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KING OF CAMBODIA WELCOMES PRESIDENT U HTIN KYAW WITH LAVISH CEREMONY

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and his wife were welcomed to Cambodia yesterday with lavish ceremonies that included honour guards and floral baskets.

At the invitation of the King of Cambodia, Preah Bat Samdach Preah Baromneath Norodom Sihamoni, Myanmar President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin left Nay Pyi Taw for an official State Visit and were seen off at the airport by Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Services, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and wife, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, Mr So Bunna, Charge d'affaires of the Cambodia Embassy in Myanmar and other officials.

President U Htin Kyaw, the First Lady and entourage arrived in Phnom Penh at 11:15am Cambodia time and were welcomed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia and Minister of the Royal Palace Mr Samdech Chau-fa Veang Kong Som Ol, Mr Khieu Kanharith, Minister for Information, Cambodia, U Myint Soe, Myanmar Ambassador to Cambodia and other officials.

The President and the First Lady were then taken to the Intercontinental Hotel, where the Deputy Prime Minister presented a floral basket from the King of Cambodia.



SEE PAGE 3 >> President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady receive a ceremonial welcome in Phnom Penh, Cambodia at the Palace of the King. PHOTO: MNA

Gov't warns against religious, racial incitement after murder of NLD legal adviser

THE Union Government yesterday warned of possible provocation for conflict in the country, urging the people to be fully aware of religious and racial incitements following the murder of the Muslim legal adviser to the ruling National League for Democracy party on Sunday.

The Office of the President also requested the people to inform authorities as quickly as possible if they find evidence concerning the case or of actions aimed at destabilising the state.

U Ko Ni, the legal adviser of the National League for Democracy, was shot to death at close

range at 5 pm on 29th January at the Yangon International Airport upon his return from Indonesia via Singapore. The statement also confirmed that two men have been arrested in connection with U Ko Ni's murder. Kyi Lin, 52, son of U Hlaing, was arrested near the scene shortly after the incident by securi-

ty forces and people nearby. Aung Win Zaw, 46, son of U Aung Than, an alleged conspirator of the crime, was arrested about 12 hours after the incident.

The police arrested Aung Win Zaw at Thanlwin Bridge, Hpa-an, on his way from Yangon to Hpa-an at 4.20 am on 30th January.

The ongoing investigation is being carried out by a combined team comprised of members of the Tatmadaw and the Myanmar Police to arrest those who are connected with the crime, at which time the findings will be made public, said the statement.—*Myanmar News Agency*

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Timely stitches could save Myanmar forests

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Ks3.65 billion proposed by president for development of Rakhine State

PRESIDENT of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw has sent a proposed budget of Ks3.65 billion for the development of Rakhine State to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw and Deputy Minister for Finance and Planning U Maung Maung Win explained the allocation of the Ks3.65 billion for socioeconomic development of Rakhine State would come from the reserved funds submitted by the president under the 2016 Union Budget Law at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session.

The budget allocation will be

spent on conduits and inter-village roads as the decision to do so was made by the Rakhine State Stability and Development Implementation Committee, according to the deputy ministers.

Hluttaw Representatives were then invited to debate the motion at future sessions.

Deputy Minister for Electric Power and Energy Dr. Tun Naing explained the need to borrow 10.787 billion Yen from the Japan International Cooperation Agency for the maintenance of the Beluchaung Hydropower Plant (1) and the Hsedawgyi Hydropower Plant.

The motion was also sent to

the session by the president.

Japanese and Myanmar engineers have inspected the Beluchaung power generation plant six times and it was found out that it was necessary to carry out extensive maintenance tasks from 2017 to 2023 for the plant to reach its full capacity.

Similarly, the Hsedawgyi Hydropower Plant, which has been operating continuously for 28 years, has suffered from wear and tear of its machinery and needs major maintenance. As a result, maintenance tasks will be carried out from the 2017-18 fiscal year to the 2023-24 fiscal year.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Dr. Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Electric Power and Energy.

PHOTO: MNA



U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Finance and Planning.

PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 4th regular session holds its 3rd day meeting



Pyithu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

PYITHU Hluttaw continued its 3rd Day Meeting yesterday, in which 4 questioning, putting 2 motions to the Hluttaw, putting one revised motion and acquisition of Hluttaw's decision were made.

At the meeting, U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Resources and Environmental Conservation replied to the question raised by U Min Naung of Pinlebu constituency said, "The SLORC/ State Law & Order Restoration Committee enacted Myanmar Mining Law under law no—8/94 dated 6 September 1994, with bye-laws of Myanmar Mining issued under notification 125/96 dated 30 December 1996. Under section 10 of the Myanmar Mining Law, bye-law's section 44, licences for small-scale miners to exploit mining were granted. Revised law of Myanmar Mining Law 1994 was promulgated under the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law no 72 on 24 December 2015. Under the Revised Law of Myanmar Mining Law, licences to do mining on small-scale are to be

applied to the board of scrutiny and grant of Regions and States."

Afterward, U Ohn Win, Union Minister replied to the question raised by U Tun Wai of Phaung Pyin constituency as to which policies are to be laid down for the people to officially use teak and hard-wood where there are no timber selling depots and sawmills, and whether there are plans to make reforestations so as to continually produce for exports, at length.

Then, U Khin Cho of Hlinebwe constituency put the motion urging the Government of the State to exert efforts for the broader success of bamboo plantation which was seconded by U Bo Gyi of Chauk constituency. As the Hluttaw decided to discuss it, Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw announced that anyone interested in debating concerning the motion could have their names listed in the debate.

In addition, U Zaw Win of Htantabin constituency, Bago Region, member of drafting commit-

tee discussed for the approval of the clauses and sub-clauses concerning revised motion regarding Oil and Oil Products Law submitted by the ministry of electrical power and energy. Then, Deputy Speaker of Hluttaw won the decision of the Hluttaw and approved it.

Then, U Myint Oo of Thanappin constituency put the motion to the Hluttaw concerning re-designating Kandawgyi Lake catchment area, Bago Region as the reserved forest after withdrawal from private contracts, for systematic conservation and availability of safe drinking water. Concerning the motion, Dr Myint Thein of Nyaunglebin constituency seconded it after presenting his surveys about the lake. 7 other parliamentarians suggested as to the motion, followed by clarification from the U Ohn Win, Union Minister.

Afterward, Deputy Speaker of the Hluttaw took the opinion of Hluttaw and approved it.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 4th regular session holds its 3rd day meeting

AGRICULTURAL equipment and export-quality honey were among the issues discussed during the third-day meeting of the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

U Hla Kyaw, the deputy minister for agriculture, livestock breeding and irrigation, replied to a question raised by Daw Naw Sar Mu Htoo of constituency 11, Kayin State about how farmers can purchase modern farming equipment.

"Arrangements are being made to enable farmers to buy mechanized agricultural equipment with a 10 per cent down payment with the remaining amount repaid in seven installments during a three-year period, in consultation with private investors, strong banks which can supply financial aid and the ministry of agriculture, livestock breeding and irrigation," said U Hla Kyaw.

The deputy minister said his ministry alone cannot satisfy the growing demands of farmers.

"The State's grant fund alone cannot fulfill the increasing demands of mechanized agricultural equipment. The Department of Mechanized Agriculture cannot to arrange to give free and accept half-payment as its granted expenditure fund cannot purchase agricultural equipment needed by farmers to sell them in installments—three installment in two years. The Department of Mechanized Agriculture sold 490 modernized tractors, 35,120 hand-drawn tractors in a hire-purchase system from 1 April 2011 to 30 November 2016."

U Hla Kyaw also replied

to the question raised by U Hla San of constituency 1, Magwe Region about the production of honey.

"Honey produced by apiculturists from private sectors is being imported through honey-importing companies under the leadership of apiculturist associations with a view to stabilising prices and it has been called to produce export-quality honey. Exports of raw material are being delivered via the routes of border trade, instead of delivering straight to Thailand. We are linking with the World Organisation for Animal Health to export high-quality honey to European countries, breeding systems and upgrading of laboratories are being made."

Afterward, the deputy minister replied to questions raised by U Min Naing of constituency 12, Sagaing Region, U Myo Win of constituency 8, Mon State and U Thet Naing Soe of constituency 2, Taninthari Region.

Daw Hla Htay, also known as Daw Ohn Kyi of constituency 4, Mandalay Region read out the report of Amyotha Hluttaw Drafting Committee, "Bill on Revising Legal Assistance Law," returned back from the Pyithu Hluttaw together with the amendment, followed by an announcement of putting names of parliamentarians to the Hluttaw discussion, if interested.

The 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 4th Regular Session's 4th day meeting is designated to be continued on 6 February.—*Myanmar News Agency*

King of Cambodia welcomes . . .

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In the afternoon, the President and the First Lady were welcomed at the King's Palace. The President and the King received the salute from the Guard of Honour, ceremonially inspected the honour guard, and then met in the Palace of the King.

In the meeting, increased cooperation in the sectors of education, religion and culture between the two countries and cooperation in promoting tourism were discussed.

"I am very happy to see Myanmar developing and exercising the practice of transparency more than ever. I believe that Myanmar will implement the process of internal peace and multi-sector development successfully," the King of Cambodia said.

In the evening, the President and the First Lady paid a visit to the Independence Monument in Phnom Penh, and the memorial monument of former King Norodom Sihanouk, where they laid a

wreath in honour of the former King.

Later that night, U Htin Kyaw and the First Lady attended a state banquet hosted by the King at the King's Palace, where the King and the Myanmar President exchanged toasts.

"Our two countries have not only shared the same historical background, culture, designated Asian values and temperament, but also the same determination to be in harmony and at peace with the world. Throughout history, friendship and cooperation between the two countries have increased for the benefit of the people of both countries."

"We firmly believe that bilateral cooperation will bring about the remaining opportunities to be implemented in multi-sector cooperation. Myanmar is always ready to cooperate closely with Cambodia in the international sphere for the preservation of regional and global peace, stability and development," the President said.—*Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw and the First Lady receive a red-carpet welcome on their arrival at Phnom Penh, Cambodia. PHOTO: MNA

Aid delivered to fire victims in Mayangon

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement said that relief aid were delivered to fire victims of ward-6 in Mayangon, according to the Yangon Region Department of the Ministry.

"Clothes and food were delivered to nun and the public immediately after the fire breakout in accordance with the instruction of the ministry, said U Win Shwe, Director of Yangon Region Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

The fire broke out at Zeyak-hema Street of Ward-6 in Mayangon, killing one and destroying 29 houses.

A total of 472 fire victims from 75 households and 15 nuns from 10 nunneries were provided



with K 991,200 for rice and 46 bags of rice, 75 boxes of nine relief items, 75 Huawei family kits, 80 boxes of dry noodles, drinking water, edible oil, mats,

sugar, clothes and robes for nuns in addition to K 7.8 million for construction materials were presented for the victims.—*Zaw Gyi (Panita)*

Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand visits Bagan

A Thai delegation led by Deputy Minister HE Dr Somkid Katusripitak arrived at Bagan yesterday evening.

The delegation was welcomed at Bagan-Nyaung-U Airport by Mandalay Region Planning and Finance Minister U Myat Thu and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism U Ye Mon.—*A-one Soe*



Deputy Minister HE Dr Somkid Katusripitak is welcomed by women in Bagan-era dress at the NyaungU Airport. PHOTO: MNA

Information Committee issues lists of civilians abducted or killed in Rakhine State

SINCE the violent attacks in Maungtau District in Rakhine State, columns of government troops and border guard police have launched operations for the security and stability in the area.

The terrorists abducted or killed innocent residents and village administrators so that no one dares to tell the truth and cooperate with authorities by instigating fear. Between 9th October 2016

and 3rd February 2017, nine people disappeared and two women were injured, according to the State Counsellor's Office Information Committee.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Head of hundred-household falls from bridge and dies

A village leader fell off a bridge linking Dotan Village and Ngasakyu at about noon on Wednesday and died, according to news sources.

Saulimoula, 50, the head

of hundred-household, suffered from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity, a disorder that results in inattention or impulsive behaviour, officials said.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Abducted village leader escapes

ANNA Mullah, the head of hundred-household in Gwason Village, Rakhine State, escaped after being abducted and told police of his harrowing ordeal.

The village leader told Deputy Police Inspector Aung Myat Kyaw that he was travelling on business when he was attacked and arrested by a group of eight men armed with swords and batons led by a village resident named Adulock. After being beaten with swords and sticks, he was blindfolded and taken to a valley, where he had to spend the night.

He was told by the group

that it had been hired by a five people including a village man named Harshein because they had not been allowed to participate in the administrative committee and had been prevented from contacting another village resident, Mawlawi Zupai. He was taken to a cliff, where he met with Mawlawi Zupai on Monday. On Wednesday at about 5 pm, he ran away from the site while abductors were sleeping, arriving back at his home at about 9:20pm, Anna Mullah said. An investigation is ongoing, authorities said.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Woman dies at relief camp in Mawtheehnyar relief camp

A woman was found dead with cut and puncture wounds at Mawtheehnyar relief camp in Thechaung Village at 6 am on 2 February.

The victim Ma Shawriahartu, 28, who lived in room 4, hall 1 at the camp, was found dead

with a 6-inches long cut wound at her throat. Eislam, 37, the husband of the victim said that they went to bed on 1 February night and found her dead in the morning. The body was sent to Sittway Hospital for autopsy.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Correction

A story in the 3 February edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar headlined "Workshop on rights of indigenous peoples held in Nay Pyi Taw" incorrectly identified Mr. Pablo Barrera. Mr. Barrera is from the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, not the UN Resident Coordinator. The same story mischaracterized the indigenous people in Myanmar. The indigenous people are only 5 per cent of the global population but account for roughly 10 per cent of the world's poor.—*ED*

Celebrity's food service aims to reduce expenses of low-income families

YADANA Khin, a popular former actress, plans to open new food shops in every township in Yangon with the aim of offering food service to people from low-income families at an affordable price.

"People have to pay only Ks500 for a meal sold through the new shops named Shwe Sar Phwe Sone," said Yadana Khin, adding that this idea comes from her husband and she has just implemented the plan she already knows that the service business may produce poor profits.

This is a part of a philanthropic effort to help people who

cannot afford to spend much money for a meal, she said.

The first Ks500 food shop has opened at No. 6/8 Byaingyehsin Street in Tamway Township in Yangon on Thursday, selling rice and curry as well as other kinds of food for only 500 kyats.

The move aims to help people, especially civil servants and low-income employees, to reduce their food-related expenditures, said U Soe Hlaing Oo, the spouse of Yadana Khin. Yadana Khin, the film star, has plans to open several food shops in the rest of Yangon's townships in the future. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Suicide cases reach 100 in Taninthayi Region last year

TANINTHAYI Region experienced a total of 100 suicide deaths last year, most of the cases related to family problems, said a regional police officer.

"Investigators found that the majority of suicide cases were caused by family issues. The region has experienced the cases relating to suicide in previous years," said U Myo Min Aung, head of the Taninthayi Region Police Department.

Regionwide there were 100 suicide deaths during 2016. Myeik District topped the chart with 56 cases, followed by Dawei and Kawthoung districts with 22 cases, according to figures released by police.

Last month, the police department recorded seven suicide cases in Myeik District and one other in Dawei District.

"Suicide is considered a kind of mental illness due to depression, which is a common mental disorder that causes people to experience depressed mood," a local medical professional said. "There are many factors that play a role in influencing whether someone decides to commit suicide.

"People are most driven to suicide when they view their current situation as being completely hopeless and feel as if they have no way to change things for the better." —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Competition to promote reading appreciation for children in Toungoo

WITH the aim of educating children, helping them to appreciate literature and enjoy reading, a reading skills contest, poem recitation contest and English words puzzle contest were held at the Public Library of Toungoo District on Tuesday morning.

Daw Khine Khine Thin, staff officer of the Toungoo District Information and Public Relation Department, first explained the objectives of the contests. A total of 30 students in Basic Education Primary level and Basic Education Middle level took part in the competitions.

As part of the event, students performed songs and officials offered presents to the students.—*Shwe Win (Pyay)*



Children perform dance and songs at the Public Library of Toungoo District. PHOTO: SHWE WIN (PYAY)

Electrical Law to be amended to develop Myanmar's electrical power and energy sector

YANGON region government will amend the electrical law to develop Myanmar's electrical power and energy sector after negotiating with Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein on Tuesday.

The development occurred at a workshop on developing the Yangon electrical power and energy sector held on Tuesday at the offices of the Yangon Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

"The Union government takes responsibility for the electricity sector, while the regional government is allowed to pro-

duce only 30MGW. After the law is amended, Yangon Region Government will extend and expand the production and supply of electricity in the Yangon region," said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein.

"The Yangon Region consumes half of the power supply to the whole country. Therefore, we will draw the master plan for Yangon region's electricity and energy sector," he added.

The Myanmar government spent Ks450 billion on the electrical power sector in 2016. The government will hold a forum in March at UMFCCI concerning a master plan to promote the production, transportation and store

of energy, petroleum and fossil fuels.

In 2016, 133 megawatts of electricity were produced by the Myingyan natural gas electrical power factory project in Mandalay, 30 megawatts of the STG-3 Mawlamyine electrical power factory project, 66KV Taung Got-Maei electrical power line with 45 miles in Rakhine State, 66/11 KV 5MVA Maei electrical power substation, 66KV Kyaukphyu-Kyaukphyu (SEZ) electrical power line No 1 with 5.57 miles and No 2 with 5.69 miles and 66/11 KV 2x10 MVA Kyaukphyu (SEZ) electrical power substation.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Crime NEWS

Three Myanmar workers killed in accident in Thailand



Bodies of Myanmar workers are taken by Thai police from the hospital to Thailand monastery. PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHAUNG)

Three Myanmar workers in Thailand were killed when a 10-wheeled vehicle struck them as they were riding their bicycles to work at 6 am yesterday.

The victims were all employees at I.S.A. Value Co., a sardine-canning factory in Bangkoktient, Thailand.

The driver of the 10-wheeled vehicle fled and is being sought, authorities said.

The three victims are: Tin Kyaw Moe, 28, and Ma Nyein Nyein Soe, 24, of Nyang Kaine

Village, Yinmabin Township in Sagaing Region and Maung Aung Pyae Win, 24, of Tarwa Village in Yinmabin Township. They all had received their jobs through the Today TopStar Agency.

The driver of the 10-wheeled vehicle driver is still at large. An investigation team has been assigned to the case.

The three bodies were taken from the hospital to a Thailand monastery for cremation, according to Thai authorities.—*Kyaw Soe (Kawthaung)*

Yaba seized in Namhsan

NAMHSAN Myoma police and staff seized Yaba from a house at the foot of the Gu Kyaung Pagoda, No. 4 village, Namhsan township on Friday. The combined team searched the house and found 5,125 Yaba tablets on Zaw Moe Win and Aung Myo Thu.

Similarly, police searched a tent beside the road of No. 5 village and found 1,252 Yaba tablets. Sithu Aung, Sai Tun, Tine Kyaw, Ma Tun May, Day Wah Ku Man, Naing Win Tun, Thet Naing, Win Ko Tun and Zaw Min Naing, who were found inside and in the vicinity of the tent, were arrested. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Stimulants tablets, low-quality opium seized in Lashio

Lashio anti-narcotics unit No. 24 seized a large quantity of yaba from a vehicle at the Oriental toll gate on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off, police searched a vehicle driven by Kyaw Lin and found 60,000 yaba tablets, low-quality opium

weighing 20 grams, eight glass bottles, eight ceramic funnels, nine glass rods and two license plates.

Similarly, police from Koe Kwe seized 2,000 yaba tablets from a motorbike driven by Min Wai on Pin Laung - Nay Pyi Taw

Road, Pin Laung Township on Tuesday.

Officers and staff from Mohnyin anti-narcotic unit No. 3 seized 780 yaba tablets from Ma Aye Kyin near the Myay Sar Pon market stalls, Whay Khar village, Phakant township on Tuesday.

Police arrested Win Soe Naung and Ma Aye Myint at Mhaw Taung ward 1, Whay Khar Village, Phakant. Police have filed charges against all the suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws.—*Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business

Thailand invest in Myanmar to increase

H.E. Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, attended the Trade and Investment Forum held at the Chatrium Hotel in Yangon, after he met with high-ranking government officials in Nay Pyi Taw.

"The trip is aimed to promote cooperation between the two countries," said Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak who said that the energy sector is the most important for the implementation of development for the two countries.

Thailand will have to invest in the special economic zones, which will be opened soon in Myanmar. The requirements of industrial experts are also essential, said the deputy minister, who pledged at the forum that Thailand will provide scholarship to promote small and medium-sized enterprises and technology development. The deputy minister urged Myanmar business groups to invest in Thailand, which will be supportive for the two countries' economies. He believes Thai

companies also have plans to penetrate the global market and can help Myanmar through cooperation.

During the forum, business groups from the two countries discussed cooperation in the trade, investment, energy and travel sectors.

Thailand's Deputy Minister then visited the Thilawa special economic zone and met the management committee.

Yangon's minister for electricity, industry, and transportation, Daw Nilar Kyaw, who is vice president

of the Thilawa Special Zone Committee, made a presentation consisting of updated information about the zone development.

U Aung Thurein, vice chairman of Myanmar-Japan Trade Development, also explained the operation of the SEZ before 10 Thailand investors described their business operation in the zone.

During H.E. Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak's trip to Myanmar, 18 Memorandums of Understanding between Myanmar and Thailand

were signed: 16 MoUs in the private sector and two MoUs for government sectors for an emergency unit at Dawei and on fishery cooperation.

Mr Panitarn told the Bangkok Post that the MoUs mainly cover cooperation on small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development, industrial estate development and joint investment.

The Daiwei SEZ has been in the works for years. Myanmar and Thailand first signed a memorandum of understanding to develop

the area in 2008, and two years later Myanmar granted a 60-year concession to Italian-Thai Development (ITD) Plc to develop a deep-sea port, industrial estate, and road and rail links to Thailand's Kanchanaburi, reported the Myanmar Times.

According to the statistics from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, the value of investment by Thailand in Myanmar reached US106 million during the year 2016-17.—GNLM

US company to buy Myanmar coffee

A US company which is already purchasing Myanmar's quality coffee will visit Myanmar in March to continue to buy and sample Myanmar's coffee, according to the Myanmar Coffee Association (MCA).

"They will visit in March," said U Ye Myint, the chairman of MCA. "They have already sent their itinerary to us. They will visit Myanmar to observe the coffee quality and if they are satisfied with the quality, they will continue to buy our coffee, he added.

The US company Atlas bought 36 tonnes of Myanmar's Arabica coffee in June, 2016, when the high-quality product

was introduced into the US market. Since then, Myanmar's coffee has penetrated the international market, he added.

The EU and France are also interested in buying Myanmar's coffee, U Ye Myint said.

"This year, we expect to produce more quality coffee and export it to the international market. Myanmar's coffee is mostly cultivated in Moegok and Nawnghkio in Shan state and Pyin-Oo-Lwin in Mandalay region," he said.

Myanmar produces 7,000 tonnes of coffee yearly and exports 50 per cent to the international market.—Min Min

Ministry links farmers with companies to buy tractors under installment plan

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is putting farmers in contact with companies willing to sell tractors under an installment plan, said an official from this ministry.

Farmers need to cultivate and harvest quickly depending on the weather conditions but are often faced with a scarcity of oxen and cattle and a shortage of labourers.

The ministry is linking the farmers with Shwe Htwat Toe Co, Farmer

Choice Tractor Co and Convenience Prosperity Co. The farmers need only a 10 per cent down payment of the tractor's value. The remaining 90 per cent will be paid in installments once in every six months over the next three years, it is learnt.

Farmers who have traditionally plowed and harvested their land using traditional manual methods face financial hardships when purchasing tractors and agricultural machines.—200

A high-rise building is under construction in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR



Over 120 high-rise buildings granted permits to build

YANGON City Development Committee (YCDC) has now granted permission to 123 out of 130 projects to build high-rise structures after scrutinising the projects, according to the Yangon City Development Committee.

Build permits for the remaining seven buildings has been delayed by YCDC because they still need to perform renovations as directed, according to the engineering and building department.

Most of the buildings

will have between 10 and 30 floors, including Golden City, Marga Land Mark, and INNO City.

Inspection teams from YCDC checked those buildings already under construction. Projects set to start in 2016 were delayed

after the new government came to power. Although YCDC previously announced that they would decide on permits based on new policy, permission was granted to the most recent projects according to old policy.—Min Min

Yangon Job Fair to take place on 26 February

A NEW job fair is planned to take place later this month in Yangon, according to MyJobs.com.mm, according to an event organiser, welcoming job hunters to come to the event.

The fair will be held on 26 February at the Rose Garden Hotel on Upper Pasodan Road from 9 am to 4 pm with the purpose of helping

job seekers find out which professions fit their personality.

Currently there are many job opportunities in sales, marketing, travel tourism, IT and banking, according to one businessman. Despite high demands for staff, local companies are experiencing a scarcity of skilled workers as well as a

salary negotiation problem with experienced workers, he added.

A businessman commented that Myanmar youths find it difficult to get a job even though there are many employment opportunities. All job hunters have burning desires to get a job but they themselves do not know which sector

they are interested in and many do not have enough experience or training to land a job, the businessman said.

Those interested can join the fair free of charge. Attendees should bring a curriculum vitae. For more information, call the event organiser at 09 31349834.—Khine Zar

Philippine leader scraps communist truce, tells troops 'be ready to fight'

MANILA — The Philippine government will on Friday withdraw from a ceasefire with communist rebels, President Rodrigo Duterte said, as he ordered soldiers to get ready to fight and declared there would be no peace with the insurgents for a generation.

Duterte had made a nationwide peace process one of the priorities of his administration but showed frustration over demands made by the New People's Army (NPA), and the deaths of seven soldiers since the group pulled out of the ceasefire two days ago. Three soldiers have been captured.

"I have lost many soldiers in just 48 hours, I think to continue with the ceasefire does not or will not produce anything," Duterte said in a speech.

"I am asking the soldiers: Go back to your camps, clean your rifles and be ready to fight."

Duterte's declaration follows his defence minister's assurance on Wednesday that the government would stick to a unilateral truce. The communists ac-



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gestures while addressing families of the 44 Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) members who were killed in a 2015 police operation, during a dialogue at the presidential palace in Manila, Philippines, on 24 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

cused the military of occupying 500 barrios, or town districts, that are supposedly within their control.

The rebels said government troops engaged in "hostile actions", but they still supported the peace process. The military responded by saying the NPA had broken the ceasefire numerous times. It was due to expire on 10 February. "I'm really very sorry. I tried my best but like in the song, my best was not good enough,"

Duterte said. "There will be no peace in this land vis-a-vis the Communist Party. Let's resume the war."

He said the rebels' demands were "too huge" and it was impossible to work out a compromise. He felt he had shown his commitment to the process by freeing top communist leaders. "I am sad to report to you that there will be no peace with the communists for the next generation", he said. —Reuters

Indian police bust \$550 million internet scam that duped thousands

NEW DELHI — Indian police have busted an internet scam in which around 650,000 people lost a combined 37 billion rupees (440.25 million pounds) after sending money to a company that promised they would earn cash by clicking on web links, police said on Friday.

Police, who described the pyramid-style scheme as one of India's biggest ever, said they had arrested three ringleaders on the outskirts of New Delhi, the capital, and seized more than 5 billion rupees (\$74 million) from bank accounts.

"They learned that if you give some money back to members, the investments would go up exponentially," Amit Pathak, head of a police cyber crime unit in India's populous northern state of Uttar Pradesh, told Reuters.

The men ran a series of websites that prom-

ised would-be subscribers a chance to earn five rupees (\$0.07) each time they clicked or liked web links sent to their mobile phones, police said.

The unsuspecting investors each paid thousands of rupees into the company's bank accounts to join the scheme, but the web links they received were fake.

The company running the alleged scam had operated for years, but earned almost all the money over a few months from last August, after it began to distribute some of the proceeds, using the beneficiaries to draw in more investors.

Police said the ringleaders had not yet appointed lawyers as the chargesheet was still being prepared.

When police raided the company's head office in the city of Noida they found 250 passports of employees and members who had been rewarded

with a holiday to Australia.

The scammers planned to film the holiday and then post it online as promotional material to lure more subscribers.

The alleged mastermind spent some of the proceeds on houses, cars and celebrity parties. Pathak said it would take time to trace most of the money, and several bank employees were believed to be involved.

"It's a very big task for us. We have brought in the income-tax department, and other government agencies, to trace the money," Pathak said.

Cyber crime in India, home to the world's second largest number of internet users, jumped 350 per cent in the three years to 2014 as criminals exploited booming smartphone use, a study by auditing services firm PwC and industry lobby group ASSOCHAM showed last year.—Reuters

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Fukushima reactor-probing robot unveiled ahead of survey in March

TOKYO — A nuclear research organisation unveiled on Friday a robot that will be tasked with surveying one of the crippled reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear complex.

The operator of the plant, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc., plans to send the robot into the No. 1 reactor in March, while its survey plan for the No.2 reactor remains under a cloud after extraordinarily high radiation levels were detected.

The stick-like robot, some 70 centimeters in length and equipped with a camera, is remotely controlled and can articulate its two joints, according to the International Research Institute for Nuclear Decommissioning.

The institute was established in 2013 by nuclear plant constructors, power firms and government organizations to develop technology needed for the decommissioning of the Fukushima plant, which was damaged by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

After the disaster,

three of the plant's reactors suffered meltdowns in the world's most severe nuclear crisis since the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

During a robotic survey in April 2015, the operator found no major obstacles in the robot's path in the No. 1 reactor while discovering water accumulating in the

basement. In the upcoming survey, the operator hopes to search the water by deploying a camera and a radiation sensor.

The move comes after the plant operator detected a record radiation level of up to 530 sieverts per hour and found what is believed to be nuclear debris and a

1-square-meter hole during a recent survey inside of the No. 2 reactor.

The estimated record reading poses unexpected difficulties for conducting further probes inside the reactor as the robot could fail in less than two hours when exposed to such high levels of radiation.—Kyodo News



The International Research Institute for Nuclear Decommissioning unveils a robot on 3 February 2017, to examine the inside of the containment vessel of the No. 1 reactor of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in the northeastern Japan. The robot is equipped with a camera and dosimeter. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Asian stocks tumble most in two weeks after China tightens policy



A billboard displays the morning trading on the first day of trade after Lunar New Year at the Hong Kong Exchanges in Hong Kong, on 1 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

HONG KONG — Chinese stocks slumped on Friday, sending Asian markets skidding for their biggest losses in two weeks after Beijing unexpectedly raised short-term interest rates, adding to growing concerns about US President Donald Trump's aggressive policies.

European stocks are expected to take Asia's lead with major bourses set to open in the red before a key US jobs report sheds further light on the outlook for US monetary policy in the coming months.

On the first day of trading after a week-long break for the Lunar New Year, Chinese equities tumbled and the currency weakened after the People's Bank of China raised the interest rates on open market operations by 10 basis points.

Two banking sources

also told Reuters it had raised the lending rates on its standing lending facility (SLF) short-term loans, suggesting policymakers were tugging multiple levers to slow down a rampant build-up in debt among Chinese corporates.

"My interpretation of the higher interest rates in China is that the regulator does not want corporates to over-leverage, which could be the case if borrowing cost is low together with ample liquidity," said Iris Pang, senior economist, Greater China at Natixis in Hong Kong.

The latest increases in market interest rates comes after the central bank raised rates on its medium-term loan facility (MLF) in late January. That was the first time it has raised one of its policy interest rates since July 2011.

Analysts say the fresh increases mark a step up in policy tightening for domestic markets and appears to be aimed at bolstering the yuan after record capital outflows in recent months. The Institute of International Finance estimated capital outflows from China surged last year to a record \$725 billion.

"The signal is very clear," said Zhou Hao, senior emerging market economist, Asia, for Commerzbank in Singapore. "I think it's targeted tightening compared to the last cycle in 2010-2013."

Chinese yields snapped a three-year declining trend in late October with five-year benchmark yields rising by 65 basis points since then. Ten year yields have surged by a greater magnitude. They extended their rise on Friday.—Reuters

Japan's robotics startup ZMP Inc hopes to list in coming months: CEO

TOKYO — Japanese robotics startup ZMP Inc hopes to list on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in the coming months, after a delay late last year due to client information being leaked on to the internet, the firm's founder and CEO told Reuters on Friday.

Despite the delay in its initial public offering, worth up to \$82 million, ZMP remained on track to develop a self-driving taxi in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, CEO Hisashi Taniguchi said.

The company was ironing out internal security issues after it discovered some client information had been leaked to the public days ahead of its listing, Taniguchi said.

"We're developing our security systems in-house, which will take some time, but this is not the sort of thing that takes a year to develop," he said.

"When we're happy with our security system, then we'll re-submit our listing application."

Taniguchi said ZMP will push ahead with developing self-driving taxis, despite losing its partnership last month with gaming software developer DeNA Co. DeNA paired up instead with Nissan Motor Co to develop services for autonomous driving cars.—Reuters



A worker of ZMP leaves his hands under the steering wheel in a RoboCar while the autonomous car makes its way during its demonstration in Tokyo, Japan, on 31 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Honda raises full-year profit outlook on lower costs, weaker yen

TOKYO — Honda Motor Co (7267.T) on Friday lifted its annual profit forecast for the second time in as many quarters due to cost-cutting and the impact of a weakening yen, while sales in China remained strong.

Japan's third-largest automaker said it expected net profit for the year through March at 545.0 billion yen (3.9 billion pounds), up from previous guidance upgraded in November, and 58.2 per cent more than a year earlier.

It also raised its operating profit forecast to 785.0 billion yen after posting 207.6 billion yen for October-December — up 27.4 per cent from a year prior and exceeding the 157.07 billion yen average of 11 analyst estimates in a Reuters I/B/E/S/ poll.

Analysts expect the automaker to post full-year operating profit of 753.27 billion yen and net profit of 533.44 billion yen.

The automaker also forecasts the local currency to average 107 yen to the US dollar through March,

compared with an earlier forecast of 103 yen.

The results come as business is booming in China, where surging sales led by the Civic and the XR-V have prompted the automaker to invest \$436 million in its seventh plant in the country.

It raised its full-year sales outlook for Asia including China to 1,945 million vehicles from 1,915 million. The automaker expects to sell 5.005 million vehicles globally in the year through March, up from a previous forecast for 4.98 million.

In the US, strong demand for Honda's latest CR-V sport utility vehicle (SUV) and the latest generation of its Civic sedan have also led to record sales in the automaker's biggest market during calendar 2016.

Honda is among global automakers which have come under pressure from US President Donald Trump, who has demanded that more cars sold in the United States be made locally to increase jobs and

shrink the US trade deficit.

The new president has focused on protectionist trade policies in his first weeks in office, formally withdrawing the United States from Trans Pacific Partnership trade pact.

Honda and other Japanese automakers have increasingly localised vehicle production over the past three decades, and Honda's US-produced vehicles account for around 26 per cent of its global vehicle output.

The company operates seven production plants in the United States which manufactured nearly 80 per cent of the record 1.64 million Honda vehicles sold in the country in 2016. It also operates plants in Mexico and Canada which export a chunk of their output to the United States.

As demand for SUVs and trucks continues to rise in the United States, Honda has increasingly turned to exports from Japan, which more than doubled to 82,780 units in the 12 months through December.—Reuters

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Opinion

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Timely stitches could save Myanmar forests

Aye Min Soe

THE Union Government has taken further steps to prevent illegal logging in Myanmar forest reserves, in an attempt to remove itself from the list of top countries in the world that are most rapidly depleting their forests.

Logging has been banned for 10 years in the Bago Yoma Mountain Range, with planting and conservation also being carried out in the area. The Union Government has also given a nod to the Forest Department to carry out its 10-year master plan, allocating a large chunk of the national budget to fund the replenishment effort.

But employees of the Forest Department cannot succeed in their drive to prevent and reverse deforestation nationwide without the participation of the people.

The recent seizure of 33

tonnes of teakwood found in two containers at a port in Yangon was a wake-up call for authorities about the illegal, but thriving business.

According to Forest Department statistics, a total of 40,568 tonnes of illegal wood have been seized between April and January in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

It was found that all routes for smuggling illegal hardwood now lead to the commercial city of Yangon, where they once led to Kachin and northern Shan State.

It is obvious that a new route is being used to export illegally cut hardwood to avoid authorities in the north who are looking for violators.

Illegal vehicles and chainsaws used in the illegal business have posed challenges to law enforcement forces. This is because drivers have no problem aban-

doning their vehicles that are carrying illegal wood when they are intercepted by the authorities and their cargo is confiscated. The price of an illegal vehicle, usually with no license, is much, much lower than the millions of kyats that can be made by selling the valuable hardwood.

Law enforcement forces are faced with a nearly impossible task. It is difficult for the authorities to check every vehicle on suspicion of the smuggling of wood as they have to also take the smooth flow of commodities into consideration when carrying out their duty to find the forest products hidden under other commodities.

And chainsaws, popular for loggers to illegally cut down trees in Myanmar, are also blamed for the quick depletion of forests in the country. In response, au-

thorities have been stepping up efforts to crack down the sale of the chainsaws.

Seizing illegal forest products is considered good news, but, looked at from a different perspective, we have already lost trees in the forests that took hundreds of years to grow.

The old expression "A stitch in time saves nine" refers to the prompt sewing up of a small hole or tear in a piece of material, thus saving the need for more stitching at a later date. Prevention is better than arresting smugglers and confiscating logs. The participation of the people is playing a critical role in the country's reforestation drive.

We are all obliged to preserve our forests for our posterity and for future generations. Intervene early before the trees are cut, and eventually save an entire forest.

The Iron Curtain, The Bamboo Curtain and Now What?

Khin Maung Myint

THE end of the Second World War brought joy and relief to the whole world. However, those didn't last long. Immediately after the War, there emerged two military superpowers and were locked in an arms race to make their military might superior to the other's. The two military superpowers were the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) or the Soviet Union for short. Their competition, or rather, their rivalry led to the emergence of the **Cold War**.

The two groups formed military alliances with like-minded nations who adopted the same ideology, to deter one another from gaining the upper-hand, and scrambled to control the world.

The USA was involved in the forming of two organizations: the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** comprising most of the non-communist European countries and Canada and the **South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)**, that included only the Philippines and Thailand from South East Asia, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, France, United Kingdom and the United

States. That organization was also called the **Manila Pact**, though not widely known. Later the SEATO was dissolved.

On the other-hand the **Soviet Union** headed an organization called the **Warsaw Pact**, comprising of the communist countries of Europe and Cuba, except Yugoslav. Though the Soviet Union did not form any official alliance group to counter the SEATO, they are clandestinely involved in almost every military conflicts that took place in S.E.Asia. In early 1960, Communist Albania broke off from the Soviet Union and aligned itself with the Peoples' Republic of China. Today it has become one of the NATO members like most of the other former Soviet Bloc countries.

During those days, the division between the two factions was so great that reconciliation seemed to be absolutely impossible and peace on Earth was under threat. The communist countries isolated themselves from the others. They closed their doors to the Western world and those actions led to the emergence of the terms **Iron Curtain** and **Bamboo Curtain**.

These terms were used metaphorically to describe the state of isolationism adopted by certain

countries during the Cold War Era that commenced not very long after the Second World War. Generally speaking, the isolationisms were born out of the differences in political ideologies adopted by certain countries. The political ideologies that were at the root of the divisions were the Capitalism and Communism.

The Iron Curtain. It was a metaphorical name given to the geopolitical or the ideological boundary that divided the Soviet Union and its satellite communist countries from the other Western nations. It originated right after the Second World War and lasted from 1945 until 1991. The events that led to the demolishing of the Iron Curtain started from the discontent in Poland and continued to Hungary, then to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Romania. This led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact along with the Iron Curtain ceased to exist, hence bringing about the end of the Cold War too. Although it did not have structural existence apart from the Berlin Wall, the Iron Curtain had practically divided Europe in two---Eastern Europe and Western Europe---during its heydays.

During those days, the countries that bordered the line that separated the Eastern and Western Europe were recognized as the lines of defence for both the NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The situations were always tense and war could breakout anytime, anywhere along that line and could escalate into another World War that could lead to an all-out nuclear war. However, the leaders of both the groupings should be lauded for their rationality, thoughtfulness and the constraint they had maintained to avoid such a dreadful situation.

The Bamboo Curtain. This too was a metaphorical name of the geopolitical or ideological boundary that the Peoples' Republic of China created to keep her citizens out of contact with the West. However, that curtain stopped to exist after 1975, when China begun its long journey to reform and open up to the West. Though still clinging on to the communist ideologies, China adopted the capitalist economic practices and invited foreign direct investments and those moves placed her right on the path to economic developments.

The above mentioned brief background history may not be comprehensive, but as it was writ-

ten as an introductory phase to the analysis I intend to make hereafter, I hope it would suffice.

While the two curtains were in place, the populace of those countries behind them suffered extensively. Many sought refuge, at great risks to their lives, in Western countries where there were more freedom and opportunities than under their communist regimes. The two curtains or the self-seclusions from the international community had taught us that they did not serve any significant purpose apart from imposing restrictions and difficulties on their own citizens. The only thing they did was, deprived their citizens of freedom and opportunities to enjoy life.

Today, the world is facing another threat of a **new curtain** coming into existence. This time around it wouldn't be due to the geopolitical reasons or differences in ideologies as the previous two, but because of the changes in policies in a country. Worst still is the fact that the country in question is not just any ordinary country, but one that is deemed to be the most powerful country in the world and had always been recognized as the most free and the land of great opportunities.

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Shan Nationals Democratic Party presents policy and programs



U Sai Aung Myint Khaing of Shan Nationals Democratic Party (SNDP)

Joint-Secretary (1) of the Shan Nationals Democratic Party (SNDP) U Sai Aung Myint Khaing presented the policy, political outlook and programs of his party on 3 February 2017 from the Radio and TV programs.

The full text of his presentation is given below:

Maing Sun Kha - Mingalabar, May I first of all greet all ethnic nationals, citizens of the Union by wishing them auspiciousness. I am U Sai Aung Myint Khaing, Joint Secretary (1) of the Shan Nationals Democratic Party (or) White Tiger Party.

If I were to present the aims and objectives of the White Tiger Party, they are as follows:

The main aim of our party is not just imaginations and hopes but to get practical results. We do not give priority to confrontation and opposition but for the building of Federal Union of Myanmar.

Our aims are:

- To build a Federal Union.
 - Establish a State Government made up of resident ethnic nationals.
 - To work for the unity of one racial group and henceforth for the unity of the whole Union.
- Brother ethnic nationals,
- (1) The meaning of "Federal" is not to secede but to unify.
- States will obtain equal rights and executive powers for the purpose of equality.
 - The Union Government will exercise collectively the rights and executive powers on behalf of others.
 - All rights and executive powers that are due to the States should be equally shared.
- These are the genuine principles of a Federal Union system.
- What we mean when we say "Federal" are the above principles.
- (2) Our aim of forming a State Government with resident ethnic nationals is not to get power

for our own selfish interests.

It is only the resident ethnic nationals who understand most what we need. They are the ones who know how to work for development on an equitable basis. We will be able to build a beautiful life for all of us only when we have the executive power to fashion our own destiny.

For a political party, the most important thing is to gain political power to enable it to implement its political programs in accordance with its policy. We need to keep lofty objectives to work for the benefit of the people after gaining political power.

Some people say, after taking the moral high ground that contesting in the elections is not to gain political power. They give promises that the common people like and say that they did not need political power, and that they do not wish to work effectively for the national interest. In fact if they do not know how to do it, if they did not want political power, why contest in the elections in the first place. How can they help the people? This is what we want to ask. Isn't it true that all of us are contesting in the elections because we want political power?

As for our party, we are contesting in the elections because we want political power. Only when we get political power will we be able to work for the interest of the State and work on things that relate to the development of our people namely fundamental things such as projects for road and bridges, projects to create job opportunities, economic projects, and projects to elevate the living standards and socio-economic life of the people.

Brother ethnic nationals.



Party Logo.

(3) Our country is a country in which many groups of ethnic nationals are living together. Big ethnic national groups and small ethnic national groups are scattered all over the country. These ethnic national groups should work for unity of their various groups and from that try to work for the unity of the ethnic nationals of the Union.

Political parties representing ethnic nationals should work for the unity of their parties. Only then will they be able to work for the benefit of National Unity. Furthermore, all ethnic nationals should be able to live on good terms with the ethnic national groups living in their areas. They should feel grateful and also understand how the areas have been providing support for their livelihood. Only then will we see the emergence of the federal democratic republic which we all desire.

That is why, all of us who live on the same land, drink the same water, build our lives in the same region, as we work for the national interests of the ethnic nationals residing in this region, I wish to ask you to join us and support us.

Brother ethnic nationals,
As we march towards the fed-

eral democratic republic which we all desire, the 2017 By-elections represent a door which we must all go through. To be able to successfully pass through this door, we need the votes of the people. We will be able to reach the goal that we desire only if the people vote properly and only if they choose properly the party and the representatives who will represent them.

We urge you to put your stamp beside the party logo which represents the candidate of your choice.

Brother ethnic nationals,
Lastly, this is what I wish to say to you.

I wish to urge all of you, who live on this same land, drink the same water and build your lives in the same region, as we work for the national interests of the resident ethnic nationals, let us all pay back the gratitude of our Motherland by making the proper choice as we vote.

I wish to conclude my speech by saying that the Shan Nationals Democratic Party will march forward with firm determination based on our beliefs to build a new life under the Union. (Unofficial translation)

The Iron Curtain, The Bamboo Curtain and Now What?

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In the past week, the developments in the US, especially the drastic and sudden changes in the policies related to immigration, trade, labour, industries, foreign relations, defence and other sectors that could impact internationally had the whole world shocked and in suspense. Those who would be immediately affected are the refugees from all over the world and visitors from some Muslim dominant countries because of the ban on refugees and restrictions of entry to visitors from seven Muslim dominant countries. According to some media reports, many were already in the air, enroute to the US and were unable to turn back at the time the bans and restrictions came into force. Even some US citizens of foreign origins are contemplating to migrate to other countries before the impending curtain is fully put in place.

Frankly, I am not concerned with the policies restricting immigration nor the trade and labour policies nor the increase in tariffs on imported goods into the US. However, my deep concern is the

controversial changes in foreign and defence policies. These are the two hottest factors that could affect the whole world. One false move can bring about a war. In these days of nuclear-capable, sophisticated and advanced weapons, plus the unpredictable, undiplomatic and arrogant leaders with erratic minds and attitudes in some countries that own such weapons, the future of our world is in very dire situations. Lately, in anticipation of such situations, some affluent people in the US are already building strong underground bunkers that could withstand nuclear attacks and stocking them up with rations and other essential commodities in preparations for any eventuality.

From my personal point of view, those people who are anticipating the end of the world to be nearing are not paranoids. This concept of a **doomsday**, caused by an all-out nuclear war, had been envisioned by some prominent scientists for quite sometimes now. I had mentioned that concept in my article: "**Is the World Headed for Doom**" (17/01/2017 GNLM). In that article I had clearly mentioned,

what the consequences of an all-out nuclear war would be. The whole world would suffer if that should take place.

Thus in conclusion, let's hope that the leaders of the superpowers will come to their senses and endeavour to avoid such a situation by not provoking others or by not retaliating in the same manner to such uncalled-for provocations. The United Nations should also be more concerned about these matters, instead of wasting time on human rights issues that are overly highlighted and exaggerated out of proportions by false and fabricated news. They should be more involved and to be more aggressive in addressing the conflicts that could lead to wars. Until now, no significant intervention is seen in the case of the South China Sea disputes or the confrontation between Russian-backed forces and the NATO forces in Poland or the random testings of nuclear weapons by North Korea. These are the most imminent flash points that could flare up into wars any moment and could escalate out of control.

MFVP to provide free training to grow avocado

THE Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP) will provide a training course free of charge to teach trainees how to grow avocado in Chin state and Taunggyi.

The training course will start in March, with agriculture expects from the United States giving the training.

"Growing avocado fruits

needs training. The training is aimed at systematic planning. The training will be free of charge," said U Soe Than Min Din, chairman of the MFVP.

The training course will accept between 30 and 50 trainees. The MFVP formed local offices in Taunggyi, Shan state and Kan Pat Lat township, Chin state. —Myitmakha News Agency

50-bed hospital in Pintaya to double its capacity with upgrade

A 50-BED hospital will be upgraded to a 100-bed facility in Pintaya Township, southern Shan State, according to Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports.

"We will act to get the approval for upgrading of the 50-bed hospital to a 100-bed hospital in the 2016-2017 financial year. We will request funds to upgrade the hospital in the 2018-

2019 financial year," Dr Myint Htwe said on the second day of the meeting of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw's fourth regular session yesterday.

On average, there have been 104 outpatients receiving medical treatment in the 50-bed Pintaya hospital in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Pintaya Township has a population of 79,303. —Myitmakha News Agency



French police secure the site near the Louvre Pyramid in Paris, France, on 3 February 2017 after a French soldier shot and wounded a man armed with a knife after he tried to enter the Louvre museum in central Paris carrying a suitcase, police sources said. PHOTO: REUTERS

French soldier shoots, wounds machete-wielding attacker at Paris Louvre

PARIS — A French soldier shot and wounded a man armed with a machete and carrying two bags on his back on Friday as he tried to enter the Paris Louvre museum in what police said looked like a terrorist attack.

The man shouted Allahu Akbar (God is greatest) and attacked another soldier before being shot near the museum's shopping mall, police said, adding a second person had also been detained after acting suspiciously.

The attacker was alive but seriously wounded, the head of Paris police Michel Cadot told reporters at the scene, adding the bags he had been carrying contained no explosives.

"The soldier fired five bullets," Cadot said, describing how the man hurried threaten-

ingly towards the soldiers.

"It was an attack by a person... who represented a direct threat and whose actions suggested a terrorist context."

An anti-terrorism inquiry has been opened, the public prosecutor said in a statement.

The identity and nationality of the attacker remains unknown for now, French Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet told reporters.

France has been hit by a series of militant Islamist attacks over the past two years that have killed more than 230 people, and which have been claimed by the militant Islamist group Islamic State.

The country is less than three months away from a presidential election in which security and fears of terrorism are among

the key issues. It has been living under a state of emergency since November 2015.

Paris was also planning to submit its official bid to host the 2024 Olympic Games on Friday with a launch show at the Eiffel Tower around 1730 GMT.

The most recent deadly attack took place in the southern city of Nice when a man drove a truck into a crowd on the seafront killing 86.

In September, in an attempted attack, a group of women parked a car containing gas canisters near Paris's Notre Dame Cathedral.

Police cordoned off and evacuated the area around the museum on Friday. Louvre officials closed the museum and kept visitors inside from leaving.—Reuters

US to issue new Iran sanctions, opening shot in get-tough strategy — sources

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump is poised to impose new sanctions on multiple Iranian entities, seeking to ratchet up pressure on Tehran while crafting a broader strategy to counter what he sees as its destabilising behaviour, people

familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

In the first tangible action against Iran since Trump took office on 20 January, the administration, on the same day he insisted that "nothing is off the table," prepared to roll out new

measures against more than two dozen Iranian targets, the sources said. The announcement is expected as early as Friday, they added.

The new sanctions, which are being taken under existing executive orders covering terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, may mark the opening shot in a more aggressive policy against Iran that Trump promised during the 2016 presidential campaign, the sources, who had knowledge of the administration's plans, said.

But the package, targeting both entities and individuals, was formulated in a way that would not violate the 2015 Iran nuclear deal negotiated between Iran and six world powers including Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, they added.—Reuters



Iranian-made missiles are pictured at Holy Defence Museum in Tehran in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Germany's Merkel says Europe has its fate in its own hands

VALLETTA — German Chancellor Angela Merkel appealed for European unity ahead of a meeting of European Union leaders in Malta to discuss ways to stem the flow of migrants coming to Italy from Africa.

"Europe has its fate in its own hands," Merkel said. "The more we are clear about how we define our role in the world, the better we can also take care of our transatlantic relations."—Reuters

Angola's dos Santos will not run in 2017 presidential election

LUANDA — Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos will not run in this year's presidential election, he said on Friday, calling an end his 38 years in power.

Defence Minister Joao Lourenco will be the presidential candidate for the ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in elections planned in August, dos Santos said. Dos Santos will remain president of the MPLA.—Reuters

More than 2 million flu patients reported in a week in Japan

TOKYO — An estimated 2.01 million people in Japan have caught influenza and visited clinics in one week through Sunday, nearing last year's peak, the health ministry said Friday.

The total rose by some 400,000 from the previous week, bringing the average number of the flu patients per hospital to 39.41, according to the ministry. The figures were estimated from reports of 5,000 designated medical institutions, it said. By prefecture, Miyazaki topped with 59.08 per hospital, followed by Fukuoka, 55.10, and Aichi, 54.68. All prefectures reported an increase from the week before.—Kyodo News

Brussels urges Belgrade, Pristina to calm rhetoric

BRUSSELS — The EU believes that progress in the normalisation of Belgrade-Pristina relations is needed now more than ever for peace and stability, and urges both sides to comply with agreements, calm the rhetoric and continue efforts towards easing tensions, says European Commission spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic.

The presidents and PMs of Serbia and Kosovo agreed at Tuesday's high-level meeting to refrain from incendiary rhetoric and statements to ease tensions and focus on further work, noted Kocijancic in a written statement released in Brussels late Thursday.—Tanjung

Japan Airlines passengers give up trip to US after Trump order

TOKYO — Japan Airlines blocked an unspecified number of travelers from taking US-bound flights on two occasions earlier this week following President Donald Trump's temporary entry ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries, airline officials said Friday.

The country's second largest carrier did not reveal the number of people involved, their nationalities or their flight numbers but an official said, "We explained our policy and gained their understanding." Japan Airlines said its actions were in line with a notice issued by the International Air Transport Association after Trump signed an executive order barring nationals of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen from entering the United States for 90 days. This is the first time individuals are known to have been impacted in Japan by the ban.—Kyodo News

Cambodia, UK sign deal on combating crimes

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) to combat transnational crimes, according to the Cambodia's National Police website on Friday.

The MoU was inked in London on Thursday between Cambodia's National Police chief Neth Savoeun and NCA's international operations chief Steve Reynolds, the website said. Under the agreement, the two countries would cooperate with each other to fight cross-border crimes, including child sex exploitation, sexual trafficking and cybercrime, it said.—Xinhua



INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily
UB-017	17:45	19:15	Daily
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily
UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5
UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily
UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6

YGN TO DMK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-252	8:30	10:20	Daily
FD-256	12:55	14:40	Daily
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily
DD-4239	21:00	22:55	Daily
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily

YGN TO CAN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-713	20:25	01:00+1	1
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5

YGN TO SIN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily
3K-582	11:35	16:05	Daily
TR-2823	9:25	13:55	1,2,4,5,7
UB-001	7:15	11:45	Daily

YGN TO NRT			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily

YGN TO ICN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily

YGN TO KUL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily
AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily
8M-501	16:10	20:10	2
8M-501	11:45	15:45	1
MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily
MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7

YGN TO KMG			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily
MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily
MU-2012	12:55	19:55	3

YGN TO TPE			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CI-7916	10:50	16:10	Daily

YGN TO PEK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-906	23:50	0550+1	1,3,5,7

YGN TO HAN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-956	19:10	21:30	Daily

YGN TO SGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-942	12:10	14:55	2,3,4,5,7

YGN TO HKG			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KA-251	1:05	5:25	Daily
UB-8027	09:00	13:30	1,3,5,7

YGN TO DOH			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,3,4,6,7

YGN TO CNX			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-724	13:40	15:35	Daily

YGN TO DAC			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
BG-061	16:45	18:30	1,3,6

MDL TO DMK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-245	12:55	15:15	Daily



MDL TO SIN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-533	15:45	20:50	2
MI-522	14:15	20:15	4,6

SIN TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-522	11:30	13:20	4,6
MI-533	11:30	14:50	2

MDL TO BKK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-710	14:10	16:35	Daily

MDL TO KMG			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2030	14:25	17:15	Daily

NYT to BKK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-722	19:50	22:50	1,3,4,5,6,7

AIRLINE CODES

- 8M = Myanmar Airways International
- BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines
- MH = Malaysia Airlines
- MU = China Eastern Airlines
- NH = All Nippon Airways
- SQ = Singapore Airways
- PG = Bangkok Airways
- UB = Myanmar National Airlines
- VN = Vietnam Airline
- 3K = Jet Star
- AI = Air India
- CI = China Airlines
- DD = Nok Airline
- KA = Dragonair
- MI = Silk Air
- TG = Thai Airways
- AK = Air Asia
- CA = Air China
- CZ = China Southern
- FD = Air Asia
- KE = Korea Airlines
- QR = Qatar Airways
- TR = Tiger Airline

DAY	4 = Thursday
1 = Monday	5 = Friday
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday

Limit work to 39 hours per week to protect workers' health: research

CANBERRA — The average working week should be capped at 39 hours in order to protect workers' mental and physical health, according to a latest research from the Australian National University (ANU).

Researchers said that working long hours takes a significant toll on general well-being as well as the mental health of workers and have recommended the work limit be set at 39 hours per week, down from the 48-hour week standard set internationally around 80 years ago.

The ANU's Dr. Huong Dinh said around two-thirds of all Australians currently working full time are at work for more than 40 hours per week.

"Long work hours erode a person's mental and physical health, because it leaves less time to eat well and look after themselves properly," Dinh said in a statement on Friday.

Dinh said a healthy work limit for women and those who do a lot of domestic work should be 34 hours per week

once their other commitments were considered, while those who do not engage in other domestic work could work up to 47 hours a week while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

"Despite the fact that women on average are as skilled as men, women on average have lower paid jobs and less autonomy than men, and they spend much more time on care and domestic work," Dinh said.

"Given the extra demands placed on women, it's impossible for women to work long hours often expected by employers unless they compromise their health."

Co-researcher Professor Lyndall Strazdins said striking a work-life balance was crucial to maintaining a healthy life.

"Australia needs to do more to change attitude to work and to support men to take time to care without penalty or prejudice. Australians also need to dispel the widespread belief that people need to work long hours to do a good job," Strazdins said.—Xinhua

Fat shaming tied to increased risk of metabolic problems

NEW YORK — Obese people who feel stigmatized about their size are not only more likely to struggle with weight loss, they're also more likely to develop cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders, a new study suggests.

In many cultures, people who are obese are viewed as stereotypically lazy, lacking in willpower, incompetent, unattractive and personally responsible for their excess weight, researchers note in the journal *Obesity*. These negative beliefs, known as weight bias, can cause obese people to experience discrimination, which is in turn associated with an increased risk of "internalizing disorders" like depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, previous research has found.

For the current study, researchers focused on what's known as metabolic syndrome, a group of risk factors for heart disease, stroke and diabetes. People with this syndrome typically have at least three of these five problems: excess belly fat, high triglycerides, low levels of "good" cholesterol, elevated blood pressure and high levels of sugar in the blood.

Participants who internalized weight-related stigma were 41 per



An overweight woman sits on a chair in Times Square in New York, in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

cent more likely to experience metabolic syndrome than people who didn't internalize stigma very much, after accounting for depression and the degree of obesity, the study found.

"Experiencing weight stigma can elicit a physiological stress response, marked by elevated blood pressure and inflammation, and it's possible that self-directed weight stigma may be a form of chronic stress as well," said lead study author Rebecca Pearl, a psychiatry researcher at the University of Pennsylvania in Phila-

delphia.

"Individuals who internalize weight bias may also engage in unhealthy behaviors to cope with this stress — such as eating high-caloric comfort foods — which could affect triglycerides and other cardiometabolic risk factors measured in this study," Pearl added by email. "Additionally, when people apply negative weight stereotypes to themselves, such as being lazy or lacking willpower, they have less confidence in their ability to engage in healthy behaviors, such as physical activity."—Reuters

Italy's Renzi signals willingness to ditch push for early vote

ROME — Former Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi signalled willingness on Friday to shelve a drive for early elections that is tearing apart his Democratic Party (PD) as it faces a strong challenge from eurosceptic populists.

Renzi, who resigned after his proposal to change the constitution was rejected in a referendum last year, has been pushing for a vote by June, around a year ahead of schedule.

But threats by left-wing PD rivals to split the party if he forces elections are jeopardising his return to power, and Renzi said he did not want to be seen as seeking a "re-match" after the referendum defeat.

"Elections can't be the 'sec-

ond half' after the referendum. When you lose at football you don't try again at water polo," the 42-year-old told Milan's *Corriere della Sera* newspaper.

In an apparent olive branch to PD traditionalists who want to challenge his leadership, he said he was open to holding a party congress ahead of elections next year, although remained ready for an early vote.

Often accused of running a one-man show while in government, Renzi suggested someone else could be the party's prime ministerial candidate, such as current Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, who is widely seen as his proxy.

"The next time it might not

be me," Renzi said.

The main opposition parties are calling for a snap vote, but the proportional electoral system would probably not give any of them a majority, paving the way for more political instability.

Renzi's change of tack followed recent warnings from several senior figures about the dangers of an early vote.

"Maybe we could think about running this risk if we could foresee a clear victory by one group on the horizon," Industry Minister Carlo Calenda, a close Renzi ally, said this week.

The anti-system 5-Star Movement is polling roughly level with the PD, and would beat it by a wide margin if the PD's



Former Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi gestures during a ceremony at the Chigi Palace in Rome, Italy, on 12 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

left-wing dissenters went it alone, two polls showed this week.

Giorgio Napolitano, a 91-year-old former president who still wields significant political influence, also spoke out on

the subject. "In civilised countries, you vote at the natural end (of the legislature) and we still have a year left," he said.

"Early elections have been abused in Italy."—Reuters

Fillon bid for French presidency in chaos as MPs call on him to quit

PARIS — French presidential candidate Francois Fillon attempted to fight back on Thursday as pressure mounted on him to quit the race with some lawmakers from his own side urging him to drop his scandal-tainted bid to save the conservatives from defeat.

With opinion polls showing the conservatives that their candidate may be fatally damaged, some senior members of The Republicans urged him to pull out now to give the party time to find a replacement who can save them from defeat.

Fillon, 62, denied wrongdoing after *Le Canard Enchaîné* newspaper reported the former prime minister had paid his wife hundreds of thousands of euros for work she may not have done.

Falling poll ratings since then will benefit far right leader Marine Le Pen and centrist Emmanuel Macron, a former investment banker running as an independent.

A daily IFOP poll of voting intentions for the 23 April first round showed Fillon down one percentage point since Wednesday to be level with Macron. Either



Francois Fillon, former French prime minister, member of The Republicans political party and 2017 presidential candidate of the French centre-right, leaves home in Paris, France, on 1 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

candidate would comfortably beat Le Pen in the 7 May runoff, the poll suggests.

"I think our candidate must stop," Alain Houpert, a senator close to Fillon's former rival for the conservative ticket, Nicolas Sarkozy, told Public Senat television on Wednesday.

France 2 television broadcast on Thursday extracts of a 2007 interview of Fillon's Welsh-born wife Penelope telling Britain's

Daily Telegraph that if she had not had her last child she would have looked for work.

She added that beyond helping her husband during campaigns, she had done nothing more.

"I have never been actually his assistant or anything like that. I don't deal with his communication," she said. Her lawyer, Pierre Cornut-Gentille, said in a statement that the interview had been taken out of context and that she

had always done her utmost to remain discreet and not appear to have a public role.

French financial investigators are widening their probe to include two of the Fillons' children, who were also hired to help him out, a source told Reuters.

Fillon himself pressed on with campaigning in the Ardennes region in northern France, telling a rally of about 1,000 people to "help him resist" against orchestrated efforts by his political opponents to break him and the party.

He once again defended his actions as "nothing illegal" and sought to grab back the political high ground by attacking the other presidential candidates.

"I feel like someone who is being attacked unjustly on all sides. But I am ready to defend myself," he told reporters earlier in the day when a few cries of "Resign!" rang out from a crowd.

French lawmakers are allowed to employ family members, but the suggestion Penelope Fillon did no real work has damaged Fillon's image, and could yet put him in court.—Reuters

Japan-China-S Korea cultural events to start in Kyoto on 18 February

TOKYO — The Agency for Cultural Affairs said Friday a series of cultural exchange events aimed at strengthening relations between Japan, China and South Korea will start taking place in Kyoto from 18 February.

Artists from the East Asian countries will perform their music and traditional arts in the western Japanese city during the fourth round of the annual event called Culture City of East Asia, which will go on through 19 November.

"It is a time where relations between Japan, China and South Korea are not good, but there is a meaning in connecting hearts through culture," said Kyoto Mayor Daisaku Kadokawa at a press conference held at the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry in Tokyo.

In March a symposium on rice and events in which participants will get to taste dishes from the three countries and watch performances of traditional arts will be held.

From August through November, there will be an exhibition of contemporary art at Nijo Castle in Kyoto and similar events on manga and animation, according to the organizer.

Along with Kyoto, Changsha in China and Daegu in South Korea will host events this year, it said.—Kyodo News

China's Jack Ma Foundation launches scholarship programme in Australia's University of Newcastle

CANBERRA — Australia's University of Newcastle (UON) on Friday announced the establishment of a scholarship program supported by China's Jack Ma Foundation.

Jack Ma Foundation will give US\$20 million (AU\$26.4 million) to fund a first of its kind scholarship programme at UON, marking the largest philanthropic commitment in UON's history, and the Jack Ma Foundation's first philanthropic contribution in Australia.

Ma was joined by New South

Wales (NSW) Premier Gladys Berejiklian MP, UON Chancellor Paul Jeans and others to announce the scholarship program in Newcastle.

In its initial year, The Ma & Morley Scholarship Program will support 30 new UON scholarships, 20 scholarships to support students throughout the duration of their degree, including access to a unique and comprehensive engagement and enrichment program, and 10 one-off scholarships to support educational exchange, internship or

immersion activities.

When the programme reaches full capacity, it will support 90 students per year.

UON Vice-Chancellor, Professor Caroline McMillen, said The Ma & Morley Scholarship Programme at UON would have a transformational impact on the lives of students and shape the next generation of leaders.

"Through this remarkable friendship spanning decades, a new generation of talented students will have the opportunity to reach their

full personal and professional potential," Professor McMillen said.

"This scholarship programme will exemplify the shared values between Mr Ma and Mr Morley, and aims to develop the next generation of globally aware and socially conscious Australian leaders," Professor McMillen said.

The first round of The Ma & Morley Scholarship Programme will be advertised in mid-2017 for students commencing their first year of an undergraduate degree at UON in 2018.—Xinhua

In Peru, droughts give way to floods as climate change looms

LIMA — Severe droughts gripping Peru have given way to some of the country's most devastating downpours in decades, catching authorities off guard as they scramble to contain the kind of floods that climate change is expected to make more frequent.

At least 20 people have died in rain-related events in Peru in recent weeks, including six miners buried under a landslide in southern Peru, said Juber Ruiz, with Peru's civil defense institute, on Thursday.

Rivers bursting their banks have pushed thousands from their homes and clogged water treatment plants with rocks and debris — forcing authorities to restrict water use in the capital Lima and Peru's second-biggest city, Arequipa.

"We definitely were not prepared for this type of thing," Prime Minister Fernando Zavala told reporters from a working-class neighbourhood in Lima, where dozens of houses were damaged by floods.



People walk on debris next to damaged houses after a landslide and flood in Lurigancho district in Chosica, Peru, on 2 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Although the downpours have hit Peru during its traditional "landslide season," this year they have been much more intense and have fallen over a broader swath of Peru,

Ruiz said.

The precipitation has been fueled by unusually warm temperatures in the Pacific that would indicate a strong El Niño if they hold, said meteorologist

Abraham Levy.

While it was too early to attribute the rains to any particular climate phenomenon, Ruiz said they were a wake-up call for Peru to prepare for the kind of ex-

treme weather expected to accompany rising global temperatures.

About half a million people in Peru live in flood plains, according to a recent report by state water

agency ANA.

Television footage showed people up to their waists in water and cars being swept away.

Last week, a three-story hotel collapsed into a river in the Huancavelica region.

Just a few months ago, wildfires tore across drought-stricken regions of Peru after scientists urged authorities to spread the word about the risks of a severe drought in the Andean-Amazonian region.

"We've rarely seen this kind of rapid and quick change in climatic conditions," Ruiz said, adding that two more months of rains lay ahead.

The combined impact of the droughts and the rains could shave up to 0.6 percentage point off economic growth, said Pedro Tuesta, an analyst for 4Cast who expects a 3.6 per cent economic expansion in 2017.

It could also fan inflation as landslides in the Andes choke off deliveries of food products to Lima — squeezing prices at local markets.—Reuters

UN agency urges farmers to keep livestock to tackle climate fluctuations

NAKURU (Kenya) — Keeping livestock in dry areas is one of the most effective ways to cushion households from extreme climate fluctuations, a senior official of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has said.

Piers Simpkin, FAO's Senior Program Coordinator in Kenya said in an interview with Xinhua on Thursday that livestock keeping is an adaptation mechanism to climate variability. "Keeping livestock in dry rangelands is considered one of the most effective livelihoods that is adapted to reduce the impact of drought through mobility. Mobile livestock systems

by definition are low input and low output systems," he said. Simpkin said FAO is supporting improvement of grazing management in Kenya by encouraging planned grazing mainly benefiting pastoralist communities. Although it is imperative for farmers to adopt drought tolerant crops, uncertainties over prices of substitute crops complicate their transition to climate smart farming. "It is difficult for farmers to change overnight from growing their own food and cash crops to becoming fully market dependent and feeling comfortable to give up growing their staple food crop for a crop whose pro-

duction might be more reliable but whose market price is unknown and liable to global fluctuations," he said.

FAO has established Early Warning Early Action Fund (EWEA) from which county governments in Kenya would receive financial support to provide animal feeds for selected breeding animals for individual families, Simpkin said. On preparing communities for weather extremes, FAO is executing an early warning system of which 100,000 people are targeted with early warning messages and response options, according to the official. Simpkin said FAO is collaborating with

National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) on a predictive livestock early warning system which is intended to assist the state agency tasked with assessing drought situation in the country in informing public, identifying possible responses and preparing adequately to avert crises associated with severe drought.

"Prevention is better than cure — hence resilience building and preparing communities in advance to mitigate or avoid drought risk is vital. The increasing frequency and severity of drought is not purely climatic but due to a number of factors," he said.—Xinhua

Int'l standards to be drafted for automatic brakes in passenger cars

TOKYO — The transport ministry said Friday that Japan will begin discussions with other countries in a UN working group to draft international safety standards for automatic brakes in passenger cars.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism aims to eventually make it mandatory for all passenger cars in Japan to be equipped with such technology to curb acci-

dents. Discussions by the UN panel of experts — the establishment of which Japan proposed in January — will begin in full swing from fall and wrap up possibly in around a year, ministry officials said.

Following the compilation of international standards, the ministry intends to reflect the rules in Japanese law and require carmakers to install automatic braking systems that meet the stand-

ards in new passenger cars sold in Japan, the officials said.

Global safety standards for automatic braking systems have already been set for buses and trucks.

Hopes are high in Japan's auto industry that it would be easier to sell passenger cars in Europe and elsewhere if such standards are unified among countries.

In Japan, 45 per cent of passenger cars produced

in 2015 were equipped with automatic braking technology but there is concern about the quality of differing systems, which could be resolved by the adoption of common standards.

Of the fatal road accidents caused by drivers aged 75 and over in 2015, 29 per cent were attributed to driver error, including the application of brakes, according to the National Police Agency.—Kyodo News

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV WEST SCENT VOY. NO (139)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV WEST SCENT VOY. NO (139) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.2.2017 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 INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T./A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Oscars 2017: Leonardo DiCaprio, Brie Larson, Mark Rylance and Alicia Vikander to present at Oscars

LOS ANGELES — Academy Award winners Leonardo DiCaprio, Brie Larson, Mark Rylance and Alicia Vikander will return to the Oscars stage as presenters. The actors won the top four acting honours last year. DiCaprio won last year for his role in “The Revenant”. He was previously nominated for his performances in “The Wolf of Wall Street” (2013), “Blood Diamond” (2006), “The Aviator” (2004) and “What’s Eating Gilbert Grape” (1993).

Larson’s performance in “Room” earned her an Oscar for Actress in a Leading Role. She has also appeared in “Trainwreck” (2015) and “Short Term 12” (2013). Her upcoming

films include “Captain Marvel,” “Kong: Skull Island,” “The Glass Castle” and “Unicorn Store.”

Rylance, a noted British performer, won in the best supporting actor category for his role of a Russian spy in “Bridge of Spies.” His other film credits include “The BFG” (2016) and the upcoming features “Dunkirk” and “Ready Player One.” A prolific stage actor, he earned Tony Awards for his performances in “Twelfth Night,” “Jerusalem” and “Boeing-Boeing.”

Vikander won a supporting role gong for her performance in “The Danish Girl.” The Oscars, produced by Michael De Luca and Jennifer Todd and hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, will be telecast on 26 February.—PTI



Oscars 2017: Academy Award winners Leonardo DiCaprio, Brie Larson, Mark Rylance and Alicia Vikander will return to the Oscars stage as presenters. PHOTO: PTI

Angelina Jolie slams Trump travel ban, calls for ‘compassionate America’

LOS ANGELES — Actress and human rights advocate Angelina Jolie on Thursday said US President Donald Trump’s executive order barring travellers from seven Muslim-majority countries hurts vulnerable refugees and could fuel extremism.

Without directly naming Trump, Jolie, who has served as a special envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said in a New York Times opinion piece that discriminating based on religion was “playing with fire.”



Angelina Jolie. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Oscar-winning actress added that as the mother of six children, “all born in foreign lands and ... proud American citizens,” she believed in the need for the nation’s safety, but said decisions should be “based on facts, not fear.”

“I also want to know that refugee children who qualify for asylum will always have a chance to plead their case to a compassionate America. And that we can manage our security without writing off citizens of entire countries — even babies — as unsafe to visit our

country by virtue of geography or religion,” she wrote.

Trump’s executive order bans citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen from entering the United States for 90 days. Refugee admissions were suspended for 120 days while Syrian refugees were barred indefinitely.

The move has not only caused consternation for the nations involved but among other Muslim-majority countries, allies such as Germany and Britain and career State Department officials.

Hollywood’s celebrities have also been using their spotlight to slam the president’s ban.

Jolie, 41, has received an honorary Oscar for her humanitarian work. Last year, she visited refugee camps in Lebanon and Greece, meeting with families fleeing war in the Middle East.

The actress warned that by “implying Muslims are less worthy of protection, we fuel extremism abroad.”

Jolie’s op-ed is the first comment she has made publicly since filing for divorce in September from her husband, actor Brad Pitt. The former couple share three adopted children from Cambodia, Viet Nam and Ethiopia, and three biological children, who were born in France and Namibia.—Reuters

Natalie Portman pays tribute to John Hurt

LONDON — Actress Natalie Portman has praised John Hurt for his “incredible” performance in “Jackie” saying she was impressed by his willingness to learn. The 35-year-old actress was left devastated by the passing of the veteran actor, who died of pancreatic cancer last week, as she adored working with him and his presence made a huge impact on the film, reported Female First.

“John was such an incredible human being, very, very kind, very easy to work with. We were shooting in really cold weather, doing difficult, very long takes, where he had a lot of dialogue. He was doing an Irish accent. He was just so good-natured and funny.”

“The things he would come up with on his own between takes, Pablo (Larrain a, director) would say, ‘That’s better than what we have, just say that.’ We didn’t rehearse, so really all that energy from him was apparent when we were filming,” Portman said.

Veteran British actor Sir John Hurt, Oscar-nominated for his star turn in The Elephant Man and his supporting role in Midnight Express, has died after a long battle with pancreatic cancer, the BBC reported on Saturday. He was 77.

Hurt, who had starred in more than 200 films and televi-



Natalie Portman has praised John Hurt for his “incredible” performance in “Jackie” saying she was impressed by his willingness to learn. PHOTO: PTI

sion series over a career spanning six decades, revealed in 2015 that he was suffering from the early stages of pancreatic cancer and that he was receiving treatment.

The actor who is known for his role as Mr. Ollivander in the Harry Potter films, and has also starred in Hellboy and Doctor Who, told Radio Times in August 2015, “I’m can’t say I worry about mortality, but it’s impossible to get to my age and not have a little contemplation of it.”

Hurt essayed the role of a priest in the Jackie Kennedy biopic.—PTI

‘Game of Thrones’ music comes to a stage near you

LOS ANGELES — Any fan of the HBO fantasy television series “Game of Thrones” will tell you that the show enthralls right from its opening title sequence accompanied by a foreboding instrumental piece played using drums and violins.

Later this month, Ramin Djawadi, the composer for the show who wrote this catchy title track, takes a production of mu-

sic from “Game of Thrones” on a live performance tour across Canada and the US.

Three years in the making, the “Game of Thrones Live Concert Experience” comprises a musical programme from all six seasons in chronological order, including “all the spoilers”, Djawadi says with a laugh.

“As the seasons have progressed and as the story has ex-

panded, so has the score,” he said. “And it’s exciting every season to find new instrumentation for what we haven’t used before.”

At a first look at rehearsals for the concert on Wednesday night, actor Liam Cunningham was impressed at the “enormous” scope of the production.

With massive screens, a piano raised high on a stage in-

fused in green light, and a choir that performs in a somber procession, the show promises to excite audiences.

“Game of Thrones” has been a television phenomenon that has garnered large praise in the industry, winning a Golden Globe, SAG Awards, a BAFTA and several Emmys.

“Listen, the best drama holds a mirror up to society,”

explained Cunningham. “One could certainly say that certain recently elected officials in a certain country could easily fit into our cast. I’ll leave that to your imagination.”

The “Game of Thrones’ Live Concert Experience” begins its tour on 20 February in Minneapolis, and travels across the United States until finishing in Portland, Oregon, on 2 April.—Reuters

Afghan girls fight prejudice with martial arts

KABUL — On a snowy mountaintop to the west of Kabul, a group of Afghan girls practice the flowing movements of Wushu, a sport developed from ancient Chinese kung fu martial arts, stretching and bending and slashing the air with bright swords.

In a country where women's sport is severely restricted, the Shaolin Wushu club in a part of Kabul that is home to the capital's Hazara ethnic community, is a rare exception.

Sima Azimi, the 20-year-old leading the

practice session, says Wushu teaches self-defense, but just as important, "it's really effective for body and soul".

She learned the sport in Iran, where she won a gold and bronze medal in competition, and she has been teaching in Kabul for about a year, encouraged by her father, with whom she trains at the club's gym.

"I am working with Afghan girls to strengthen their abilities and I love to see Afghan girls improve the way other girls have improved in the world," she

said. "My ambition is to see my students take part in international matches and win medals for their country."

Martial arts of all kinds are popular in Afghanistan, but it is a notoriously hard country for women, and the girls of the Shaolin Wushu club face regular harassment and abuse in addition to the normal dangers of life in Kabul.

"The biggest challenge we faced is insecurity," said 18-year-old Zahra Timori. "Most of the time, we can't go to the club due to insecurity."

Her friend Shakila Muradi said she hoped that sport could help create a more peaceful climate in Afghanistan in defiance of the daily reality the girls face.

"There are many people harassing us but we ignore them and follow our goals," she said.

When possible, training goes on in a gym dominated by a poster of Hussain Sadiqi, a Hazara martial arts champion who fled to Australia in 1999 and later worked as a film stuntman.

So far, all the girls in the club are Hazara, a Persian-speaking, mainly Shi'ite group who have faced a series of attacks claimed by Islamic State militants over the past year.

Their generally more liberal social traditions give the girls more room to move outside the home and practice sports but Sima's father, Rahmatullah Azimi says he hopes to see girls from other ethnic groups join in as well.

He said he worries about his daughter's safety but said it was a joy to see her train other girls.

"I am really happy that I helped, encouraged and supported Sima," he said.—Reuters



Sima Azimi (C), 20, a trainer at the Shaolin Wushu club, poses with her students after an exercise on a hilltop in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 29 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bolivia opens \$7 million museum honouring President Morales



Bolivia's President Evo Morales (R) and Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera pose with a statue of Morales after the inauguration of the Orinoca Museum in Orinoca, Bolivia, on 2 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

ORINOCA, (Bolivia) — Bolivia on Thursday opened a \$7 million (£5.6 million) museum dedicated to President Evo Morales and indigenous peoples in Morales's birthplace of Orinoca high up in the deserts of the Bolivian antiplano.

Morales ordered the museum to be built by decree shortly after he became Bolivia's first indigenous president in 2006, creating a place to hold hundreds of his gifts as well as photos, videos and archaeological treasures.

"This town that has raised me, this town that has taken care of me, I want to say 'thank you, we will keep working'," said a tearful Morales at the inauguration some 400 kilometres (249 miles) from Bolivia's main city of La Paz.

Morales was elected to a third consecutive term in 2014, a leftist holdout on a continent that is large-

ly moving to the political right, and is seeking a way to run again in 2019 despite losing a referendum over a fourth term.

The museum, which Bolivia's minister called the largest and most modern in Latin America, tells the country's history with a focus on the achievements of Morales. It is divided into three wings, each named after mythic animals in Bolivian history.

Andean music and traditional dances from dozens of nearby communities rounded out the opening of the so-called "Museum of the Democratic and Cultural Revolution." Some have criticized the museum as a waste of money that is too remote to attract tourists.

Bolivia is in the middle of its worst drought in 25 years. It declared a state of emergency in November amid protests in major cities and conflicts over the use of aquifers.—Reuters

Japan eyes 500 farm homestay areas to boost foreign tourism

TOKYO — The Japanese government aims to establish 500 areas for homestays on farms and fishing communities across the country to help attain its goal of boosting the annual number of foreign visitors to 40 million by 2020, according to a draft action plan on tourism promotion obtained Thurs-

day by Kyodo News. The four-year action plan through 2020 when the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games are held will be approved by the Cabinet by the end of March, aiming to promote tourism particularly in rural areas, according to the draft. Under such homestay

programmes, visitors will experience agriculture, craft-making and other aspects of local cultures. The government believes the plan could also help increase farmers' income, according to sources familiar with the matter.

The draft also calls for designating 200 areas to at-

tract tourists by making use of various cultural assets, particularly in the Tohoku area in northeastern Japan hit by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. It also aims to attract more foreign visitors to national parks. The previous target of 20 million foreign visitors was reached last year.—Kyodo News



(4-2-2017 07:00am ~ 5-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon - The Sacred Hair Relics Hailing Pagodas
07:53	Am	Ngapali Beach: Fishing Villages
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Ananda Temple Festival (Pyarho Pwe)
08:41	Am	Lucrative Myanma Rattan Industry
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Hive Hunter
09:46	Am	Irrawaddy Dolphin (Part- II)
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Next Generation (Min Thu Ryein)
10:37	Am	Tour of The National Heritages and Archeological Site

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	New
07:26	Pm	Travelogue: "Anyar Myay" or Upcountry (Part-3)
07:44	Pm	Now in Yangon
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar: Yangon Books Street
08:03	Pm	News
08:25	Pm	National Literary Icon & Guiding Light of Myanmar Literature: Sayar Zaw Gyi (Episode- 2)
08:50	Pm	Service Life and Literary Journey Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Pann Kyi

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



6:00 Am ♦ Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw	3:10 Pm ♦ Teleplay
7:00 Am ♦ Breakfast News	3:30 Pm ♦ 70 th Anniversary Union Day Programme
7:30 Am ♦ Hyper Sport	3:45 Pm Myanmar National League MNL(1) (2017) (Live) (Chin United FC Vs Shan United FC)
8:30 Am ♦ Documentary	6:35 Pm ♦ Tasty Trip
9:30 Am ♦ Business News	7:15 Pm ♦ TV Drama Series
10:30 Am ♦ Poem for Children	8:00 Pm ♦ News/International News/ Weather Report
11:15 Am ♦ Health and Vegetable	8:35 Pm ♦ Documentary (Union Day Programme)
12:35 Pm ♦ TV Drama Series	9:00 Pm ♦ News/ Weather Report
1:50 Pm ♦ Weekly Entertainment News	♦ Sing in Enjoy (Union Day) (NRC)
2:20 Pm ♦ HUMAN DIGNITY FILM INSTITUTE "The Gong"	♦ Musician's Talk
2:55 Pm ♦ Sing & Enjoy	

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Cameroon down Ghana 2-0 to reach Nations Cup final

FRANCEVILLE, (Gabon) — Cameroon reached the African Nations Cup final as a second-half goal from defender Michael Ngadeu-Ngadjui and a stoppage-time effort from Christian Bassogog secured a 2-0 win over Ghana in their last-four clash on Thursday.

Giant centre back Ngadeu-Ngadjui sneaked around the back of the Ghana defence from a free kick and took advantage of a mix-up to blast the ball home from close range in the 72nd minute.

Bassogog caught Ghana on the counter attack as Cameroon added a second with virtually the last kick of the game to claim a place in Sunday's final against Egypt in Libreville.

Cameroon, who were beset by selection problems before the start of the tournament, profited from poor finishing by their more fancied opponents, who were making a sixth successive semi-final appearance, but are still without success since 1982.

Ngadeu-Ngadjui, almost unknown in his own country less than a year ago, fired home from an acute angle after Ghana centre back John Boye got into a muddle with keeper Razak Brimah



Cameroon v Ghana — Cameroon's Ambroise Oyongo celebrates after the match with teammates at Stade de Franceville, Franceville, Gabon, on 2 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

that allowed the ball to run through to the unmarked Cameroonian.

The goal broke the deadlock in a lively affair and set up a grandstand finish as Ghana tried furiously to find an equaliser,

forcing several corners as they desperately sought a way back.

But as Ghana pressed forward they were always susceptible to the counter attack and Danish-based Bassogog steamed away three minutes into added

time to wrap up Cameroon's triumph.

Cameroon started brightly and created good early chances, notably when defender Adolphe Teikeu forced full back Harrison Afful to clear off the line from an

eighth minute corner.

Robert Ndip Tambe hit a powerful effort from close range straight at the fortunate Brimah four minutes later to set the tone for a game littered with opportunities.

Ghana had to wait until five minutes before halftime to get their first proper chance as Teikeu's defensive slip allowed Jordan Ayew, who moved from Aston Villa to Swansea City at the start of the week, to strike just wide from an acute angle.

The second half saw Ghana dominate the game as Andre Ayew cut his eye in a collision with goalkeeper Fabrice Ondoa and Mubarak Wakaso forced a diving save with his swirling free kick. Thomas Partey and Jordan Ayew then went wide with shots before Ghana threw experienced captain Asamoah Gyan, injured last week, into the fray for a furious final quarter-hour.

But Cameroon, who won the last of their four Nations Cup titles 15 years ago, managed to hold on for a place in their first final since Egypt beat them in Accra in 2008.

Ghana will meet Burkina Faso in Saturday's third place playoff in Port Gentil.—Reuters

Alaves hold Celta to 0-0 draw in King's Cup semi



Celta Vigo's Pablo Hernandez (R) and Alaves' Manu Garcia in action during Spanish King's Cup Sem-final first leg at Balaidos stadium, Vigo, Spain, on 2 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

MADRID — Celta Vigo rattled the crossbar, but could not find a breakthrough as they were held to a goalless draw at home in the first leg of their King's Cup semi-final against Alaves on Thursday.

Celta's Iago Aspas was denied by the woodwork in the 67th minute with a bullet strike from the heart of the area on a rain-soaked pitch at the Balaidos stadium.

Alaves, the 2001 UEFA Cup finalists, who are attempting to reach the King's Cup final for the first time, will host the second leg on 8 February. Three-times finalists Celta, who knocked out Real Madrid in the quarter-finals, dominated possession for most of the first half only for Alaves to create the first chance in the 40th minute.

The visitors launched a counter-attack that ended with Manu Garcia getting on the end of Victor Camarasa's cross and striking a left-footed effort towards the near post that drew a flying save from Celta goalkeeper Sergio Alvarez.

Celta almost broke the deadlock on 58 minutes but Alaves goalkeeper Fernando Pacheco kept out Aspas's shot from six metres.

Alaves substitute Edgar Mendes had a one-on-one with Alvarez but shot straight at the keeper in the 78th minute. Barcelona won 2-1 at Atletico Madrid on Wednesday in the other semi-final, ahead of next week's return leg at the Nou Camp.—Reuters

2020 golf venue to vote on ending ban on women: reports

TOKYO — The Kasumigaseki Country Club, which will host the golf tournaments at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, will hold a board meeting next week to consider ending its ban on women becoming full members, local media reported.

The vote comes after calls to shift the tournament from the private club in Saitama province because of the rule, which allows women to play Monday through Saturday but bars them from becoming full members and from playing on Sundays.

The Tokyo Olympic organising committee sent a letter to the club on Thursday appealing for it to reconsider the policy.

The missive was sent on behalf of organisers, the Japanese Olympic Committee, the International Golf Federation and the Japan Golf Association.

"I think it's very important that the Kasumigaseki Country Club reach a conclusion as soon as possible," Olympic Minister Tamayo Marukawa told reporters on Friday.

"I certainly hope that they

consider giving female members the same treatment as men," she said.

The 15-member club board will meet next Tuesday with a unanimous vote required to change the relevant bylaws, the Kyodo News agency reported.

Hiroshi Imaizumi, Kasumigaseki's general manager, told Reuters that the club would hold a board meeting next week but that the date and agenda had yet to be decided.

Both men's and women's tournaments will be held at the club in 2020, following the return of the sport to the Summer Games at last year's Rio Olympics.

Two of the most famous golf clubs in the world have changed their policies to allow female members in recent years.

In 2014, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews decided to allow women to join after 260 years of exclusion, and Augusta National, home of the US Masters, ended its men-only membership in 2012.

—Reuters