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Hailing Union Peace Conference –21st Century Panglong (Second Session)

State Counsellor to meet northern armed groups

Ye Khaung Nyunt

Seven ethnic armed groups will meet with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi today and will present to her a book outlining

their political stance, according to Zhao Guo An, the United Wa State Army's (UWSA) external relations officer.

"We will meet the State Counselor on Friday," said Zhao

Guo An. "Still, we have not yet decided what we will discuss when we meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi."

The book is a compilation of agreements reached by the northern armed groups at the

4th Pangkham Conference, which was held in Pangkham in February 2017, and is described as 70 per cent similar to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

He also described the second

session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong as a "smooth and good" conference, expressing his commitment to peace in Myanmar.

SEE PAGE-6



Participants discuss the social sector of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong (Second Session). **PHOTO: MNA**

Day two of Union Peace Conference achieves agreement for most points in five sectors

Ye Khaung Nyunt

THE Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong (second session) discussed position pa-

pers in five sectors and reached agreement for the majority of the points in the five sectors.

Agreed upon were 41 points of facts related to the political,

economic, social, land and environment sectors, reached by representatives of the government, Hluttaw, the Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organisations

and political parties, according to the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) Secretariat.

SEE PAGE-7



NATIONAL
Vice President receives Chinese Special Envoy for Asian affairs
PAGE-3

LOCAL BUSINESS
MIC gives nod to Puma for retail petrol sales
PAGE-5

NATIONAL
SG Min Aung Hlaing receives German Parliamentary State Secretary and departing Ambassador of Pakistan
PAGE-10

NATIONAL
Admissions for new school year begins
PAGE-6

KBZ BANK
STRENGTH OF MYANMAR
သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

Fourth day of the fifth session of second Pyithu Hluttaw

HLUTTAW agreed to accept and discuss a motion urging the union government to properly plan and implement a project to gradually reduce unemployment in the country.

The motion was tabled at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting yesterday by U Khin Cho of Hlaing-bwe constituency. The motion mentioned that more than 22.87 million out of 32.98 million of the population in the age bracket of 15 to 64 years is working which means only 66 per cent were employed while 34 were unemployed. Many were self-employed rather than earning salaries and thus if conditions are made to provide trainings on practical trades skills, unemployment can be gradually reduced.

Hluttaw made an announcement for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the motion to submit their names.

Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency raised the question of whether there is any plan to control and guide cases of allowed budget being more than the actual



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

cost in implementing projects with national budget, checking the quality of the project and issue B/Q forms for calculation. She said there wastage of country's finance in construction works where the quality is not in consistent to the cost. Repair works were seen to be conducted on bridges constructed in Ottwin Township that deteriorated before the guaranteed period. Submitted work values for 2017-2018

FY were seen to be more than the previous years. In the past FYs, the norm for a mile of 12 ft. wide, 7 in. thick road is about Ks 88 million but for 2017-2018 FY, the requested amount were seen to be up to Ks 211 million.

In responding to the question, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win said budget estimate for a new FY is based on last FY's material tender rates, market

price in the region and labor cost. As prices fluctuate from year to year, some differences can exist.

To prevent the allowed budget being more than the actual cost in implementing projects, guide and control is made by determining the expenditure boundary before preparing the budget, checks conducted in stages and rechecked in hluttaw, readjust the estimate and transfer or return of the excess fund. Relevant department and organization conduct ground survey and issue forms and drawings before conducting the works. During the actual implementation period, relevant department and organization send quality control teams responsible personnel periodically to ensure consistency to the design, quality is up to set standard. Therefore, he answered that quality assurance forms B/Q were issued under departmental program to the department's quality control teams and Union Auditor General's office.

U Maung Myint of Mingin

constituency asked of any plan to increase the government employees' salary in order to ease their economic hardships, the Deputy Minister said currently there is no plan to do so as this should be considered only after attempting to develop the country's economy from all side. But while doing it, there are plans to increase the rates that are inconsistent with the present condition, review the possibility of using overtime and bonus system and arranging to purchase homes with installment systems.

U Khin Maung Win of Lanmadaw constituency questioned on particulars of telecommunication sector from 2011-2012 FY and Deputy Minister said from 2011-2012 FY to 2016-2017 FY Myanmar Post and Telecom, Telenor Myanmar Ltd and Ooredoo Myanmar Ltd sold 87,377,360 mobile SIM cards and 1,632,187 units of mobile hand sets were imported on which custom duty of Ks 1700.573 million and commercial tax of Ks. 1,747 million was collected.

SEE PAGE-9

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha: Low interest loans, antimalarial drugs

UNION Minister for Industry U Khin Maung Cho says their ministry is working with banks to reduce interest rates for loans for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Chin State, during the 4th day of the second Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular meeting held yesterday.

The minister made his remarks in response to a question raised by Hluttaw representative Daw Khin Swe Lwin from Chin State constituency (9), asking whether international loans with low interest rates will be used to help SMEs in Chin State.

To provide loans to SMEs in Chin State, a loan of ¥5 billion (approx. Ks50 billion) was received from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2015. Since 2016, an amount of Ks 41.558 billion from that international loan has been distributed to KBZ bank, Myanmar Citizens Bank, Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank (SMIDB), Ayeyawady Bank (AYA), Co-operative Bank



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker arrives at the 4th day of the second Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

(CB), and Myanmar Apex Bank so that 186 business owners in ten states and regions can take out loans.

Discussions are being made with the Board of Directors from each bank to provide the remaining Ks 8.441 billion as loans to industrial workers in Chin State such as Chin traditional rattan weavers, ginger planters, yam planters, avocado planters, and coffee bean

planters.

Union Minister U Khin Maung Cho said there are currently no petitions submitted for acquiring international loans with low interest specifically for SMEs in Chin State, but if anyone wishes to petition, it can be submitted by the State government to the Union government, to the Central Committee for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, and to

the Ministry of Planning and Finance with the Ministry of Industry giving assisting where necessary.

Next, Dr. Kyaw Than Htun (Kantong) of Mandalay Region constituency (3) raised the question on whether the Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory (MPF) had plans to plant artemisia plants for use in medicine to combat malaria. Union Minister U Khin Maung Cho replied that the MPF (formerly known as BPI-Burma Pharmaceutical Industry) is able to produce 6,300 tablets and 700 packets of piperamisinin from one ton of artemisia. The cost for production from one ton of artemisia is Ks 2,892,400 and Ks 4,132 for the production of one packet of the medicine. Because antimalarial drugs containing artemisia imported from China cost only Ks 1,500 per packet, the Ministry of Industry also sells the packets to the Ministry of Health and Sports at Ks 1,500 at a huge financial loss.

The Switzerland-based

Global Fund 3 Disease Project provides antimalarial drugs for free and the Ministry of Health and Sports distributes Pandomar antimalarial drugs in packets of 24 for only Ks300 under the National Malaria Control Program. Pandomar is produced with cooperation from AA pharmacy and other donor organisations.

Since antimalarial drugs from BPI cost Ks167 per pill and a Pandomar pill costs only Ks13, BPI stopped production of piperamisinin tablets on 24 August 2011, unable to compete with the low price.

Next, Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun answered questions concerning the education sector raised by Hluttaw representative from Chin, Bago, and Kayah constituencies.

Afterwards, two Hluttaw representatives discussed the draft bill amending the Conservation of Water Resources and Rivers Law.—Myanmar News Agency ■

U Kyaw Tin attends 16th round of Myanmar-India Foreign Office Consultations

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and Foreign Secretary of the Republic of India H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar attended the 16th round of Myanmar-India Foreign Office Consultations held at the Ayeyarwaddy Meeting Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw, at 11:15 hours on 25th May 2017.

Together with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy, the

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Ministry of Construction, and the Indian Delegation led by H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary of India were present.

At the consultations, both sides cordially discussed a wide range of issues on bilateral relations and multi-faceted cooperation, including exchange of goodwill visits, security and border management, enhancing connectivity, boundary issues, ongoing projects between the two countries, promotion of trade and investment, cooperation in various sectors including tourism, cultural and

consular affairs.

As regards boundary issues, both sides agreed to mutually respect already-demarcated boundary between the two countries; to conduct joint inspections for resolving outstanding boundary issues; erecting subsidiary pillars; to raise public awareness about the demarcated boundary among the local populace of the border areas, and to commence demarcation of disputed border areas as early as possible.

Afterwards, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs hosted a luncheon in honour of the Indian delegation led by the Foreign Secretary at Park Royal Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw. —Ministry of Foreign Affairs ■



The 16th round of Myanmar-India Foreign Office Consultations met yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss on various topics on bilateral relations and multi-faceted cooperation. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vice President U Myint Swe shakes hands with Special Envoy Mr. Sun Guoxiang in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Myint Swe receives Chinese Special Envoy for Asian affairs

Vice President U Myint Swe received the Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, H.E. Mr. Sun Guoxiang at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting stability and development matters in Maungtau region, Rakhine

State and peace process in Union of Myanmar were discussed.

Present at the meeting were U Min Thu, Deputy Minister from the Office of the President and officials and the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang who accompanied the Special Envoy

—Myanmar News Agency ■

Duties of Information Ministry explained to Hluttaw

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint explained the duties and responsibilities of the departments under the ministry to the Pyithu Hluttaw Health and Sports Development Committee yesterday afternoon at a meeting in Hluttaw Affairs Committee Building 13 in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was attended by Dr. San Shwe Win, the Chairman of the Pyithu Hluttaw Health and Sports Development

Committee, committee members, and department officials.

After the committee chairman's welcoming speech, Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint explained in detail about the duties and responsibilities of the departments in his ministry, the works done for media sector development and efforts to provide precise and accurate news to the people.

Responsible officials then

answered and explained by sector on questions asked by the Pyithu Hluttaw committee members in attendance.

Pyithu Hluttaw committee members in attendance then asked questions, to which responsible officials answered and explained by sector.

Next, the Union Minister gave a closing address and the committee chairman spoke words of thanks.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint explaining the role of the Ministry of Information to the attendants. **PHOTO: MNA**

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSKhin Maung Oo
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Khin Maung Win (Chief Proof Reader)
Zaw Min
Min Zaw Oo**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor)
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Khaing Thanda Lwin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Hay Mar Tin Win,
translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Sandar Soe
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Tun Aung Kyaw,
reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

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

THE number of people visiting lake currently full of lotus plants situated in the western part of Wunzin Ward in Meiktila Town, Mandalay Region has increased, with local fishermen generating more income as visitors take sightseeing boat tours.

Several groups of day trippers including university students in downtown Meiktila have been visiting the lake, which is one of the more romantic destinations for couples, residents say.

"The price for those wishing to take a sightseeing boat tour is Ks1,000 per head," said

a fish catcher from Kalamagyun Village in the western part of the lake.

He said that there have been only a small quantity of lotus flowers on the lake in past few years. But presently the lake is full of white lotus flowers and has become a popular destination, attracting mostly domestic visitors from the region and nearby areas.

The lake is also being used as the natural setting to photograph both male and female models as well as couples wishing to take pre-wedding photographs.—Chan Tha (Meiktila) ■



A man rows a boat in Meiktila Lake which has full of lotus flowers in the Wunzin Ward in Meiktila, Mandalay. **PHOTO. CHAN THA (MEIKTILA)**

Yangon Gov't plans to distribute water to reduce using underground water

The Yangon regional government will distribute water to reduce the use of underground water in the Yangon region, said U Maung Maung Soe, the mayor of Yangon city.

U Maung Maung Soe made the remark in response to a question posed by U Hla Htay, Regional Hluttaw representative of Mingalartaungnyunt township constituency (2) about

electricity and water in homes in Yangon region.

Currently, the government distributes 205 million gallons of water a day via Hlawgar, Phogyi, Joephyu, Nga Moe Yeik dam to 60 per cent of the population in the Yangon region.

Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is upgrading the rivers and creeks to distribute sufficient water in

accordance with the expected Yangon population in 2040 with the assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The La Gwn Pyin distribution water project was implemented in 2013 by YCDC, JICA and other departmental concerns with an aim of able to distribute 40 million gallons of water a day. The project is

now 98 per cent complete. The La Gwn Pyin distribution water project is still under construction and expected to be completed in 2020. Upon completion of the project, the YCDC will distribute 10 million gallons of water to the Thilawa Special Economic Zone and 30 million gallons of water to Thaketa, Dawbon, Dagon Myothit townships a day.—The Mirror ■

Multi-purpose stadium to emerge in Mandalay

A MULTIPURPOSE stadium constructed in Mandalay City is 90 per cent complete and is expected to be finalised by the end of this month, project leaders said.

The 253-ft long, 194-ft wide and 57-ft high stadium has been built within the Mandalathiri

Sports Stadium located at the corner of Ngushwewah Road and 68th Road, for the purpose of holding multiple types of sports events, including volleyball, basketball, table tennis and other indoor sports, on an international scale. The new sports structure with a good air-condi-

tioning system is able to hold up to 2,500 people. A public clinic, meeting room, VIP lounge, relaxation rooms for athletes and coaches, a media room, administrative office and room for food preparation will be included in the stadium.

The overall costs of con-

struction are allocated by the Union government. Upon completion of the project, the new sports facility will officially open by holding an international tournament, said U Myo Myint Aung, principal of Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Institute.—Aye Mya ■

Tender to be invited for waste-to-energy project

THE Yangon City Development Committee will invite tenders for the new waste-to-energy project in June and July, said a spokesperson of the YCDC's Pollution Control and Cleansing Department.

The new scheme targets to produce electricity from garbage in the two biggest waste

dumping sites in Hlinethaya and Dagon Myothit (North) townships, according to the pollution control department.

Private companies have been invited to take part in the tender process.

The first-ever waste-to-energy plant near Hlawga National Park in Shwepyitha Township

started operation since last month, supplying electricity to the national grid for local consumption. The main purpose of establishing such a project is to reduce methane and carbon dioxide emissions to a certain degree as both gases badly damage the natural environment and are the root cause of

climate change.

About 1,700 tonnes of waste are collected daily in Yangon. The YCDC collects garbage from every township and disposes them to designated dumping sites in Shwepyitha, Hlawga in Mingaladon, Dagon Seikkan and Dala townships every day.—200 ■

Prices of re-exported sugar declining

THE price of re-exported sugar has been on the decline and the business is in danger of suspension due to weak Chinese demand, according to local traders.

Since the beginning of April, the export volume has plummeted to 80 per cent from 60 per cent, causing a headache for some traders, said U Sai Kyaw, a local exporter, who estimates that the re-export business is likely to halt if China continues to decrease its demand.

For the time being, the country sends about 20,000 bags of sugar to the Chinese market on a daily basis. In the past, China imported about 80,000 bags of sugar a day, paying Ks46,000 per bag of sugar. The prices have recently decreased to Ks40,000 a bag.

Sugar is one of the re-exported items from Myanmar, which officially imports a good quality sweet product from Thailand as well as India across the land border and by ship. The imported sugar goes mainly to China, the largest neighbour of Myanmar.

The country normally imports sugar via two routes — the Kawthoung-Yangon-Mandalay-Muse route and the Tamu-Monywa-Mandalay-Muse route.

Most of the sugar produced in the country has only local market interest, but local manufacturers are putting forth continuous efforts to produce export-quality sugar.—200



Security guards stand near a tanker carrying aviation fuel during the opening ceremony of Puma Energy fuel storage facility at Myanmar International Terminal Thilawa outside Yangon on 6 May. REUTERS/Soe Zeya Tun

MIC gives a nod to Puma for petrol sales

Puma is given a green light by Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) as the very first company permitted to retail petroleum in the country, according to a recent meeting held at Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Puma Energy Asia Sun (PEAS) is majority owned by Singapore-based oil company Puma Energy while its 20 per cent shares were held by local firm Asia Sum. The PEAS

opened its US \$92 million petroleum product storage facility at the Thilawa Port.

With a fuel storage capacity of 91,000m³, the Thilawa terminal is the largest and most modern refined products import terminal in Myanmar. Its storage facilities cater for a range of petroleum products, including commercial fuels (Mogas 95 and 92, low sulphur Diesel), HFO (heavy fuel oil typically used for power generation), bitumen and jet fuel.

Currently, Myanmar's fuel oil market is held by Myanmar citizens. The prices offered by local petrol stations remained on the rise despite the drop in international fuel oil market. The Planning and Finance Ministry will allow the foreign investors to put investments in local fuel oil market in order to have better quality, service and reasonable price for the local consumers, said U Kyaw Win on 18th March.

Recently, the foreign in-

vestors are showing interest on Myanmar's fuel oil industry, enquiring about this at MIC, it is learnt.

The prevailing price of fuel oil rises a bit with a high of about 7 dollar per barrel in international petroleum price. The petroleum prices per liter are Ks700 for diesel, Ks720 for premium diesel, Ks710 for Octane 92 and Ks750 for Octane 95 in the retail market, according to local petroleum market.—Ko Htet ■

Local pea price slumped due to low demand of India

A halt of pea purchase from India resulted in decline in local pea price, said pea exporters.

With India merchants scaling down the pea demand, the prices of mung bean and pigeon peas are unstable in the market.

The price of mung bean on 23rd May is around Ks940,000 a tonne whereas mung bean fetched Ks1,002,000 per tonne in the last week.

Similarly, the price of pigeon peas is about Ks640,000 a tonne which is a decrease of Ks40,000

against that of last week.

India merchants increased the demand in April on account of the news of late season in India. However, the news of rainy season to start regularly comes out lately.

Some India merchants halted a purchase and so, the local pea prices declined.

Seventy per cent of various peas export constitutes the demand from India. Therefore, the price is positively related to its demand. The green grams are

exported to China, Viet Nam and European Union countries.

A total of 18 varieties of peas are planted in the country. Mung beans, green grams, pigeon peas and chick peas are mostly cultivated.

The peas are mostly cultivated in Sagaing and Magway regions.

A total of 1.43million tonnes of various peas were exported in the Fiscal Year 2016-2017, according to the Commerce Ministry.—Ko Khant ■



Farmers harvest pea on a farm at a village near Nay Pyi Taw. Pea price slumped due to halt of pea purchase from India. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

State Counsellor to meet ...

FROM PAGE-1

The seven groups are the United Wa State Party/Army (UWSP/UWSA), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), the Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA), the Shan State Army/Progressive Party (SSPP/SSA), the Ta-ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Arakan Army (AA).

Dr Tin Myo Win, Chairman of the Peace Commission, Vice-Chairman U Thein Zaw and the leader of the advisory group of the Peace Commission U Aung Kyi met with the seven organisations separately yesterday.

“Their ambition for peace are the same with us. We will bring what we discussed at the meetings with them to the State Counsellor. We sat down and talked face to face to build trust,” said Dr Tin

Myo Win to journalists following the meetings, describing the meetings as positive.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will host a luncheon to the chairman of the United Nationalities Federal Council U N' Ban La and his wife today before meeting the seven ethnic armed groups. She will meet the KIA, UWSA, SSPP and NDAA first, and then the TNLA, AA and MNDAA in a separate meeting, according to spokesperson U Zaw Htay.

“The meeting between the State Counsellor and the northern armed groups is ‘social’”, said U Zaw Htay, the spokesman of the government. Several representatives of northern ethnic armed groups accepted invitations to the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong (Second Session) as special guests and attended the conference’s opening ceremony. ■



Students together with their parents enrolling at a school in Thaketa. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Admissions for new school year begins

Officials have begun accepting school admission nationwide for the students of basic education schools (BESs) for the 2017-2018 academic year, starting yesterday morning.

In making the enrollment at the schools, payment and

donations are not required for entrance fees plus library, sports and stationery fees.

“Many students were seen wearing school uniforms together with their parents enrolling at their respective schools in Nay Pyi Taw”, said a student’s

parent. Readers will be offered for free to all students from kindergarten to matriculation classes. Moreover, school uniforms will also be given without any charges for students from kindergarten to 4th standard. —Than Oo (Laymyethna) ■

Nobody can answer the question of how long this peace process will take

AT THE second day session of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong held at MICC-2, Nay Pyi Taw, the Myanmar News Agency interviewed the EU Ambassador to Myanmar through his political advisor Isabell POPPELBAUM and the following are statements over latest development of ongoing peace process carried out in Myanmar.

Q. What your impression over the peace process and how long will it take for Myanmar to achieve eternal peace? What the main challenges for Myanmar government in dealing ethnic armed groups in its making peace and how to overcome those difficulties?

A. The peace process in Myanmar is one of the most complex peace-building endeavors in modern world. After decades of conflict and with so many stakeholders involved, internally and externally, we understand it is very challenging to bring everybody to the negotiating table and to find sustainable solutions acceptable to all. However, if non-signatories do not join the peace process, the potential of the country’s political dialogue process to achieve a lasting solution and peace accord will remain limited. One should always give a chance to dialogue and negotiation. Remaining outside is not a winning strategy. Nobody can answer the question of how long this process will take, but history has shown that comprehensive

peace agreements take time to negotiate and often years to implement them, as the stakeholders navigate through multiple phases, setbacks and difficulties.

The new Myanmar government has clearly stated that all efforts to advance democratic reform and boost economic development will come to naught as long as there is no peace. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has immediately made peace the top priority of her administration and this was a crucial signal. The first steps have been made, and the second session of the Union Peace Conference 21st century Panglong is taking place at the moment—a positive development. But we have regrettably also seen a continuation of armed hostilities in several ethnic states of Myanmar, as well as complex shifts in alliances. Progress in the peace process will only be possible once these hostilities come to an end. Trust will be built through dialogue, not warfare. There is a lot of international support for the peace process on offer, but we can only support from the side lines what is ultimately a home-grown and domestically driven process. The EU fully respects this ownership, and certainly does not want to interfere in Myanmar’s internal affairs. As the EU has learned from its own experience, lasting peace can only be achieved when all parties feel truly part of the solution, can have an active role in decision-making and develop a

sense of cooperation and solidarity with one another. This has brought decades of peace to Europe and I am confident this can be a recipe for success in Myanmar, too.

Q. What kind of assistance did the EU provide to Myanmar peace process and any assistance in future?

A. The EU is supporting the peace process and is ready to continue doing so in two ways: politically and financially. I think we have shown that we are a trusted partner in peace and we have a track record of efficiency and reliability. The EU reiterated its strong support for peace in Myanmar as a top priority when State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi recently visited Brussels. We are awaiting to get a clear signal on what more we could do. The European Union has also been helping the peace process financially for several years. This has come with ups and downs and has not always been understood, but today’s situation shows we did the right thing. A big component of our financial support to the peace process is currently being channelled through the “Joint Peace Fund”, the JPF. The Myanmar peace process is costly with people coming from many different regions. You need to organize meetings, provide technical assistance, training. In total, the European Union has currently allocated more than 80 million EUR (120 trillion kyats) in support of peace initiatives in

this country. EU support aims at strengthening the capacities of the institutions and bodies working towards peace (National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, UPDJC, JMC, etc). Another important component of our financial support goes to community-based initiatives and stakeholders in the areas affected by conflict. These projects work to promote the protection of human rights, improving livelihoods and fostering reconciliation.

Q. To what extent the conflicts in northern Myanmar and Rakhine State pose a threat to the country and how to effectively address those conflicts?

A. Conflict is a main stumbling block for democratic reform and sustainable development. As long as hostilities continue, social and economic development stand still, and prosperity will not reach the vast majority of people in this country. It is not for us ‘outsiders’ to present a ready-made solution – we respect Myanmar’s sovereignty and the national ownership of the peace process. However, we know from our own experience that the only way forward are inclusive negotiations and constant efforts to build trust among the different parties. People need to see a perspective; they need to believe that they will be able to take part in decision-making processes to shape their own future as part of this country.

How this is can be ensured – through decentralization, fed-

eralism or other constitutional arrangements – is the decision of the democratically elected government and the people it represents. Also, the participants that are involved at the National Political Dialogue will have a unique opportunity to express their desires and views on the future political settlement of this country. This will undoubtedly represent an opportunity for addressing the conflicts in all ethnic areas of Myanmar.

Q. Can the State Counsellor deal with the concerns of relevant ethnic armed groups and what kind of approach should be taken in that regard?

A. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in her speech yesterday at the opening session of the second Panglong Conference stressed the need for finding an “agreement that is acceptable to all, based on open, frank and inclusive dialogue”. She has also issued a call for face-to-face dialogue in order to find common ground. Equally, General Mutu Sae Poe who spoke on behalf of the ethnic armed groups yesterday called for trust-building and inclusive political dialogue. From the EU’s perspective, the importance of inclusive dialogue cannot be overstated. As the European experience has shown us, it is only through inclusive discussions led in good faith and in a spirit of compromise on all sides that can pave the way to durable peace. —Tha Sein ■

Day two of Union Peace Conference achieves agreement for most points in five sectors

FROM PAGE-1

“Today’s discussion over the political sector is very positive. All participants have committed to signing the Union agreement,” said Dr Salai Hlan Hmon Sar Khaung, a member of the Secretariat of UPDJC at the press conference following the meeting.

Positive results also came out from the remaining four sectors, said the representatives at the press conference.

The results will be submitted to the final-day meeting of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong (second session) on 28th May.

At all the sessions concerning different sectors, opening speeches were made and rules, regulations and disciplines were read out. Then representatives from the governmental group, Hluttaw group, Tatmadaw group, armed national ethnic group and political parties’ group entered into discussions. Following that, the tasks of presenting and putting on record the combined discussions were performed, after which the leading presidents made closing speeches.

The morning session concerning the political sector was presided over by U Kyaw Tint Swe, with the evening session presided over by Padoh Saw Kwe Htoo Win. Members of the presiding board are U Than Khe, Daw Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein and Naing Chit Oo.

In the discussion of the political sector, the topics of the proposal on sovereignty, proposals on exercising sovereignty, the proposal on equality, the proposal on self-promulgation, the proposal on the policy of Federal Union



Representatives discuss matters concerning the political sector at the press conference. PHOTO: MNA

(formation and power division) and the proposal on multi-party democracy were debated.

In the discussion concerning the economic sector, the morning session was presided over by U Tun Naing and the evening session presided over by Khun Tin Shwe Oo, with Sai Yi Tip, Mi Kun Chan, U Li Paw Ye and Brigadier Thet Aung as the members of the presiding board.

In the discussion of the economic sector, various matters were debated regarding effective implementation of market economy, banning the emergence of monopolised economy, effective implementation of the acquisition of equal rights on economic development in the Union, Regions & States, self-administered regions and fair division of budgets and taxes in accord with the Constitution among the Union Government and Regions, States and

regional governments.

In addition, division of authority & power on economy among the Union Government, Cabinets of Regions & States, Self-administered Regions and regional groups in accord with the Constitution, and matters on the implementation after laying down long, medium and short-term economic projects of the State with transparency, accountability and responsibility were discussed.

In the discussion concerning the social sector, U Thein Swe presided over the morning session and Dr Naw Kapaw Htoo did preside the evening session with Poo Bwe Lian Mahn, Daw Nan Win Kyi, Daw Zin Mar Aung and U Ne Win acting as members of the presiding board.

In the discussion of the social sector, various matters were respectively discussed regarding

systematically made plans for a durable solution on the victims and displaced people who were subject to man-made hazards or natural disasters by abiding by international standards without any discriminations, and matters on rehabilitation of victims and displaced people who were subject to armed conflicts, man-made disasters and natural calamities in their origins or other secure places, of their own accords.

In addition, other matters on the effective safeguard of basic rights and privileges of the aged, the feeble, women and children regardless of race, religion and status, lifting up of their social lives and implementing the eradication of narcotic drugs effectively assuming that these are national problem or political issue were discussed.

Similarly, in the discussion of land and natural environment

sector, U Tun Tun Hein presided over the morning session and Pular Ram Law Mar did the evening session with Saw Daniel, U Zaw Min Latt, Sai Yi and Brigadier Myint Maung Oo acting as the members of the presiding board.

In the discussion of the land and natural environment, basic principles were respectively discussed regarding emergence of people-orientated land policy which will help the sustainable development for the nation, based on justice and fairness, lessening central control, drawing up land policy by taking human rights, international standards, democratic and federal norms into consideration.

Besides six basic principles, matters on ownership, management and arrangements for protection accepted at the different levels of discussions including UPDJC were discussed.

Likewise, in the discussion of the security sector, Brigadier General Sein Tun Hla presided over the morning session and Phyartan Khun Okkar presided over the evening session with Sao Baung Khe, Poo Zin Khant Sun, U En Hton Khar Naw Sam and U Saw Tun Aung Myint acting as members of the presiding board.

In the discussion on the security sector, principles on the existence of the only one “Tatmadaw,” was also discussed.

It has been learnt that on 26 May, discussions on political, economic, social, land & natural environment and security sectors and discussions between the government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw, armed national ethnic groups and political parties will continue to be held. ■

Families of those killed by wild elephants receive compensation

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will pay compensation to the families of those who were killed by wild elephants in Ngwesaung township, Patheingyi township, and in the Ayeyawady region, said U Kyaw Myint, the Ayeyawady regional minister for Development Affairs.

The regional government also plans to give compensation to farmers if their farmland was

damaged by wild elephants.

“Six people have been killed by wild elephants,” said the regional minister.

Every year, at least four people are killed by wild elephants in the region. The number of people who were killed by wild elephants have increased this year compared to last year. Similar cases are found in Bo Kwe Gyi village in Ayeyawady region.

“About 250 acres of farm-

land were destroyed by wild elephants. We do have not access to any assistance from the organisation, even though we have reported the matters to the regional administrator”, said a local resident.

Villagers from Hsin Ku village in Thar Paung township have recently been forced to move to safe places because wild elephants have enter the village during the past few days.—200 ■

Nearly 250 dengue cases recorded in Mon State

MON STATE has recorded almost 250 confirmed dengue cases since January, said Dr Nyan Hsint, head of the Public Health Department in Mon State.

According to hospital data recorded between 1 January and 16 May, the cases of dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) chiefly occurred in Mawlamyine Township, followed by Mudon and Paung townships. The most affected age group is children between 5 and 10 years of age,

physicians said.

In Myanmar, the disease used to be more common in the rainy season, but now DHF transmission occurs throughout the year, Dr Nyan Hsint said.

The virus has particularly been prevalent in flood-affected areas that provide ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Lack of sanitation, unhygienic water storage and overcrowding are mainly blamed for causing the deadly infectious disease.—200 ■

Myanmar's participation in the 21st Century maritime silk road

Khin Maung Oo

With a view to focusing on connectivity of land-based trade and maritime commerce among Europe and Asian countries, the People's Republic of China is launching its One Belt One Road Initiative after extending the Economic Silk Road primarily. In fact, One Belt One Road Initiative is referred to as the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

It is an excellent objective of the said initiative to make an effort for the emergence of the interest of the people across the world by encouraging global peace and progress, exchanging different cultures so as to bring about economic prosperity of project-covering nations and regional economic co-op-

eration. State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended the ceremony of the initiative held in PRC, addressing the round-table negotiation of national leaders of the International Cooperation Forum on Economic Belt and Silk Road. The State Counsellor emphasized that acquisition of better inter-relationship among regional peoples and emergence of a peaceful and stable environment based on mutual understanding and respect have been major principles for the success of economic belt and silk road initiative.

Myanmar is a part of both of the Asian Expressway and Rail Tracks Webs as the regional corridor of the Silk Road. In the sub-regional corridor, Myanmar is taking part in a triad of rail-tracks between India-Myanmar-Thailand,

co-operation for the development of ASEAN and Mekong basin, Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum and transportation network of Great Mekong's sub-regional groups.

Being a part of the Silk Road, Myanmar has potential situations of great promise, as if spanning a bridge that will bring about beneficial results not only for Myanmar but also for South and South-Eastern Asia. The present negotiations of the State Counsellor with national leaders at the One Belt One Road Initiative can be said to have broadened the existing access to economic opportunities with the countries from this Silk Road.

At such a time when Myanmar is laying stress on the implementation of the process of peace and stability in

the country, we as well must welcome our country's approval of launching the Economic Silk Road Initiative and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road sponsored by PRC. As a developing nation, there may be difficulties for Myanmar to take part in the Great Initiative. Yet, by making partners with regional countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, there sure will be benefits for Myanmar as well as for the countries in the region. We firmly believe that as a result of Myanmar's ability to negotiate successfully at the international forum for cooperation on the Corridor and the Silk Road, the success of these negotiations will surely result in commercial investments among nations from the Silk Road and betterment of economic relations and peace with countries in the respective regions.

Myanmar's Outlook on China's OBOR in the context of ASEAN

Professor Chaw Chaw Sein

Chinese Dream of President Xi Jinping by 2050 aims at expanding both the economic and the military capability of China globally under the banner of "China Goes Global" strategy. In line with this strategy, "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative was proposed by President Xi Jinping encompassing two main components: the land-based "Silk Road Economic Belt" (SREB) and the oceanic "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" (MSR). China's Belt and Road Initiative is the largest and most ambitious agenda initiated by President Xi Jinping in 2013. It appeared at the right time, during a slowdown in the world economy. This initiative targets Euro-Asian to African markets in which Chinese want to support and invest in the infrastructure. In this regard, China will finally become an economic powerhouse by sharing Chinese wealth and also have the chance to create new opportunities in those places. The 21st Century Silk Road is composed of two routes: the first one includes all land based economic corridors, called the Silk Road Economic Belt. It is planned to connect Northwest China (Xi'an) to Central Asia, from there it goes to the Middle East and heads Northeast through Europe by means of modern train transportation. The second one, based on sea-lanes passing through the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, is called the Maritime Silk Road. It also aims to connect countries such as Myanmar and India via train, road, pipe and canal to develop deep-sea ports with the infrastructure support of China. Likewise, China has intention to support its

southern corridors (ASEAN), with similar facilities, such as ports and modern railways that attract 600 plus million people market.

The main objective of the OBOR is to tackle socio-economic imbalances between the country's flourishing coastal provinces and less developed western and central provinces. In order to implement OBOR successfully, it is important to accomplish the pragmatic implementation of Strategic Partnership between China and ASEAN. Within the ASEAN context, there remain different views on the OBOR strategy. Some scholars from ASEAN identified three categories of views: enthusiastic, cautiously positive and skeptical as a response from individual ASEAN member countries. Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, which have strong economic ties with China, are in the group of enthusiastic. The countries, which were grouped as cautiously positive on China, are Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. The Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar are listed as skeptical. Although Myanmar has no territorial dispute with China, there are negative sentiments among people in the case of Chinese investments. Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar illustrate the highest infrastructure risk levels among ASEAN countries, with a series of Chinese projects having been halted in the past.

Trust is noteworthy among ASEAN

member countries in engaging with China. In the case point, it can be seen during the ten-day study tour in April 2015 (including different people from academic, civil society, medias and political parties) on OBOR which was invited by Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament with the aim to promote better understanding on China. Even though the study tour was in the name of ASEAN context, five countries were not represented due to

their disagreement with China over the South China Sea at the time of invitation. Some observers raised the question that China needs to address: Who draws up the OBOR? Does China discuss with ASEAN member countries in deciding how to develop OBOR? They also noted the possible

consequences of the OBOR initiative in dealing with environmental pollution and degradation, and the implications on daily life in some local communities.

ASEAN is composed of two groups: the founding members and the latecomers. The founding members include Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines. The latecomers are called CLMV, which represents Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Although CLMV are the latecomers of ASEAN, they are China's immediate neighbors and therefore strategically important to China. Among them, Cambodia and Laos seem to have responded most enthusi-

astically to OBOR while Myanmar and Vietnam face more acute dilemmas because both welcome OBOR and became founding members of AIIB, while they also face issues in their relations with China.

In Southeast Asia, Vietnam is the first in line that Maritime Silk Road acts as the gateway for the MSR. Many officials and analysts in Vietnam tend to believe that accepting China's Maritime Silk Road initiative would reduce the Vietnam's territorial tension with China in South China Sea. In addition, as Vietnam is in need of upgrading the seaports, land and rail link as connectivity to ASEAN, they see OBOR as an opportunity to support Vietnam's economic development and integration towards ASEAN Economic Community.

Furthermore, there are similar concerns like Myanmar such as influx of Chinese goods, Chinese immigrants along the border, and natural resource extraction from incoming Chinese investments. They also have the problem with public discussions on Chinese companies, workers and their concerns with local communities. The findings of Jason Moris, visiting fellow, ISEAS, on his field research to Vietnamese-Chinese mineral sector partnership in a remote region of northern Vietnam illustrated that the lack of transparency and regulation from Chinese side in dealing with mineral sector in Vietnam. And the influx of Chinese workers gave rise to anti-Chinese sentiments. Besides these factors, Vietnam might worry about the changing diplomacy of the Philippines, whose relationship with the US is being strained and relations with China correspondingly improving.

SEE PAGE-9

Fourth day of the fifth session of second Pyithu Hluttaw

FROM PAGE-2

During 2016-2017 FY there were 626 tax payers conducting mobile phone sale business and income tax Ks 675.629 million and commercial tax Ks 1,488.268 million was collected. In order not to lose tax, it is important to coordinate and exchange information within related departments. From 2011-2012 FY to 2016-2017 FY 9,289 units of illegally imported mobile phone worth Ks 1,293.56 million were detained at airports and border posts.

Arrangements were made to reduce the tax burden of the people in purchasing mobile phones in the market and importing from abroad. Reviews were conducted to keep the prices of mobile phone low and relevant departments co-

ordinated to ensure that the country is not losing the tax and duties it ought to get.

Furthermore, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win answered to questions by U Kyaw Htay of Leshi constituency and U Bo Gyi of Chauk constituency questions on upgrading Myanmar Economic Bank branch and complete utilization of expenditures.

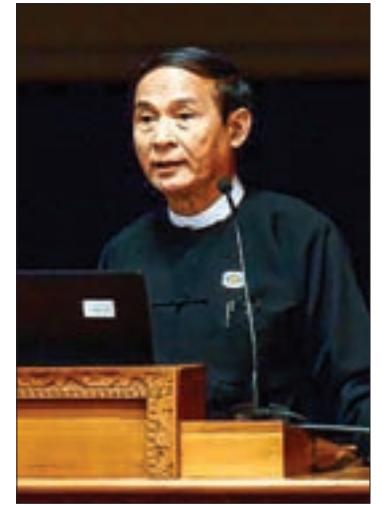
During the day's meeting, matters relating to transfer and reassigning of hluttaw committee members, confirming the substitutions and reforming, submission of Public Accounts Committee annual reports were also conducted. The fifth day of the fifth session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw will be continued on 29 May 2017. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker attends the ceremony of national education strategy of Ministry of Education

PYITHU HLUTTAW Speaker U Win Myint attended the ceremony of national education strategy of Ministry of Education (2016-2021) and promoting the educational challenges, promoting the learning opportunities and quality of education at the building of Hluttaw in Thab-

insaung hall yesterday afternoon.

Also present at the ceremony were Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat, Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi and other officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■



U Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

170,000 WY-stimulants seized in Maungtaw

THE ownerless stimulant pills were seized near Kanyinchaung shore mangrove forest in Maungtaw Township yesterday morning.

While the Tatmadaw (Navy) forces were conducting regular

inspections in Maungtaw Township, they found suspicious objects near Kanyinchaung shore mangrove at about 9:00am and upon further inspection discovered and seized ownerless 170,000 WY/R-stimulant pills

worth in estimated Ks 3400 million.

The police are taking investigation into the case to arrest those who involved in the drug trafficking.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar's Outlook on China's OBOR in the context of ASEAN

FROM PAGE-8

Unlike Myanmar and Vietnam, both Laos and Cambodia have no territorial disputes with China and have strong economic ties, which have benefited their trade and investment. When Laos, as non-claimant state on South China Sea (SCS) chaired ASEAN Summit in 2016, she officially made no opportunity to put on SCS agenda at the Summit. Cambodia becomes the friendliest country of China in ASEAN especially after taking Chair of 2012 ASEAN Summit and failure to release a joint communiqué on South China Sea. The connectivity under Belt and Road Initiative can contribute Laos from landlocked to land link, which will boost her economy and tourism. Both Laos and Cambodia are positive towards BRI but on the other hand, their concern is the financial matters for their projects, which can grab from the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

Although CLMV welcome and support OBOR, there remains concern about China on using OBOR as carrot and stick approach. The workshop hosted by Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies in October 2016 came up with the recommendation with a mechanism of multilateralism among the CLMV to overcome the asymmetric relationship between China and CLMV. While most CLMV have no option for maneuvering Chinese OBOR, Myanmar has geostrategic advantages from which she could play either active diplomacy in multilateral relations or economic

benefits as well.

Regarding the proposed 21st century Maritime Silk Road, Myanmar considered that the route can play an important role in the development of the country by bringing new economic opportunities for Myanmar and its people. Myanmar is regarded as a newly emerging destination for businesses on account of its strategic geographical location. It is located on the cross road of China's Go West Policy on the one hand and India's Look East Policy on the other. Similarly, Myanmar is important for China's landlocked southwestern provinces market access to Bangladesh and India through transit trade instead of China's eastern coast.

Myanmar is always aware of changes and development in China that brings both positive and negative implications for Myanmar. Myanmar-China relations went sour after Myanmar's democratization and reforms were undertaken in 2011. Several factors which has been a crucial matters are suspension of China's state-owned investment of CNCP in Myitsone dam hydropower project, local people opinion on gas pipeline project which runs from Rakhine to Yunnan, severe environmental degradation in copper mine project in Monywa, land grabbing in many areas of Myanmar, illegal trading of jade in Northern Kachin and Chinese people influx into Mandalay areas. Besides, the railway project linking Kunming to Myanmar's Rakhine coast was cancelled in 2014 by Myanmar railway ministry due to the strategic reason such as this railway will give China access to

the Indian Ocean.

However, after the 2015 election, China-Myanmar relations were restructured with the State Counsellor's visit to China in September 2016. This visit paved the way for signing the implementation of two infrastructure development projects: one for electrification in Myingyan Township of Mandalay Region and another for highway project that runs from Shwe Li-Mandalay-Nay Pyi Taw-Mon State, which is under the framework of Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). China and Myanmar also reached an agreement to open a cross-border pipeline into southeast China during the state visit of President U Htin Kyaw to China in April this year.

Myanmar's position on China's OBOR can also be observed by the State Counsellor's visit to Beijing to attend the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in May 2017. She put an important emphasis on closer people-to-people bond, a peaceful and stable neighbourhood based on mutual understanding and respects are the basic principle for the success of the OBOR.

Even though Myanmar government is willing to embrace the OBOR, there remains the question of local people anxieties on Chinese investments. The Special Economic Zone that was given to China in 2015 in the Rakhine state may have major geostrategic, political and socio-economic implications that Myanmar cannot ignore. In this context, Myanmar needs to consider the best approach to engage with

China in order to maximize synergies. In response to public anxieties, the Chinese government is using media like Xinhua News Agency as a campaigning tool for better understanding of OBOR by compiling the data, which includes questionnaires on OBOR. China needs to pay attention to the feedback of these questionnaires in implementing the OBOR.

China has reiterated from time to time that cooperation under Belt and Road Initiative will be a "win-win" situation for both China and her counterpart countries. It is hope that China will attempt to guarantee its neighbour for common and mutual development in the future by paying attention to the perspective from Myanmar as well as from other ASEAN member countries.

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives separately German Parliamentary State Secretary and outgoing Ambassador of Pakistan

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, received Dr. Ralh Brauksiepe, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry of Defence in Bayitnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

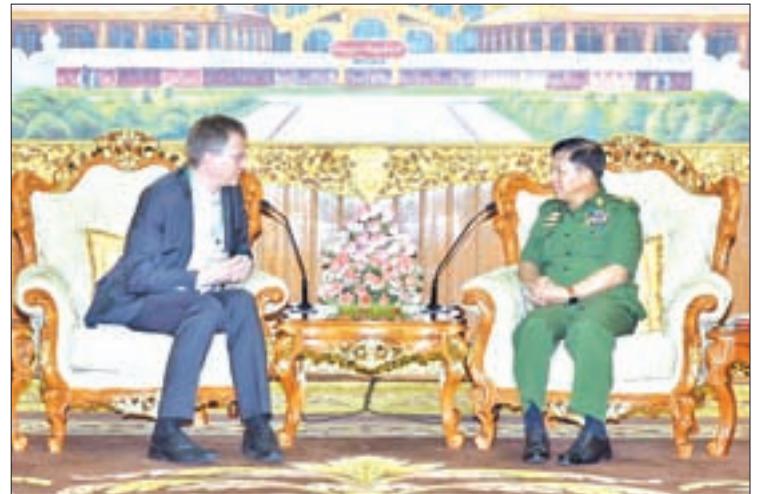
During the meeting Senior General Min Aung Hlaing explained about construction works conducted by the Tatmadaw for national defence, Tatmadaw's works and its role and position in the transition towards democracy and the peace process.

The visiting Parliamentary State Secretary said help and assistance would be provided to make the Myanmar Tatmadaw strong and capable to achieve progress and success in the national transformation, democracy and peace process.

Matters relating to increasing relations between the armed forces of the two countries, training, meetings and increasing cooperation in conducting practical matters. In the afternoon, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received the outgoing Ambassador of Pakistan to My-

anmar H.E. Ehsan Ullah Batth.

In the meeting, they discussed and exchanged views about promoting bilateral relations and cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries, goodwill visits, training, exchange of information, cooperation in sports, transformation and peace process in Myanmar, and promoting friendship between the armed forces of the two countries through transparency, trust and honesty during the ambassador's tour of duty in Myanmar. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with German Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Ralh Brauksiepe. **PHOTO: MNA**

SEAGP targets to spend US\$ 500000 to US\$ 1000000 for CSR in regions



Vice Chairman Mr. Li Zhi Lin of SEAGP Co. Ltd talks to media at the press conference in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

SEAGP (South East Asia Gas Pipeline) Co, Ltd which is implementing Myanmar-Sino Oil & Natural Gas Pipelines has target to spend US\$ 500000 to US\$ 1000000 for the socio-economic development in the region, according to Mr Li Zhi Lin.

Mr Li Zhi Lin, said at the clarification ceremony on the reports of CSR of SEAGP held at the Sule Shangri la Hotel yesterday morning, "Myanmar-Sino Oil & Natural Gas Pipelines Company is implementing the acquisition of electricity and drinking water within 5 years which is the major need for the locals in Kyaukpyu & Madae Island."

Since the commencement of the pipeline project till the end of March this year, it was reported in the CSR report that

China National Oil Corporation spent US \$ 525000 for the social activities in Myanmar and US \$ 18300000 for 120 socio-economic businesses in the areas through which pipelines pass, together with the partner companies.

In addition, donations were contributed to education, transport, health, electricity, wells, ponds and public-used buildings and rescue works of natural disasters, creating job opportunities for over 900 locals including those from Madae island in Kyaukpyu township, according to the report.

Myanmar-Sino Oil & Natural Gas Pipeline Project had two pipelines—one for natural gas and another for oil. The former one had started its operation in 2013 with the latter commencing its operation in May this year.

Myanmar-Sino oil and natural gas pipelines starting from Yanbye island, in Kyaukpyu township, Rakhine State and crude oil pipelines starting from Madae island were built parallel.

As regards the said projects, some locals in Kyaukpyu and Madae island staged a demonstration against the project on May 22.

The pipelines are sending oil and gas into China via Rakhine State, Magway and Mandalay Regions and Shan States. The crude oil pipelines stretch 771 km, with natural gas pipelines 793 km long.

The natural gas pipeline project initially sent 5.2 billion cubic meters per year, expected to send up to 12 billion cubic meters annually later, whereas crude oil pipelines projects will send 22 million tons. And a port has been built for crude oil.

Mr Li Zhi Lin, vice-chairman of the company said, "When locals started demanding, we went to study there. We always consult with data collecting teams and regional authorities. We will implement with the budget we have.

The company will perform its duties they are required to do. If it exceeds the limit, we will submit it to the government. SEAGP comprising 6 companies from 4 countries—Myanmar, China, India and Korea invested in it and its project period is 30 years. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Fire breaks out in Kyaukpyu

A fire broke out due to overheating of wires at the electrical appliances shop in Alaepaing Ward of Kyaukpyu Town, Rakhine State yesterday morning.

The fire started at 2 am from the electrical appliances shop named Aung Hein owned by U Zaw Myint Kyi. The major cause of fire is overheating of wires in

that shop and the other 2 shops were also gutted by time. The fire was under control within half an hour by the Fire department including 3 fire engines also with the help of public and local police force. Fire destroyed 3 shops, and action is being taken against U Zaw Myint Kyi for the negligence fire.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung receives a delegation led by UN Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Miroslav Jenca. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Border Affairs receives UN Assistant Secretary-General

Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung received United Nations (UN) Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Miroslav Jenca in the Ministry's guest room yesterday morning.

Matter relating to continued assistance by the UN in the peace and national reconciliation process, situation of coordinating and complementing long term harmony between two communities of Rakhine state and socio-economic de-

velopment of the state, status of the government conducting Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session) for peace and national reconciliation, human resources development of ethnic nationals and situation of increasing cooperation among UN agencies, non-government organization (NGO) and international non-government organizations (INGOs). —Myanmar News Agency ■

Syrian force urges Raqqa jihadists to surrender by end-May

BEIRUT — A US-backed alliance of Syrian militias promised on Thursday that no harm would come to Islamic State fighters in Raqqa who turned themselves in by the end of the month, calling on them to lay down their arms ahead of an expected assault on the city.

The Syrian Democratic Forces, which groups Kurdish and Arab fighters, has advanced to within a few kilometres (miles) of Raqqa city at the nearest point, in an offensive that got underway in November to encircle and capture the city.

The SDF, which includes the powerful Kurdish YPG militia, said earlier this month it expects to launch the final assault on Raqqa in early summer. YPG and SDF officials had previously given April start dates for the assault, but these slipped.

The US-led coalition has not declared any time frame for the final assault on Raqqa city, which has served as Islamic State's de facto capital in Syria since the group declared its cross-border "caliphate" in 2014.

In a statement, the SDF said a 15 May appeal for militants to turn themselves in within 10 days had achieved "positive results",



A Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighter inspects a damaged building inside Tabqa military airport after taking control of it from Islamic State fighters, west of Raqqa city, Syria, on 9 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

and the deadline would now be extended until 31 May based on "requests from the noble people of Raqqa".

The SDF said it would guarantee the lives of militants who turn themselves in regardless of their position, "paving the way for the settlement of their situation". The safety of their families was

also guaranteed, it says. The SDF statement issued by spokeswoman Jihane Sheikh Ahmad said the extension would "allow the greatest number possible of those who were deceived or forced to join to benefit from this opportunity". The US-led coalition says some 3,000 to 4,000 Islamic State fighters are thought to be holed up in

Raqqa city where they continue to erect defences against the anticipated assault. The six-year-long Syrian war has allowed IS to seize swathes of Syria, where the group faces separate campaigns by the US-backed SDF, the Russian-backed Syrian military, and Free Syrian Army rebels backed by the United States.—Reuters ■

Kurdish militants kill three Turkish security force members

ANKARA — Two Turkish soldiers and a policeman have been killed in two separate clashes with Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants in eastern Turkey, security sources said on Thursday.

Early on Thursday, PKK fighters opened fire in a mountainous area of Agri province's Dogubayazit district, near the Iranian border, killing two soldiers and wounding four others, the sources said.

A day earlier, a special forces police officer was killed in a clash in a mountainous area of Sirnak province's Beytusebap district, near the Iraqi border, they said.

A ceasefire between the Turkish state and the militants broke down in July 2015 and the southeast subsequently saw some of the worst violence since the PKK launched its insurgency in 1984.

More than 40,000 people, mostly Kurds, have been killed in the conflict. The PKK is designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union.—Reuters ■

Iraqi paramilitary forces push further in anti-IS operation in west of Mosul

MOSUL, (Iraq) — Iraqi paramilitary Hashd Shaabi units initiated a new advance to recapture areas scattered near Iraqi-Syrian border in west of Mosul, as part of a major operation to dislodge the Islamic State (IS) militants from Iraqi side of the border, the units said in a statement Thursday.

They began their progress on late Wednesday night to recapture the IS-held town of Baaj, some 25 km west of the newly-freed town of al-Qairwan, the statement said.

The two towns are located in the rugged sprawling area about 100 km west of Mosul.

In the early morning hours, the paramilitary units, backed by the army's helicopter gunships, freed four villages in west of al-Qairwan as they are advancing westward in the open land to free

Baaj, according to the statement.

The Hashd Shaabi forces have surrounded three more militant-seized villages in the area between al-Qairwan and Baaj, the statement said.

The helicopter gunships destroyed a booby-trapped car during the fighting with IS militants, and are searching for seven IS vehicles carrying heavy machine guns spotted near one of the villages, it added.

Two days ago, the Hashd Shaabi units liberated al-Qairwan and many villages scattered around the town from the IS militants and announced that the paramilitary forces had ended the first stage of major offensive designed to secure the border areas with neighboring Syria and cut off the IS' supply routes between Mosul and the Syrian

city of Raqqa, the capital of the IS' self-declared caliphate.

The paramilitary units are now advancing to free the villages and take control of the IS supply routes around Baaj in order to isolate it and liberate the town later.

Furthermore, the operation came as Iraqi security forces, backed by the anti-IS international coalition, were simultaneously conducting a major offensive to dislodge IS militants from their major stronghold in western Mosul.

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

Policeman shot dead by unknown militants in Egypt's Sinai

CAIRO — An Egyptian policeman was shot dead by unknown militants on Thursday in Arish city of North Sinai province bordering Israel and the Gaza Strip, official MENA news agency reported.

The assailants gunned down the 38-year-old non-commissioned police officer and managed to run away. The police are currently combing the area in search for the perpetrators.

Anti-government terror attacks in Egypt have killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers since the mid-2013 military removal of former Islamist President Mohamed Morsi in response to mass protests against his one-year rule.

Most of the terrorist attacks nationwide, particularly those in Sinai, have been claimed by a Sinai-based group loyal to the re-

gional Islamic State (IS) militia.

To further pressure the government, the IS started to expand terror operations to target the Coptic Christian minority in capital Cairo and other provinces nationwide.

In April, IS-claimed bombings at two churches in northern provinces of Gharbiya and Alexandria killed at least 47 and wounded over 120. A similar suicide bombing at a Cairo church in December 2016 killed at least 28 worshippers.

Meanwhile, security campaigns in Sinai have killed hundreds of militants and arrested a similar number of suspects over the past few years as part of the country's anti-terror war declared by former army chief and current President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi following Morsi's overthrow.—Xinhua ■

Toxic substances detected in Tsukiji fish market soil samples

TOKYO — Toxic substances exceeding the legal safety limits have been detected in soil samples taken from 30 locations in Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market, with the findings expected to affect the ongoing debate over the market's relocation, the Tokyo metropolitan government said Thursday.

The results of the first full-fledged soil survey at the Tsukiji market could influence Gov. Yuriko Koike's decision on whether the metropolitan government will move the famous but aging market to a new site within the capital or renovate the market on the existing site.

The site of the fish market was feared to have been contaminated by chemicals used at a now-defunct dry-cleaning plant.

Koike, who became governor last August, has suspended a plan to transfer the wholesale market to the Toyosu waterfront district due to soil and air



Photo taken in August 2016 shows aerial view of Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market. The Tokyo metropolitan government said on May 25, 2017, that toxic substances exceeding legal safety limits have been detected in soil samples from the market. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

pollution concerns at the planned site — previously occupied by a gas production plant — as well as mounting costs linked to the project.

The Tokyo government conducted the soil inspection earlier this month based on its ordinance on environmental protection, taking samples from about 110 locations in the Tsukiji market.

To detect substances which tend to remain in

soil, including heavy metals, the metropolitan government took soil samples from 50 centimeters below ground.

The Tokyo government also examined gas in the samples and detected benzene at one location. Benzene, which results from the production of gas, is known to cause cancer.

At Toyosu, where the new market was scheduled to open in November 2016, extremely high levels of

toxic chemicals, including benzene, have also been detected.

Koike has said it is necessary to reduce the levels of toxic substances at Toyosu below the government standards to ensure consumer safety. The market also deals in fruit and vegetables.

A Tokyo government project team on the fish market relocation has estimated renovating the Tsukiji market at the existing site would cost about 85.2 billion yen (\$763 million), cheaper than taking the necessary safety measures at Toyosu.

But the latest soil survey results could push the renovation costs for Tsukiji higher. The Tsukiji market used to house a laundry facility run by the Allied occupation forces after World War II. The facility is believed to have used organic solvent solution and is likely to have left toxic substances in the soil. —Kyodo News ■

Fighting corruption, Ukraine starts to judge its judges

KIEV — Ukrainian judge Artur Yemelianov has acknowledged in an online declaration that he owns a Breguet watch worth nearly a third of his annual salary and keeps piles of cash.

On 12 January he was suspended for three months after prosecutors opened a criminal case against him related to how commercial law cases were allocated to judges, according to statements by the Ukrainian High Council of Justice and Yemelianov himself.

They accused him of rigging the process, which is supposed to be random, by setting out rules establishing that only particular judges could hear particular cases, court documents show.

The prosecutors also claim that Yemelianov nudged the judges to deliver his preferred verdicts and would take judges off cases if they

refused to comply.

Ukraine is trying to show its international supporters and lenders that it can tackle entrenched corruption, including in the judiciary.

The next payment of a \$17.5 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund will depend on Kiev showing progress on reforms including anti-graft measures.

Yemelianov denies any wrongdoing and says his businesswoman ex-wife gave him money that helped to fund his lifestyle. He says the allegations that he rigged the case allocation process were trumped up by his enemies in revenge for his attempts to stamp out bribe-taking and to stop him securing a seat at a newly established Supreme Court. His application could not be considered because of the criminal case against him.—Reuters ■

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES –Individual Consultants)

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Agricultural Development Support Project (ADSP)
Credit No.: 5624 MM

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is in the process of receiving funds from the World Bank toward the cost of the ADSP Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The Project Management Unit now invites expressions of interest from qualified candidates for the National Procurement Officer (Ref # SC-17) position. Interested consultants must provide their updated curriculum vitae, indicating personal and technical skills, qualifications and experience in similar assignments.

The Services are expected to be carried out over a period of 12 months with the possibility of extension, starting in July 2016. The location of work will be the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers dated July 2014 ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with procedures set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information and a copy of the detailed Terms of Reference (TORs) can be obtained at the address below during working days from 10:00 to 15:00 hours.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail, or by Fax) by **16th June 2017, 14.00 hrs.**

Attn: Mr. Tint Lwin, Director of Procurement
Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
Building No.43, Floor/ Room number: 1st floor, Office of Director of Procurement,
Nay Pyi Taw
Country: Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Telephone: +95-67-410019, Fax: + 95-67-410509, E-mail:
tlwin4.irr@gmail.com

Meeting on preventing nuclear terrorism to be held in Tokyo next week

TOKYO — A meeting on a global partnership to prevent nuclear terrorism will be held in Tokyo next week, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said Thursday.

Around 200 delegates from 88 countries and five international organizations are set to participate in the annual plenary of the

Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which was launched in 2006 jointly by the United States and Russia, the ministry said.

The participants, including those from nuclear powers Israel, India and Pakistan, are expected to exchange views on how to bolster measures to pre-

vent weapons of mass destruction and related materials from falling into the hands of terrorists. North Korea is not part of the initiative. After the end of the two-day senior-official-level gathering through 2 June, a joint statement by co-chairs the United States and Russia is likely to be

released, a foreign ministry official said. Japan, which will host the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, has actively engaged in discussions on the technical aspects of nuclear forensics and on improving security in the transport of nuclear materials. —Kyodo News ■

Eight officers, seven inmates injured in prison riot in California

SAN FRANCISCO — A "major riot" Wednesday morning at a state prison in Northern California has sent eight staff members and seven inmates into a hospital.

Gun shots were fired by officers in the incident, which started at 10:25 am local time, at Pelican Bay State Prison (PBSP) in Crescent City of Del Norte County, said the California

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

With two maximum-security facilities, the prison was designed to house California's most serious criminal offenders in a secure, safe, and disciplined institutional setting. It currently houses approximately 2,000 inmates and employs approximately 1,300 people.

The CDCR sent out a statement detailing the incident, saying that custody staff initially responded to a fistfight between two inmates on the B Facility maximum-security general population yard. "Responding staff used chemical agents and batons to subdue the inmates; however, they refused to stop fighting."

However, as staff con-

tinued to try to subdue the two inmates, large groups of inmates from various areas of the yard ran toward the incident. Overwhelmed as the inmates started attacking them, the officers from three armed posts used lethal force to stop the attacks, firing a total of 19 rounds from the mini-14 rifle and three 40-millimeter direct impact rounds.—Xinhua ■

California highway to be closed for months after Big Sur landslide

SAN JOSE, (California) — A section of highway winding along California's breathtaking Big Sur coastline will probably remain closed for months by damage from a massive landslide unleashed by a rain-soaked hillside over the Pacific, state transportation officials said on Wednesday.

After the wettest winter on record in the state, the collapse marked the third major closure in Big Sur, a roughly 76-mile stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway that hugs California's rugged Central Coast between Cambria and Carmel-by-the-Sea.

The Big Sur portion of State Route 1 is designated as a National Scenic Byway



A massive landslide is seen in this Caltrans aerial photo of a quarter-mile section of State Route 1 about 100 miles south of San Jose, California, US in this photo released on 24 May 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

for its spectacular coastal vistas and is famed as one of the longest stretches of largely undeveloped shoreline in the continental United States. Saturday's slide, one of the region's largest

in decades, deposited a mound of rocks and other debris some 35 feet deep along a quarter-mile section of the highway, about 100 miles south of San Jose, California Department of

Transportation (CalTrans) spokesman Colin Jones said.

An estimated 1.5 million tons of material was dumped onto the road and the shoreline below at Mud

Creek in an area adjacent to a smaller slide that had already closed that section of the highway.

"I think it's safe to say it will be several months before it reopens," Jones said by phone. "We haven't even been able to get in and assess the damage and come up with a plan."

Jones added that it may be necessary to re-route the highway entirely around the damaged section. The affected area is not the busiest portion of the highway. Still, during summer tourist season, as many as 6,000 vehicles a day typically pass through the stretch of road blocked by the landslide.

The Mud Creek blockage is the southernmost of

three major road closures in effect along a 36-mile stretch of the Big Sur coast, forcing lengthy detours for motorists. Severe erosion led highway officials to shut down a bridge in Pfeiffer Canyon in February, and a March landslide closed a stretch of the road near Lime Kiln State Park. The bridge is not expected to reopen until late September, Jones said. "Typically when it rains for a few days, you can expect small slides that our maintenance crews can clean up in a few hours," Jim Shivers, a CalTrans spokesman, said by phone on Wednesday. "These are way beyond the scope of what we're used to responding to."

—Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.5.2017 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SILKAGO LOGISTICS PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD.
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE MV X PRESS YAMUNA VOY. NO (013)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV X PRESS YAMUNA VOY. NO (013) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S X-PRESS FEEDERS PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE MV EVER ABLE VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ABLE VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING LINES
Phone No: 2301185

Jane Campion, only female Cannes laureate, brings cop drama to Riviera

CANNES, (FRANCE) — Jane Campion, the first and so far only woman to win the Palme d'Or, is back at Cannes almost a quarter of a century after winning the festival's top prize for "The Piano", this time with a chilling six-part made-for-TV drama.

"Top of the Lake: China Girl" is the second series of the cop story made for the BBC which critics have compared to David Lynch's "Twin Peaks" due to its disturbing off-kilter tone.

"Lynch — he's our master, he spawned us," New Zealander Campion said of the American director who is also in Cannes this year, with the reboot of TV show "Twin Peaks".

Starting in a low-rent brothel staffed with Asian immigrants, one of whom goes missing, the "China Girl" part of the title appears to refer to the murder victim, but could apply just as well to the central character, a young woman detective whose brittle exterior fails to conceal her troubled soul. Elizabeth Moss, who reprises the role



Director Jane Campion, cast members Gwendoline Christie, Nicole Kidman and Elisabeth Moss pose at 70th Cannes Film Festival — Photocall for the TV series 'Top of the Lake : China Girl' presented as part of 70th Anniversary Events, Cannes, France on 23 May 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

as the story moves from New Zealand to Australia, said her character represented the type of feminism for which Campion is

known. "Getting to play a character who is strong but vulnerable, dark yet funny, is intelligent but makes terrible mistakes, for me

that is a feminist idea in itself — that women can be all those things," Moss told Reuters in an interview. For this series, which

also features Nicole Kidman, Moss has a partner thrust upon her, a gauche, overly enthusiastic junior played by Gwendoline Christie, best known for her roles in Game of Thrones and the J. J. Abrams Star Wars franchise, who said "Top of the Lake" occupies "an interesting fluctuating place between horror and hilarity".

A remarkable scene in the first episode shows a group of computer nerds at a cafe posting website reviews of prostitutes they have hired, expressing macho swagger they clearly lack in the real world.

"That came from the net," said Campion, describing how she and co-writer Gerard Lee had discovered the existence of such review sites during their research and used it to show not only the men's misogyny but also, in some cases, their vulnerability.

"We could not believe the graphic detail," said Campion. "(But also) sometimes quite cute things: 'we spooned at the end, that was the best part.'" —Reuters ■

There should be no comparisons between 'Dangal' and 'Baahubali 2': Aamir

MUMBAI — Superstar Aamir Khan said the box office collection of his blockbuster "Dangal" should not be compared to the recently released "Baahubali 2", as both are good films which are making the country proud.

"Baahubali 2: The Conclusion" broke all previous box office

records in India and international markets and has reportedly raked in nearly Rs 1,565 crore in worldwide collection.

Aamir's sports drama too is not behind, thanks to its excellent run in China which has taken the worldwide collection of the film to reportedly Rs 1,500 crore.

When asked whether "Dangal" would be able to beat "Baahubali 2" collection, Aamir told reporters, "I am very happy the film is being appreciated so much in China and across the world. But I don't think there should be any comparisons. —PTI ■

Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood has surgery for lung lesion

LOS ANGELES — Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood has undergone surgery for a small lesion on his lung, but is feeling fine, his representative said on Wednesday. Wood, 69, will need no additional treatment and the upcoming Rolling Stones tour of Europe will not be affected, the representative said in a statement in London. "I'm so grateful for modern screening which picked this up so early, and would



Ronnie Wood of The Rolling Stones performs during Desert Trip music festival at Empire Polo Club in Indio, California US, in 2016. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

like to thank all the doctors who treated me," Wood said.

The statement said the lesion was found during a routine medical exam and that it had been treated by keyhole surgery.

It was not clear whether the lesion was benign or malignant. The Rolling Stones are due to start their "No Filter" European tour in Hamburg, Germany, on 9 September.—Reuters ■

Singer Ariana Grande suspends concert tour following Manchester attack

LOS ANGELES — Ariana Grande has suspended her concert tour after a suicide bomber killed 22 people at her performance in Manchester, England, the US pop singer's representatives said on Wednesday.

Grande had been scheduled to perform two shows at London's O2 arena this week as part of her "Dangerous Woman" tour. Both shows have been canceled, as well as performances through June 5, her record label said in a statement. "Due to the tragic events in Manchester the Dangerous Woman tour with Ariana Grande has been suspended until we can further assess the situation and pay our proper respects to those lost," the statement said. "Our way of life has once again been threatened but we will overcome this together."

British-born Salman Abedi, 22, blew himself up on Monday night at the packed Manchester Arena at the end of Grande's concert, attended by thousands of children and teenagers, killing 22 people and injuring 64.

His victims included an 8-year-old girl, several teenage girls, a 28-year-old man and a Polish couple who had come to collect their daughters. Grande, 23, was unharmed, but tweeted in the aftermath that she was "broken." She was reported to be back in the United States on Tuesday, seen walking down the steps of a private plane at an airport in Florida in photographs posted on the Daily Mail website.

Grande, a former Nickelodeon cable TV star who made the transition into a successful solo music career, is known for upbeat pop tracks such as "Problem" and "Break Free," and was touring in support of her third album, "Dangerous Woman." After performing in London in this week, she was scheduled to move on to Belgium on Saturday and then Poland, Germany and Switzerland next week. All of those concerts have been canceled. Concert promoter Live Nation said in a statement that ticket holders will get refunds.—Reuters ■



Egyptian Minister of Antiquities Khaled Enany (2nd L) and the Egyptian director of the Grand Egyptian Museum Tarek Sayed Tawfik (L) during the arrival of King Tutankhamun's funerary bed at the restoration laboratory of the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, Egypt, on 23 May 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

New Cairo museum hopes Tutankhamun's chariot will be a draw for tourists

CAIRO — A chariot and funeral bed belonging to ancient Egypt's boy-king Tutankhamun were safely moved on Tuesday across Cairo to a new museum that Egypt hopes will lure back wary tourists.

Just beyond the Great Pyramids of Giza in the basement of Cairo's Grand Egyptian Museum, which is set to be the world's largest archaeological museum when it opens in 2018, Egyptian and Japanese restoration experts

unpacked the pharaoh's treasured artifacts from sealed wooden boxes.

Some of the world's oldest relics, including dozens belonging to King Tut, who ruled Egypt more than 3,000 years ago, are being carefully shuttled from the old Egyptian Museum in central Cairo to the vast halls of the new one 23 kilometers away. Egypt is hoping the splashy new museum will be a draw for tourism, a crucial pillar of its economy that has strug-

gled since a 2011 political uprising drove away visitors who once flocked to ancient Pharaonic temples and pyramids. Transporting the artifacts became an issue of international concern in 2014 after the beard of the ancient Egyptian king's golden burial mask was accidentally broken off by workers changing the lights in its display case. The workers later tried to crudely reattach the beard with an epoxy glue compound that damaged the

mask, prompting outrage among archaeologists. King Tut ruled Egypt as pharaoh for 10 years until his death at age 19, around 1324 B.C.

His nearly intact tomb was discovered in the Valley of the Kings in Luxor in 1922 by British archaeologist Howard Carter.

The king's funeral bed is made of wood gilded with gold leaf and decorated with the head of the lioness goddess Sekhmet.—Reuters ■



Japanese interactive art exhibition dazzles Beijing

BEIJING — A new digital interactive exhibition in Beijing allows visitors to create their own art and see it immediately reflected in the work being displayed around them.

The project, "Living Digital Forest and Future Park", is the first to be opened in China by the Japanese art collective teamLab.

The Tokyo-based company said its work aims to blend art, science and technology into an interactive experience.

The Beijing exhibition includes a digital garden of floating flowers and forest animals, and a crystal universe of light sculptures.

Visitors can use their

smartphones to send commands to change the artworks around them automatically according to the chosen patterns.

Children can scan their drawn art and have it incorporated into an animated world of colourful rockets and vehicles moving on a rollercoaster-like highway.

"Here I have the chance to spend some time with my child and do something together that greatly enriches his mind," said Ren Lei, who was drawing at a table with his six-year-old son.

The exhibition will run to 10 October in Beijing before it moves to Shenzhen in the south.—

Reuters ■

Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(26-5-2017 07:00am ~ 27-5-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News	10:37	Am	Plastic Flower The Longest Living Siblings (Part-I)
07:25	Am	A Highland with Peace and Charm	(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
07:44	Am	The Caves	Prime Time		
08:03	Am	News	07:03	Pm	New
08:25	Am	A Street Vendor "Spreading Knowledge"	07:25	Pm	Tourism development of Bagan
09:03	Am	News	07:41	Pm	Mon Traditional Wedding
09:26	Am	A Bike Ride in pursuit of Mural Art (Episode-1)	07:52	Pm	Tea
09:45	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: Nipa Plam	08:03	Pm	New
09:50	Am	Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Decision"	08:25	Pm	Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part-1)
10:03	Am	News	08:50	Pm	Beach Food Delivery
10:26	Am	The Green Corner (Epi 4)	(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		

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

Programme Schedule

(26-5-2017, Friday)

<p>6:00 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw <p>7:00 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Breakfast News <p>7:35 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ MRTV Travelogue <p>8:55 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Current Affairs <p>9:20 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documentary <p>9:35 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ MRTV Worker's Programme <p>10:30 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Soclo Economic Scenes <p>11:10 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teleplay <p>12:30 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ TV Drama Series 	<p>1:00 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Myanmar Movies (Part-2) <p>2:05 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ TV Drama Series <p>4:35 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documentary (Part-4) <p>5:05 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teleplay <p>5:35 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Weekly Sport Info <p>6:35 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Documentary <p>7:15 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ TV Drama Series <p>8:00 Pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ News/ International News/ Weather Report <p>◆ Documentary (Rakhine State)</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p>
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United outclass Ajax to win Europa League on emotional night

STOCKHOLM — Manchester United's Paul Pogba and Henrikh Mkhitaryan scored a goal in each half as their team comfortably outclassed Ajax Amsterdam to win an emotional Europa League final 2-0 and qualify for the group stages of the Champions League.

A minute's silence held for the victims of Monday's suicide bombing at a pop concert in Manchester in which 22 people died turned into applause as chants of "Manchester" and "We'll Never Die" bellowed out from the English supporters before the match.

World record signing Pogba opened the scoring in the 18th minute as United won the ball after an Ajax throw-in,

the Frenchman's shot taking a wicked deflection to wrong-foot goalkeeper Andre Onana and fly into the net.

Mkhitaryan then flicked the ball home early in the second half following a corner and, with chants of "Manchester, Manchester" echoing around the stadium, United held on to win the one European trophy missing from the Old Trafford cabinet.

"We know things like this are very sad all over the world," said Pogba referring to the attack. "We had to focus. Manchester — we won for them. We played for England, we played for Manchester and we played for them — the people who died."



Manchester United's Wayne Rooney and teammates celebrate with the trophy after winning the Europa league on 24 May. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"The goal was to win all the way through this season. We've done it, and we're proud," said Pogba. "People say we've had a bad season but the prize is great and we've done it now. We have three trophies so enjoy it now," he added. United's triumph followed success in the League

Cup and the Community Shield in Jose Mourinho's first season in charge at Old Trafford with Champions League football secured after United could only manage a sixth-place finish in the Premier League. "We preferred to reach the Champions League this way than finish

fourth, third or second," said Mourinho.

"We got the objective, we are back in the Champions League by winning a title, an important title. The club now has every title in world football. We fought hard for this since the beginning."—Reuters ■

Barcelona 'fully support' Messi after fraud sentence



Barcelona's Lionel Messi. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

BARCELONA — La Liga club Barcelona have expressed their support for Argentine striker Lionel Messi and his father after the Spanish Supreme Court upheld their prison sentences over tax fraud charges, although neither are expected to go to jail.

Five-time World Player of the Year winner Messi, who has been

at Barcelona since the age of 13, was handed a 21-month prison sentence and fined 2 million euros (1.7 million pounds) for three counts of tax fraud between 2007 and 2009. "The club reiterates, once again, its full support for Leo Messi, his father Jorge Messi, and his family," a statement on the club's official website read. (www.fcbarcelona.com) "FC Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu contacted the player's family to communicate this support.

"The family was very grateful, not only for today's gesture, but also for the support the player and his family have received from the club throughout this process. The club will continue to stand with Leo Messi, his father, and his family." Argentine international Messi has scored 506 goals in 582 senior appearances for Barcelona, winning eight league titles and four Champions League trophies.—Reuters ■

Tiger has no plans to retire, 'no hurry' to return either

NEW YORK — Tiger Woods may be in the midst of yet another lengthy recovery from his fourth back surgery but the former world number one said on Wednesday he now felt better than he had in years and had no plans to retire from competitive golf.

The surgery Woods had in April has a typical recovery time of six months and, while he still has very limited mobility, the 41-year-old American was firm in his resolve that he will again compete with the world's best golfers.

"I want to say unequivocally, I want to play professional golf again," Woods, commenting for the first time since his surgery, said on his website (tigerwoods.com).

"Presently, I'm not looking ahead. I can't twist for another two and a half to three months. Right now, my sole focus is re-



PHOTO: REUTERS

hab and doing what the doctors tell me. I am concentrating on short-term goals."

Woods, second on the all-time list with 14 major titles, has played sparingly since returning to golf in December after a 16-month layoff following back surgery.

He missed the cut at the Farmers Insurance Open in January and withdrew from a European Tour event in Dubai

after a first-round 77.

Woods only decided on surgery because he could no longer live with the pain, adding that even lying down hurt and that he tried every possible non-surgical route but nothing worked.

He said the fusion surgery provided instant nerve relief. "I haven't felt this good in years," said Woods, a 79-times winner on the PGA Tour. "My surgeon and physiotherapist say the operation was successful. It's just a matter of not screwing up and letting it fuse. "I'm walking and doing my exercises, and taking my kids to and from school. All I can do is take it day-by-day. There's no hurry."

Woods also said he did everything he could to play in last month's US Masters, where he has not competed since 2015, but that the pain was too great.—Reuters ■