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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: Transportation, electricity are keys to jobs, development

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday identified the transportation and electricity sectors as the most important infrastructural challenges in the country that need to be improved in order to improve the lives of the people and attract foreign investment.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi made the remarks at the co-ordination meeting on national energy policy held at 2 pm at the Myanmar International Convention Center-2 in Nay Pyi Taw.

“In the transport sector, there were places that could not be accessible in some seasons. In some places there was no electricity available. If the problems of electricity and roads in these places are solved on a self-help basis, economic advantages can be implemented. Only if transport and electricity is better will foreign investors be interested in investing in the country”, she said.

Only approximately 35 per cent of the country has access to electricity, according to the energy ministry. Of the 35 per cent who have access to electricity, there are frequent outages. Those who have access to electricity pay much less than the actual cost for their use. Meanwhile, people from unconnected areas have to pay the same taxes as those who are already connected, according to the energy ministry. There is one expressway in the country, the 587 km Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, which runs from Yangon to Mandalay, bypassing Bago, Taungoo, Nay Pyi Taw and Meiktila. The state counsellor said yesterday that improved transport and electricity creates jobs and improves lives.

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks at the co-ordination meeting on a national energy policy at the Myanmar International Convention Center-2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor to attend 30th ASEAN Summit and related meetings in the Philippines, pay official visits to EU countries

At the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will leave for the Republic of the Philippines to attend the 30th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings to be held on 29th April 2017.

After attending the Summit, the State Counsellor will pay official visits to the Headquarters of the European Union, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Italian Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

INSIDE



Agricultural products account for 25 per cent of total export volume

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Peace negotiators hold press conference on National Level Political Dialogue for Shan State

A PRESS conference on National Level Political Dialogue for Shan State took place in Taunggyi, Southern Shan State yesterday.

At the press conference, Chairman of the Supervision Committee for Region-wise National Level Political Dialogue Shan State Minister for Inn Ethnic Affairs Dr. Tun Hlaing, Member of the National Reconciliation and Peace Center U Tun Tun Hein, Member of the Peace Commission Professor Dr. Aung Tun Thet and Shan State Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Dr. Nyi Nyi Aung replied to the questions

raised by the journalists.

Member of the National Reconciliation and Peace Center U Tun Tun Hein said a total of 57 papers submitted to the meeting will be presented to the 21st Panglong Peace Conference through Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) for further discussions. Region-wise national level political dialogues were successfully held in Taninthayi and Bago Regions and Shan State and the representatives were invited to attend the meeting with the approval of the UPDJC, he added. He pledged that the papers sub-

mitted by Shan State will be issued to make the publicly known if the union level approves them.

Member of the Peace Commission Professor Dr. Aung Tun Thet said that the submitted papers are compiled based on various points of view. Shan State Minister for Inn Ethnic Affairs Dr. Tun Hlaing disclosed that he is pleased to see the representatives from the major political parties in Shan State at the meeting, saying the outcomes from the meeting represent the voices of the ethnic people in Shan State.—*Min Htet Aung (Man Sub-printing House)*



Representatives signing the attendance book on arrival at national level political dialogue for Shan State. PHOTO: MNA

Third day of National Level Political Dialogue for Shan State

A paper-preparing committee combined the papers submitted by representatives from political parties, the self-administered regions and zones according to set frameworks and rules into three state level papers — one political paper, one paper on the economy, one paper on land and environment — and these three papers were read out on the third day of the National Level Political Dialogue for Shan State.

Afterward, member of Peace Commission and economist Dr. Aung Tun Thet explained “Business for Peace”.

Shan State Chief Minister

Dr. Lin Htut said that during the three days of national-level political dialogue for Shan State, representatives from political parties and political organisations, the self-administered regions and zones, districts and business persons read out 57 papers. The proposals and recommendations of this dialogue will be sent to the Political Discussion Work Committee, the Work Committee on Economy and the Land & Environment Work Committee of Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong through the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) and will be submitted

to Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong for discussion.

He advised those attendees to prepare suggestions for future political dialogues as the national level dialogue is a continuous process and will not end with this one. Collected and consolidated thoughts, views and aspirations of the people from national level political dialogues were submitted to Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong for further discussion in order to build a federal democratic Union that ensures democracy, equality and self-determination rights.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Diamond Aircraft Industry. PHOTO: MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Diamond Aircraft Industry

THE Myanmar delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing who is currently on a working visit to Austria visited Diamond Aircraft Industry at 3:00 pm local standard time on 24 April.

Officials from Diamond Aircraft Industry explained the

detailed information about the aircrafts manufactured by industry and the Myanmar delegates asked what they wanted to know.

Then, the Senior General went on sightseeing of Vienna in a DA-62 manufactured by Diamond Aircraft Industry whereas his delegates on board

other aircrafts manufactured by the company.

Then, Diamond Aircraft Industry CEO Mr. Christian Dries and wife hosted a dinner at 6:00 pm local standard time in honour of Myanmar delegation led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint holds talks with Chairman of Institutional Capacity Development Committee of Indonesian parliament. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Indonesian parliamentary delegation

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received a delegation led by Prof. Dr John Pieris, Chairman of Institutional Capacity Development Committee, Regional Representative Council, the Upper House of Indonesia at the hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw

Complex in Nay Pyi Taw at 11 am yesterday.

Both sides discussed matters relating to legislative affairs, friendship and cooperation between the two parliaments.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker meets Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than met with Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Luan Thuy Duong at the hall of the Amyotha Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Promotion of amity and cooperation between the countries were discussed during the meet-

ing. Present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Thar Aung, Chairman of the Amyotha Hluttaw Commission on Non-Government National and International Organizations Affairs U Min Oo and the officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than holds talks with Vietnamese Ambassador Dr. Luan Thuy Duong. PHOTO: MNA

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: Transportation, electricity are keys to jobs, development

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“The government will help the public to have the acquisition of better transport and electricity, and the parallel creation of jobs”, she said. “We came to know that people acknowledged that the transportation sector developed much more than the electricity sector. In meeting with rural youths, I noticed them say that their living standards improved because of better transport.”

U Pe Zin Tun, the Union Minister for Electric Power and Energy, explained in brief about the amendment of the National Energy Policy, followed by the clarification of departmental conclusions toward the national energy policy by the director-general of the Oil and Gas Planning Department.

Afterward, Union Ministers from the Ministry of Agriculture,

Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Conservation and the Ministry of Industry, Union Attorney General, ministers for energy from regional and state cabinets gave suggestions over the draft policy of national energy, with discussions made by those present at the meeting. The State Counsellor wrapped up the meeting by saying that the expectations of a national energy policy were targeted to support the national economic development and to sustainably supply the internal energy demand. With a view for all the public to use energy resources in the long run, it is learnt that a framework for sharing the use energy rightly and fairly between regions and states will be laid down.—*Myanmar News Agency*



The co-ordination meeting on national energy policy held at the Myanmar International Convention Center-2 in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Union Ministries and Rakhine State Gov't coordination meeting held

COORDINATION meeting between Union Ministries and Rakhine State Government was held at Rakhine State Government office in Sittway yesterday afternoon.

Rakhine State Minister for Finance, Revenue Planning, and Economy U Kyaw Aye Thein gave an opening speech and Director-General U Htay Hlaing, Immigration Department, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and

Population explained about work procedures on working with the state government. U Nay Win, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, U Aung Kyaw, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Border Affairs, Dr. Than Htut, Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Health and Sports and Dr. Sai Kyaw Naing Oo, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Education ex-

plained about the respective ministries work on policy matters and coordination work with the state government.

Rakhine State Government secretary U Tin Maung Swe discussed in detail on state government works including matters of birth list, household certificate, work difficulties commonly occurring between union ministries and state government, quick implementation of matters submitted by state government to union ministries and timely response by union ministries in providing guidance to matters submitted by state government to which respective officials of the union ministries attending the meeting discussed and clarified in detail. Rakhine State Minister for planning, finance, Revenue and economy U Kyaw Aye Thein gave a closing note. The meeting was attended by State Minister of Development Affairs U Min Aung, State Minister of Chin Ethnic Affairs U Pon Bway, State Auditor-General Daw Yin Hla, officials and media.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Coordination meeting between Union Ministries and Rakhine State Government in progress in Sittway, Rakhine State. PHOTO: MNA

Yangon government earns over Ks159 million from cooperative enterprises

YANGON Region government earned over Ks159 million in revenue from cooperative enterprises this fiscal year, said U Myint Thuang, Regional Minister for Planning and Finance.

The government rented to the cooperative societies 34 rooms out of 116, which were nationalised in the days of the socialist regime. So, the government earned the revenue

from those 34 rooms.

“Among 34 rooms, two rooms are being used as departmental offices, another two rooms are being used by the human settlement and housing development department, leaving only 30 rooms for the cooperative department. The revenue is credited to the regional government’s bank account,” said U Myint Thuang, Regional Minister from

for Planning and Finance.

Out of 116 rooms, seven rooms are under lock and key, whereas another eleven rooms are regarded as dangerous. Those rooms are handed over to the privatisation commission. People who want to rent the remaining rooms can submit the applications to the privatisation commission according to the rules and regulations.—200

Restaurant owners fined for failure to affix tax stamps

Ko Moe

THE Department of Internal Revenue in Yangon took action against 520 restaurant owners who failed to use tax stamps issued by the government and fined Ks133 million during the 2016-2017 fiscal year, according to U Myint Thuang, Yangon Region Cabinet’s Minister for Planning and Finance.

“There are some restaurants which did not give bills, some which failed to put tax stamps on bills and some who put an incomplete set of tax stamps on bill that were found in the Yangon Region that caused losses while collecting tax,” said U Myint Thuang.

Restaurant owners had been called for a meeting at the township internal revenue offices in the Yangon Region and asked to issue bills on which tax stamps are to be placed. There were notice letters for customers on every restaurant’s wall that all the customers need to ask for the bill with tax stamps when they pay the money to the restaurants.

During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the revenue from tax stamp sales in the Yangon Region reached more than Ks11 billion, according to the minister for Planning and Finance. The number of restaurants which were ordered to use tax stamps on their vouchers were 1,508 in 2015-2016, which increased to 1,265 restaurants in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

“As there has been the situation of losing revenue with collecting tax in the Yangon Region, action will be taken so nothing will be wasted concerning the tax stamps in respective townships during the 2017-2018 fiscal year,” said Region Minister U Myint Thuang.

The stamp tax and commercial tax for the restaurants came out of the second meeting of the Yangon Region Hlut-taw held on 24 April, when U Kyaw Kyaw Htun, representative for No. 1 constituency in Hlaing township, asked how many restaurants in Yangon Region bought tax stamps and how much commercial tax was being collected in a month. U Kyaw Kyaw Htun also asked for action against those restaurants which did not properly use the tax stamps.

In the Yangon Region, on the bill issued by the restaurants which pay commercial tax, the Internal Revenue Department said customers have to pay a 5 per cent tax.

According to the union tax law issued in 2015, The Department of Internal Revenue announced that the first-time fine for restaurant owners who fail to put stamps on a voucher would be Ks2 lakh. The fine for the second offense would be Ks5 lakh, the third time Ks7 lakh and the fourth time Ks10 lakh. Persons who complain to the department about a non-compliant restaurant will get 10 per cent of its fine as a prize.

LOCAL Business



Farmers work in the organic farm in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Agricultural products accounted for 25 per cent of total export volume

AGRICULTURAL exports during the last fiscal year 2016-2017 fetched over US\$2.93 billion, which is up by over US\$315million compared to that of the previous year and accounted for 25 per cent of the total export volume, according to statistics released yesterday by the Commerce Ministry.

The agricultural exports included 1.75million tonnes of rice and broken rice, which earned US\$554million, while 1.43million tonnes of various

peas fetched US\$1.40 billion. Also exported to foreign countries were 1.4million tonnes of rubber worth about US\$ 200 million, over 100,000 tonnes of sesame seeds worth US\$147million, 1.3million tonnes of maize worth US\$253million and over 1million tonnes of various foods worth US\$178million.

To boost agricultural production, the country is tackling the challenges of erratic weather, capacity and technical know-how to produce value-added

products and dependence on foreign market demand. The issue of high transportation costs, which cause problems in the supply chain, is also being addressed so as to keep up with the countries in the region.

The country's exports cannot be dependent only on natural resources and the agro industry, but also on fishery exports, the Cutting, Making, Packing (CMP) garment export and re-export sectors should also play an important role.

During fiscal year 2016-

2017, the export of natural gas was down by US\$1.4billion, while the value of jade and mineral exports were found to have a decrease of US\$190million when compared to those of the previous fiscal year.

The fisheries export value was over US\$581million and the export value of CMP garment products reached US\$1.84 billion. The export value during last FY totaled over US\$11billion, according to the Commerce Ministry.—*Mon Mon*

Stock trading on YSX hit over Ks80.9billion over a year

THE values of stock trading on Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) has reached over Ks80.9billion over the past year, according to the statistics of YSX.

Last year, the monthly stock trading values by FMI on YSX were over Ks24 billion in March and over Ks5billion in April. With MTSH entering YSX on 20th May, stock trading values of FMI and MTSH amounted to over Ks 16billion in May and over Ks 6billion in June and over Ks 3.7billion in July respectively. After MCB listed on YSX, the monthly stock trading values were over Ks2.9 bil-

lion in August, over Ks 2.4 billion in September, over Ks 4billion in October and over Ks 2.2 billion in November. YSX stock trading in December hit all-time low with the trading value of over Ks1.6billion this year, it is learnt from monthly report of YSX.

In 2017, with the debut of First Private Bank (FPB) on YSX, the stock trading hit over Ks2.8billion in Jan, over Ks3.1billion in Feb, nearly Ks3.4billion in March and over Ks1billion as of 25th April, it is learnt.

First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ

Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) and First Private Bank (FPB) are currently trading their shares on YSX.

On 25th April, a total of 11,647 shares were traded on YSX, with 1,035 shares of FMI, 9,589 shares of MTSH and 1,023 shares of FPB. MCB frequently hit zero trading and only three days were seen to have a stock trading this month.

The share prices are Ks16,000 for FMI, Ks4,000 for MTSH, Ks8,700 for MCB and Ks29,000 for FPB at the closing time.—*Ko Khant*



People stand outside the YSX in downtown Yangon.

PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

National Bank of Canada acquires 22% stake in Myanmar mobile money outfit

THE National Bank of Canada (NBC) has acquired a 22% stake in Ongo, a mobile money service with big plans for expansion in Myanmar, Finextra reported on 25 April. Established by emerging markets investment business Ronoc, the Ongo e-wallet allows for P2P money transfers, B2B payments and bill payments, alongside cash-in and top-up services at two hundred cash agent locations around Yangon.

Ongo currently employs over three hundred people in Yangon and is expected to grow to five hundred by year end.

For NBC, the stake reflects the bank's existing interest in Asean markets through its Cambodian subsidiary ABA Bank, the report said.—*Mizzima*

Inflation rate in March 2017 declines a bit

THE inflation rate as of March 2017 showed a slight decrease of 6.81 per cent when compared to that of February 2017, according to an announcement released by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

The inflation rate based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) as of Feb 2017 was 6.97 per cent. The year-on-year inflation rate was 7 per cent in March 2017 versus March 2016.

During March 2017, Rakhine State recorded the highest inflation rate at 13.64 per cent, followed by Kaya State at 9.54 per cent and Yangon at 9.30 per cent, according to an announcement of the CSO.

Previously, the inflation rate was evaluated based on a 2006 survey and then, the base year turned to a 2012 survey. The Central Statistical Organization conducted a Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in Nov 2012. The inflation rate in the first five-year plan from 2011-2012 FY to 2015-2016 FY rose. To reduce the inflation rate, the authorities concerned are making efforts in the second five-year plan based on the policies of finance, currency, trade and foreign currency control, according to the second five-year National Development plan.—*Ko Htet*

Sein Ta Lone and mango value-added products to ship to Korea

SOUTH KOREA is gearing up to directly export Myanmar's Sein Ta Lone (Diamond Solitaire) mangoes and mango value-added products, establishing a cold storage factory in Nay Pyi Taw, according to a local mango promotion association.

Sein Ta Lone is a mango native to Myanmar and is famous for its fragrance and taste. The demand for the mangoes has prompted South Korea to send mango products direct to their country by making mango pulp, said U Ko Ko, the chair of the promotional association.

Mango of poor quality will be purchased to make the mango pulp. About 100 tonnes of mango pulp is expected to be exported this year. The factory was built in 2015 and fresh mango of high quality will be exported in the upcoming years, he added.



Mangoes vendors wait for customers. PHOTO: WUTYI MON (AMIA)

Previously, the mango market was solely dependent on the China market. This year, mango pulp was shipped to Russia. South Korea and Japan have since expressed an interest, it is

learnt.

In addition to fresh mango, preserved mango pulp and dried mango are currently exported to China, Singapore and Thailand. —*Htet Aung (AMIA)*

Border trade value with ITC totaled over Ks43billion

THE value of border trade using the Individual Trading Card (ITC) has reached over Ks43billion, with 1,272 cards issued, according to statistics provided by the Commerce Ministry.

The export values with ITC were over Ks7billion, whereas the imports hit Ks36billion from 2012 to 2017.

The Trade Department issued 292 cards from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, 261 cards in 2013-2014 FY, 317 cards in 2014-2015 FY, 146 cards in 2015-2016,

248 cards in 2016-2017 FY and eight cards as of 14th April this FY 2017-2018.

The trade values with ITC were over Ks737million from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, over Ks6,656million in 2013-2014 FY, over Ks9,372million in 2014-2015 FY, over Ks6,450million in 2015-2016, over Ks18billion in 2016-2017 FY and over Ks1billion in 2017-2018 FY.

The border trade values with ITC as of 14th April this FY were over Ks739million in Tamu,

over Ks4million in Muse, over Ks1,214million in Myawady, Ks54million in Tachilek, over Ks40million in Kan Pike Tee, over Ks28million in Kawthaung, over Ks19million in Reed, over Ks18million in Maw Taung respectively, according to the official statistics of the Commerce Ministry. A businessman can trade Ks3million a day with an ITC, and the trade department granted trade up to Ks15million a day, which amounts to a five-day-trade-value.—*Ko Htet*

123 telecoms licences have been issued to date

THE Post and Telecommunications Department (PTD) under the Ministry of Transport and Communications has issued a total of 123 licences for telecommunication services, with 85 local companies and 38 foreign companies, according to the department's announcement.

The PTD has issued four Nationwide Telecommunication Licences, 44 Network Facilities Services Licences (Individual), 16 Network Service Licences, 39 Network Facilities Services Licences (Class) and 20 Application Service Licences.

The department has granted licences since January 2015 and

123 companies have received licences so far. The department has been planning to continue to issuing licences for both local and foreign businesses after appropriate scrutiny.

Licence fees depend on the type of licence. Only some applicants are running a business, it is learnt.—*Ko Khant*

First time of Rice Conference held in Yangon

THE Rice Trader Myanmar Rice Network 2017 (Rice Conference) will be held in the Sule Shangri-La Hotel on 27 and 28 April led by the Myanmar Rice Federation, with the aim of reaching new export markets and to promote the quality of rice.

Officials from the Ministry

of Commerce, local rice traders and officials from the companies of foreign countries that purchase Myanmar rice will attend this conference. Domestic rice traders and purchasing companies from foreign countries will directly negotiate during this conference and will potentially lead to gain-

ing new markets, it is learnt.

"It is important to make negotiations between customers and suppliers for long-term deals. The Rice Conference will be held again in a favourable time in the future" said Dr. Soe Htun, the vice chairman of the Myanmar Rice Federation.—*200*

21 markets in Yangon Region in the process of upgrading

Ko Moe

IN the Yangon Region Hluttaw meeting on 25 April, Yangon Region government minister for planning and finance U Myint Thauung said 21 markets in Yangon region are in the process of upgrading. This was in response to a question by Hluttaw Representative Daw Soe Pa Pa Hlaing on a plan to upgrade Theingyizay C block.

He said designs were drawn up with the help of Association of Myanmar Architects

and the markets will be constructed under a tender system. The markets will include security systems and car parks as well as water and lighting.

According to Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), discussions are still underway and there can be changes to the 21 markets targeted for upgrade, but YCDC confirmed the inclusion of Theingyizay C block, Kyimyindine night market and Mingala Taungnyunt model market in the upgrade.

Trade value rises over 2 per cent; US\$500mil of loans repaid

THE country's trade value rose by over two per cent, while US\$500million of loans were repaid during the first year of the incumbent government, said an official from the Commerce Ministry. During this period, Myanmar's trade value reached over US\$26.3billion which is up by over US\$540million when compared to the similar period of last year.

The agriculture and livestock sectors managed to boost trade in spite of the decrease in natural gas exports and finished industrial sectors. Additionally, the government slashed the

number of ministries with an aim at cutting costs to reduce the trade deficit.

The exports in fiscal year 2016-2017 hit over US\$11billion, with over US\$2billion from agriculture, over US\$10million from animal products, over US\$581million from fisheries products, over US\$925million from minerals, over US\$246million from forest products, over US\$5billion from finished industrial goods and over US\$1billion from other products, according to the statistics provided by the Commerce Ministry.—*200*

Myanmar women LFPR low compared to neighbors

THE labour force participation rate (LFPR) of Myanmar women is low when compared to other neighboring countries, according to JobNet.com.mm.

The working age population in Myanmar is 33.9 million but there are only 54 per cent of women in the labour force. Among them, 29 per cent are from urban areas whereas 71 per cent, from rural areas.

When the job opportunities are created for the women, they should have an equal chance as the men. Those holding the

same job position should have the same payment. Total LFPR is 64.7 per cent only in Myanmar with men accounting for 80 per cent while women 52 per cent. There are 21.8 million jobs in Myanmar and only 43.1 per cent of the women are employed.

According to UNFPA, women LFPR is only 50.5 per cent in Myanmar while that of Thai is 80 per cent. If the women LFPR rises, the GDP will increase, said the UNFPA report.—*Min Thu*



Women workers work at a garment factory in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Thousands stage ANZAC Day memorials in Australia, New Zealand and Thailand

SYDNEY — Thousands of people in Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Turkey and Britain attended dawn services on Tuesday to commemorate ANZAC Day, the Gallipoli landings during World War One and the Thai-Burma “death railway” of World War Two.

The day marks the landing of thousands of troops from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey on 25 April, 1915.

The ill-fated military campaign against the Turks has become an important anniversary to remember troops from both countries who served and died in war. Gallipoli was the first time that soldiers from Australia and New Zealand fought under their own flags and is seared in the national consciousness as a point where their nations came of age, emerging from the shadow of the British empire.

Veterans and their families marched by flag-waving crowds and laid wreaths at war memorials in Sydney and other Australian cities.



Visitors from Australia and New Zealand attend a ceremony at the Lone Pine Australian memorial in Gallipoli following a dawn ceremony marking the 102nd anniversary of the World War One battle of Gallipoli in Canakkale, Turkey on 25 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

In Turkey, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and New Zealand Justice Minister Amy Adams attended a dawn service at ANZAC Cove on the Gallipoli peninsula where they laid wreaths.

Turks mark what they

call the Canakkale War on 18 March — the day in 1915 that saw the start of the main Allied naval assault on the Dardanelles Straits. More than 130,000 were killed during the campaign, most of them Turks. The 102nd anniversary

of ANZAC Day was held amid tight security in Gallipoli after the Australian government said it had received information of a possible attack during the ceremony.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull

posted a message and photo on social media on Tuesday after his unannounced visit to Australian troops in Afghanistan and Iraq this week. “We do not glorify war. ANZAC Day is not the anniversary of a great victory, but it commemorates the triumph of the human spirit,” he said in a video message posted on Facebook.

In Thailand, two former prisoners of war joined other Australians at Hellfire Pass in Kanchanaburi province, where POWs were forced by the Japanese army to build the infamous Thai-Burma “death railway” in 1942-43.

“There’s a lot of young people coming now and it’s good that they learn what happened during the war,” said 100-year-old former POW Harold Martin.

Neil MacPherson, 95, who also worked on the railway, said: “I do think of mates of mine that didn’t come through it and remembered them as they were then, rather than as Harold and I are now.”

More than 90,000 men died during the railway’s construction — 12,000 prisoners of war and more than 80,000 Asian labourers. In London, hundreds of people attended a dawn service where Britain’s Prince Andrew was among those paying their respects. —Reuters

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Cambodia, Viet Nam sign 4 pacts, strengthen bilateral cooperation

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia and Viet Nam on Tuesday signed four pacts aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation following talks between Prime Minister Hun Sen and visiting Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

In the morning, Hun Sen and Phuc discussed a wide range of issues including economic ties in

their meeting at the Peace Palace, also known as the Office of the Prime Minister of Cambodia, the prime minister’s spokesman Kao Kim Hourn said.

Following that meeting, the two leaders witnessed the signings of the four pacts on a feasibility study for an expressway from Cambodia’s capital Phnom Penh to Viet Nam’s Ho Chi Minh City;

construction of Phnom Penh-Hanoi Friendship Boulevard; building a rehabilitation center for drug addicts in Cambodia’s coastal province of Sihanoukville; and fishery cooperation. For the construction of the rehabilitation center, Viet Nam has pledged to provide \$3 million and another \$2 million for construction of a market in Cambodia’s

newly established Tbong Khmum province near the Vietnamese border.

Phuc, meanwhile, also asked the Cambodian side to treat Vietnamese people living in Cambodia well. Cambodia earlier estimated that some 200,000 Vietnamese are living in Cambodia.

Phuc is on a three-day visit to Cambodia from Monday.—Kyodo News

China court hands US citizen jail, then orders deportation for espionage

BEIJING — A Chinese court on Tuesday sentenced a US citizen to three-years and six-months in prison for espionage but then ordered she be deported, her lawyer said, in a case that has added to US-China tension.

Sandy Phan-Gillis, who has Chinese ancestry and is a naturalized US citizen, was arrested in March 2015 while about to leave mainland China for the Chinese-ruled, former Portuguese colony of Macau, and had been held without charges since then.

She had plead guilty during the trial in the

southwestern city of Nanning and was not planning to appeal, lawyer Shang Baojun told Reuters.

“She will probably be exported to the US soon, but we do not know the exact date yet,” Shang said, adding that she was being held in a police station in the meantime.

The government has not released details of the charges against Phan-Gillis.

Shang said that because the case touched upon “state secrets”, he could not reveal details of the ruling until the official verdict had been released, which was expected with-

in the next five days.

Phan-Gillis had been in regular contact with US officials while in detention, Shang said.

Calls to the court went unanswered after work hours on Tuesday, and it was not possible to reach Phan-Gillis for comment.

China’s definition of state secrets is very broad, encompassing everything from government directives to top leaders’ birthdays. Information can also be declared a state secret retroactively.

The arrest added to tension between China and the United States in the final months of former

President Barack Obama’s administration, a relationship already strained by China’s assertiveness over its claims in the disputed South China Sea.

Despite criticising China on the campaign trail, US President Donald Trump has recently warmed to it after a summit with President Xi Jinping in Florida in early April when Trump said they had developed an “outstanding” relationship.

In recent days, Trump has praised Chinese efforts to press North Korea to give up its development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.—Reuters

North Korea stages large-scale artillery drill as US submarine docks in South

SEOUL — North Korea conducted a big live-fire exercise on Tuesday to mark the foundation of its military as a US submarine docked in South Korea in a show of force amid growing concern over the North's nuclear and missile programmes.

The port call by the USS Michigan came as a US aircraft carrier strike group steamed toward Korean waters and as top envoys for North Korea policy from South Korea, Japan and the United States met in Tokyo.

Fears have risen in recent weeks that North Korea would conduct another nuclear test or long-range missile launch in defiance of UN sanctions, perhaps on the Tuesday anniversary of the founding of its military.

But instead of a nuclear test or big missile launch, North Korea deployed a large number of long-range artillery units in the region of Wonsan on its east coast for a live-fire drill, South Korea's military said. North Korea has an air base in Wonsan and missiles have also been tested there.

"North Korea is conducting a large-scale firing drill in Wonsan areas this afternoon," the South's Office of Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. The South Korean military was monitoring the situation and "firmly maintaining readiness", it said.

The South's Yonhap News Agency said earlier the exercise was possibly supervised by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

North Korea's state media was defiant in a commentary marking the 85th anniversary of the founda-

tion of the Korean People's Army, saying its military was prepared "to bring to closure the history of US scheming and nuclear blackmail".

"There is no limit to the strike power of the People's Army armed with our style of cutting-edge military equipment including various precision and miniaturized nuclear weapons and submarine-launched ballistic missiles," the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a front-page editorial.

North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threat is perhaps the most serious security challenge confronting US President Donald Trump. He has vowed to prevent North Korea from being able to hit the United States with a nuclear missile and has said all options are on the table, including a military strike.

Trump sent the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier strike group for exercises off the Korean peninsula as a warning to North Korea and a show of solidarity with US allies.

South Korea's navy said it was conducting a live-fire exercise with US destroyers in waters west of the Korean peninsula and would soon join the carrier strike group approaching the region.

China, North Korea's sole major ally which nevertheless objects to its weapons development, has repeatedly called for calm, and its envoy for Korean affairs, Wu Dawei, was in Tokyo on Tuesday.

"We hope that all parties, including Japan, can work with China to promote an early peaceful resolution of the issue, and play the role, put forth the effort, and assume the responsibility that they



People mark the 85th founding anniversary of the Korean People's Army (KPA) in this handout photo by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) made available on 25 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

should," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters in Beijing.

Japan's envoy on North Korea, Kenji Kanasugi, said after talks with his US and South Korean counterparts that they agreed China should take a concrete role to resolve the crisis and it could use an oil embargo as a tool to press the North.

"We believe China has a very, very important role to play," said the US envoy for North Korea policy, Joseph Yun.

South Korea's envoy, Kim Hong-kyun, said they had also discussed how to get Russia's help to press North Korea.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is expected to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on 27 April, the Kremlin said. It did not elaborate. Matching the flurry of diplomatic and military activity in Asia, the State Department in Washington said on Monday US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson would chair a special ministerial meeting of the UN Security Council on North Korea on Friday.

Tillerson, along with Defence Secretary Jim Mattis, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and Joint Chiefs chairman General Joseph Dunford, would also hold a rare briefing for the entire US Senate on North Korea on Wednesday, Senate aides said.

A North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said those meetings called by US officials clearly reflected the US pressure that could "ignite a full-out war" on the Korean peninsula.

"The reality of today again proves the decision to strengthen nuclear power in quality and quantity under the banner of pursuing economic development and nuclear power was the correct one," the unidentified spokesman said in a statement issued by the North's state media. On Monday, Trump called for tougher UN sanctions on the North, saying it was a global threat and "a problem that we have to finally solve".

"The status quo in North Korea is also unacceptable," Trump told a meeting with the 15 UN Security Council ambassadors, including China and Russia, at the White House. "The council must be prepared to impose additional and stronger sanctions on North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile programs."

The official China Daily said it was time for Pyongyang and Washington to take a step back from harsh rhetoric and heed calls for a peaceful resolution.

"Judging from their recent words and deeds, policymakers in Pyongyang have seriously misread the UN sanctions, which are aimed at its nuclear/missile provocations, not its system or leadership," the newspaper said in an editorial.

"They are at once perilously overestimating their own strength and underestimating the hazards they are brewing for themselves."

The nuclear-powered submarine the USS Michigan, which arrived in the South Korean port of Busan, is built to carry and launch ballistic missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles. —Reuters

ADB lending hits record high amid rising infrastructure demand

MANILA — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) annual operations exceeded the 30 billion US dollars mark for the first time in its 50-year history last year as regional demand for development finance and knowledge, particularly on infrastructure, continues to grow, said the bank's 2016 annual report released on Tuesday.

The new report said ADB's total lending in 2016, including co-financing, reached 31.70 billion US dollars, or an 18 per cent increase from 2015.

The total includes 17.47 billion US dollars in approvals for loans and grants, 169 million dollars for technical assistance, and 14.06 billion dollars for cofinancing, which increased by a record 31 per cent over 2015, the report said, adding that disbursements, a key indicator for successful project implementation, also reached a new high of 12.26 billion US dollars in 2016. ADB President Takehiko Nakao said the spike in ADB's develop-

ment financing to Asia and the Pacific "reflects our strong commitment to improving the lives of the people in the region."

The 2016 annual report also reviewed the significant economic transformation in Asia and the Pacific over the past 50 years, and the role played by ADB to support the region's development to improve people's lives. The report noted that while the region's economic growth and success in reducing poverty have exceeded the most optimistic forecasts, there remain significant challenges to be addressed. "We cannot be complacent," Nakao said. "The fact remains there are still 330 million people living in absolute poverty across Asia and the Pacific. A lack of infrastructure continues to limit economic growth, inhibit poverty reduction, and restrict improvements to quality of life," Nakao said. ADB estimates that the region requires 1.7 trillion US dollars a year to meet its infrastructure financing needs.—Xinhua

Invitation to young writers for new Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is now accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its new weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform starting in May.

Interested candidates can send their works to the Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150 NgarHtatGyiPayar Street, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information:

- (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.),
- (2) Real name and (if different) your penname,
- (3) Your level of education,
- (4) Name of your School/College/University,
- (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses,
- (6) A color photo of the submitter,
- (7) Copy of your NRC card,
- (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).

- Editorial Department
- The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

Opinion

Write for us

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

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Building a better world through creativity and innovation

Tha Sein

THE 2017 World Intellectual Property Day will be held at the Myanmar Convention Centre on Min Dhamma Road in Yangon from 9 am to 5 pm on 26 April under the sponsorship of the Science and Technological Department of the Ministry of Education. The event which is to bring together local and foreign experts and government officials includes discussions on copyrights, a showcase of a range of regional products, meals and presentation of souvenirs.

The World Intellectual Property

Day provides an opportunity for people of all nations to reflect on the importance of creativity and innovation in building a better world. Human creativity drives advances in science, business, technology, and the arts in all human endeavors. Recognizing and developing this limitless resource, and exploiting it as an economic asset, is key to achieving prosperity in today's world.

Myanmar has grasped this fact and is actively incorporating intellectual property policies into her overall development strategy. The WIPO's goal is to work with all countries to assist them in

this effort. In this aspect, it encourages young people to recognize the creator, the problem-solver, and the artist within themselves, as their capacity to create and innovate is limitless and their curiosity about whatever is new, different, or novel.

It is public knowledge that ideas shape our world. They are the raw materials on which our future prosperity and heritage depend. This is why it is important to provide environments in which innovative ideas are encouraged and rewarded. Realizing this, the government is stimulating and safeguarding innovation and creativity by celebrating intellectual

property day every year.

With abundant natural resources, the country can serve the economic and developmental interests of the countries in the region and beyond, allowing intellectual property to widen its scope in the areas of education, health, culture, arts and so on. At a time when the economies of the nations around the world are becoming more intertwined, the country has a vested interest to harnessing the power of creativity and innovation through the use of the intellectual property systems in order to achieve economic growth and cultural development.

Peace is the foundation for prosperity

Khin Maung Myint

IN a country where there is no peace, there cannot be prosperity. As a matter of fact, if there is no peace there would be much hindrances to the development of that country and the general populace would always be subjected to insecurity, anxieties, dangers, threats and poverty. Therefore peace is the most

important and most desired goal for a country. It can be generally analyzed that the absence of peace is caused by many factors, of which, the most important are: lack of unity, misunderstandings, distrusts, hatreds, grievances, inability to forgive and forget and above all, manipulations and instigations by those who could benefit only if there is no peace.

Lack of unity

The lack of unity is the main driving force behind the hindrances that are depriving us of the coveted peace, which we had been yearning for, since right after our Independence. Peace had eluded us for nearly seven decades. So, what factors are hindering the attainment of peace? In my humble opinion, misunderstandings are the main culprits, because misunderstandings lead to distrusts, distrusts breed hatreds, which in turn give rise to grievances and all these factors contribute to the disunity.

Misunderstandings

It is only natural that if one doesn't trust another, misunderstandings would follow suit. These misunderstandings fueled the hatred between the two. Today, what we are facing are the misunderstandings between national races and the Bamar race. Most national races thought that the Bamars, as the majority race, are getting all the privileges while their needs are being neglected. This situation gave rise to distrusts.

Distrusts

Distrust towards one another is the most divisive force behind the disunity. This distrust is mainly directed towards the majority race, the Bamars, by some ethnic races. In the past there may be sound and concrete reasons for their distrusts. I don't blame anyone for mistrusting, because they have every right to be so, but after all these years, times have changed and so also their views and outlooks should be changed.

Hatreds

Misunderstandings also lead to hatreds and hatreds turned into hostilities and thence to conflicts. These conflicts emerged with the advent of our Independence and are still raging on in some places. It is high time that these undesirable conflicts should stop once and for all.

Grievances

Grievances harboured by some national races are mostly based on the past histories and some are born out of misunderstandings. Such attitudes are despicable and are detrimental to the peace, so they should be rid off too.

Forgive and forget

I would like to repeat what I had written in one of my previous articles. I had mentioned there, that peace could only be attained through unity among our peoples, based on the national reconciliation process.

To achieve the national reconciliations, we must discard our distrusts, grievances, hatreds amongst the diverse national races and have more understandings towards one another.

We should try to forgive and forget what had happened in the past, but if we would be dwelling in the past and lamenting on what were supposed to have happened based on the not so creditable historical records, peace would remain elusive as ever.

If we look back to our past, we are bound to see that like everywhere else in the world of those days, there were wars between the various kingdoms and fiefdoms since time immemorial. Those were the days when "might is right" and those who were mighty would bully the weaklings.

Also, those were the days when there was no conventions or organizations to control or intervene in such situations of hostilities.

Thus whoever attained a sizeable military advantage over the others would wage wars on those that were weaker.

Those were the days of empire-buildings, which were being carried out all over the world.

Some national races are still dwelling in the past and holding grudges against the Bamars for what the Kings and rulers of the old days had done to them. Likewise there were also times when some national races plundered the Bamar Kingdoms.

Thus it is undeniable that the intrusions and atrocities committed in the past were not one-sided. However, most of the Bamars had forgiven or even forgotten those incidents of the past and never kept lamenting them.

A fact that can be proved by the fact that most of their new generations are not even aware that such things ever took place in the past.

That is because they never handed down the grievances and hatreds against other national races to their new generations.

Conclusion

At the present, the incumbent administration is endeavoring earnestly with genuine goodwill to achieve national reconciliations, which are the foundations of peace.

Now is the most opportune time for all the ethnic armed groups to participate in the peace process.

I would like to suggest that all the stakeholders should discard their misunderstandings, distrusts, hatreds and grievances, forgive and forget, make necessary compromises as much as possible to settle their differences and join hands to work towards that common goal. We should be mindful that without peace the country wouldn't prosper as much as she should.

So, let us bury the hatchets finally and move forward, hand in hand, towards a peaceful and brighter future. Lastly, we should be wary of those saboteurs who would manipulate or instigate to derail the peace process.

“ We should be mindful that without peace the country wouldn't prosper as much as she should.”

7th anniversary of Khami National Day to be celebrated in Buthidaung Tsp on a grand scale

THE 7th anniversary of Khami National Day will be celebrated at the Gundayi monastery in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State on 27 April.

The Khami is one of the Rakhine ethnic groups and Khami national day is scheduled to be celebrated after a conference was held in MraukU Township.

Khami national day is annually held in the townships in Rakhine State where Khami ethnic people had been residing since time immemorial.

The first anniversary of Khami national day was held on 27 April in Agyetaw Ma (2) village in MraukU Township. The Khami national days

were celebrated four times in MraukU Township and one time each in Ponnagyun and Pauktaw townships and the celebrations were held on a rotational basis, said Khami national Ko Kyaw Sann Win.

There are over 80,000 Khami ethnic people in Rakhine State.—(Sittway IPRD)



Khami ethnic people celebrated 5th anniversary of Khami National Day in Rakhine State. PHOTO: SITTWAY IPRD

Signing on Memorandum of Understanding between Myanmar and the Netherlands for education

THE signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between The Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education and the Netherlands-based Stichting Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) was held yesterday in the meeting room of the Ministry of Education in Nay Pyi Taw.

The signing ceremony was attended by U Win Maw Htun, Deputy Minister for Education, the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education, rectors from various universities, librarians and responsible personnel from the Netherlands-based EIFL.

Dr. Thein Win, Director-General of the Department of Higher Education under the

Ministry of Education and Ms. Rima Kupryte, Director of EIFL, signed the MoU agreement for the cooperation of the

libraries of the universities in the two countries and the development of education.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Director-General of the Department of Higher Education Dr. Thein Win and Ms. Rima Kupryte sign the MOU in the presence of Deputy Minister U Win Maw Htun. PHOTO: MNA

Negotiations to open private universities in Myanmar

TALKS are ongoing about the possibility of private universities being opened in Myanmar, it has been learnt.

"We are negotiating with the government to open private schools and universities to promote the local educational sector," from an official of Myanmar

Investment Commission.

Instructions and qualifications necessary to gain permission to open such a university will be forthcoming if the plan is approved.

Local and foreign businessmen who want to open schools and universities shall submit

application forms to Myanmar Investment Commission, officials said.

Private universities will allow local youths pursue higher education at a diverse number of institutions in their own country, it is learnt from Myanmar Investment Commission.—200

MYANMAR GAZETTE

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Current Position	Transferred Position
(1) Dr. Soe Win Permanent Secretary (Education) Director-General In-charge Assessment Board (Education) Ministry of Education	Rector Institute of Economics (Monywa) Ministry of Education
(2) Dr. Hsint Soe Rector Mandalay Technological University Ministry of Education	Rector Mandalay Technological University Ministry of Education
(3) Dr. Daw Theingi Rector Technological University of West Yangon Ministry of Education	Rector Technological University (Thanlyin) Ministry of Education
(4) Dr. Kyi Soe Rector Technological University (Hmawby) Ministry of Education	Rector Technological University of West Yangon Ministry of Education
(5) Dr. Daw Kay Thi Lwin Rector Technological University (Thanlyin) Ministry of Education	Rector Technological University (Hmawbi) Ministry of Education

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Deputy Director- General U Nyunt Win of the Department of Labour Relations under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population as Director- General of the same department on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

7,000 stimulant tablets worth K 14 million seized in Maungtaw Township

MEMBERS of the local security force from Kyeinchaung police station seized 7,000 stimulant tablets from the two motorcyclists near Leikya Junction in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State on 23 April.

The security force searched a motorcycle driven by Mohamed Aliyed and Hami Tusoung from Shwezar Village and found 7,000 WY-branded stimulant pills worth K 14 million

hidden together with potatoes, dried fishes and detergent packs from them. Accord to the initial investigation, they took 50,000 kyat as transportation fee from Ahdu who resides in Shwezar (Kanbe) Village for the stimulant pills and it will be sent to Dimarmouk living in Taungpyo (Letyar) Town.

Action will be taken against the suspects in accord with the law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Heroin and stimulant tablets seized in Mohnyin Township

A LOCAL anti-drug squad in Mohnyin seized 0.0365 kilo of heroin and 1,132 stimulant

tablets including K 760,000 in cash in a search of the hut of Tint Zaw Oo in Mawlumaw, Mohnyin Township on 24 April.

Similarly, on the same day, local police stopped and searched a motorbike driven by Tin Zaw on the Mawhan-Nhamache road in Mohnyin Township and confiscated 22,000 stimulant tablets along with K 490,000.

Action has been taken against the suspects under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Tint Zaw Oo. PHOTO: MPF

Trump urges UN reform to make US investment worthwhile

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump complained on Monday that the United States is shouldering an unfair burden of the cost of the United Nations, but said if the world body reforms how it operates, the investment would be worth it.

Trump, who has frequently criticized the cost to the United States of supporting the NATO alliance, took his concerns directly to the ambassadors of the UN Security Council, who joined him at the White House for a lunch.

“If we do a great job, I care much less about the budget because you’re talking about peanuts compared to the important work you’re doing,” Trump told the 15 council envoys.

The United States is the biggest UN contributor, paying 22 per cent of the \$5.4 billion core budget and 28.5 per cent of the \$7.9 billion peacekeeping budget. These assessed contributions are agreed by the 193-member UN General Assembly.

Trump said the US share of those budgets was “unfair.”

He has proposed a 28 per cent budget cut for diplomacy and foreign aid, which includes an unspecified reduction in funding for the United Nations and its



With US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley at his side (L), US President Donald Trump speaks during a working lunch with ambassadors of countries on the UN Security Council at the White House in Washington, US on 24 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

agencies, as well as enforcement of a 25 per cent cap on US funding for peacekeeping operations.

“We need the member states to come together to eliminate inefficiency and bloat and make sure that no one nation shoulders a disproportionate share of the burden,” he said.

Trump’s remarks came as the General Assembly prepares to negotiate in the coming months the UN regular budget for both 2018 and 2019 and the peacekeeping budget from 1 July, 2017 to 30 June, 2018.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres met briefly with

Trump at the White House on Friday for the first time since both took office earlier this year.

The United States currently owes the United Nations \$896 million for its core budget, UN officials said. The United States is also reviewing 16 UN peacekeeping missions as the annual mandates come up for renewal by the Security Council in a bid to cut costs.

UN agencies such as the UN Development Program (UNDP), the children’s agency UNICEF, and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), are funded by governments voluntarily.

The State Department said this month it was ending funding for UNFPA, the international body’s agency focused on family planning, as well as maternal and child health in more than 150 countries. Guterres warned that the cut could have “devastating effects” on vulnerable women and girls.

In 2016, the United States was the top contributor to the UNDP’s core budget, with an \$83 million donation; the leading donor to UNICEF’s core budget in 2015 with \$132 million; and the fourth-largest donor to the UNFPA, giving \$75 million. —Reuters

Drop ‘tribal politics’ — Britain’s May takes election fight to Wales

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May will call on voters on Tuesday to drop the “tribal politics” of the past and back her plan for leaving the European Union, bringing her election message of “strong leadership” to Wales.

May is targeting Wales, a largely rural country which has long been a stronghold of her Labour opponents but voted in favour of Brexit, by exploiting rifts in the opposition party to press her argument that only she can win a good divorce deal with Brussels.

Her visit is timely, with Labour on the back foot over its plans for Brexit and an opinion poll suggesting her Conservatives are on track to win a majority of parliamentary seats in Wales for the first time in more than 100 years.

“This election is not about the kind of tribal politics that has held sway in Wales and elsewhere for many years. It is not about calling in old favours or relying on past allegiance. It is about the future,” she



Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May visits a steel works in Newport, Wales on 25 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

wrote in the Western Mail newspaper before visiting Wales.

“It is an opportunity to provide this United Kingdom with the strong and stable leadership it needs to see us through Brexit and beyond.”

By calling an early vote for 8 June, three years before it was scheduled, May has sent opposition parties scrambling to come up with election manifestos in just six weeks, handing the prime minister the upper hand.

With national opinion polls giving her a lead of around 20 percentage points over Labour, she looks set to get a large majority in parliament, easing passage of the dozens of laws needed to guide Britain’s divorce from the European Union.

But she may also face election fatigue among an electorate who voted in the EU referendum less than a year ago, and some commentators say her warnings that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn might win the vote

ring hollow in light of opinion polls.

Running well behind, his Labour Party went on the offensive on Tuesday, berating May for a “reckless” approach to the Brexit talks that will start in earnest in June. Its Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer said his party would reset the tone by immediately guaranteeing the rights of millions of EU citizens living in Britain if it won.

But May shot back, accusing Labour and other opposition parties of trying to disrupt the negotiations.

“That approach can only mean one thing – uncertainty and instability, bringing grave risk to our growing economy with higher taxes, fewer jobs, more waste and more debt,” she wrote.

“That is why I will be fighting to earn every vote I can in this election, because every vote I receive will strengthen my hand as I negotiate with the prime ministers, presidents and chancellors of Europe.” —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK’s May to host meeting with Japanese PM Abe on Friday

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May will host her Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe for talks at her official country residence on Friday, May’s spokesman told reporters on Tuesday.

The talks come as Britain prepares to hold a national election in June, before embarking upon exit negotiations with the European Union which could affect large Japanese investments in British sectors like the car manufacturing industry. —Reuters

Russia to supply breakaway Ukrainian region with power — official

MOSCOW — Russia will start providing power to the breakaway Ukrainian region of Luhansk after Kiev cut supplies, Interfax news agency cited Russia’s envoy to the Ukraine peace talks, Boris Gryzlov, as saying on Tuesday.

Gryzlov said the decision to cut electricity supplies to the region was politically motivated and violated a fragile peace deal struck between Kiev and Pro-Russian separatist forces who have controlled the area since 2014. —Reuters

At least 18 Kurdish YPG members killed in Turkish air strikes in Syria — monitor

BEIRUT — At least 18 Kurdish YPG fighters and media officials were killed in Turkish air strikes on a headquarters of the militia in northeastern Syria on Tuesday, the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

The YPG, a US ally in the fight against Islamic State, did not immediately give its own precise death toll.

Turkey’s military bombed the YPG and Kurdish militants in neighbouring Iraq early on Tuesday, widening a campaign against groups affiliated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). —Reuters

Russia calls US allegation it arms Taliban unsubstantiated

MOSCOW — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday that a US allegation Moscow was supplying arms to Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan was unsubstantiated.

The head of US and international forces in Afghanistan said on Monday he was “not refuting” reports that Russia was providing support, including weapons, to the Taliban. —Reuters

Spain police arrest eight suspected of Islamist militant activity

MADRID — Spanish police in the northeastern city of Barcelona have arrested eight people and raided 12 properties in a sweeping operation against Islamist militants, police said on Tuesday.

The detained were all Moroccans aged between 21 and 39, the police said.

The investigation and operation were carried out in conjunction with Belgian police, they said in a statement. A police spokesman declined to say what connection the arrested had with Belgium.

The raids follow an eight-month investigation in which the police observed a group which they said was associated with Islamist militants and had links to organised crime in the Barcelona area.

Spain has arrested some 22 people in 16 separate operations this year in connection with Islamist extremism, according to Interior Ministry figures. —Reuters

Iraqi troops recapture new neighbourhood from IS in western Mosul

MOSUL (Iraq) — Iraqi government forces on Tuesday freed a new neighbourhood after heavy clashes with Islamic State (IS) militants in the western side of Mosul, the Iraqi military said.

The elite forces, known as Counter Terrorism Service (CTS), drove out IS militants from the neighbourhood of al-Tanak in western edge of the city of Mosul and raised the Iraqi flags on some of its buildings after fierce clashes, Lt Gen Abdul-Amir Yarallah, from the Joint Operations Command (JOC), said in a statement.

The recapture of Tanak neighbourhood, which had long been one of the main IS redoubts in Mosul, came after several days' battles against terrorist militants.

The latest advance is part of operations to retake control of the remaining IS-held neighbourhoods in the western side of Mosul.

It is also part of slow push toward the western and northwestern edges of Mosul's densely populated old city centre, where roughly 400,000 residents are believed to still be trapped under IS rule.

Meanwhile, federal police and interior ministry special forces, known as Rapid Response, pushed further reinforcement troops to the edges of the old city center to initi-



An Iraqi Counter Terrorism Services (CTS) soldier looks through binoculars during a battle between CTS and Islamic State militants in western Mosul, Iraq, on 25 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

ate progress from new directions in the areas of Bab al-Toub and Bab al-Jadid, Lt Gen Raid Shakir Jawdat, commander of the federal police forces, said in a press release.

The move came as fierce clashes continued in the narrow streets in the old neighborhoods around the historical al-Nuri

Mosque in the middle of Mosul's city centre.

The troops' progress in the old city centre is much slower than the early phases of the offensive by the stubborn resistance of IS militants, in addition to the orders to the troops that restricted the use of heavy bombings and increased

sniper fire against the militants holed up in densely populated area to reduce civilians casualties.

Also in the day, the paramilitary Hashd Shaabi units launched in the early morning a new operation to dislodge IS militants from their desert stronghold in the town of Hadhar and nearby villages,

some 80 km southwest of Mosul, a media office for Hashd Shaabi said in a statement.

After several hours of their advance, the paramilitary units cleared three villages near Hadhar from IS militants and defused many roadside bombs, the statement said.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, announced the start of an offensive on 19 February to drive extremist militants out of the western side of Mosul, locally known as the right bank of the Tigris River which bisects the city.

Late in January, Abadi declared the liberation of Mosul's eastern side, or the left bank of Tigris, after over 100 days of fighting IS militants.

However, the western part of Mosul, with its narrow streets and heavily populated neighborhoods, appears to be a bigger challenge to the Iraqi forces.

Mosul, 400 km north of Iraqi capital Baghdad, has been under IS control since June 2014, when government forces abandoned their posts and fled, enabling IS militants to take control of parts of Iraq's northern and western regions.—Xinhua

Palestinians say Britain refuses request for apology over 1917 Balfour promise

RAMALLAH (West Bank) — Palestinian leaders said on Tuesday Britain had rejected their request for an apology for a 1917 declaration that helped pave the way to the state of Israel, and they would pursue international court action unless London backtracked.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for the apology in an address to the UN General Assembly in September, but Britain plans to hold celebrations along with Israeli officials to mark the 2 November centenary of the Balfour Declaration.

"The answer came in a written letter to the (Palestinian) Foreign Ministry that the apology is refused," Manuel Hassassian, the Palestinian ambassador to Britain, told Voice of Palestine Radio on Tuesday.

"It means the Queen and the government of Britain will not apologise to the Palestinian people and the celebration marking 100 years since the Balfour promise will be held on time."

There was no immediate comment from Britain's Foreign Office.

In the 1917 declaration, the British government said it viewed "with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". It also said "...nothing shall be done which

may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..."

Palestine was under British rule when Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour made the policy statement in a letter to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community.

Palestinians have long condemned the document as a promise by Britain to hand over land that it did not own.

Hassassian said that unless Britain apologised, cancelled planned celebrations and recognised the state of Palestine, the Palestinians would go ahead with plans for a lawsuit.

"This is the only condition upon which we can close this file permanently," he said.

Israel declared independence in 1948, at the end of British Mandatory rule and after the UN General Assembly voted in 1947 in favour of a plan, rejected by Palestinian representatives, to partition Palestine into a Palestinian state and a Jewish state.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem in the 1967 Middle East war, territories where Palestinians now seek to establish an independent state.

The last round of Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations collapsed in 2014.—Reuters

UN 'horrified' by video showing killing of experts in Congo

KINSHASA — The United Nations said on Monday it was horrified by a video screened by the government of Democratic Republic of Congo that appeared to show the brutal killing of two UN investigators.

Congo's government showed the film to reporters in Kinshasa on Monday, saying it showed members of an anti-government militia carrying out the act.

Government spokesman Lambert Mende did not explain how authorities obtained the video, but said they were showing it to rebuff suggestions that Congo authorities were complicit in the killings.

The pair, from the United States and Sweden, went missing on 12 March on a mission to the Kasai Central province, where rebels have intensified an anti-government insurgency in recent weeks that has left dozens dead on both sides. Their bodies were found later last month.

"Our colleagues in the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) have seen the video and we are utterly horrified at what appears to be the killing of Michael Sharp and Zeida Catalan," said UN human

rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani.

The UN is carrying out its own investigation into the killings and has urged Congo to do so as well.

The video shown to a group of journalists in the capital Kinshasa on Monday appeared to show the two experts walking with a group of men wearing red headbands characteristic of the local Kamuina Nsapu militia, according to a Reuters reporter present.

Since July, when the militia first launched an uprising, the United Nations estimates at least 400 people have been killed.

The film, narrated by a Congolese police spokesman, cuts mid-way through and the two are seen sitting on the ground and then shot. Catalan is subsequently beheaded.

Government spokesman Lambert Mende said it was filmed by the Kamuina Nsapu militia and had been secured by police.

He declined to give further information on how the video was obtained, but said it was being screened to show that Congo was not responsible for their deaths.

"Our police and soldiers

are accused of being implicated in the assassination of the two UN experts.

That is not the case," he said. "The images speak for themselves. It is not our soldiers that we see in the video executing the two UN workers but the terrorists of the Kamuina Nsapu militia."

The government also presented another video including images showing a large group of beheaded bodies wearing police uniforms that authorities say were also victims of militia violence.

Congo's government is under pressure to investigate the violence in Kasai, where the United Nations says it has found a total of 40 mass grave sites it says may need to be probed by the International Criminal Court if the government fails to.

Several Congolese officials close to President Joseph Kabila are subject to Western sanctions for police brutality — allegations which Congo regularly denies.

Tensions with the West are also high due to criticism of Kabila, whose mandate to rule the country of 70 million people expired in December 2016.—Reuters

Russia's seaborne air defence system to receive three types of missiles

MOSCOW — Russia's Poliment-Redut seaborne missile complex will be fitted out with three types of missiles unified with the S-350 Vityaz ground-based air defence system, Almaz-Antey Aerospace Defence Group Chief Designer Pavel Sozinov said on Monday.

"The Poliment-Redut R&D work is focused on developing small-, medium- and intermediate-range missiles for arming the relevant ships," he said in an interview published in *Natsionalnaya Oborona* (National Defence) magazine.

"Poliment-Redut surface-to-air missiles have been unified with the S-350 Vityaz air defence system," the chief designer said. All new-generation missiles are being developed with active homing heads and the iner-

tial guidance system and feature very high maneuverable characteristics for hitting the entire range of attack means, Sozinov said.

This year, Almaz-Antey defense contractor will celebrate the 15th anniversary of its establishment.—TASS

Germany opposes key EU reforms prompted by VW scandal — document

FRANKFURT/BRUSSELS — Germany is opposing key elements of a European Union proposal to overhaul how vehicles are licenced and tested to prevent a repeat of the Volkswagen emission cheating scandal, according to an EU document.

The German car maker's admission in September 2015 that it used software to cheat US diesel pollution controls also put the spotlight on the EU's lax vehicle regulations, prompting the European Commission to propose tougher rules for testing.

These include making governments rather than car makers pay for emissions testing and giving Brussels the authority to fine vehicle manufacturers for any violations.

However, a German position paper seen by Reuters shows that Berlin is against allowing Brussels to fine car makers up to 30,000 euros (\$31,925) per vehicle and Germany also wants to maintain the system under which car makers pay testing agencies.

Under the Commission's proposal, EU nations would have to fund car exhaust testing centres, although they can levy fees from car makers to do so. The German position paper says cheating can be prevented through compulsory market surveillance checks on car pollution levels at the national level by independent authorities, regardless of how these

tests are financed.

It also suggests vehicle approval authorities rotate responsibility among various emissions testing laboratories and swap out staff halfway through a vehicle test.

Germany is not alone in stalling. An inquiry by the European Parliament has accused EU governments including Italy, France and Spain of repeatedly delaying the adoption of stricter car emissions tests, despite evidence this has allowed pollution to go above legal limits.

Brussels is becoming increasingly frustrated by what it sees as governments colluding with car makers. It launched legal cases against Germany, Britain and five other EU members in December and has promised more cases to come. While EU member states are still debating the EU's proposal, expecting to hammer out a final position by the end of May, the European Parliament has endorsed the Commission's bill.

The final legislation will then be thrashed out in negotiations between the EU's three law-making bodies.

"We invite the co-legislators to uphold our level of ambition so that we introduce greater quality and independence in vehicle testing, more surveillance of cars already in circulation, and greater European oversight," a spokeswoman for the European Commission said.—Reuters



Russia's seaborne missile complex will be fitted out with three types of missiles unified with the S-350 Vityaz ground-based air defence system. PHOTO: REUTERS

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (170)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (170) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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.

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AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

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

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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.

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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.

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Former US President George HW Bush staying in hospital few more days

HOUSTON — Former US President George HW Bush will remain for a few more days in a Houston hospital where he was being treated for pneumonia, the hospital said on Monday. Houston Medical Center said Bush, 92, "continues to be in good spirits and is resting comfortably." "Mr Bush will remain in the hospital for a few more days of observation, and his medical team hopes to discharge him by the end of the week," it said in a written statement.

A spokesman for

the former president, Jim McGrath, directed Reuters to the hospital statement.

Bush, who served in the White House from 1989 to 1993 and is the father of former President George W Bush, was admitted to the hospital on 14 April for a cough that was later diagnosed as a mild case of pneumonia, McGrath has said. In an earlier bout with pneumonia, Bush spent more than two weeks at Houston Methodist in January, much of it in the intensive care unit.—Reuters

Le Pen's father criticises her presidential campaign as she steps back from party

PARIS — French far-right veteran Jean-Marie Le Pen said on Tuesday his daughter Marine, who faces centrist Emmanuel Macron in a 7 May presidential runoff, should have campaigned more aggressively for Sunday's first round, following the example of Donald Trump. With 7.5 million votes, Marine Le Pen beat the National Front party's previous election record on Sunday but failed to pip pro-EU Macron to the first place. The intervention by her father follows her announcement on Monday that she plans to step back from day-to-day management of the far-right party he founded ahead of the runoff and marks the latest tussle between the two of them over its future direction. "I think her campaign was too laid-back. If I'd been in her place I would have had a Trump-like campaign, a more open one, very aggressive against those responsible for the decadence of our country, whether left or right," 88-year-old Jean-Marie Le Pen told RTL radio. The

two have been at odds since Marine Le Pen launched moves to clean the National Front's image of xenophobic associations in the run-up to the campaign for the 2017 presidency.

Jean-Marie Le Pen shocked the world in 2002 by qualifying for the second round of the presidential election and then went on to lose in a landslide to conservative Jacques Chirac.

He was frequently accused of making xenophobic and anti-Semitic statements and Le Pen expelled him from the party in 2015, though as the party's founder he remains a well-known figure and represents a body of opinion in the party.

In another sign of his influence, the National Front has borrowed about 6 million euros from a political fundraising association he heads. Marine Le Pen's decision to take a leave of absence from the day-to-day management of the party appeared to be an attempt to portray herself as being above the narrow world of National Front politics and



France's far right National Front party founder and Member of the European Parliament Jean-Marie Le Pen arrives to take part in a voting session at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France on 11 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

broaden her appeal to the wider electorate ahead of the crucial runoff vote.

Her programme calls for sharp curbs on immigration and on the rights of immigrants living in France, as well as the expulsion of foreigners under suspicion of having militant Islamist links. But she is seeking all the same to distance herself from the toxic legacy of her father and the xenophobic and anti-semitic undertones of his previous campaigns.

Under France's Fifth Republic, the president is

the head of state, very much like a monarch in other countries, a role described by founder Charles De Gaulle as being above party politics — something Le Pen may have had in mind in her Monday night statement.

She may also be seeking to play Macron at his own game, as the 39-year old centrist has refused to join mainstream parties, and consistently described his "En Marche!" (Onwards!) party structure as a "movement" transcending the left-right divide.—Reuters

Wikipedia founder aims to "fix the news" with collaborative website

LONDON — Jimmy Wales, the founder of online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, has launched a website aimed at countering the spread of fake news by bringing together professional journalists and a community of volunteers and supporters to produce news articles.

The new platform, called Wikitribune, will be free to access and carry no advertising, instead relying on its readers to fund it, while the accuracy of news reports will be easily verifiable as source material will be published, Wales said.

"The news is broken, but we've figured out how to fix it," he said in a promotional video posted on the website's homepage.

The online proliferation of fake news, some of it generated for profit and some for political ends, became a major topic of angst and debate in many developed countries during last year's US presidential election.

Wales argued in his video that because people expected to get news for free on the Internet, news

sites were reliant on advertising money, which created strong incentives to generate so-called "clickbait", catchy headlines to attract viewers.

"This is a problem because ads are cheap, competition for clicks is fierce and low-quality news sources are everywhere," said Wales.

He also argued that social media networks, where an ever-increasing number of people get their news, were designed to show users what they wanted to see, confirm their biases and keep them clicking at all costs. Social media giant Facebook was widely criticised last year for not doing enough to prevent fake news reports from spreading on its platform, and has announced new tools to tackle the problem.

Wales said Wikitribune would combine professional, standards-based journalism with what he called "the radical idea from the world of wiki that a community of volunteers can and will reliably protect the integrity of information".—Reuters

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Loved and lost, Heath Ledger shows carefree side in new documentary



Actor Heath Ledger arrives at the premiere of the film "Candy" in New York on 6 November, 2006. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Nine years after his death at age 28, audiences are seeing a different side of Australian actor Heath Ledger through the lens of his own camera.

Documentary "I Am Heath Ledger" uses thousands of hours of self video shot by Ledger, as well as his art work and music videos, to paint a portrait of the young actor who took Hollywood by storm in roles like "Brokeback Mountain" and "The Dark Knight."

The film also seeks to counteract the lingering perception that Ledger was severely depressed when he accidentally overdosed on painkillers, anxiety and insomnia medication.

"He was super happy and he was loving life. He struggled with some demons, but he wasn't one to go anywhere but forward," Ledger's Hollywood agent Steve Alexander says in the film, which was launched at the Tribeca film festival this week.

Rather than dwell on his January 2008 death in New York, the film uses Ledger's video archives and interviews with his family and closest friends to "celebrate Heath's life and to tell the story of this multi-faceted artist," director and producer Derik Murray told Reuters Television.

It portrays Ledger as a force of nature who longed for adventure,

was generous with his friends, and whose passions ranged from chess to making music videos. His non-stop energy also meant he rarely slept a full night.

While Ledger's friends including Naomi Watts and director Ang Lee were interviewed for the film, Michelle Williams' — Ledger's former fiancée and mother of his daughter Matilda — chose not to take part, said her spokeswoman.

Murray said Williams' support was integral to the film "but she really didn't feel she wanted to be in front of the camera."

Ledger was found dead a few months after the couple split up and shortly after filming his

role as the manic Joker in "The Dark Knight," for which he won a posthumous Oscar. "There was a lot of conversation and chatter around the fact that his passing was a byproduct of his role as the Joker and that he spiraled down this path and couldn't pull himself out of it," said Murray.

But Murray said everyone the filmmakers spoke to said this was untrue. "He had the best time making it... The Joker was a role. He was enthralled by it. He was proud of it." "I Am Heath Ledger" will get a one-night showing in 300 US movie theaters on 3 May and premiere on Spike TV on 17 May. —Reuters

Elton John recovering from 'potentially deadly' bacterial infection

LONDON — Elton John spent two nights in intensive care with a potentially deadly bacterial infection and has canceled all his concerts for the rest of April and May, his publicist said on Monday.

The British musician, 70, became "violently ill" on a flight home from his recent South American tour, spokeswoman Fran Curtis said in a statement.

The "Rocket Man" singer spent two nights in intensive care in the UK and is resting at home after being released on Saturday, the statement said.

The infection was not identified, but the statement said John contracted the "harmful and unusual bacterial infection" during his South American tour, which ended in Chile on 10 April.

"Infections of this nature are rare and potentially deadly," the statement said, adding that his time in intensive care was followed by an "extended stay in hospital." John is expected to make a full recovery but has canceled all his concerts in Las Vegas for April and May, as well as a gig in Bakersfield, California, on 6 May. John apologized to fans for disappointing them, adding in a statement: "I am extremely grateful to the medical team for their excellence in looking after me so well." He is due to resume performances at a concert in Twickenham, England, on 3 June.

John, a Grammy, Oscar and Tony winner for his work in film and theater, is working on a score for a Broadway musical adaptation of the comedy-drama "The Devil Wears Prada." —Reuters

Tom Hanks jokes Twitter CEO inspired his character in 'The Circle'

SAN FRANCISCO — Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks, who plays a Silicon Valley tycoon in the new film "The Circle" about a powerful social media company, teased Twitter Inc Chief Executive Officer Jack Dorsey on Monday that he may have been inspiration for the part. Hanks appeared alongside Dorsey on Periscope, Twitter's service for live broadcasts, to promote the film that premieres on Wednesday at New York's Tribeca Film Festival.

"I played you," Hanks said, as co-stars including Emma Watson laughed. "I'm not in as good a shape. I didn't exercise or eat as well as you did, but I played you."

Dorsey, laughing along, held up a hand and said, "Not me."

Earlier, while telling the bearded, T-shirt-wearing Dorsey about the executive he portrays in the film, Hanks deadpanned: "You know that he's a diabolical genius because he's got a beard. Do you find that to be the case, Jack?"

The film, which opens widely

in the United States on Friday, is based on a Dave Eggers novel. The book sparked debate about the rise of social media when it was published in 2013.

The fictional company at the center of the film and the book is obsessed with getting people to share their daily activities publicly. Reviewers have made comparisons to Alphabet Inc's Google, Facebook Inc and Twitter.

The film's cast members said they were conflicted about technology that encourages people to share online, torn between its ability to shine a light on injustice and its threat to privacy in everyday affairs.

"The world that we live in now, with the level of transparency that we're seeing, you get everything — every unkind word, every criticism," Watson said.

Patton Oswalt, who plays a tech executive in the film, asked whether people would become burned out over the next 10 years and start a mass retreat from so-

cial media.

"It's the opposite of Andy Warhol's thing. In the future, everyone will be allowed to be anonymous for 15 minutes."

Oswalt said. — Reuters



Actor Tom Hanks arrives at the People's Choice Awards 2017 in Los Angeles, California, US on 18 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Lamar's 'Damn.' scores biggest debut of the year on Billboard chart



Kendrick Lamar performs a medley of songs at the 58th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, California on 15 February, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Kendrick Lamar scored the biggest debut album of the year on Monday as his latest album "Damn." sold more than 600,000 copies, eclipsing Drake's "More Life."

"Damn.", the third album from Grammy-winning Lamar to top the Billboard 200 chart, sold a total of 603,000 album units that comprised 340 million streams, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

The Billboard 200 album chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

Lamar's "Damn." outpaced Canadian rapper Drake's "More Life," which debuted on the Billboard 200 chart in March with

505,000 album units sold in its first week.

At No 2 this week is singer-songwriter John Mayer's latest album "Search For Everything," which sold 132,000 album units, while Drake's "More Life" dropped one spot to No 3 with 87,000 units sold.

The soundtrack to Universal Pictures' blockbuster action film "Fate of the Furious" was the only other new entry in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart this week, entering at No 10 with 37,000 copies sold.

On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online single sales, electro-pop DJ Zedd and singer Alessia Cara's dance track "Stay" jumped from No 10 to No 1, selling 91,000 copies. —Reuters

Chinese, Russian visitor surge push Dubai toward 20 million target

DUBAI — The number of Chinese and Russian visitors to Dubai surged in the first three months of the year, boosted by the United Arab Emirates' recent decision to grant visas on arrival to citizens of the two countries.

Overnight Chinese visitors jumped 64 per cent to 230,000 in the three months to 31 March, making it Dubai's fourth largest source market during the period, Dubai's tourism department said on Monday. Overnight Russian visitors rose by 106 per cent to 126,000.

"We knew that there is huge potential there for us to capitalize on," Dubai Tourism Chief Executive Issam Abdul Rahim Kazim told Reuters in an interview ahead of the release of the Q1 numbers.

Tourism is a key sector

for the glitzy Middle East citystate which has spent billions of dollars trying to attract visitors with sites like the world's tallest tower.

The overall number of overnight foreign visitors increased by 11 per cent to 4.57 million in the quarter compared to the same period a year ago with India and Saudi Arabia holding as the first and second largest source markets, respectively.

"We've been focusing a lot on family tourism being our priority," Kazim said. Last September, the UAE announced it was granting visas on arrival to holders of Chinese passports and the same policy was introduced for Russians in January.

The increasing number of Chinese and Russian visitors is likely to be welcomed

in Dubai where growth slowed last year due to low oil prices and sluggish global trade. China is the world's largest outbound tourism market with Chinese travelers spending \$261 billion in 2016, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

Russia used to be a major source market for Dubai until its economy slipped into a recession in 2015 under pressure from sanctions and low oil prices.

State-owned budget carrier flydubai is planning to add flights to Russia after the number of Russian passengers traveling to Dubai increased in the first quarter.

"It's a huge market for Dubai," flydubai chief executive Ghaith Al Ghatih told Reuters on Monday.

However, Dubai is set



A general view of Atlantis resort is seen in Dubai on 19 January, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

to lose some direct flights to the United States, a top 10 source market, following Emirates' decision this month to cancel some services from May. Kazim said the tourism department

would have to increase efforts in other markets to "compensate if there is any drop from the US."

Along with China and Russia, Dubai is targeting South Korea, Nordic coun-

tries, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet states as growth source markets. Dubai has said it expects 20 million visitors by 2020, up from 14.9 million in 2016.—Reuters

In late April, Dutch tulip bulb farmers chop off the flowers' heads

THE HAGUE — As the end of April approaches, Dutch tulip farmers prepare for "topping", when they run cutting machines through the fields across the north and west of the country, lopping off the colorful flower heads and leaving the stalks and plants to wither.

Throughout the month, the tulip fields are in full bloom and tourists flock to attractions such as the Keukenhof flower garden in The Hague to see the year's designs and spectacular new strains.

To the un-initiated, the "topping" that follows may look like senseless destruction.

In fact, it's all part of the tulip's growing cycle, as the plant then



A man arranges tulips at the Dutch pavilion during preparations for the Green Week international food, agriculture and horticulture fair in Berlin on 16 January, 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

diverts its energy to the still-living bulb underground, which will

bloom again.

The reinvigorated bulbs are harvested in

mid-summer and sold to growers for planting in the autumn.—Reuters

Ancient porcelain kiln excavated in central China

CHANGSHA — Archaeologists in central China's Hunan Province are excavating a site of a porcelain kiln to make way for a new railway.

The Yanquan kiln, on a hill in Shantian village, Liuyang city, was used between the Southern Song Dynasty (1127 - 1279) and the Yuan Dynasty (1271 - 1368), said Xun Chunlin, curator of the Liuyang city museum on Monday.

Archaeologists have found a kiln workshop, a pit for storage of the clay used in porcelain making, two channels and three walls. They have unearthed porcelain utensils, mostly greenish white, and

tools used in the kiln. "Although it was an unofficial kiln, the excavation helps us learn more about life of people in the Song and Yuan dynasties," Xun told Xinhua.

"It also demonstrates the spread of porcelain making from east China to Hunan," he said.

The kiln, discovered in 1984, is on the route of a railway linking Inner Mongolia and Jiangxi Province, intended to be a major coal transportation line, stretching more than 1,800 kilometers and scheduled to begin operations in 2020. The relics unearthed will be kept in the museum.—Xinhua

Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(26-4-2017 07:00am ~ 27-4-2017 07:00am) MST

<p>07:03 Am News</p> <p>07:25 Am Yangon Markets: Da Nyin Gone Market</p> <p>07:36 Am Family of Toys</p> <p>07:55 Am Hip-Hop and Design</p> <p>08:03 Am News</p> <p>08:26 Am Amazing: May Phoo Han</p> <p>08:37 Am A Historic Town: 9 Pagodas</p> <p>08:49 Am Farming: Duck Breeder</p> <p>09:03 Am News</p> <p>09:26 Am Serene and Happy Rural Life in Myanmar</p> <p>09:37 Am International Dances in Myanmar</p> <p>09:55 Am Made in Myanmar "Mixxo"</p> <p>10:03 Am News</p> <p>10:26 Am Orchidologist Dr. Saw Lwin</p> <p>10:48 Am ABU Radio Song Festival</p>	<p>(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>Prime Time</p> <p>07:03 Pm News</p> <p>07:26 Pm Geographic Center of Myanmar</p> <p>07:47 Pm Dhamma School</p> <p>08:03 Pm News</p> <p>08:25 Pm Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-3) The Sphinx of Egypt And The Manousiha of Myanmar</p> <p>08:40 Pm Bollywood Actress "Laila Khan" Born & Raised in Myanmar (Part-1)</p> <p>(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)</p>	<p>6:00 Am</p> <p>◆ Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw</p> <p>7:00 Am</p> <p>◆ Breakfast News</p> <p>7:35 Am</p> <p>◆ Money Talk Myanmar</p> <p>8:40 Am</p> <p>◆ Solution for Agriculture</p> <p>9:10 Am</p> <p>◆ Life Struggles</p> <p>9:30 Am</p> <p>◆ Pyi Thu Ni Ti</p> <p>10:35 Am</p> <p>◆ Documentary</p> <p>11:15 Am</p> <p>◆ Documentary</p> <p>11:30 Am</p> <p>◆ Teleplay (Health)</p> <p>12:30 Pm</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>1:00 Pm</p> <p>◆ Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competition</p>	<p>1:50 Pm</p> <p>◆ Kyae Pwint Myaye Yin Kone Than</p> <p>2:05 Pm</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>3:50 Pm</p> <p>◆ Documentary</p> <p>4:35 Pm</p> <p>◆ Documentary (Part-2)</p> <p>5:05 Pm</p> <p>◆ Documentary (Part-1)</p> <p>5:30 Pm</p> <p>◆ MRTV Travelogue</p> <p>6:30 Pm</p> <p>◆ Real Story Real Movies</p> <p>7:15 Pm</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>8:00 Pm</p> <p>◆ News/International News/ Weather Report</p> <p>8:35 Pm</p> <p>◆ Documentary</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>◆ Fine Arts — Bosom of Dramatic Performance</p>
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(26 - 4 - 2017, Wednesday)

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Myanmar Women League for 2017 season restarts

THE first day of second match of 2016-2017 women league held at the Aung San Stadium yesterday evening. Arr Kar Theikpan FC played against Thitsar Arrman FC and held 1-1 draw.

Thitsar Arrman FC struggled for their win but late responsive goal made their draw result. Thitsar Arrman included the key-players but allowed an opener within ten minutes. The goal was scored by Nu Nu, the striker of Arr Kar Theikpan FC. Thitsar Arrman have not been able to equalize until the last minutes of the first half.

In the second half, Thitsar Arrman led the match to Arr

Kar Theikpan with brilliant penetration but goalkeeper managed to save every kick by the attacker. The equalizer for Thitsar Arrman was scored by captain Khin Moe Wai in the last minutes of the game and the match ended in a draw.

There are seven teams in Myanmar Women League began in the second week of December 2016.

However, due to the international games, the Women League was postponed over four months. The second day of the second match will be played today evening between Gandamar FC and Sports and Edu FC.—*Nyi Myat Thawda*



PHOTO: PHOE TAWZIN

Four-goal Newcastle romp back to Premier League



Newcastle United's Christian Atsu scores their second goal. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Newcastle United sparked a noisy promotion party by beating 10-man Preston North End 4-1 at a packed St James' Park on Monday to ensure a return to the Premier League at the first attempt.

Exactly 348 days after being relegated, Newcastle overcame their obvious nerves to bag a prize worth more than 100 million pounds (\$127.92 million) and retain an outside chance of pipping Brighton & Hove Albi-

Newcastle manager Rafael Benitez. PHOTO: REUTERS

on to the Championship title.

Two tap-ins from Ayoze Perez, a well-worked Christian Atsu goal and a Matt Ritchie penalty, after Preston's Paul Gallagher was sent off for handling on

the line just past the hour mark, warned the crowd of 50,212 on a bitter Tyneside night.

The only alarm came after 14 minutes when Preston's Jordan Hugill threatened to spoil the celebrations with a delightful flicked equaliser, but Spaniard Rafa Benitez's side kept their cool to ensure they are only the second team in five years to return to the Premier League immediately after relegation. Newcastle are four points behind Brighton with two games left.—*Reuters*

Pacquiao lands Down Under, tells Horn to be ready

BRISBANE — Eight-division world champion Manny Pacquiao concedes his next opponent Jeff Horn is a bit of an unknown quantity but has told the Australian he needs to be in peak condition to make sure their WBO welterweight title fight pleases fight fans Down Under.

Pacquiao made a low-key entry to Australia on Monday, touching down at Brisbane airport for a promotional tour for their 2 July bout at Lang Park and speaking briefly to reporters before being whisked away by handlers.

"I don't know much about him, but I know he's a fighter," Pacquiao told local media.

"I haven't watched his fights yet, but I'm going to get his last three fights and watch it.

"My message for him is to work hard, and make sure you're 100 per cent conditioned on 2 July so we can give a good fight, we can entertain people."

The fight against Horn (16-



Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines. PHOTO: REUTERS

0-1) will be the 38-year-old Pacquiao's first since his unanimous decision victory for the title over American Jessie Vargas in Las Vegas last November.

Pacquiao had previously agreed to an April fight against

Briton Amir Khan in the United Arab Emirates but his promoter Bob Arum said last month it had been postponed after the \$38 million offer for the bout failed to materialise.

The Horn-Pacquiao fight is eagerly anticipated in Australia and will be the biggest boxing event held in the country in decades. Organizers expect a crowd of over 50,000 to cram into Lang Park, which regularly hosts domestic and international rugby and soccer matches.

Dean Lonergan, a director at promoter Duco Events, hoped the bout would revitalise boxing in Australia. "It's been in the doldrums for some time," Lonergan said in comments published by state media ABC.

"I think you'll find this will be the biggest fight in Australian history and you'll see the underdog (Horn) come through, and there's nothing like Australians supporting their own guys when they're underdogs." —*Reuters*

Real's title credentials to be tested at Riazor

MADRID — Real Madrid's La Liga title credentials will be put to the test on Wednesday as a tough week continues with a tricky trip to Deportivo La Coruna.

This season the Galician side's Riazor stadium has proven an unhappy hunting ground for top clubs.

Atletico Madrid, Villarreal and Valencia have all been held to draws there, while Barcelona succumbed to a shock 2-1 defeat last month as the battle by Pepe Mel's side to avoid the drop gathered pace.

After losing a dramatic Clasico 3-2 to Barca on Sunday with the last kick of the game — a result that sees the Catalans move ahead at the top of the table because of their superior head-to-head record — Madrid know they cannot afford defeat as they bid to lift their first La Liga title for five years.

Coach Zinedine Zidane

insisted that, while they might currently sit second, the fact that Madrid have played one game fewer means they still control their own destiny. "Nothing changes, we still have things in our own hands and we are only thinking about Wednesday's game," Zidane said.

"It (the Clasico) was not about deciding who wins La Liga. A win, loss or draw means that nothing changes. We are disappointed as overall we did not deserve to lose, but football is like that. We do not have too much time to wallow and have to get over it."

Real will be without captain Sergio Ramos for the trip after he was sent off against Barcelona and have Nacho as their only recognized senior centre-back, with Pepe and Raphael Varane out injured. Depor striker Florian Andone will be looking to capitalise on Ramos's absence.—*Reuters*