his father and grandfather, Devendran has no formal education in astronomy. His interest was piqued during a visit to the observatory when he was a child.

He became a fulltime sun-watcher in 1986 and says the six-inch (15-cm) telescope has never failed his family.

"It has never required any major overhaul, or change of parts, because we all take care of it," he said.

More than three decades of observation has made him feel close to the sun, despite its distance of more than 149 million kms (93 million miles) from Earth. It's a feeling enhanced by the devout family's worship of the Hindu sun god Surya, he said.

"I feel more religious than other people, as I can see that there is a universal power which is controlling everything," he said.

His 23-year-old son, Rajesh, expects to carry on the family tradition, but with one difference. He has a master's degree in physics.

"I get amazed by what my father does here," said Rajesh. "I think observing the Sun is in my blood."—Reuters

## Japan protests Russian military buildup plan in decades-old islands dispute

TOKYO — Japan has protested to Russia over its plan to boost troop strength on disputed islands, Japan's top government spokesman said on Thursday, the latest move in a territorial row that has overshadowed ties since World War II.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference the government was closely monitoring Russia's actions and analysing information.

"If the move leads to the reinforcement of Russian military on the islands, it would be incompatible with Japan's stance and it is regrettable as they are inherently our territory," he said.

Suga made the comment after media reports that Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu talked about a plan to deploy a military division to the islands, including areas Japan claims as its territory, this year.

The islands in the Western Pacific, called the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kuriles in Russia, were seized by Soviet forces at the end of World War II when 17,000 Japanese residents were forced to flee.

Suga said Russia's military plan would be on the agenda when defence and foreign ministers from the two countries are due to meet in Tokyo on

20 March.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin met last December and struck numerous economic deals but failed to achieve a breakthrough on the islands.

Abe is expected to visit Russia this year to speed up talks to resolve the dispute and try to conclude a peace treaty officially ending World War II hostilities.

He has pledged to resolve the dispute in the hope of leaving a significant diplomatic legacy and building better ties with Russia to counter a rising China.—Reuters

## South Korea, US, Japan to hold nuclear talks on Monday in Washington



The top nuclear envoys of South Korea, the United States and Japan hold talks in Seoul, on 13 December 2016 to discuss ways to denuclearize North Korea following the latest sanctions imposed on Pyongyang by the UN Security Council and unilateral sanctions by the three allies. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

SEOUL — South Korea, the United States and Japan are scheduled to hold a meeting of their head delegates to the long-stalled six-party talks on North Korea's denuclearization on Monday in Washington, the South Korean Foreign Ministry said Thursday.

The upcoming talks will be held between Kim Hong Kyun, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs at South Korea's Foreign Ministry, Joseph Yun, US special representative for North Korea policy, and Kenji Kanasugi, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, spokesman Cho June Hyuck said during a press briefing.

Cho described the meeting as "very timely" as it will be the first of its kind under the new US administration of President Donald Trump and will also occur shortly after North Korea launched a ballistic missile on 12 February, and

also after the estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was apparently assassinated in Malaysia last week.

The participants are expected to discuss the situation on the Korean Peninsula and ways to make joint responses to possible North Korean provocations.

They will also discuss ways to implement UN Security Council resolutions and sanctions imposed on Pyongyang separately by each country, and "concrete and substantive" ways to induce North Korea to the "sincere and significant path of denuclearization," Cho said.

The upcoming meeting between the three top nuclear envoys is to follow up on a similar meeting they held in Seoul in December.

The six-party talks involving the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, China and Russia, have been deadlocked since late 2008.—Kyodo News



Men walk in Malokurilskoye settlement on the Island of Shikotan, one of four islands known as the Southern Kuriles in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan, on 19 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

# Opinion

## Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email [ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com](mailto: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.

## We will succeed if we are committed and work hard!

**Khin Maung Oo**

IT is a common saying in our everyday expressions. We want to say that success has not come to us yet, as we have not really worked hard for what we aspire. Human beings are creatures who can create the avant-garde and accomplish their aspirations. They have the ability to do even something impossible, to perfection. There is a way if there is a will, on one condition that we need to implement it.

We have been asked to work hard for our country to reach the state of a developed nation. Now, we are seeing our leaders performing development tasks. If we devote ourselves to our aspirations, our hopes will soon be fulfilled. Yet, many say that our will power is brief, like a burning straw fire.

It means that we are extremely eager at the very beginning but our eagerness tends to fizzle out finally.

We have seen that the current government has been exerting concerted efforts in working for the socio-economic development of the people, with the slogan, "Time to change." In less than a one year period, the government has been tackling the most urgent problems with "cetana", determination and energy.

In actually changing a society, it will not succeed just by depending wholly upon a respective organization alone. It will be successful only if there is people's participation.

Now, our changes are no longer like straw fire. Our leaders are all working hard for

change and we are seeing people following the path of change willingly. But, some have failed to notice the changes, or follow the path and join in people's participation, until now.

Therefore, we must try our best for all the people to actively take part in all activities. Those who fail to perform their duties for the change process are to be educated. In accord with rules and disciplines, necessary actions must be taken. In doing so, organizations should perform in accord with rules and regulations, and simultaneously welcome the co-operation of volunteers and civil society organizations, so that the necessary tasks can be accomplished, without being likened to straw fire. With the increasing participation of peo-

ple, we can see the actual triumph of a region, then of a town, and then of an urban area and the whole country's development. Then no one can say any longer that we cannot keep abreast with other developed countries.

Actual aspiration, eagerness, ebullience and willingness to participate are of great importance. Success can be achieved only if we implement any task according to the prescribed disciplines, so we must try hard to learn to follow changes exactly without reluctance. Provided that we conduct our duties like this, our aims for our country to reach the state of other developed countries will come true. We will succeed if we are committed and work hard.

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

*(Continued from 23-2-2017 issued)*

In the research pipeline are beta carotene-enriched rice, insect-resistant eggplant and cotton and virus-resistant papaya. Golden Rice is undergoing field trials now. Bt eggplant would be expected to increase incomes by increasing yields, and also by reducing insecticide use by as much as 48 percent. The virus-resistant papaya is projected to increase returns by 275 percent more than conventional papaya (Yorobe, 2009).

In Pakistan, after six years of commercial cultivation, 93 percent of its cotton is biotech. It's estimated that the economic gains from 2010-2014 was US\$1.9 billion and US\$299 million for 2014 alone. Pakistan has about 900 pending applications from the public sector for various stages of field trials, showing its robust research but slow regulatory process. Viet Nam approved cultivation of Bt corn in 2015. Myanmar is the only Asian country that grows biotech crops legally without a national biosafety law or guidelines. Bt cotton was first cultivated in 2006 and has resulted in significant benefits for the farmers such as high crop yield, reduced input cost, increase profits, and less exposure to pesticides.

Indonesia, the second largest raw sugar importing country in the world, is most likely the next country in Asia to grow biotech crops. In 2013, it issued food and environmental safety certificates for the country's first home-grown GM drought tolerant sugarcane with commercial planting expected within the next year. Biotech soybean, corn and rice are already undergoing research.

Malaysia is unique among Asian countries. Agriculture only contributed 7.3 percent to the country's GDP in 2010 and is in decline. It's a major importer of food and feed and does not have a big seed industry. While Malaysia was proactive in developing its biosafety law and has a strong commitment to advance modern biotechnology, commercial cultivation is still not a reality. Many scientists are still not used to the tedious regulatory procedures and have given up on GM research. Also, research on biotech crops is done on an ad-hoc basis with no long term vision. Most biotech crops already in the market elsewhere are not suited for Malaysian climate. Bt corn might be the closest for adoption but some studies conclude that importing it is more economically feasible than growing it locally, but the government is now revisiting its plan to grow grain corn.

### Asian Agriculture and Biotechnology Facts

More than 2.2 billion people in the region rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Source: ADB (2009)

The stagnant and declining yields of major crops such as rice and wheat can be ultimately linked to declining investments in agriculture. Public investments in agriculture in India, for instance, have been generally the same since 2004. Source: ADB (2012)

In 2015, it was estimated that biotech crops were grown on 19.7 million hectares of land in Asia – making it the fastest adopted crop technology. Source: James (2015)

Three of the top ten countries planting biotech crops in 2015 were in Asia. India grew more than 11.6 million hectares of cotton, the People's Republic of China planted 3.7 million hectares of cotton, papaya and poplar, while Pakistan farmed 2.9 million hectares of cotton. Source: James (2015)

Food and feed crop demand will nearly double in the coming 50 years. Producing meat, milk, sugar, oils, and vegetables typically requires more water than producing cereals – and a different style of water management. Source: Molden (2007)

There is significant potential for biotech corn in Asia, especial-

ly in China, where 35 million hectares could be grown once approved and adopted. Source: James (2015)

By the third quarter of 2016, the combined rice stocks of India and Thailand have been projected by IRRI to be around 70 percent lower than in 2013. Source: Mohanty (2016).

### Biotech Papaya Resistant to Ringspot Virus Illustrates Asian Anti-GM Activism

The lack of food security persists in Asia, with farmers struggling to combat low yields, diseases, high production costs, environmental footprints and occupational health hazards due to exposure to chemicals. These problems—many of which could be significantly addressed using crop biotechnology, have not stopped anti-GM activists from crusading against GMOs and biotech crops in Asia. These campaigns are orchestrated almost entirely by foreign organizations with external funding from developed countries, either from affluent Western governments or non-government organizations (NGOs).

The local organizations in each country are well funded by international NGOs. Greenpeace, whose huge budget surpasses the R&D expenses of many countries, channels millions of dollars

to splinter groups in developing countries. Major efforts against GMOs are also carried out by "consumer" associations, which often peddle misrepresentations about GM crops. Organic groups and industry also play a role in creating fear about GM technology. The photos below show blatant lies and unethical scaremongering tactics.

Thailand's failure in commercializing biotech papaya resistant to ringspot virus illustrates the impact of anti-GM activism. In 2007, activists donned goggles, gloves and respiratory masks and uprooted ringspot resistant papaya in a field trial. Greenpeace demonstrators wearing zombie fruit suits dumped 10 metric tons of papaya in front of the Ministry of Agriculture building. These protests set into motion a country-wide moratorium on all field testing of biotech crops that remains in force.

Activists often speak for farmers without any consultation with them or understanding of the challenges in agriculture. Throughout 2007, activists demonstrated against biotech papaya.

Thai woman trying to save the last diseased papaya tree in her backyard. She never got to see ringspot virus resistant papaya.

SEE PAGE 9 >>

## First child kidney transplants in Myanmar today

TWO children will undergo kidney transplantation for the first time in Myanmar at the Urine and Kidney Ward of the 300-bed children's hospital in Mandalay today and tomorrow, said Dr. Aung Kyaw Oo, Chief Medical Officer of the Mandalay Children's Hospital.

The kidney transplant surgery will be jointly undertaken by the health education unit, the pediatric surgery unit, the Mandalay Kidney Transplant Team and the Singapore Organ Transplant Team.

"The children whose kidneys are no longer functioning properly need to have kidney transplants, which is better than cleansing the kidneys (dialysis) regularly. This is the first time for child kidney transplants in Myanmar. We will operate the kidney transplant on children who are suffering from chronic kidney diseases," Dr. Aung Kyaw Oo added.

The Ministry of Health and Sports granted approval for kidney transplants to be done at the



Nurses work at the Urine and Kidney Ward in Mandalay. PHOTO: MDY DAILY

300-bed children's hospital in Mandalay on 10 June, 2016, but no operations have been attempted until today. The kidney transplant team involves 22 physicians and surgeons. "There might be some complications with the kidney transplant operation because we have to transplant the adult kidney into children's bodies. But we are all eager to do the opera-

tion. We hope that the operation will be successful," said Professor Min Thu, a Urine and Kidney transplant surgeon at the Mandalay hospital. The government has provided Ks16 million for the operation. After the surgery, two physicians will monitor the children. Officials said more donors are needed for future kidney operations.—*Mdy Daily*

## Mandalay Region gov't workshop for draft policies to enhance regional economic development held

MANDALAY Region government held a workshop on Tuesday with an aim to receive suggestions on the draft policies to enhance regional economic development.

The draft policies have been formulated in accordance with national-level guidance in order to adopt better policies in the agricultural, hotels and tourism and SME sectors for Mandalay regional economic development.

Dr Zaw Myint Maung, Mandalay Region Chief Minister, delivered an opening speech stating that the purpose of this workshop was to receive policy suggestions from the foreign and local experts in attendance.

"Vision plays an important role in our activities. The basic policies were formulated on the basis of regional strong points to effectuate the economic development in Mandalay region.

I encourage the local and foreign experts and regional Hluttaw Representatives to discuss openly and transparently the procedures which can support the regional development," he added.

Mr. Steve Parker, project manager from the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID), gave a speech and Ms. Linda Filponi, an economist and a visiting professor at Yangon University of Economics, discussed how to create an economic environment.

A draft policy for small and medium-sized enterprises was explained by U Myo Htut Swe, a team leader of policy drafting for regional SME development and head of Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection from Mandalay Region.

U Khin Maung Shwe, the head of Mandalay Region Hotels and Tourism Development, explained a draft policy regarding tourism industry in detail. Similarly, a draft policy for agriculture by U Kyin Maung, head of Mandalay Region Agricultural Department, a draft policy to construct system and framework for transparency and accountability by U Soe Lin from Mandalay City Development Committee and U Khin Maung Htwe, a researcher were presented.

Additionally, the attendees discussed the matters for these sectors in four groups and the representatives concerned supplemented the outcome from the discussion, it is learnt.—*Mdy Daily*

## Consultancy service to solve SME problems

CONSULTANCY services will be provided from the end of February to solve problems being faced by small and medium enterprises by the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (DISI).

The consultancy will be

provided jointly by Hamsahub Co., Ltd, a Germany Company and DISI. Myanmar has already signed an MoU with another company from South Korea.

Myanmar is being offered more and more by foreign companies to provide consultant ser-

vices with the development of economic sector in Myanmar.

"We provide solutions to the problems of the businessmen," said Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection Director-General Daw Aye Aye Win.—*200*

## Asian agrobiotechnology ...

>> FROM PAGE 8

India is an epicenter for anti-GM activists who have effectively blocked the introduction of new GM crops beyond Bt cotton. Thousands of movements rally for organic farming and against GM crops, effectively blocking their approval. The NGOs most successful strategy has been filing petitions to the Supreme Court, invoking the precautionary principle to seek moratoria on the release of GMOs. As a result, some important GM crops such as Bt eggplant, barstar-barnase, hybrid mustard and golden rice are still awaiting clearance for field trials (Kumar, et.al. 2014)

The Supreme Court permanently stopped field testing of Bt eggplant in 2015. The petition was initiated by a group of scientists, farmers and individuals backed by major international NGOs. Prior to the adoption of Bt corn, NGOs mobilized churches and used religious sentiment to lobby against approvals. There has been a backlash against some activist NGOs. In a milestone decision in 2015, the Indian government froze the bank account of Greenpeace, a vocal campaigner against GM foods, for misreporting funds and using unaccounted foreign aid to stall national development projects. The government has also launched a crack-

down against foreign inflow of money into the country and NGO funding sources are carefully monitored.

Philippines has a strong anti-GM movement and has caused losses to farmers in the millions of dollars. In a milestone decision, the Philippines Supreme Court reversed its decision to halt field trials of Bt brinjal after an appeal by farmers, scientists and other agriculture advocates, who asked the high court to reconsider its December 2015 ruling permanently stopping Bt brinjal field trials.

Pakistan has had its share of scaremongering, carried out in pockets, largely through mass mailings targeting authorities that approve biotech crops and companies that develop them. Character assassination is one of their strategies. Both in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the media plays an important role in creating the negative perception about biotech crops. In spite of the success of Bt eggplant in Bangladesh, news articles with inaccurate reports make the rounds, falsely reporting that the crop is a failure, despite its overwhelming success.

Strategies of Anti-GM Activists: My Personal Account

Science literacy is low among the general populace. Throughout my 12-year career as a biotechnol-

ogy communicator, I have seen the following anti-GM NGO strategies: creating fear; creating doubts; cherry picking data; character assassination; hiding behind anonymous letters; reluctance to attend open discussion; and shutting down meetings when challenged.

My personal encounters provide an insight into the moral view of the activists. At a global meeting on biological diversity in Japan, an activist spoke on why India should not adopt Bt eggplant, but was ignorant about the crop and when asked, could not answer the number of times eggplants are sprayed with pesticides before harvest—a clear example of someone "Speaking FOR farmers and NOT TO farmers".

Below is an exchange I had, also in Japan, with an activist from South Africa, on her claim that Africa should not adopt biotech crops because almost all farms are small.

Me: Do you want African farmers to be smallholder farmers forever?

Activist: That is not for me to answer. Let the farmers decide.

Industry: What do you want ag biotech companies to do in Africa?

Activist: Pack your bags and leave Africa.

Me: Why are you deciding for farmers? You should remain with your earlier position that farmers need to decide for themselves. Let your farmers tell companies to

leave or to stay.

Activist: We do not have time for further discussion. We are wrapping up. (She literally ran away).

The moral of the story is that farmers, politicians, policymakers, regulators and the general public must understand the ulterior motives of many anti-GM activists, most of whom are foreigners. They attempt to decide for countries that are thousands of miles away from where they live and for farmers who they have never interacted with.

### Way Forward for Asia

Only a focused political effort will move agro biotechnology forward in Asia. Countries should shed their activist-inspired aversion towards the private sector and not fall for the false claim that corporations are establishing a trade monopoly, especially because most of their GM products are being developed by the government. The 18 million farmers who are growing biotech crops are not foolish. Private-public participation to meet the demand of the farmers and enhance research collaboration is a prerequisite to modernize the agricultural sector.

Regulations need to be put in place in Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. The region is rich with agricultural experience and it should not be difficult to develop national legal instruments and risk assessment and management pro-

ocols.

The most critical factor is to raise awareness so the public can distinguish between science and pseudoscience, understand the safety and environmental issues and more importantly understand the agenda of the activists and their motives. Politicians, policymakers and regulators should be the key focus of public awareness and understanding initiatives.

Mahaletchumy Arujanan is the Executive Director of Malaysian Biotechnology Information Centre (MABIC) and Editor-in-Chief of The Petri Dish, the first science newspaper in Malaysia. She is also an Adjunct Lecturer at Monash University, Malaysia. She was listed as one of the world's 100 most influential people in biotechnology by Scientific American Worldview 2015. She uses her Facebook page to promote science literacy.

The Genetic Literacy Project is a 501(c)(3) non profit dedicated to helping the public, journalists, policy makers and scientists better communicate the advances and ethical and technological challenges ushered in by the biotechnology and genetics revolution, addressing both human genetics and food and farming. We are one of two websites overseen by the Science Literacy Project; our sister site, the Epigenetics Literacy Project, addresses the challenges surrounding emerging data-rich technologies.

# Astronomers find seven Earth-size planets where life is possible



Space Telescope Science Institute astronomer Nikole Lewis uses a graphic to compare the size of Earth (bottom) with a recent discovery of an exoplanet, during a news conference to present new findings on exoplanets, planets that orbit stars other than Earth's sun, in Washington, US, on 22 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAPE CANAVERAL, (Fla.) — Astronomers have found a nearby solar system with seven Earth-sized planets, three of which circle their parent star at the right distance for liquid surface water, bolstering the prospect of discovering extraterrestrial life, research published on Wednesday showed.

The star, known as TRAPPIST-1, is a small, dim celestial body in the constellation Aquarius. It is located about 40 light years away from Earth, close by astronomical standards, but about 44 million years away at the average cruising speed of a commercial passenger jet.

Researchers said the proximity of the system, combined with the proportionally large size of its planets compared to the small star, make it a good target for follow-up studies. They hope to scan the planets' atmospheres for possible chemical fingerprints of life.

"The discovery gives us a hint that finding a second Earth is not just a matter of if, but when," NASA chief scientist Thomas Zurbuchen said at a news conference on Wednesday.

The discovery, published in this week's issue of the jour-

nal *Nature*, builds on previous research showing three planets circling TRAPPIST-1. They are among more than 3,500 planets discovered beyond the solar system, or exoplanets.

"This is the first time that so many Earth-sized planets are found around the same star," lead researcher Michael Gillon, with the University of Liege in Belgium, told reporters.

Researchers have focused on finding Earth-sized rocky planets with the right temperatures so that water, if any exists, would be liquid, a condition believed to be necessary for life.

"I think that we've made a crucial step towards finding if there is life out there," University of Cambridge astronomer Amaury Triaud said on a conference call with media on Tuesday.

The diameter of TRAPPIST-1 is about 8 percent of the sun's size. That makes its Earth-sized planets appear large as they parade past.

From the vantage point of telescopes on Earth, the planets' motions regularly block out bits of the star's light. Scientists determined the system's architecture by stud-

ying these dips.

"The data is really clear and unambiguous," Triaud wrote in an email to Reuters.

Because TRAPPIST-1 is so small and cool, its so-called "habitable zone" is very close to the star. Three planets are properly positioned for liquid water, Gillon said.

"They form a very compact system," Gillon told reporters on Tuesday. "They could have some liquid water and maybe life."

Even if the planets do not have life now, it could evolve. TRAPPIST-1 is at least 500 million years old, but has an estimated lifespan of 10 trillion years. The sun, by comparison, is about halfway through its estimated 10-billion-year life. In a few billion years, when the sun has run out of fuel and the solar system has ceased to exist, TRAPPIST-1 will still be an infant star, astronomer Ignas Snellen, with the Netherlands' Leiden Observatory, wrote in a related essay in *Nature*.

"It burns hydrogen so slowly that it will live for another 10 trillion years," he wrote, "which is arguably enough time for life to evolve."—Reuters

## Deportation spat overshadows Trump envoys' talks with angry Mexico

MEXICO CITY — A bid by US President Donald Trump to deport non-Mexican illegal migrants to Mexico that has enraged Mexicans will top the agenda when officials from both countries meet on Thursday amid a deepening rift between the two nations.

The US government on Tuesday said it would seek to deport many illegal immigrants to Mexico if they entered the United States from there, regardless of their nationality, prompting a

fiery response from Mexican officials.

Calling the measure "unilateral" and "unprecedented," Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray said new immigration guidelines would top the agenda of meetings in Mexico City with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly.

The stakes are high for the United States, since Mexico has warned that a breakdown in rela-

tions could affect its extensive cooperation on the fight against narcotics and on stemming the flow of Central American migrants that reach the US border.

Talking points from a senior official show Mexicans plan to seek more information on Trump's executive orders at the summit. Officials plan to say, "We are worried about the consequences that these can have for Mexican nationals," in the United States, the notes show.—Reuters

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Smoke emerges at TEPCO's Niigata nuclear plant

NIIGATA (Japan) — Smoke emerged at a service building of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant in Niigata Prefecture on Thursday but it quickly halted after a firefighting effort by workers, its operator said.

Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. said there was no radiation leak in the incident. The utility has not identified the cause of the incident. The plant operator confirmed smoke coming out around 3:25 p.m. from a locker room inside the service building, located near the No. 6 and No. 7 reactors at the plant. The building is not a radiation controlled area, according to the company.—Kyodo News

#### Two Germans kidnapped near Nigerian capital's temporary airport — police

KADUNA, (Nigeria) — Two German archaeologists were kidnapped in central Nigeria on Wednesday, a police official said, near the road that will run between the capital Abuja and its temporary airport from next month.

Abuja's main airport will be closed for repairs for six weeks from 8 March, with flight rerouted to the city of Kaduna some 100 miles (160 km) to the north. That set-up has raised security concerns. Abuja-bound passengers will have to fly to Kaduna and travel in buses, guarded by security, on a road where several kidnappings have taken place in the past few years.—Reuters

#### Four killed in two suicide car bomb attacks in Iraq's Diyala

BAQUBA (Iraq) — Four people were killed and nine others wounded on Thursday in two suicide car bomb attacks targeting security checkpoints in Iraq's eastern province of Diyala, a provincial security source said.

In the early morning, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden car at a checkpoint north of the town of Khalis, some 70 km northeast of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

The blast occurred just after security forces captured another booby-trapped car at the same checkpoint and detained its driver, the source said. Minutes later, another suicide car bomb ripped through a second checkpoint, located some 7 km north of the first checkpoint, the source said, adding that both the checkpoints are located on the main road between the provincial capital city of Baquba and Kirkuk province in the north. Authorities in the town of Khalis intensified security measures and imposed a curfew to avoid possible further attacks by militants of Islamic State (IS) group, which in most cases, is responsible for such suicide attacks.—Xinhua

#### Israeli soldier injured by explosive in West Bank

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military said that a soldier was slightly injured by an explosive device hurled at him near the West Bank city of Nablus early on Thursday morning.

The troops were on patrol to secure the arrival of some 1,200 Jewish pilgrims to Joseph's Tomb, a site holy to both Jews and Muslims, when the incident happened, a military spokesperson said in a statement.

"Overnight, Palestinian perpetrators hurled an explosive device at forces in the Balata Refugee Camp in Nablus," the statement said.

The spokesperson said the slightly injured soldier has been evacuated to a hospital for further medical treatment.

Israeli pilgrimage to holy sites in the Palestinian territories frequently provoke anger and violence. A recent wave of violence in the West Bank and Israel have claimed the lives of at least 248 Palestinians, 40 Israelis, two US nationals, a Jordanian tourist, and two Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers.—Xinhua

#### NBS: Investments, exports to push 2017 GDP to 3 per cent

BELGRADE — Serbia's economic growth will accelerate further to around 3 pct this year and around 3.5 pct in 2018, the National Bank of Serbia (NBS) said in its February inflation report.

This year's growth will continue to be led by investment and exports based on continued implementation of infrastructure projects and an improved investment ambience, the document says.—Tanjung



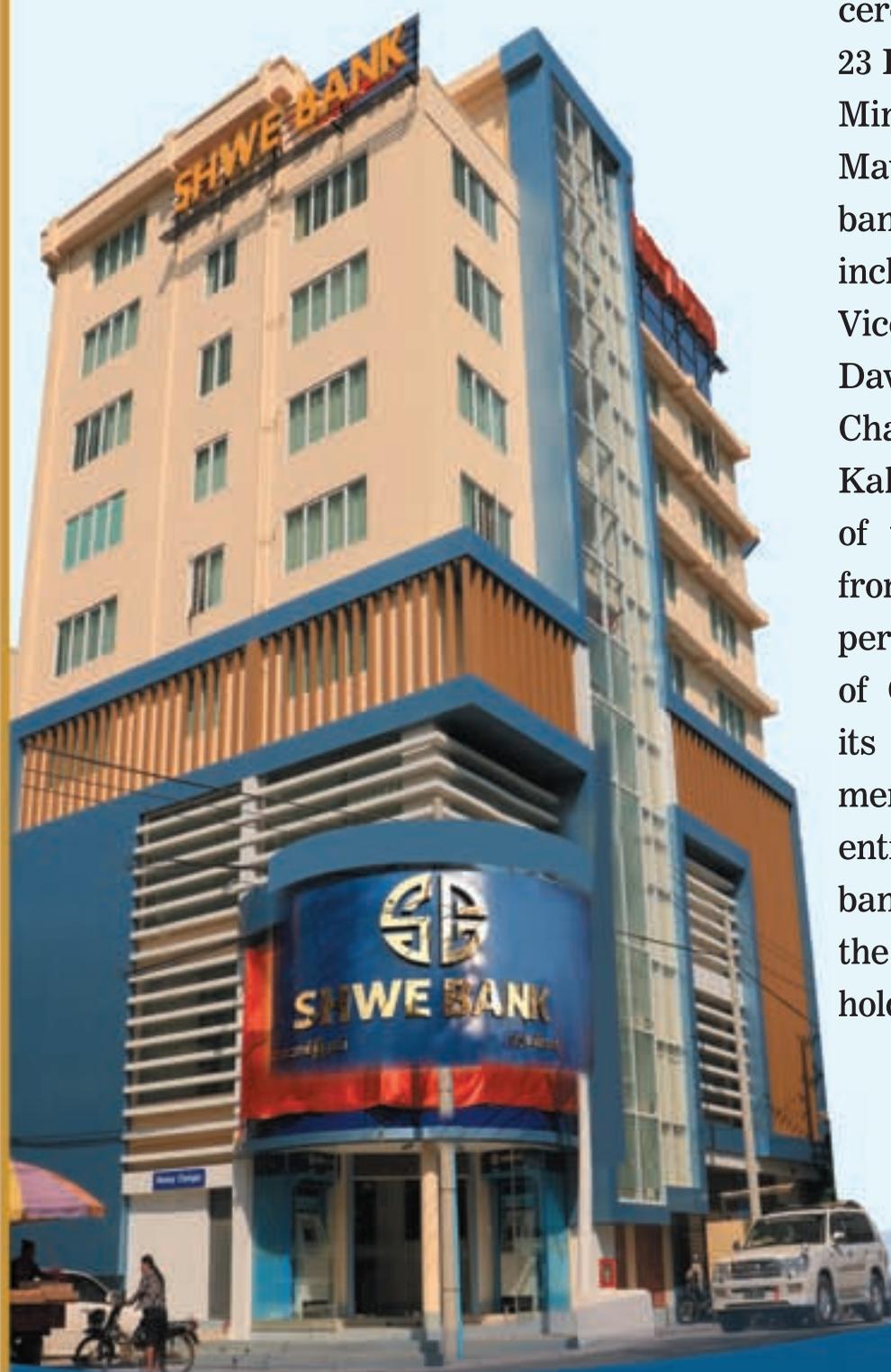
## SHWE BANK

### Special Thanks



**SHWE BANK** (Shwe Rural & Urban Development Bank) thanks those who attended the opening ceremony of Shwe Bank's Mandalay branch on 23 February, 2017. Our special thanks go to Chief Minister of Mandalay Region Dr Zaw Myint Maung, who unveiled the signboard of the branch bank, those who cut the ribbon at the ceremony including Mandalay Mayor Dr Ye Lwin, U Soe Min, Vice-Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Daw Ni Ni, Patron of Shwe Bank and U Thet Tin, Chairman of the Brokers, Merchants & Millers Kahtaintaw Association Mandalay and officials of the Mandalay Region Government, guests from the military and civilian communities, personnel from the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and its brotherhood associations, chairmen and members of local business organisations, local entrepreneurs, personnel from the private banks, those who sent commemorative gifts for the opening ceremony and those who assisted in holding the ceremony successfully.

**Shwe Bank  
Members of the Board of  
Directors and  
employees of Shwe Bank**



# Le Pen retains French poll lead, still seen losing runoff — two surveys

PARIS — Far-right leader Marine Le Pen remains favourite to win the first round of France's presidential election but would lose the 7 May runoff against either the centre-right's Francois Fillon or centrist Emmanuel Macron, two polls showed on Thursday.

Both polls were conducted at the start of this week, before Wednesday evening's announcement that veteran centrist Francois Bayrou would ally with Macron rather than stand himself, a move that could boost the centrist candidate at Fillon's expense.

The polls' findings are in line with a slew of other opinion surveys over the last few weeks.

A BVA poll showed Macron beating Le Pen comfortably, by 61 per cent to 39 per cent, in the runoff vote.

If the scandal-tainted Fillon faced off against Le Pen in the second round instead of Macron, he would receive 55 per cent against her 45 per cent, a narrow-



**Marine Le Pen, French National Front (FN) political party leader and candidate for French 2017 presidential election, poses prior to an interview on the prime time evening news broadcast of French TV channel TF1, in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris, France, on 22 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS**

er margin of victory and well short of the 20-point lead polls gave Fillon a few weeks ago.

A separate Harris Interactive poll also had Le Pen leading in the 23 April first round, but in the runoff Macron would secure 60 per cent against her 40 per cent. Fillon would get 57 per cent to Le Pen's 43 per cent, it showed.

The campaigns of both Le Pen, leader of the anti-euro, anti-immigrant National Front, and of Fillon,

a former prime minister, have been shaken by investigations into allegations that they misused public money. Both have denied any wrongdoing.

Fillon, 62, was once the election frontrunner but is now engulfed in a scandal over salaries paid to his wife and children out of public funds for work they may not have carried out. He says they did do the work for which they were paid.

Le Pen is facing accusations of paying her chief of

staff and bodyguard illicitly from European Parliament funds that she is now being pressed by the assembly to repay.

Macron, a 39-year-old ex-banker who has never held elected office, could benefit from his cleaner image as well as from Bayrou's endorsement, which on Wednesday cheered investors nervous about France's economic prospects under Le Pen.

Polls have suggested in the past that Bayrou, 65, has the support of about five percent of French voters, and his backing for Macron could prove crucial in a tight race in pushing the centrist into the runoff.

Macron says he wants to transcend the classic left-right divide in French politics and has drawn huge crowds to rallies that easily equal those of his closest rivals.

Macron and Bayrou were expected to work on the details of their alliance on Thursday.—Reuters

## Iraqi security forces storm Mosul airport, military base

BAGHDAD — US-backed Iraqi security forces closing in on the Islamic State-held western half of Mosul stormed the city's airport and a nearby military base on Thursday, state television said.

Counter-terrorism service (CTS) troops and elite interior ministry units descended on the airport early on Thursday and the nearby Ghazlani military complex, CTS spokesman Sabah al-Numan told state TV.

"Our forces started a major operation early this morning to storm the airport of Mosul and the Ghazlani base to dislodge Daesh (Islamic State) terrorists. We can confirm that the Mosul airport militarily has fallen

and it's a matter of short time to fully control it," Numan said.

After ousting the militant group from eastern Mosul last month, Iraqi forces have sought to capture the airport and use it as a launchpad for an onslaught into the west of Iraq's second-largest city. The airport and military complex, which includes barracks and training grounds and sprawls across an area close to the Baghdad-Mosul highway was captured by Islamic State fighters when they overran Mosul in June 2014.

Loss of Mosul could spell the end of the Iraqi side of IS's self-styled caliphate, which it declared from the city after sweeping through vast areas of Iraq and Syria.—Reuters

### MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2017 (Peasants' DAY) Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV ANAN BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANAN BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV EVER ABLE VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ABLE VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.2.2017 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

MV ARCA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ARCA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of 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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)  
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV DAWEI STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DAWEI STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING  
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

### ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR YANGON 300MW RENTAL PROJECT

The Electric Power Generation Enterprise of Myanmar Ministry of Electricity and Energy issued a Letter of Acceptance to the consortium of National Infrastructure Holdings Co., Ltd, MCM Pacific Pte. Ltd, APR Energy and Ace Resources Group Co., Ltd (the Consortium) for hire a 300 MW HFO Based Power Plant and provision of services in Yangon area for five years from the date of commercial operation to meet the demand for electric power in the country and to fulfill the demand in the region/state. The Project involves the construction and operation of a 300 MW HFO fired power plant in Yangon. The Consortium has conducted one round of engagement so far at the national, state and township levels in Yangon Region and is planning conducting further engagement in Dala, Seigyikanaungto, Ahlone and Twante townships.

Under the Environmental Conservation Law and Environmental Conservation Rules of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Consortium is required to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in order to obtain an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the proposed activity. Environmental Resources Management (ERM), on behalf of the Consortium, is currently undertaking an EIA Study, which includes further stakeholder engagement. The EIA will be conducted in accordance with the Myanmar EIA Procedure (2015).

Any information requests, inquiries about future engagement, or queries, comments and suggestions on the Project can be provided to [atm@pps-mm.com](mailto:atm@pps-mm.com) or 09 518 8323. The website for the Consortium will be launched shortly with information on the Project.

## Thousands still forced from homes by flooding in California tech hub

SAN JOSE — The mucky water flooding a section of San Jose in Northern California forced officials on Wednesday to widen the area under mandatory evacuation orders, with about 14,000 people barred from returning to their homes following drenching rains.

San Jose, a hub of high-tech Silicon Valley, suffered major flooding on Tuesday triggering evacuation orders when Coyote Creek overran its banks, swamping the Rock Springs neighbourhood. Water at some sites engulfed the entire first floor of residences while in other places it reached waist-high.

Officials said the city of about 1 million residents has not seen a flood approaching this magnitude since 1997.

The gush of water inundating San Jose flowed down from the Anderson Reservoir, which was pushed to overflowing by a rainstorm that pounded Northern California from Sunday to Tuesday, officials said.

The reservoir's opera-



Vehicles are seen partially submerged in flood water after heavy rains overflowed nearby Coyote Creek in San Jose, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

tors have been releasing water at maximum levels since Jan. 9 but it was not enough to avoid a spillover because of recent storms, Rachael Gibson, a spokeswoman for the Santa Clara Valley Water District, said at a news

conference.

Trash-strewn floodwaters inundated city blocks in California's third-largest city, as firefighters in inflatable boats on Tuesday ferried stranded residents to dry ground.

Aside from 14,000 people whom officials said were placed under mandatory evacuation orders, with many taking up residence in emergency shelters, the city has issued a less severe evacuation advisory to

22,000 people, urging them to leave their homes as well.

"This is nothing you ever want to see in your community," San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo told a news conference.

Residents of the flood-

ed area, which is near downtown and is made up of apartment buildings and townhomes, would not be allowed to return to their properties on Wednesday, Liccardo said. "We're not out of this yet," he said.

The Weather Service forecasts light rain to resume this weekend in the area.

It was not immediately clear how many homes suffered flood damage.

A section of the 101 Freeway in San Jose and another strip of the thoroughfare south of the city were closed by flooding, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Coyote Creek crested at a record-breaking 14.4 feet (4.4 meters) on Tuesday evening, said National Weather Service forecaster Bob Benjamin. The previous record was in 1922, at 12.8 feet (3.9 meters), Benjamin said.

"Quite possibly we won't see a return to a flood this weekend because the (weather) system does not look terribly imposing," Benjamin said.—Reuters

## Armyworm caterpillars ravage maize crop in southeast Congo

KINSHASA — Crop-destroying caterpillars known as armyworms have ravaged 63,000 hectares of maize in southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo since December, causing local maize prices to triple, a UN spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

Suspected outbreaks have already erupted in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique, and the outbreak in Congo is the first evidence it has spread into central Africa.

Scientists say the armyworm, which is native to North and South America, could reach tropical Asia and the Mediterranean in the next few years.

The 63,000 hectares in southeastern Congo represent 80 percent of maize production in four terri-



A crop-eating armyworm is seen on a sorghum plant at a farm in Settlers, northern province of Limpopo, South Africa, on 8 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

tories along the Zambian border, UN spokeswoman Florence Marchal told reporters in the Congolese capital of Kinshasa.

The outbreak has caused the price of a 25 kilogram sack of maize to rise from \$10 to \$30, she added, and comes as Congo's other main staple crops, bananas

and manioc, are ravaged by other maladies.

Armyworm moths lay eggs in maize plants and the caterpillars have also been known to march en masse across the landscape. Countries with confirmed outbreaks can also face import bans on agricultural products.—Reuters

## Apollo 11 capsule to start museum journey across US

WASHINGTON — The US "moonwalker-carrier" spacecraft Apollo 11 will take off on a new trip in the next two years to visit different museums around the country.

The space capsule called Columbia has been kept in the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington since it

came back from the moon in 1969. To celebrate the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its successful achievement of the "first step on moon" project, the capsule will take its own first step off the museum.

"It represents one of the great achievements of mankind," said Myriam Springuel, the director of

the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service that runs the tour "Destination Moon: The Apollo 11 Mission," as quoted by USA Today. "We are privileged to take it across the country and to share it with the people who own this object, which are the citizens of the United States," added Springuel.—Xinhua

### Scoping of EIA Study of Zawtika Phase 1C and 1D Development in Offshore Block M9 by PTTEPI

PTTEP International Limited (PTTEPI), following the success of Phase 1A and 1B Development, plans to develop the Zawtika Phase 1C and 1D in Offshore Block M9. The development of Phase 1C consists of 4 remote wellhead platforms ZWP8 - ZWP11 including associated pipelines. The first platform is expected to install in 4th quarter of 2017. The development of Phase 1D consists of 8 remote wellhead platforms ZWP12 - ZWP19 including associated pipelines. The tentative plan for commencement will be in 2020.

Under Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, PTTEPI is required to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study to obtain an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the proposed activity. PTTEPI and Environmental Resources Management (ERM) are currently undertaking Scoping of EIA Study to define project description, study area, potential environmental and social impacts and relevant stakeholders. The Scoping will be conducted in accordance with the Myanmar EIA Procedure (2015).

More information about the proposed activity can be found on PTTEPI's website as follows: [www.pttep.com](http://www.pttep.com)

Questions and comments can also be submitted to PTTEPI in writing by contacting the following e-mail address: [TinNilarSoe@pttep.com](mailto:TinNilarSoe@pttep.com)

### IEE Study of 2D Regional Seismic Survey in Onshore Block MOGE-3 by PTTEP SA

PTTEP South Asia Limited (PTTEP SA) plans to conduct a 2D onshore regional seismic survey for Block MOGE-3, located in Magway Region, Myanmar. The survey is approximately 300 line-km and scheduled to commence in mid of 2017.

Under Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, PTTEP SA is required to undertake an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) Study to obtain an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the proposed activity. PTTEP SA and Environmental Resources Management (ERM) are currently undertaking IEE Study in compliance with the EIA Procedure and plan to submit to Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) in March 2017. After the IEE report is completed, it will be publically viewable on PTTEPI's website as follows: [www.pttep.com](http://www.pttep.com)

In the meantime, questions and comments can be submitted to PTTEP SA in writing by contacting the following e-mail address: [TinNilarSoe@pttep.com](mailto:TinNilarSoe@pttep.com).

# Late David Bowie honoured with two wins at BRIT Awards

LONDON — Late music icon David Bowie was the big winner at the BRITs in London on Wednesday, taking the British male solo artist and album of the year prizes at the UK's top music awards.

Bowie, a pop chameleon who won legions of fans with his ground-breaking music, released his last album, "Blackstar," days before his death from cancer at age of 69 in January 2016.

At the British Record Industry Trust (BRIT) awards, Bowie beat off competition from the likes of grime artist Skepta, rapper Kano and singer Michael Kiwanuka in both the "British male solo artist" and "Mastercard British album of the year" categories.

"He's always been there supporting people who think they're a little bit weird or a little bit strange, a little bit different, and he's always been there for them," Bowie's son, Duncan Jones, said as he collected the album award. "This award is for all the kooks and all the people

who make the kooks."

Held in the capital's O2 arena, the televised BRITs are the mainstream British music industry's top awards ceremony. The evening saw performances from Katy Perry, Robbie Williams, Bruno Mars and Ed Sheeran.

American singer Perry performed her single "Chained to the Rhythm" alongside dancers wearing models of white houses.

Perry, who wore an armband reading "Persist" when she performed the song at this month's Grammy Awards, was joined by two giant skeletons. British media and viewers taking to social media said the skeletons appeared to be dressed in outfits similar to what US President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Theresa May wore when the two recently met in Washington.

Singer George Michael, who died in December, was honored with a tribute of his song "A Different Corner," performed by Coldplay frontman Chris Martin. Clips of the ex-Wham! sing-



British singer David Bowie performs in a concert during his world-wide tour called 'A Reality Tour' at T-mobile arena in Prague, in 2004. PHOTO: REUTERS

er appeared on stage, speaking as well as singing the same song.

Other winners included girl band Little Mix, who won the "British single" prize for the song "Shout Out to My Ex."

Singer Emeli Sande picked up the "British female solo artist" prize. The "British Group" accolade went to band The 1975.

Songstress Adele, whose album "25" triumphed at last

year's BRITs and the Grammys, won the "BRITs global success award" for international sales of that same chart-topping work.

Singer-songwriter Rag'n'Bone Man, who was already announced as the "Critics Choice" pick for this year's awards, took "British Breakthrough Act." He also beat Skepta, who performed but went home empty-handed despite three nominations.

While the ceremony mainly honors British music and artists, it also has categories for international male and female solo artists as well as international group. Drake, Beyonce and A Tribe Called Quest won those categories, respectively.

Criticized last year for not representing non-white artists, organizers in November said they had invited more than 700 potential new voters to join the BRITs Voting Academy in a bid to "achieve greater gender balance as well as increased black, Asian and minority ethnic representation."—Reuters



Journalists attend a preview of a new exhibition of dresses worn by the late Princess of Wales Diana, at Kensington Palace in London, Britain, on 22 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Princess Diana's dresses go on display in London, 20 years after her death

LONDON — Gowns worn by Princess Diana for everything from meeting diplomats to dancing with movie stars feature in an exhibition celebrating the fashion of one of Britain's favourite royals, which opens in London this week.

The collection of 25 dresses will be displayed from Friday for the rest of the year in Kensington Palace, where she lived for over 15 years. The exhibition coincides with the 20th anniversary of her death.

It features an ink-blue velvet gown worn by Diana when she danced with actor John Travolta at the White House in 1985, as well as her "Elvis" dress - high-collared and encrusted with pearls.

The collection also shows Diana's "understanding of how to deploy fashion as a diplomatic tool," organizers said, including one dress that incorporates the national bird of Saudi Arabia, the falcon.

"Our exhibition explores the story of a young woman who had to quickly learn the rules of royal and diplomatic dressing, who in the process put the spotlight on the British fashion industry and designers," said Eleri Lynn, curator of "Diana: Her Fashion Story". Diana, mother to Princes William and Harry, was married to heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles between 1981 and 1996 when the couple divorced.

She died in a car crash in Paris in 1997.—Reuters

## Gucci's magic garden kick off Milan Fashion week

MILAN — The curtain went up on Milan's fashion week on Wednesday with Gucci's enchanted garden inspired looks and Fay's 1990s rock chick styles paraded for the womenswear autumn and winter 2017/2018 season.

After New York and London, the Italian capital of fashion will be the setting for six days of runway shows, exhibitions, parties and events as the fashion elite, designers, bloggers and media flock to the city.

Gucci, the biggest brand of French luxury giant Kering, kicked off the extravaganza showcasing clothes with flowers, insects, animals and symbols, with models walking on an elevated glass runway surrounding a silver pyramid.

Outfits by Alessandro Michele, creative director since January 2015, were inspired by an "alchemist's garden, a magical place ... where apparent contradictions live together", the style note said.

The first model wore a long white pleated skirt matched with a long white and black cardigan and a red top with a big pearl necklace, in a classical look.

But the conservative style was soon broken as she was followed by girls covering themselves with wide parasols, carrying arrows, wearing glitter leggings, long ruffled and flowered dresses, models with their heads covered in balaclavas, men in shorts and embroidered

capas as well as models looking like farmers and maids.

Michele, who has been able to relaunch the brand giving it a new strong identity and a vintage, geeky yet chic look, dwells on the "complexity of existence and on its ambivalence and dualisms", the note added.

Just across the street, models for Fay, part of Italian luxury group Tod's, wore masculine looks, inspired by the fashion of the 1990s. Looks were mainly made from tartans, Prince of Wales check tweeds, angora wool and cashmere in the neutral tones of black, grey, blue and white with splashes of yellow and burgundy.

The group, known for its signature field coats, brought out duffle coats, interpreted in various lengths and materials, adorned with furs and high collars and decorated with leather.

Models wore pleated short

skirts with studded belts, leggings with zippers, masculine jackets decorated with embroidery, recalling the successful spring-summer collection.

"We took the French and Italian fashion from the 1990s and brought it back to our days," Tommaso Aquilani, one of the brand's two creative directors since 2010, told reporters ahead of the show.

Italian fashion industry revenues rose 1.9 per cent last year, beating expectations, and are forecast to keep growing in 2017 despite uncertainty over the trade policies of the Trump administration and the impact of Brexit, according to the national fashion association. The country's top 140 fashion companies had total sales of almost 63 billion euros (\$66 billion) in 2015, or 4 per cent of Italy's GDP, according to a report by Mediobanca Securities research unit.—Reuters



A guest makes video with mobile phone during the Fay Autumn/Winter 2017 women collection during Milan's Fashion Week, in Milan, Italy, on 22 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

**Obituary**

**Al Haj Tun Aung**

(Chairman – Gensecon Myanmar Pte. Ltd.)

(Supervisor (Rtd.) – The Guardian Newspaper House

(Aged 69 Years)

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

The Bereaved Family

## Rural Cuban ‘Van Gogh’ transforms ramshackle home into art museum

MORON, (Cuba) — Lack of money has not kept Remigio Hernandez from making striking art. Without formal training or access to supplies, the Cuban artist has still managed to turn his ramshackle home into a museum featuring sculptures made from scraps of aluminum, busts molded from mud and portraits daubed onto discarded televisions.

“Museum of Baby”, in the sleepy town of Moron in central Cuba, is named after Hernandez’s late wife Barbara, or “Baby”. In one life-size sculpture, she gallops off on a white steed into paradise. In a painting, she is the Mona Lisa.

“I go looking for things thrown away in the rubbish, aluminum, cardboard, and I find ways to recycle them,”

says Hernandez, dubbed locally “The Van Gogh of Moron”.

Frowning, the 64-year old says he is happy to remain penniless in a world where greed and ambition have caused so many wars and tragedies. Family and religion are his subject matter.

“I want distance myself from all that and live dedicating my painting to poverty, humility,” he said.

“What I have is a history, and I consider history to be greater than fame or money.”

Hernandez has lived alone with his dogs since his wife died three years ago. He scrapes a living by giving cars and walls a new lick of paint or painting small landscapes and portraits.—Reuters

## Women in sports ad strikes nerve in Arab world

DUBAI — An online commercial released by Nike this week showing Arab women fencing, boxing and spinning on ice-skates has stirred controversy over its attempt to smash stereotypes about women leading home-bound lives in the conservative region.

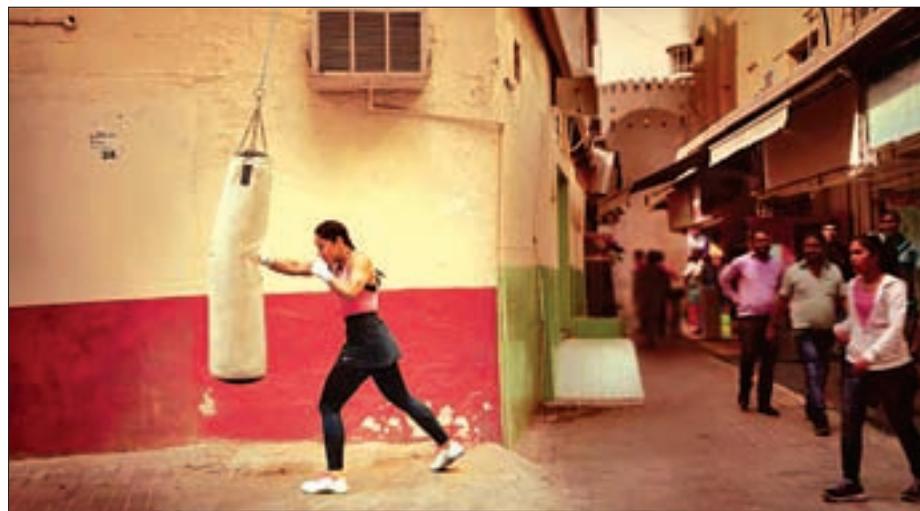
It begins with a woman nervously peering out of her doorway and adjusting her veil before going for a run in the street, while a female voice narrates in a Saudi dialect: “What will they say about you? Maybe they’ll say you exceeded all expectations.”

Within 48 hours the video was shared 75,000 times on Twitter and viewed almost 400,000 times on YouTube.

“An ad (which) touches on the insecurities of women in a society digs deeper and becomes an empowerment tool rather than just a product,” Sara al-Zawqari, a spokeswoman for the International Red Cross in Iraq, wrote on her Twitter page.

But not all the reviews were positive.

“I think this ad was an utter fail,” said Nada Sahimi on the company’s Insta-



Arifa Bseiso boxes an opponent in a scene shot for the Nike Middle East ad campaign filmed in Dubai, UAE, on 13 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

gram page. “This is not the true representation of Arab, Muslim women. We do not wear a hijab and go running in the streets, shame on Nike,” she said.

Filmed in the older, rundown suburbs of the glitzy Gulf Arab emirate of Dubai, the ad reflects the struggles faced not only by women across the region but also by some its own stars. Amal Mourad, a 24-year old Emirati parkour athlete shown leaping across rooftops, told Reuters her father at first forbade her from training in a gym where men were

present.

“Convincing my father was the toughest part ... if you want something bad enough you stick to it, and you can get it done,” said Mourad, who now teaches classes in a mixed gender gym. Women exercising in public is a rare sight in much of the region and women-only gyms are few, are not fully equipped for different sports and are often more expensive than gyms for men.

In Saudi Arabia, physical education is prohibited in all-girls public schools and women’s gyms remain

illegal in the kingdom because female athleticism is deemed un-Islamic.

Speaking to the Okaz newspaper this month, Saudi Princess Reema bint Bandar said the government would soon provide female gyms with licenses, citing public health reasons and not women’s empowerment. “It is not my role to convince the society, but my role is limited to opening the doors for our girls to live a healthy lifestyle,” said bint Bandar, who is a senior official at the General Authority of Sports.—Reuters

## French artist to live enclosed in block of stone for a week



French artist Abraham Poincheval poses inside his artwork Pierre (‘Stone’) in Paris, France, on 22 February 2017, before entering the rock as part of his project to live inside for a week. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS — French artist Abraham Poincheval embarked on a new feat on Wednesday by enclosing himself inside a block of stone for a week, adding to the two weeks he previously spent inside a sculpture of a bear.

Poincheval is to live entombed in a body-shaped slot carved out from a limestone boulder from 22 February to 1 March, at Paris’ Palais de Tokyo contemporary art museum. He will eat stewed fruit, soups and purees stashed in cubbyholes inside the stone block, which is also equipped with

an air vent and items such as a log book. The artist, who has made a name for himself living in enclosed spaces, told journalists that the best way to understand objects was not from a distance but by entering them.

“I say to myself, hold on, what is this object really? And you ask yourself the question and say to yourself: ‘Well, hold on, instead of distancing yourself and removing oneself from it, let’s go inside and see what is really happening,’” Poincheval told reporters. The performance left museum-goers intrigued.—Reuters



Programme Schedule  
(24-2-2017, Friday)

6:00 Am

◆ Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

7:00 Am

◆ Breakfast News

7:30 Am

◆ People Talks

8:30 Am

◆ Current Affairs

9:15 Am

◆ Documentary

9:30 Am

◆ Weekly Entertainment News

10:30 Am

◆ Weekly Sport Info

11:00 Am

◆ 2017 Matriculation Examination Lessons (Geography)

11:30 Am

◆ MRTV Worker Programme

12:30 Pm

◆ TV Drama Series

1:05 Pm

◆ Myanmar Movie (Part-2)

2:05 Pm

◆ Documentary

2:45 Pm

◆ Talk on Old Film

3:15 Pm

◆ Applied Financial Knowledge

3:50 Pm

◆ Teleplay

4:15 Pm

◆ 2017 Matriculation Examination Lessons (Geography)

5:05 Pm

◆ Documentary

5:15 Pm

◆ Analysis for Myanmar Movie

5:50 Pm

◆ Hyper Sport

6:20 Pm

◆ HUMAN DIGNITY FILM INSTITUTE (Traveller) (Right)

7:15 Pm

◆ TV Drama Series

8:00 Pm

◆ News/International News/ Weather Report

8:35 Pm

◆ Documentary

◆ Song in Myanmar Movie (Part-30)

◆ Myanmar Video

(Part-2)

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

### mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(24-2-2017 07:00am ~ 25-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	A Highland with Peace and Charm
07:43	Am	The Caves
08:03	Am	News
08:25	Am	A Street Vendor Spreading Knowledge
09:03	Am	News
09:25	Am	A bike Ride in pursuit of Mural Art (Ep-1)
09:44	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: Nipa Plam
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The Green Corner (Epi-14) Decorating Things

10:36	Am	Jade Pagoda: Weirawsana
10:53	Am	Serene and Scenic Magwe

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

**Prime Time**

07:03	Pm	New
07:26	Pm	Tourism development of Bagan
07:42	Pm	Mon Traditional Wedding
07:52	Pm	A Nun’s Creation in Fruit Carving
08:03	Pm	New
08:25	Pm	Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part-1)
08:50	Pm	Beach Food Delivery

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

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

# Leaders Real stunned by struggling Valencia

MADRID — Real Madrid suffered a surprise 2-1 defeat at struggling Valencia on Wednesday as they missed the opportunity to extend their lead at the top of La Liga after losing for only the second time in the league this season.

Simone Zaza, who endured an unhappy loan spell at West Ham United earlier this season, gave Valencia the lead in the fifth minute with a brilliant shot on the turn and Fabian Orellana added the second in the ninth.

Cristiano Ronaldo headed Real back into contention just before halftime, but the visitors were unable to build on their momentum after the break.

Real remained top on 52 points, one ahead of Barcelona and three clear of Sevilla in third, and still have one game in hand on both of their title rivals.

“The truth is we lost the game in 10 minutes. We started well with the ball, we had chances but we made two errors and they scored two goals. We had 80 minutes to rescue the game and tried but we lacked many things today,” Real coach Zinedine Zidane told reporters.



Valencia's players celebrate after scoring a goal during Spanish La Liga Santander, Mestalla stadium, Valencia, Spain, on 22 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

“We had the chance to pick up points and we didn't do it. I hope this has no psychological effect on us. We need to be more focused in future games because if you don't concentrate you get punished. In those 10 minutes we weren't clever or ready.”

Real's match at Valencia was rearranged after the original fixture was postponed in December due to Zidane's side taking part in the FIFA Club World Cup.

Valencia have endured a nightmare season filled with dis-

mal results and upheaval off the pitch, but they got off to a flying start when a long pass from goalkeeper Diego Alves found its way to Zaza, who swivelled and fired the ball into the far top corner.

Zaza, who joined Valencia

in January on loan from Juventus after flopping at West Ham, scored his first goal for his new club in Sunday's 2-0 win over Athletic Bilbao. He was a constant thorn in Real's side, linking up superbly with wingers Nani, Orellana and Munir El Haddadi.

Real responded with a wayward shot from Toni Kroos but left themselves exposed on the break and were soon another goal down as Zaza spread the play to Nani and Orellana darted on to the Portuguese's pass to knock the ball through keeper Keylor Navas's legs.

Valencia might have got a third had it not been for a decisive block from Marcelo on Munir's shot, and the Brazilian played a crucial role in giving Real a foothold in the game, sending an arcing cross into the box which Ronaldo leapt to head past Alves.

Gareth Bale was brought on to help Real's push for more goals in the second half but they barely mustered a decent attempt while Munir had a strong penalty appeal waved away at the other end.—Reuters

## Juventus close in on quarters as substitutes see off Porto

LISBON — Juventus edged closer to the Champions League quarter-finals after second-half goals from substitutes Marko Pjaca and Dani Alves earned them a 2-0 away win at 10-man Porto in a one-sided last 16 first-leg tie on Wednesday.

Porto's downfall was partly self-inflicted after left back Alex Telles received a red card in the 27th minute following two senseless bookings in the space of 90 seconds, leaving the home side to play over an hour against the Serie A leaders with 10 men.

Despite holding Juventus at bay for 72 minutes, Porto's resolve was broken when Miguel Layun deflected Paulo Dybala's pass into the path of Pjaca who slammed a first-time effort past Iker Casillas.

Dani Alves made sure of victory two minutes later when he controlled Alex Sandro's cross with his chest before finishing calmly as Juventus, who are still in the Italian Cup, boosted their hopes of a maiden treble ahead of the second leg in Turin on 14 March.

“We can be happy as it's a really good result, but to be hon-



Juventus' Gianluigi Buffon celebrates after the match with teammates UEFA Champions League Round of 16 First Leg at Dragao Stadium, Porto, Portugal, on 22 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

est after the first-half red card, we had to win this game,” Juventus midfielder Sami Khedira told BT Sport.

“It's absolutely not over,” he added. “We're happy with tonight but in three weeks we'll need to be careful as Porto are angry and have nothing to lose.”

Juventus were expected to face a stern test in Portugal, but while they imposed themselves from the early stages and controlled the first half, Porto were content to remain deep and absorb pressure.

The visitors struggled to forge the clear openings that their dominance deserved, although the lively Dybala fashioned the best chance of the first half with a thumping effort from outside the box which grazed the post.

Telles's minute and a half of madness quashed any lingering Porto ambition and prompted coach Nuno Espirito Santo to withdraw striker Andre Silva — scorer of four Champions League goals this season — in response.

Juve boss Massimiliano Allegri left out Leonardo Bonucci from the squad, after the pair's dispute during Friday's victory over Palermo, and while Juventus were untested at the back, they missed the centre back's creativity and probing long balls.

The breakthrough eventually came from the bench, as Allegri introduced Pjaca and Dani Alves to offer dynamism and directness and the pair repaid their manager with goals to end Porto's 20-game undefeated home streak.—Reuters

## Mourinho miffed by timing of Chelsea FA Cup showdown

LONDON — Jose Mourinho's delight at Manchester United's progress to the last 16 of the Europa League has been tempered by the timing of their FA Cup quarter-final against Chelsea, with the manager criticising the tie being scheduled for a Monday.

United, who beat St Etienne 1-0 on Wednesday to progress 4-0 on aggregate, now face the prospect of playing the second leg of their next Europa League tie just three days after their FA Cup showdown against former club Chelsea on 13 March.

“I feel really surprised that the decision is made before our draw in Europe because nobody knows who we play against, nor where the first and second matches are being played,” Mourinho told reporters ahead of Friday's Europa League draw.

“We play Chelsea on Monday then we've got a second match in Europe, Russia or Turkey. This is what we have.”

The Portuguese also criticised local rivals Manchester City, who fielded a weakened team in the FA Cup last season when faced with a similar problem under former manager Manuel Pellegrini. Chelsea duly ran out 5-1 winners against Pellegrini's second-string selection, and Mourinho said he would not

disrespect the competition by packing his side with youngsters.

“I cannot play against Chelsea with the second team,” Mourinho added. “I cannot play against Chelsea with the under-21s, like Manchester City did -- was it last year? We're Manchester United. I cannot do that. I don't do that.”

“As United manager, I don't do that to the FA Cup because the FA Cup is not guilty of these decisions. The cup is beautiful, the competition is historical and I have to treat United supporters and the FA Cup in the right way.”

“What is going to happen is an accumulation of matches, people playing lots of matches. I will have to make some rotation but some of the boys will have to play all consecutive matches.”—Reuters



Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho. PHOTO: REUTERS

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