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Workers process fish at cold storage factory in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

National committee on minimum wage approves Ks4,800 for daily wages

By May Thet Hnin

THE national committee on minimum wage decided yesterday to set the average daily wage at Ks4,800, offering Ks600 per hour.

This rate has been set depending on the proposed minimum wage on 2 January. Through the respective region and state committees, employers and labourers are allowed

to oppose the proposed minimum wage within 60 days of announcement. The committee received 4,092 complaints, which showed that most of the labourers wanted an average minimum wage of Ks5,600, while the employers were not willing to pay above Ks4,000. The minimum wage was set after the related region and state committees held a series of discussions with employers

and labourers.

“The committee members have inspected complaints submitted by 10 regions and states. The related committee on minimum wage met with employers and labourers to reach an agreement with them, and shortly afterwards, proceeded to the national committee on minimum wage to make a decision,” said Daw Khaing Zar Aung, a member

of the national committee on minimum wage.

This decision was made after the fifth meeting for setting the minimum wage, which was held yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, with attendees such as Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, and officials and representatives of labourers and employers.

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Some 50 victims trafficked in two months

May Thet Hnin

SOME 50 persons were trafficked in 38 cases in January and February 2018, according to the anti-human trafficking police force.

Among the suspects arrested for human trafficking in these two months were 31 men and 80 women. The victims included some 44 women, two men and four children. Among the cases investigated by the police, 12 cases were from Shan State, 11 from the Yangon Region and five from the Mandalay Region, with the remaining cases were registered in other states and regions.

Myanmar registered 38 cases of human trafficking in January and February, and of these, 28 were related to forced marriages with Chinese men. In eight cases, women were forced into prostitution within the country, while two cases were related to job exploitation. Experts have identified political instability and poverty as the root causes of human trafficking, which make some people, mainly women and children, vulnerable to traffickers. The government has also assigned an anti-human trafficking police force unit in the border area.

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‘BEST BANK IN MYANMAR’

Awarded by EUROMONEY 2017

Pyithu Hluttaw

MPs to discuss motion on reviewing resettlement of 55 households from IDP camps

Kyaw Thu Htat
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

THE Pyithu Hluttaw will debate over a motion urging the government to review the permission granted to 55 households from internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in Kyaukpyu, Pauktaw and Yanbye townships that were closed for resettlement in Yangon.

The motion was submitted by MP U Maung Myint of Minkin constituency.

The issue was mentioned in the national security advisor's statement on the northern Rakhine State security situation, which was published in the 2 July 2017 issues of state-run dailies.

The Hluttaw decided to discuss the motion and the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker requested the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the motion to enrol their names.

During yesterday's meeting, Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin answered the six questions connected with road facilities in the Pyithu Hluttaw.

U Than Aung of Ngaputaw constituency first asked



Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin. PHOTO: MNA

about the plan to upgrade the Ngayokkaung-Ngayokkaung (South) road connecting with Pathein-Thalakkhwa-Mawtinson road in Ngapudaw Township into a concrete or asphalt road.

The Deputy Minister replied that the 17-mile and 6-furlong Ngayokkaung-Ngayokkaung (South) road is owned by the Ministry of Construction, Department of Road, and managed

by the Ayeyawady Region government.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY) period, the asphalt surfacing work on a mile-long and 18-foot wide road section in Ngayokkaung Town was 70 per cent complete and the laying of a 3-inch thick gravel surface on a 12-mile and 6-furlong road section was 95 per cent complete, with capital funds from the Ayeyawady Region government,



U Than Nyunt. PHOTO: MNA



U Naing Naing Win. PHOTO: MNA

said the Deputy Minister.

The construction of a box-culvert, the repair work on retaining walls of eight water discharge pipes and the construction of rock-lined drains will be done in the first six months with the Ayeyawady Region's government fund for the 2018-2019 FY, he added.

Next, U Sai Ngaung Hsai Hein of Maukmai constituency asked if there are plans to

upgrade the Ho Namt-Hti Han Khwee villages inter-village road and the Ho Namt-Pyinthaya-Pon Aung-Hti Pyin villages inter-village road to the Ho Namt Village tract asphalt road and the Ywathit-Naungkham villages inter-village road in Sint Win Village tract during the 2018-2019 FY.

The Deputy Minister replied to a question by U Than Nyunt of Pyu constituency on the plan to continue the asphalt surfacing of the road linking Phyu Town with Banlaung Village on Sittaung River bank and said starting from the 2018-2019 FY, the road would be upgraded section-wise, depending on the availability of funds.

On a question posed by U Naing Naing Win of Tamu constituency on the plan for a bridge on Nant Ayar Creek to make the Tamu-Homalin union road into an all-weather road, the Deputy Minister replied that a fund for a 152-metre-long two-way reinforced concrete bridge has been included in the Sagaing Region government fund for the 2018-2019 FY, and the bridge will be constructed depending on the availability of funds. ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Peaceful assembly law debated by MPs

A bill to amend the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law tabled by bill committee secretary Dr. Myat Nyana Soe of the Yangon Region constituency (3) was debated by MPs at the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

The issue was discussed by U Khin Maung Latt of Rakhine State constituency (3), U Soe Thein @ U Maung Soe of the Taninthayi Region constituency (10), Naw Hla Hla Soe of the Yangon Region constituency (10), U Kyaw Kyaw Win of Rakhine State constituency No (8) and U Htay Oo of the Yangon Region constituency (2).

This was followed by Anti-Corruption Committee Secretary U San Win tabling a bill on the amendment to an anti-corruption law (fourth revision),

after which a report by the bill committee on the bill was read by bill committee member U Than Lwin.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than then requested the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the bill to enrol their names.

During the meeting, two asterisk-marked questions were answered by Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun.

First, U Maung Maung Latt of the Sagaing Region constituency (9) asked if there was any plan to upgrade the sub-basic education high school in Sagaing Region, Tamu Town, ward no. (2), to a basic education high school.

The Deputy Minister said there were only 156 students in the subject school, and it is only



Amyotha Hluttaw is being convened. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

a mile from Tamu Town Basic Education High School.

U Myo Htat (a) Salai Myo Htike of Chin State constituency (12) also asked a similar

question on the plan to upgrade the sub-basic education middle school in Paletwa Town, Yeikha Toe Che (Myothit), to a sub-basic education high school

The seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw will hold its 25th-day meeting on 7 March.—Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

State Counsellor, EU Special Rep discuss promotion of human rights, Rakhine issue

State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received European Union Special Representative for Human Rights H.E Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis who is going to attend the 4th Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue in Myanmar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters pertaining to the further co-

operation between Myanmar and the European Union on protection and promotion of Human Rights, and situation in Rakhine State, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting was also attended by Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, the Director-General of the Political Department U Soe Han and other officials.— Myanmar News Agency ■



The State Counsellor in a meeting with EU Special Representative Mr. Lambrinidis before the latter's attendance of the 4th Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue on the same day. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar-Bangladesh commence joint patrol

Myanmar's Border Guard Police and Bangladesh's Border Guard Bangladesh have reportedly performed 14 joint patrols around border checkpoints 42 and 55 from 4 to 26 February.

The Myanmar Police Force has announced that these joint patrols have effectively pre-

vented terrorist activities along the border, illegal immigration and illegal trading. It also said the relations between the two countries' border police have improved, leading to the timely exchange of information and successful upkeep of the rule of law.—Myanmar News Agency ■

National committee on minimum wage approves Ks4,800 ...

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At the meeting, the employers mentioned their difficulties such as insufficient electric power, payment for absence without leave and overtime payment. Meanwhile, the labourers raised their voices on the possible problems with the fixed minimum wage.

"Earlier, there were cases where the employers did not offer a daily wage of Ks3,600 even when the national committee on minimum wage had set it at Ks3,600. To avoid such cases, the related committee needs to be in touch with the labourers to inspect if they receive the actual minimum wage of Ks4,800, and if the employers are cutting other allowances which were previously being given," said Daw Khaing Zar Aung.

Although several employers and labourers were dissatisfied with the previous minimum wage of Ks3,600, the government convinced them to accept it.

Union Minister U Thein

Swe said at a regular meeting between Vice President and businessmen that this proposed rate was based on the commodity price, exchange rate, gross domestic product and inflation, along with wages set in neighbouring countries. They heard the employers and employees from regions and states. "We do not want to hurt anyone through this proposed rate. Based on the 2015 minimum wage calculating method, the rate is determined in line with the current exchange rate," he said.

The national committee on minimum wage will continue to submit it to the cabinet.

After the proposed minimum wage is approved, the workers will be paid at the set rate. The new, inexperienced workers will be paid not less than 50 per cent of the minimum wages during the three-month training period (before probation period). During the three-month probation period, the labourers will receive 75 per cent of the minimum wages. ■

Yangon government to use parking fees to solve traffic woes

The Yangon Region government will use overnight and hourly parking fees to tackle traffic congestion in Yangon.

The region's government has been using various approaches to handle the traffic problem in Yangon, and it now

plans to fund its solution with parking fees and other taxes.

The government will impose parking fees on cars according to standard rates and will build new parking spaces and expand the road with the fees collected.

Meanwhile, the Yangon Region government will also take action against drivers who violate traffic rules, as well as control and restrict taxis registered outside Yangon from operating in the municipal areas.—GNLM ■

Fourth Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue held



Myanmar and the European Union, co-chaired by U Kyaw Tin and Mr. Lambrinidis respectively, discussed on numerous human rights topics, such as Rakhine State's situation, and the UN's cooperation. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Fourth Myanmar-EU Human Rights Dialogue was held at the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw, on 5 March 2018.

The dialogue was co-chaired by U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation, and Stavros Lambrinidis, European Union (EU) special representative for human rights.

The dialogue was attended by senior officials from the ministries concerned, Kristian

Schmidt, ambassador of the delegation of the European Union to Myanmar, senior officials of the EU and diplomats from some EU member states stationed in Yangon.

During the dialogue, the participants exchanged their views on a wide range of human rights issues related to labour rights, the situation in Rakhine State, freedom of expression, access to basic social service, gender issues, human trafficking and related

exploitation, protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and combating and prevention of religious intolerance and incitement to hatred, human rights cooperation in the United Nations, and Myanmar's accession to and the implementation of international human rights conventions and treaties, as well as the rights of refugees and migrants and national minorities in EU member states.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSZaw Min,
zawmin.gnlm@gmail.com
Win Ko Ko Aung,
kowinkzaung@gmail.com**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Khaing Thanda Lwin,
Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw,
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01) 8604529,
Fax - (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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The famous Shwedagon Pagoda attracts thousands of international tourists daily. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Shwedagon Pagoda hosts about 2,000 foreigners daily

SHWEDAGON Pagoda, a well-known pilgrimage site in Myanmar, hosted some 2,000 foreigners on a daily basis during the peak season, with the majority of them visiting from Thailand, according to a report of the Myawady Daily issued on Saturday.

In addition, the pagoda saw an increase in the number of visitors from China, South Korea, Japan, the US,

France and Germany, he added.

Located on Singuttara Hill on Shwedagon Pagoda Road in downtown Yangon, the Shwedagon pagoda hosts, on average, about 20,000 visitors from Myanmar and abroad per day. As expected, the number of visitors increases on significant days.

Yangon's most famous landmark is crowded every

day with large numbers of devotees and merit makers who walk around the stupa and provide offerings to the Buddha statues. For foreign visitors, it is a place to enjoy observing Myanmar's cultural standards through its ancient architecture.

Currently, pagoda authorities collect a Ks10,000 entrance fee per foreigner.—
GNLM ■

Hanthawaddy airport project awaits loan from Japan

THE Ministry of Transport and Communications will submit a proposal to the respective authorities to apply for a soft loan from Japan to cover part of the Hanthawaddy airport project's cost, said U Aung Ye Tun, assistant secretary at the Ministry of Transport and Communications. A framework agreement, signed in January 2016, between Yong-name Holdings and Myanmar's Civil Aviation Department to build the airport, has expired and has not yet been renewed, as certain issues remain unresolved. Now, the authorities have planned to implement the new airport project on the basis of a public-private partnership. The Hanthawaddy airport project is one of the future projects of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The project will be implemented on more than 9,000 acres of land in Bago. It is located more than 50 miles away from Yangon. The estimated cost of the entire project is US\$2.32 billion.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications will submit a proposal to the respective authorities to seek full funding for the project through the Japanese government's official development assistance programme.—
Myawady ■

160 HIV/HCV patients to receive free medical care

May Thet Hnin

A new plan seeks to offer medical treatment free of charge to 160 people living with the HIV/HCV infection, said Dr Htun Nyunt Oo, programme manager of the National AIDS Programme.

The project will be implemented this year by the National AIDS Programme and Community Partners International (CPI) with a US\$1.5 million grant provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

"In phase-I of the project, drug treatments will be provided to the target patients at Waibagi Specialist Hospital in Yangon, with the project implementers planning to extend the project to other hospitals in the future," said Dr Htun Nyunt Oo.

Plans for the two-year programme call for 800 patients with HIV/HCV to undergo medical care starting this year, said

Dr Si Thura, executive director of the CPI.

Based on the number of viruses and their current liver conditions, as well as the taking of antiretroviral drugs, 160 out of 400 patients infected with hepatitis C will be chosen to fill the project's first-year quota. The programme will also donate the remaining funds to care for 340 patients through the Liver Foundation.

"We will use Velpatasvir and sofosbuvir, a globally recognized combination medication for the treatment of hepatitis C. However, there will be side effects when patients are treated with the ART drugs, in combination with Velpatasvir and sofosbuvir.

The anti-hepatitis C virus drug may reduce possible side effects, in combination with the state-of-the-art HIV drugs. This is why we selected Waibagi hospital for the project in Yangon. We will negotiate with the Minis-

try of Health and Sports to bring the project to Mandalay," noted Dr Si Thura.

The prevalence of HIV can also vary depending on geographical regions. According to the Myanmar National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2016-2020 (HIV NSP III), there are an estimated 224,794 people living with HIV in Myanmar, with key populations bearing a disproportionate burden of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The estimated HIV prevalence rates among people who inject drugs (PWID), female sex workers (FSWs), and men who have sex with men (MSM) in Myanmar are 28.5%, 14.6% and 11.6%, respectively.

"People who injected drugs are among the groups most vulnerable to HIV and HCV infections. In some cases, we find three severe infectious diseases in a person, especially in Kachin State. We conduct needle exchange programmes in the area

to reduce HIV transmissions. However, we received negative feedbacks from residents who thought that the programme cannot help reduce drug addictions in the area," Dr Si Thura added.

The USAID will also provide US\$10 million for HIV/AIDS Flagship projects in 2018 and 2019, targeting patients with HIV, including PWIDs, FSWs, KPs and transgender people (TGs).

Dr Htun Nyunt Oo said that it is estimated that some US\$460 million is required to carry out HIV NSP III, a five-year project to combat HIV, between 2016 and 2020.

Myanmar is ranked 25 on the list of global countries having a high rate of HIV infections. When compare with 2010, the rate of new patients with HIV infections decreased by 26%, while the death toll due to AIDS-related disease dropped by 52%. ■



A worker selects fish at the Nyaungtan Jetty in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

Myanmar aims to earn \$700 million through fishery exports this FY

MYANMAR'S income from the fishery exports sector is expected to hit US\$700 million in the current fiscal year (FY), U Tun Myint, head of Yangon Region Fishery Department, told Myanma Alinn.

From 1 April to 16 February this FY, fishery exports fetched \$594 million, which is an increase of \$103 million compared

with the same period last FY.

Viet Nam exports fisheries worth \$9 billion per year. Myanmar intends to earn \$1 billion through the fishery sector in the coming FY, said U Tun Myint.

To bolster the export volume, technology will be provided for fish and prawn farming businesses, he continued.

A law or bylaw needs to be

formulated to tackle land problems faced by fish and prawn farmers, said Dr Thet Mhu, a livestock entrepreneur.

Myanmar's fishery exports cannot keep up with Thailand and Viet Nam, and this being so, there is a plan to set up livestock zones, according to the Myanmar Fishery Federation. — Zar Lin Thu (AMIA)

Myanmar edible oil dealers to seek improvement in seed production sector

THE Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association will call on the government to boost the production of quality seeds of edible oil crops in the Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway and Ayeayawady regions.

"Land and irrigation play a vital role in growing the crop, along with pedigree seeds, agricultural equipment and machines, and growing methods. If growers work in harmony with these inputs, they might meet the target of 100 baskets per acre. The growers are faced

with financial risks due to India's restriction on the importation of mung beans and pigeon peas, and so, some of them have turned to peanuts. For seed production, we use local origins certified by the agriculture department," said U Tun Tun Oo, vice chair (1) of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association.

In a bid to produce 50 to 100 baskets per acre, the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association is conducting the project through the use of Taiwan technology, in cooperation

with Daw Khin Kyi foundation in Aunglan Township, Magway Region; Myaung Township in the Sagaing Region; and Singu Township in the Mandalay Region.

In addition to this, the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association is undertaking other projects by setting up a seeds bank for pedigree varieties in regions and states, inviting experts, providing scholarships, and agricultural machinery services in related regions and states. —Myat Thu (AMIA)

Onion prices start falling in Mandalay with improved supply

ONION prices in the Mandalay Region declined to Ks1,300 per viss in February following improved supplies, said Ko Maung Aye, a local onion cultivator from Taungtha Township.

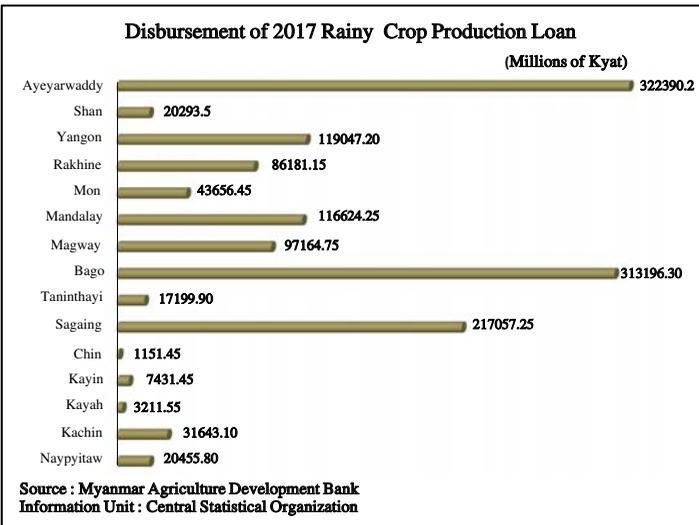
A viss (1.6 kilograms) of onion was Ks3,200 in the last week of December. However, the price of onion decreased to Ks1,300 per viss in Febru-

ary after increased supplies, he added.

Last year, the volume of onion supply had declined because of damages to onions. However, this year, the volume of onion supply has increased four times compared with last year. Recently, Seikphyu and Myittha onions have entered the market. Onion prices con-

tinued to plunge when Taungtha and Monywa onions entered the market, he added.

Summer onions will enter the market this month from Pakokku, Myittha, Myingyan and Taungdwingyi. Onion cultivation costs some Ks1.5 million and can produce some 6,000 onions per viss. —Min Htet Aung (Sub-printing house)



THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့တိုင်း: "Sunday Special" အချုပ်ပိုင် (၈) မျက်နှာပါဝင်သော The Global New Light of Myanmar နေ့စဉ်ထုတ် သတင်းစာကို အောက်ပါမြို့များတွင် ဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

"Sunday Special" အချုပ်ပိုင် (၈) မျက်နှာ ပါဝင်သည်

နေပြည်တော်
မြန်ကြားရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ် (၇) နေပြည်တော်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်)၊ စီမံရေးရာဌာန၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၄၁၂၁၀၈

နေပြည်တော်
နေပြည်တော်သတင်းစာတိုက် (တပ်ကုန်း)၊ ဝေယျာသီရိမြို့နယ်၊ ခေလင်လမ်း၊ နေပြည်တော်၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၃၆၁၄၈၊ ၀၆၇၃၆၁၂၉

ရန်ကင်း
The Global New Light of Myanmar သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊ ငါးထပ်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း၊ ဝဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကင်းမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၁၀၆၀၅၅၃၂၊ ၀၉၉၇၄၄၂၄၁၁၄

မန္တလေး
လမ်း (၂၀ x ၂၁) ကြား၊ (၉၂ x ၉၃) လမ်းကြား၊ ဝလံဇွေ ရောင်ရမ်း၊ မန္တလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၂၃၂၇၂၉၊ ၀၂၃၂၅၀၀

တောင်ကြီး
ရုံးကြီးလမ်း၊ သစ်တောရပ်ကွက်၊ တောင်ကြီးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၀၂၁၁၆၄၊ ၀၉၅၂၁၄၃၅၇

မကွေး
နတ်မောက်လမ်း၊ တပ်မ (၈၈) တပ်နယ်ရေးအနီး၊ မကွေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၃၂၃၇၁၂

တချင်းတုံ
မြို့နယ် (၃-၁) အမှတ် (၁) လမ်းသွယ်၊ မြို့နယ်လမ်း၊ ကျိုင်းတုံမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၀၄၂၂၄၉၂

တလေး
အောင်ဓမ္မေယျရပ်ကွက်၊ မြို့နယ်အားကစားကွင်းအနီး၊ တလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၃၂၂၁၃၃

မြန်ကြား
အမှတ် (၄၁)၊ ရေရပ်ကွက်၊ အောင်ဆန်းလမ်း၊ မြန်ကြားမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၄၂၂၄၆၂

စစ်တွေ
ရွှေဝတ်လမ်းနှင့် တက္ကသိုလ်ရိပ်သာလမ်း၊ မိမိတော်ကြီးအနီး၊ မန်းကျည်မြိုင်ရပ်ကွက်၊ စစ်တွေမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၄၃၂၃၀၆၈

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Hotline - 09974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun (centre-right), in a meeting with Internews Network country director Michael Pan (left), at the Ministry of Information yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Minister for Information meets Internews Network country director

Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun met with Michael Pan, the country director for Internews Network, at the guest hall of the Ministry for Information yesterday.

They openly discussed the implementation of the memo-

randum of understanding signed between MRTV and Internews Network, plans for amending the laws on media broadcasting, spreading of peace journalism, developing the ethnic media, facilitating workshops to train professional journalists and oth-

er future plans. Michael Pan also discussed Internews Network's collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation to spread general knowledge and information in rural areas. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Farmland prices go up thanks to extension of water pumping plant

Following a project at the Waryar- Tharsi river water pumping station to extend its operation to provide water to another 1000 acres of farmland, the price of the farmland from the Myay Phyu-Mone Nyin village tract and Zeedaw village in Yesagyo Township in Magway Region has recently increased.

The price of an acre of farmland has increased to about Ks. two million, reaching between Ks.2.5 to 3 million, according to local farmers.

Farmers have to rely on rain to do cultivation there. Although they can acquire groundwater they found that it's actually saltwater.

"The demand for people to purchase the farmland that include this area, that the pumping plant extends its operation to is higher, because farmers can grow crops any season. So the price of the farmland is increasing. Those who want to buy this land are offering higher prices," said Ko Kyaw Oo, a farmer from the area.

The extension project has planned to irrigate river water to 1000 acres of farmland, but at the moment, river water can

supply only 200 acres of farmland, according to an official from the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department for Pakokku District.

The construction of the extension of the river water pumping station project has been completed making fresh water accessible for 200 acres of farmland, and an irrigation project was launched on 25 February to grow summer crops on the 200 acres.

The project started on 17 January and used Ks. five million from the Union Budget.

"We conducted the project within a month for 200 acres. When we are granted another budget allocation we will proceed to carry out the project for the remaining 800 acres of land," said U Myint Oo, in charge of the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department for Pakokku District.

Farmers are very glad for irrigated river water to reach their farmland because they could not grow crops successfully before although they have good soil.

"Previously, our cultivation did not come to fruition due to

water shortages. From now on, we can irrigate river water. I was thinking to grow seasonal crops in all three seasons. I am going to grow beans in summer. I will grow rice paddy in the rainy season and chick peas in winter," said U Yan Aye, a farmer from Mone Nyin village.

He added that his land in the past was the best farmland which yielded higher agricultural produce because water from the Mt. Shin Ma Daung reached there.

After building dams up in the area 20 years ago, water from the mountain could not reach there and farmers could not grow crops successfully when they could not rely on the rain, he explained.

"I have more than 30 acres of farmland. But, only 10 acres are included in the project area. I am happy now for getting irrigated river water," he said.

The Waryar Tharsi river water pumping station has operated irrigation since 2007-2008 fiscal years. It is supplying water to 2700 acres of farmland. The new project has planned to extend its operation to another 1000 acres of farmland. —Ei Mon Swe (Yesagyo) ■

Some 50 victims trafficked in two months

FROM PAGE-1

The anti-human trafficking police force took legal action against traffickers under the 2005 Anti-Trafficking in Person Law. The Anti-Trafficking in Person Law is being amended and the new law is expected to emerge this year.

Myanmar cooperated with Thailand and China to combat trafficking by opening cooperation offices. Myanmar is one of the anti-trafficking actors in the region and the Greater Mekong Sub-region, said Police Major Khin Maung Kywe from the No. 6 Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force based in Yangon.

"The traffickers target those who lack knowledge and are poor. Many fall prey to fraudsters in their quest for better living standards. Most traffickers directly approach the targets. Therefore, a woman should not believe anyone. If you are in doubt, you should discuss it with your parents," he added.

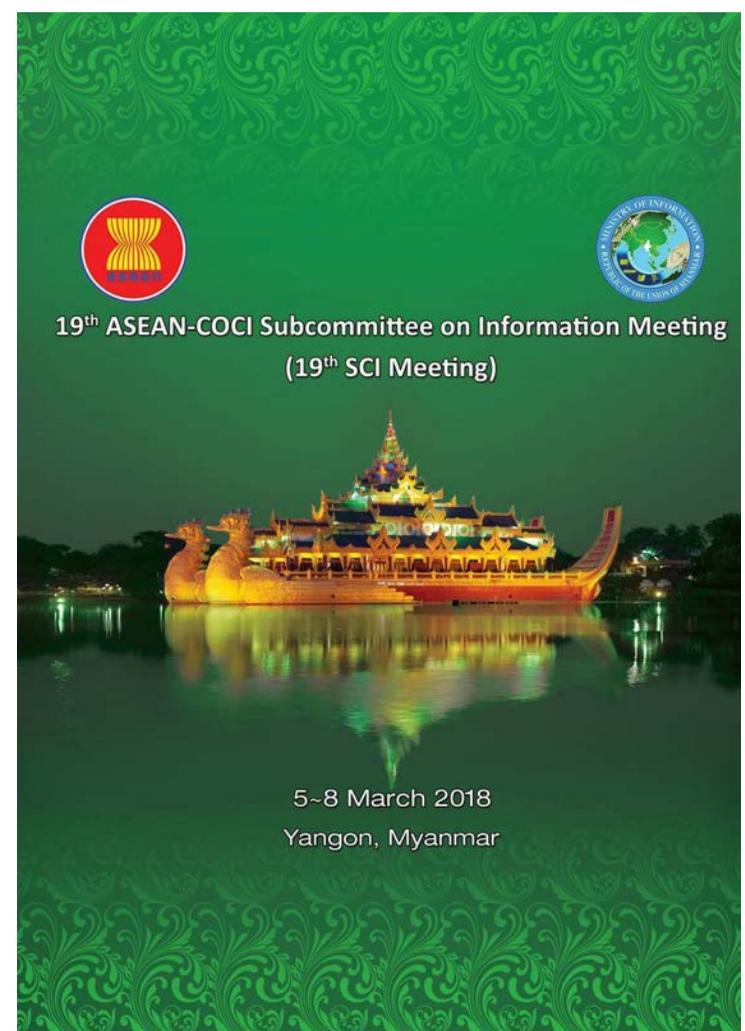
According to the 2005 Anti-Trafficking in Person Law, people who traffic women and children shall be given a minimum 10-year imprisonment or

maximum life imprisonment or fined. Money or property received through trafficking will be confiscated by the government.

According to the 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report, there are seven types of trafficking crimes, with 69.7 per cent of trafficking caused by forced marriage, 13.6 per cent by the sex trade, 10 per cent by labour exploitation and forced labour, 4.8 per cent by child trafficking, 1.4 per cent by slavery, 0.3 per cent by forced fostering and 0.2 per cent by sexual exploitation.

According to reports on transnational human trafficking, 80 per cent of the victims are sent to China, 10 per cent to Thailand, and 6 per cent to Malaysia. Domestically, there is a 4 per cent occurrence of human trafficking. Women account for 85 per cent of the trafficked victims, including minors. Child trafficking constitutes 4.38 per cent of the crimes.

Human trafficking cases have increased each year. The government should conduct anti-human trafficking activities in cooperation with the Hluttaw, civil society organisations and the public. ■



Preparation for matriculation exam in Rakhine State

Matriculation examinations will be held from 7 to 16 March and 122 examination centers have been opened in Rakhine State where more than forty thousand students will sit in the examination.

Following are the voices of the Rakhine State government and related departments on the preparations made for the examination.

Security

Rakhine State Police Force is conducting four types of security operations. Those are the security during the transport of question papers and answer papers from and to Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. Safe keeping of the

question and answer papers in the vaults of the police stations. During the examination period, the security of the exam centers is also provided. The aim is to prevent dangers such as fire and act of violence. More than 1,700 police personnel are being deployed for security. Patrols, security posts and checks will be conducted before and during the examination period of 7 to 16 March. Loudspeakers and making of noises are prohibited and no stage shows, music bands and dances are permitted as it could distract the students sitting for the exam said Police Colonel Aung Myat Moe of Rakhine State Police Force.

Health care

In each examination center, a medical team is assigned for health care.

They will provide the necessary health care throughout the entire examination period. Ambulances will also be in readiness so that a quick transfer to a hospital can be conducted where the sick student can continue to sit for the examination while being provided with health care.

All hospitals in the state have a room ready for such incidents said the state head of public health care Dr. Kyi Lwin.

Electricity distribution

Preparations are made so that there is no black out dur-



Rakhine State Electric Power Enterprise has arranged to prevent outage during the examination period. **PHOTO: TIN TUN (IPRD)**

ing the examination period. All exam centers could not be provided with stand-by generators but stand-by generators were deployed in places where there can most likely be black-outs but

everything that can be done to prevent black-outs have been done said State Chief Engineer of electricity U Kyi Zeya. —Tin Tun (IPRD), Han Lin Naing (Sittway) ■

River bank protection in Mandalay Region expected to finish next April



Deforestation and soil degradation is blamed for changing the flow of the Ayeyawady River and for erosion of the river's bank. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG**

THE Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems under the Ministry of Transport and Communications is carrying out river bank protection tasks along the Ayeyawady River in Mandalay Region.

The river bank protection tasks are being undertaken in Amarapura, Madaya, Singu, Nganzun, Myingyan, TadaU and NyaungU townships by spending Ks. 41.87 billion and the whole project is expected to be fully completed in April. "We have been able to begin the pro-

ject in January because we solved financial and technical problems very quickly. The whole project is slated for completion next month," said U Toe Aung Lin, a director from the department.

The nineteen river bank protection projects are being executed in the current fiscal year with the allotted funds from Mandalay Regional government. Some projects are about 50 per cent finished and some projects are nearly 25 per cent complete.

"The river bank protection task is beneficial to

the local people because it can prevent the farmlands, homes and pagodas from river bank erosion. Our department also focuses on not only river bank protection but also river bank stabilization. We carry out the tasks in cooperation with local lawmakers and people," he added.

Deforestation, soil degradation, illegal gold mining at watershed areas, climate change and rapid rise in river water levels can cause river bank erosion.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House) ■

Man arrested for raping four-year-old

A four-year-old girl was allegedly raped somewhere between Pan Hlaing Railway Station and Kyimyindine Railway Station in Sanchaung Township on Friday, according to a complaint filed by the victim's father at Sanchaung Myoma police station.

According to the victim's father, the girl and her two siblings were sleeping under the crossover bridge near Pan Hlaing Railway Station last Friday night. The father and mother left the children for the night and returned early next morning only to find the four-year-old girl missing. While searching for her, they found out that the local ward administrator had sent an unidentified girl with injuries to Yangon

General Hospital. On arriving at the hospital, the parents were able to locate their daughter. She had sustained injuries to her private parts. After confirming that the girl had been raped, the father filed a report with the Sanchaung Myoma police. After an investigation, Ko Ko Naing, alias Ko Naing, alias Naing Gyi, was arrested the following evening from Payarlan Railway Station, Pabedan Township, along with aphrodisiacs in his possession.

The police will take further action against the suspect Ko Ko Naing, who has served jail time twice — a seven-day sentence in Yangon and a one-year sentence in Hlegu Township. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations meet

A meeting between the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations on implementing the suggestions accepted by Myanmar during the second round regular Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the human rights situation of the countries of the world was held on 5 March 2018 at the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission office.

The meeting was attended by the chairman and members of the Myanmar National Hu-

man Rights Commission and representatives of civil society organizations.

At the meeting the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman delivered an opening speech and commission member U Nyunt Swe explained briefly about UPR and the suggestions accepted by Myanmar. Afterwards representatives of civil society organizations participated in the discussion. —Myanmar National Human Rights Commission ■

Boosting Myanmar's Fishery Sector for Exports

MYANMAR is endowed with vast fishery resources in its coastal waters, rivers and inland lakes. Myanmar's re-emergence in the world of commerce offers exciting opportunities to address the issues of sustainability and conservation, as well as to boost its export potential.

According to data provided by the Department of Fishery (Yangon region), the country has earned US\$535 million through the export of marine products in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

In the latest report of the Department of Fishery, the export of marine products reached \$535 million, registering an increase of more than \$97 million compared with last year, through the export of 38,000 tonnes of products. The export value is expected to reach up to \$700 million in the remaining three months of the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Fishery exports are expected to generate some \$1 billion in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, if the government and businesses cooperate to increase productivity, as well as the product quality.

All possible ways and means should be used to increase the productivity of value-added fishery products, such as local dried fish businesses, and encourage the establishment of canneries and fish-ball factories across the nation.

fish-ball factories across the nation. It can help Myanmar achieve the desired export earnings from marine products. The fishery sector is important for the social and economic development of the country, as fish is consumed by the population at most meals.

Currently, the Department of Fishery provides the necessary assistance and technology that can bolster the export volume of the country. Moreover, a law or a bylaw is needed to tackle the land problems faced by fish and prawn farmers.

The Department of Fishery is producing fish and shrimps in more than 400,000 acres of ponds across the country. With the aim of producing enough for the consumers and increasing exports, the Department of Fishery is supporting the livestock sector by providing technology, investments and other equipment to fish and shrimp breeders, in cooperation with the Myanmar Fisheries Federation Association. ■

The 1980 Border Agreement and the Boundary Line at Western Gate of Myanmar

By Shin Min

UNDESIRABLE events and issues cropping up each day at the Western Gate of Myanmar in the Rakhine State could be termed as motley assortments of disagreeable occurrences. In the aftermath of deadly terrorist attacks on 25th August 2017, agreed plans are being set to move ahead such as that of Myanmar for the peaceful acceptance of the returnees and that of the Bangladeshi side to repatriate people back to Myanmar; however, an unexpected and unwanted problem emerges at the area of boundary line between the two countries. Precipitous of six thousand people staying on the dot of Myanmar soil and territory has jumped up prompting to find solution.

Boundary Line between the two countries

The land space between boundary pillar number (34) and (35) in the midst of the border line of Myanmar-Bangladesh demarcation and the Myanmar boundary fence has started to group up with a few number of people and multiplied to six thousand in a short time, creating a disturbing and worrying scenario. The officials from two sides met and discussed on the issue and reached an agreement. The people on the land space at boundary line have been transferred to Kutupalong Camp and Balukhali Camp in Bangladesh, leaving only one thousand people on the land, it is learnt.

In this upsetting situation, problematic terms of reference have popped up. In the sensitive and susceptible area around the boundary line between the two

countries, the land space where no person is being allowed to stay, dwell or remain has been wrongly referred and quote as "No Man's Land" and the "Zero Line".

Sovereign State

If one asked, whether the term of reference is vital, and then the answer is very important. Union of Myanmar is a sovereign nation. A sovereign nation has the characteristics and uniqueness of the boundary demarcation, the territorial integrity, the population and the government. The boundary demarcation and definition of a nation is very much vital for its sovereignty. Therefore, the term of reference with regards to the boundary is to be accurate and precise. In the course of diplomatic relations over the international affairs, especially at the time of negotiations on bilateral relations between Myanmar and Bangladesh, more caution and prudence is to be advocated and endorsed. It should never ever be taken up lightly without due consideration.

In fact, "No Man's Land" is a term being defined as an area of land between the borders of two countries or between two armies that is not controlled by either side, and allowed no one to stay or remain.

Myanmar has signed agreements with the neighboring countries on boundary line demarcation mentioning the distances of both countries where no one is being allowed to dwell or remain as well as banned and barred from construction of buildings. The purpose of the agreement on the "Non-Construction Zone" is to avoid the possible dent and disorder of connectivity of boundary line markers. Moreover, if any discrepancy and disparity occurs

on the territorial issue, then the boundary demarcation line could be easily traced back.

Myanmar is being accorded with the agreement from Bangladesh that no building is to be constructed within 150 feet from boundary line. Therefore, no one is being allowed to construct structure in that zonal area of 150 feet from boundary line. The agreement has been exclusively included the boundary program agreement and cooperation plan signed between the two governments on 19 December 1980.

In Quest of solution

At the moment, the land space under referral between the boundary pillar number (34) and (35) in the midst of Myanmar-Bangladesh Boundary line and the parameter fencing of Myanmar is the territorial land of Myanmar. It is absolutely and completely not the "No Man's Land" as there was no such agreement whatsoever. Therefore, the "Non-Construction Zone" is never to be referred as "No Man's Land". In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding, the land space should be termed as "Non-Construction Zone" of "Boundary Demarcation Line".

In this regard, the English edition of the agreement has used the term "Boundary Line". In some international context, "Zero Line" is being referred. In line with the existing Myanmar-Bangladesh Boundary Agreement, it is to be noted that the term under referral must be used "Boundary Line".

If and when the situation calls for face-to-face negotiations in quest of solution between the two countries, the aspiration and desire of each citizen is to be well prepared on the side of the country. At this juncture, the issue between the two countries is being handled and sorted out bilaterally, but under the sharp eyes of the international onlookers. It is therefore, the government and the people must be cohesive, integrated and unified.

Constant vigilance needed

It is possible that there might be some terrorists among those remaining at the boundary line, and the disturbing news creeps in that some terror organizations gave directives to hold on tight

and stay there if the Myanmar side asked them to leave the land space. Moreover, the spreading of wrong information and fake news are mounting to reap political advantage to an alarming extent. Fake news such as that of life threatening situation is present inside Myanmar; that of extreme food shortages in the country, and that of other fabricated news are the whispering campaign of the so-called rights activists burning like wild fire.

Amicable result

At this juncture, the two governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh must always cooperate in finding a better solution and agreeable result. Therefore, the two governments are negotiating and discussing.

The first meeting of the repatriation plan for the persons who left Rakhine State is being discussed among the repatriation Joint Working Group between the two countries on 15 January and signed an agreement on 16. On 23 November 2017, an arrangement was being signed at the ministerial level between Myanmar and Bangladesh. In the initial stage, prescribed forms for verification by Myanmar authorities were in the process for those who fled to Bangladesh after the terrorist attacks on 9 October 2016 and 25 August 2017. Firstly, complete forms with regards to (508) persons with Hindu faith and (750) persons with Muslim faith were being handed over to the Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary by Myanmar side, according to the official release after the meeting of two countries.

Furthermore, a list unveiling over 1000 ARSA terrorists has been entrusted into the hands of Bangladeshi side by Myanmar officials, it was learnt

Forms required to be revised

During February 2018, a Myanmar delegation led by Home Affairs Union Minister Lieutenant General Kyaw Swe paid an official visit to Bangladesh, where they have received a list from Bangladeshi side mentioning 8000 returnees for repatriation as first batch. Unfortunately, it was found that the prescribed forms being filled up for necessary verification were not in conformity with the forms

"No Man's Land" is a term being defined as an area of land between the borders of two countries or between two armies that is not controlled by either side, and allowed no one to stay or remain.

provided by the Myanmar side. Therefore, to ensure the working plan fine and smooth, the forms were being revised and amended by the officials of Immigration and National Registration Department accordingly, it was learnt.

On 2 March 2018, Myanmar-Bangladesh battalion commander level of two countries met and discussed over the schedules and plans for border patrolling and for the exchange of security information. Matters relating to people remaining illegally near the border; arrangements for joint patrols, and exchanging news and information on occurrences along the border on a real-time basis were discussed during the meeting.

On 23 January 2018, the sectoral plans on repatriation tasks on the Myanmar side have been briefed and clarified by the responsible officials to the media personnel that started the same day. In other words, Myanmar side made the point clear that it has been doing what was earlier discussed and agreed between the two sides.

At this juncture, the relevant information is presented with regards to the resettlement and the development tasks being implementing in Rakhine State. In Rakhine State, certain committees are being formed for pragmatic approach namely Implementation Committee on recommendations of Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, (Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine-UEHRD). Moreover, the State Counsellor and the high ranking officials have been meeting with high dignitaries of international organizations, where the guests are being clarified with ground reality over the Rakhine

episodes and incidents. Furthermore, the diplomats and envoys, the international organizations, and the local and foreign media have already been permitted to see and witness by themselves and comprehend well at the two repatriation camps and the interim acceptance camp in Myanmar.

In the aftermath of 2016 October incident, the local and foreign media have been allowed and permitted to have access on news for eight times in Maungdaw area and IDP camps in Rakhine State, it was learnt. In providing more accurate and authentic information in Maungdaw District area, easily accessible Mayu FM Radio Program airwaves via the languages of Bamar, Rakhine and Bengali have been transmitting six times a day.

Implementing with high observant

In wrapping up the aim and purpose of this article, it is to convey, inform and pass on the fact on one hand over the development tasks for Rakhine State currently going on, and on the other hand, that the existing challenges and complexities are being resolving with high perception. In the course of problem solving, even the simple casual talk and the highly worded term of reference are to be selected with wisdom, not to lead them into wrong notion.

The author of this article wishes to submit the esteemed readers that it is my privilege and honor to share that Myanmar side is implementing in good faith on the Rakhine situation for the safety at the western gate of our beloved country with high perception to avoid unnecessary and undesirable disadvantages. ■

Translated by UMT

Modern zoos serving as Noah's arc for saving endangered species around the planet

By Saikat Kumar Basu

THE perennial question that still revolves around the concept of zoos or zoological garden is whether it is moral and acceptable for humans to confine animals in cages for entertainment or education or awareness or captive breeding. Several respected and dedicated animal right activists around the planet have been demanding complete closure of zoos; and to set the animals back into their natural ecosystem and habitats or advocating for more progressive animal rights. On one end of this spectrum are conservationists, foresters, and ecologists who sincerely believe that zoos have an important role to play in educating the public and making them aware of the spectacular biodiversity of the planet so that the public become more caring and responsible towards conserving natural ecosystems and environment.

While the other extreme ends calls for freedom for animals and advocating for the animals to live and thrive in their own natural ecosystems and habitats; free from any confinement or cage or enclosure. They insist that no matter how progressive and animal friendly modern zoos are in their basic philosophies; and no matter how great the zoo infrastructure is for mimicking natural ecosystems; they can never be equal or anywhere near the quality of wild natural habitats. Hence any confinement in the zoos actually violates the right of a helpless and defenseless animal as an individual species co inhabiting the planet with us; and must be returned to the wild. The debate will continue as is expected in any democratic society; however, honestly speaking we could not possibly undermine the role of modern zoos in education and awareness of the public. Furthermore, we also can not underestimate the need for modern zoo facilities for the purpose of multiplication through captive breeding of several endangered species for the purpose of conservation as well as restoration of degraded natural habitats and ecosystems.

Traditional or conventional zoos have travelled a long distance over time in transforming into knowledge centers for animal health, nutrition, behavior and conservation. They have been serving as interpretation centers for better understanding of the delicate human-animal interactions and contributed greatly in the species conservation program through captive breeding around the planet. All these could not be achieved by releasing confined animals overnight into the wild. Furthermore, many zoo bred animals are completely cut off from their wild instincts and habitats for generations; and may not even be able to adapt to their natural ecosystems; and even die, thereby further compromising their dwindling numbers.

The knowledge gathered in the zoos and aquariums by dedicated keepers, curators, vets, breeders, ecologists, conservators and researchers over several centuries across different generations in closely studying wild animals like mammals, birds, reptiles and fishes could be actually used in saving them in the wild. To be successful in proper conservation of a species that is threatened or endangered or critically endangered in the wild; we need to know about them in detail. Zoos provide some if not all opportunities to know them intimately. That knowledge could be applied in saving the species in their wild habitats and ecosystems. Hence undermining the value of modern zoos for their role as Noah's arc for saving endangered species around the planet is not advisable and appreciable. ■



Photo credit-R. Ray

Trump signals controversial tariffs will go forward

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump on Sunday signaled his intent to move forward with controversial tariffs on steel and aluminum imports that have sparked fears of a trade war.

“We are on the losing side of almost all trade deals. Our friends and enemies have taken advantage of the US for many years. Our Steel and Aluminum industries are dead. Sorry, it’s time for a change!” the president wrote on Twitter.

Earlier in the day, two Trump administration officials said the tariffs — 25 per cent on steel and 10 per cent on aluminum — would likely not include exemptions for allies.

“I know he’s had conversations with a number of the world leaders,” Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said on ABC’s “This Week.” “The decision, obviously, is his. But as of the moment, as far as I know, he’s talking about a fairly broad brush.”

In a subsequent interview on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” Ross allowed for the possibility that Trump may yet change his mind, as he has on other issues.

“We shall see. We shall see. I know a lot of ministers from a lot of countries have been talking with the president. They have been talking with me. They have been talking with others. We’ll see. The president makes the decisions,” he said.

Trump ignited fears of a trade war and an outcry from US trading partners when he



US President Donald Trump, pictured with First Lady Melania Trump, has sparked fears of a trade war. **PHOTO: AFP**

abruptly announced plans for the tariffs.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said she raised her “deep concern” over the tariffs in a phone call with Trump on Sunday, her office said.

The European Union has said it is drawing up measures against leading US brands like Harley-Davidson and Levi’s jeans, while China warned it “won’t sit idly by” if its interests are hurt.

- A ‘rounding error’ -

Canada, which has the most to lose as the top source of US steel and aluminum imports, has

called the tariffs “unacceptable.”

Ross, who said he expected them to go into effect in the coming week, played down the potential economic impact of retaliatory measures.

“Sure there may well be some sort of retaliation, but the amounts that they’re talking about are also pretty trivial.

“It’s some \$3 billion of goods that the Europeans have threatened to put something on. Well, in our sized economy, that’s a tiny, tiny fraction of one percent.”

“So while it might affect an individual producer for a little while, overall it’s not going to be much more than a rounding

error,” he said.

The move has been highly controversial among Republicans and within the administration, but Trump on Friday tweeted that “trade wars are good, and easy to win.”

Peter Navarro, a top White House trade advisor, said the administration would consider exemptions on a case-by-case basis but “no country exclusions.”

“As soon as you start exempting countries you have to raise the tariffs on everybody else. As soon as you exempt one country, then you have to exempt another country and so it’s a slippery slope,” he said on CNN’s

“State of the Union.”

- National security rationale -

Trump invoked national security as the rationale for imposing the tariffs, without making any distinction between friendly suppliers like Canada and potential adversaries like China or Russia.

Canada accounts for 40 per cent of US aluminum imports and 16 per cent of its steel imports, making it far and away the biggest US supplier.

But Navarro contends that China was “the root of the problem” despite being a relatively small player in the US steel and aluminum market.

“The bigger picture here is that China has tremendous overcapacity in both aluminum and steel. They flood the world market with this product and that ripples down to our shores and to other countries,” he said.

In Beijing, the spokesman for the National People’s Congress warned that “policies informed by misjudgment or wrong perceptions will hurt relations and bring consequences no side wants to see.”

“China doesn’t want a trade war with the United States,” Zhang told a news conference. “But if the US takes actions that hurt Chinese interests, China will not sit idly by.”

An official English-language interpreter added the phrase, “and will take necessary measures.”—AFP ■

French foreign minister in Tehran for tense talks

TEHRAN — French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian was in Tehran on Monday to push for pledges on Iran’s ballistic missile programme in a bid to preserve the country’s historic nuclear deal.

It is the first visit by one of the European signatories to the 2015 nuclear agreement since US President Donald Trump set an ultimatum that he would abandon it in May if it was not “improved”.

Le Drian arrived early Monday in Tehran and held

talks with officials including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. He was due later to meet President Hassan Rouhani.

Tensions were already surfacing ahead of the talks, with Zarif accusing the Europeans of pandering to Washington.

“In order to keep the United States in the Iran nuclear deal, European countries are suffering from extremism and this will ultimately undermine Europe’s policy,” Zarif told reformist newspaper Etemad.

Trump in January set a 120-day deadline for US lawmakers and European allies to “fix” his predecessor Barack Obama’s major foreign policy achievement or face a US exit.

He is concerned that parts of the deal start to expire from 2026 and that it fails to address Iran’s missile programme and its regional activities.

A US exit could kill the nuclear deal, which the Islamic republic has refused to re-negotiate.

European countries have



Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (R) shakes hands with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian as they meet in the capital Tehran on 5 March, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

voiced increasing concern over the missile programme, which Iran says is purely defensive and not up for negotiation.

Le Drian said last month

that the missile programme and Iran’s involvement in regional conflicts needed to be addressed if Tehran “wants to return to the family of nations”.—AFP ■

Philippines arrests suspected pro-IS militant over siege

MANILA — Philippine police announced on Monday the arrest of a suspected pro-Islamic State jihadist accused of killing civilians in last year's deadly siege of the southern city of Marawi.

Hundreds of gunmen flying black IS flags seized Marawi in May last year, triggering a five-month battle that claimed more than 1,100 lives, in a bid to establish a caliphate in the largely Catholic country.

Nasser Lomondot was arrested on Saturday in Manila, months after he fled the fighting in Marawi.

"He participated in the killing of innocent civilians and committed violence against female and child hostages," regional military spokesman Major Ronald Suscano told

reporters.

As government forces battled to wrest back control of Marawi, Lomondot directed a diversionary attack by pro-IS gunmen in the neighbouring town of Marantao, Suscano added.

"He was one of the key planners of the attack in Marantao town ...while the firefight was still ongoing" in Marawi, Suscano said. Lomondot was arrested with a second pro-IS suspect, Manila police chief Oscar Albayalde said in a statement.

The Philippine military warned last month that the remaining militants from Marawi have mustered a force of about 200 gunmen to launch a second attempt to put up a caliphate in the country's south.—AFP ■



Hundreds of gunmen flying black IS flags seized the southern city of Marawi in May last year triggering a five-month battle with Philippine troops that claimed more than 1,100 lives. PHOTO: AFP

Militants announce curfew for time of humanitarian pauses in Syria's Eastern Ghouta

MOSCOW — Militants in Syria's Eastern Ghouta announced curfew for time of humanitarian pauses and outlaw the civilians' mass rallies, Maj Gen Vladimir Zolotukhin, a representative of the Russian center for reconciliation of opposing sides in Syria, told reporters on Sunday.

"According to the information, the Centre has received participants of the illegal armed groups in Eastern Ghouta have announced curfew for civilians for the time of humanitarian pauses," he said. "The locals, who violate these regulations, undergo public punishments."

The militants also banned mass rallies, so that the locals could not breakthrough towards

the humanitarian corridor.

The sixth humanitarian pause began in Eastern Ghouta at 09:00 local time on Sunday. The militants continue holding the locals from crossing the humanitarian corridor. Only two children managed to use the corridor in the past humanitarian pauses. On Saturday, the militants' sharpshooters fired on the humanitarian corridor, where they injured three civilians.

Humanitarian corridor

Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu on Monday said that on instructions from Russian President Vladimir Putin a daily humanitarian pause was introduced in Eastern Ghouta

(a suburb of Damascus) from 09:00 to 14:00 local time, starting from 27 Tuesday, February. In the village of Al-Wafideen, the Syrian authorities and the Russian center for reconciliation of warring sides created conditions for civilians evacuating along the only humanitarian corridor connecting Damascus and Eastern Ghouta.

The humanitarian pauses were derailed by militants in the first days, the Russian center said. Terrorists opened mortar fire on the safe exit from the area. In addition, residents are being forcibly held in Eastern Ghouta controlled by terrorists and are threatened with death for wishing to flee it.—Tass ■



The militants also banned mass rallies, so that the locals could not breakthrough towards the humanitarian corridor. PHOTO: TASS

Eni and Shell go on trial over Nigeria kickback scandal

MILAN — Oil giants Eni and Shell go on trial in Milan on Monday, charged with bribery and corruption in the purchase of an offshore oilfield in Nigeria.

Eni CEO Claudio Descalzi, his predecessor Paolo Scaroni and several officials from Eni and Shell are among those facing the judge.

Ex-Nigerian oil minister Dan Etete is also on trial.

Eni — also charged with corruption in Algeria in a separate trial — and Shell stand accused of handing out bribes during the 2011 purchase of OPL245, an offshore oil block estimated to hold 9 billion barrels of crude, for \$1.3 billion. Both companies deny the charges against them.

"Eni expresses its full confidence in the judicial process and that the trial will ascertain and confirm the correctness and integrity of its conduct," the Italian firm said in a statement.

The agreement allegedly saw Nigeria's former president Goodluck Jonathan and his oil minister Etete pocket bribes, according to corruption watchdog Global Witness.

"Eni and Shell closed the deal with the government without the involvement of an intermediary. The money... was deposited into an account owned by the Nigerian government," said Eni,

which has regularly reaffirmed its trust in Descalzi.

- Major litigation -

Descalzi made it clear last year that Shell and Eni had not been "involved in the government's decision on how to use the money".

Shell also said it believed the judges would conclude there was no case against them, adding "there is no place for bribery or corruption in our company."

The 2011 deal with the Nigerian government aimed to end years of litigation over the OPL245 block between Shell and Dan Etete's Oil and Gas Malabu company. A former oil minister under the dictator Sani Abacha, Etete appropriated the block in 1998, selling it to Malabu, a company he secretly owned.

The licence was subsequently revoked by the government and then transferred to Shell and then again to Malabu, resulting in major litigation.

After taking office in 2010, President Goodluck Jonathan resumed negotiations on the highly coveted block.

According to Global Witness, the deal resulted in \$1.1 billion being paid into an account in London opened by government officials — and going directly to Etete — and \$210 million to the government.—AFP ■

Kremlin: Election meddling worldwide is a 'rich US tradition' that even impacts Russia

MOSCOW — Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov has re-addressed to the Foreign Ministry the question about attempts to intervene in the electoral process in Russia. At the same time he remarked that Washington had what he described as “rich tradition” of meddling in elections in other countries, including Russia.

“As you may know, this question should be addressed to the Foreign Ministry. Apparently it would be not appropriate for us to comment on a Foreign Ministry statement,” Peskov said.

“That the United States has a rich tradition of meddling in the internal affairs and electoral processes in many countries of the world, including our country, is not a secret for anyone. This was acknowledged by the Americans

themselves.”

‘Numerous signs of interference from outside’

The interim commission of the upper house of Russia’s parliament for the protection of state sovereignty has exposed ‘numerous signs of interference from outside’ in the country’s sovereign affairs during election campaigns in 2011-2017, according to the commission’s annual report obtained by TASS on Monday.

“The commission has revealed that numerous signs of interference from outside in Russia’s sovereign affairs took place in 2011-2017 during the following electoral campaigns: the election of deputies of the State Duma (2011 and 2016), the elections of the president of Russia (2012), regional elections (2013 and 2017),” says the document of the interim commission



Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov. PHOTO: TASS

chaired by Senator Andrei Klimov. As the document emphasizes, “the commission is convinced that these foreign attempts failed to noticeably influence the course of electoral campaigns and the expression of the will of Russian citizens during the voting.”

“The facts mentioned above speak not so much about the weakness of such sorts of unlawful actions but about the social and politi-

cal stability in Russia and the timely measures the Russian authorities are taking to protect the constitutional rights of its citizens and the Russian electoral sovereignty,” the authors of the report say.

Examples of meddling-

As an example of “obvious interference from outside” in Russia’s internal affairs, the report points to the attempts to chal-

lenge the results of Russian elections. “Moreover, foreign opponents do not recognize the elections on the Crimean peninsula at all, illegitimately depriving millions of residents in the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol of the right to elect and be elected,” the report says.

As the authors of the report also point out, “Washington carried out very active work, especially using the possibilities of its diplomatic and consular presence in Russia, to gather information on the sentiments of Russian electors, their perception of the social and economic situation and the estimates of the consequences of economic sanctions.” “Thus, a month before regional elections in 2017, Russia’s Foreign Ministry published data that instances repeatedly occurred when

employees of the US embassy from those employed locally (in violation of the Vienna Convention) visited various regions and held polls about local residents’ attitude to the governor and the federal authorities. As a result, Russia’s Foreign Ministry had to ask US diplomats to sever work relations with these people,” the report says. Aside from “direct financing from outside of Russian politicized opposition structures,” the report says that the instruments of interference include “numerous facts of the so-called training of promising Russian political figures abroad.” “Such sort of ‘training’ is normally of anti-Russian nature and is hosted, in particular, in the Baltic countries and in the United States with the participation of officials of these countries,” the report says.—Tass ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. (081 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. (081 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2018 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA
SHIPPING LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V RATANA THIDA VOY. NO. (120)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RATANA THIDA VOY. NO. (120) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BATAM VOY. NO. (142 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BATAM VOY. NO. (142 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (1003W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (1003W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP/MITT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V SHAHR E KORD VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SHAHR E KORD VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S LAND & SEA LOGISTICS**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V NACC POROS V.41

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V NACC POROS V.41 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 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 MERIDIAN SHIPPING
AGENCIES PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

S Korean president's special envoys to meet with DPRK leader

SEOUL — South Korean President Moon Jae-in's special envoys to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) agreed to meet with top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un, the Blue House of South Korea said on Monday.

Presidential Spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom told a press briefing that the special delegation had agreed with the DPRK side to have a meeting and a dinner with the DPRK leader from 6 pm local time (0900 GMT) on Monday.

It was not known whether the dinner meeting had started as agreed upon.

The 10-member delegation, led by Chung Eui-yong, top national security advisor for President Moon, took off from an airport in Seongnam, outside



Chung Eui-yong (C), top national security adviser for South Korean President Moon Jae-in and head of the National Security Office of the Blue House, is seen at the airport in Seoul, South Korea on 5 March, 2018. PHOTO: XINHUA

of Seoul, at about 1:50 pm local time. The delegation, composed of five envoys and five working-level officials, included Suh Hoon, director of the National Intelligence Service (NIS), Vice Unification Minister Chung Hae-sung, Second Deputy NIS Director Kim Sang-gyun, and Yun Kun-young, a senior Blue House

official. The plane carrying the South Korean delegation arrived in the Sunan International Airport in Pyongyang at around 2:50 pm local time, according to the Blue House. The special emissaries were greeted by Ri Son Gwon, chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland who

visited South Korea last month as a member of high-ranking DPRK delegations to the opening and closing ceremonies of the 23rd Winter Olympics.

The South Korean envoys moved to a resort facility in Pyongyang to meet with Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea who led the ranking DPRK delegation to the Olympic closing ceremony.

During the meeting with the vice chairman, the South Korean envoys discussed schedules for their two-day stay in Pyongyang, agreeing to have a dinner meeting with the DPRK leader, according to the Blue House.—Xinhua ■

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M.V HONOUR PESCADORES V.1801

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HONOUR PESCADORES V.1801 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MSTL-1 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 BEN LINE AGENCIES
(SINGAPORE) PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T./MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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

M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1081 S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1081 S/N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA
SHIPPING**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V TAN BINH 127

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TAN BINH 127 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of BSW 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 RK SHIPPING &
TRADING PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V OCCITAN BARSAC

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OCCITAN BARSAC are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT 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 CA SHIPPING PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V FALCON TRIDENT

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V FALCON TRIDENT are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 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 CA SHIPPING PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

'The Shape of Water' triumphs at nail-biting Oscars

LOS ANGELES — The Shape of Water" on Sunday won top honours at the Oscars including the coveted best picture statuette, bringing the curtain down on a Hollywood awards season overshadowed by scandal over sexual misconduct in showbiz.

Guillermo del Toro's fairy tale romance led the charge going into the show with 13 nominations, and took home best picture — the top prize of the night — as well as best director and statuettes for production design and best original score.

In an night of honours being shared fairly evenly among several candidates, Martin McDonagh's dark crime comedy "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" had to settle for best actress for Frances McDormand and best supporting actor for Sam Rockwell.

Christopher Nolan's World War II thriller "Dunkirk" also picked up three awards, but in the less glitzy technical categories, while several movies ended the evening with two trophies.

"I am an immigrant," an emotional Del Toro said in collecting his first prize of the night, praising the power of filmmaking to "erase the line in the sand" between people of different countries and cultures.

"I want to dedicate this to every young filmmaker — the youth that is showing us how things are done," he said.

"I thought this could never happen. It happens. And I want to tell you, everyone that is dreaming of using fantasy to tell the stories about the things that are real in the world today — you can do it."

- 'Long overdue' -



Guillermo del Toro's "The Shape of Water" was the big winner with four Oscars, including best picture and best director for the Mexican filmmaker. **PHOTO: AFP**

Hosted for the second straight year by late night funnyman Jimmy Kimmel, the 90th Academy Awards capped a difficult few months during which the industry has declared war on the pervasive culture of sexual impropriety unearthed by the downfall of movie mogul and alleged serial sex attacker Harvey Weinstein.

Kimmel set the tone by targeting Weinstein in his opening monologue, describing the disgraced producer's downfall following dozens of allegations of sexual harassment and assault as "long overdue."

"We can't let bad behavior slide anymore. The world is watching us. We need to set an example," he said. McDormand, a winner throughout the awards season for her scintillating turn as a grieving, rage-filled mother in "Three Billboards," took home her second Oscar, 21 years after winning for "Fargo."

In a statement about the need for inclusion in the indus-

try, she got all of the female nominees in the room to stand to highlight their work.

"We all have stories to tell and projects we need financed,"



Allison Janney won her first Oscar, for best supporting actress in "I, Tonya". **PHOTO: AFP**

she said to enthusiastic applause.

Her "Three Billboards" co-star Rockwell kicked off the night by claiming best supporting actor for his acclaimed turn as a racist, violent police officer.

Best actor went to runaway favorite Gary Oldman, who sat in make-up for three hours a day to disappear entirely into the role of British wartime prime minister Winston Churchill for "Darkest Hour." Allison Janney won best supporting actress for her turn as the cold, sardonic mother of disgraced figure skater Tonya Harding in "I, Tonya" — capping a sparkling awards season which saw her sweep the major prizes.

"My fellow nominees, you represent everything that is good and right and human about this profession. You are all extraordinary," the statuesque 58-year-old Janney, the overwhelming favorite, enthused at the podium.

- Activism -

With the #MeToo and Time's Up campaigns against sexual misconduct and gender inequality dominating the 2018 awards circuit, this year's Oscars gala was seen as an opportunity for Tinseltown to support female filmmaking.

Greta Gerwig, only the fifth woman in Oscars history to be nominated for best director — for comedy/drama "Lady Bird" — however went home empty-handed, despite other nominations for best picture and best screenplay.

There was also the first nod in history for a female cinematographer — Rachel Morrison, who shot Dee Rees's racial drama "Mudbound" — although the award ended up going to Roger Deakins on his 14th attempt, for "Blade Runner 2049."

The Time's Up initiative was not as visible as at the Golden Globes in January, with no coordinated protest — like the striking Globes red carpet "blackout." But towards the end of the show, Salma Hayek fronted the presentation of a video of stars advocating for women's rights and racial equality, including Ava DuVernay, Chadwick Boseman, Lee Daniels and Geena Davis.

"This entire fall, (through) the #MeToo, the Time's Up movements, everyone is getting a voice to express something that has been happening forever, not only in Hollywood, but in every walk of life," said Mira Sorvino ("Mighty Aphrodite").

In another nod to the women's movements, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences tapped past winners Jennifer Lawrence and Jodie Foster — on crutches — to present McDormand's best actress Oscar.

Traditionally, the previous

Oscar winners

Main categories

Best ...

Picture

"The Shape of Water"

Director

Guillermo del Toro

"The Shape of Water"

Actress

Frances McDormand

"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

Actor

Gary Oldman

"Darkest Hour"

Supporting actress

Allison Janney

"I, Tonya"

Supporting actor

Sam Rockwell

"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

Foreign film

"A Fantastic Woman"

(Chile)

Animated film

"Coco"

Animated short

"Dear Basketball"

Documentary film

"Icarus"



Oscar winners. **PHOTO: AFP**

year's best actor winner would present that statuette, but Casey Affleck, who triumphed in 2017 for "Manchester by the Sea," withdrew under a cloud of sexual harassment accusations he denies.

- Presenters atone for 2017 flub -

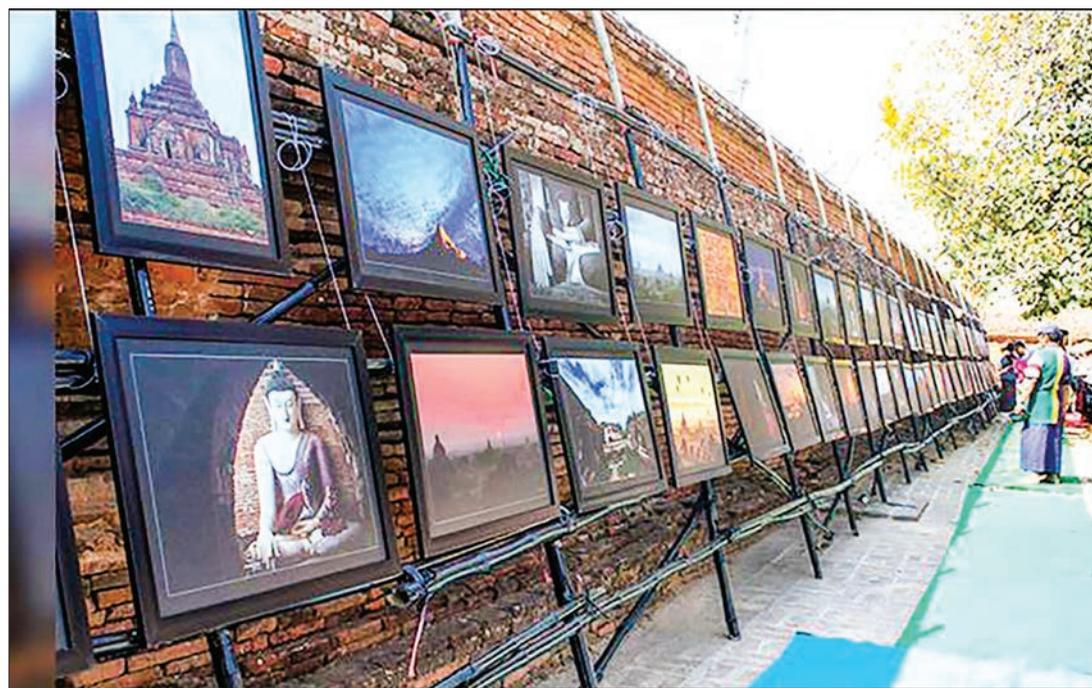
Other winners included Pixar's "Coco" for best animated feature and "A Fantastic Woman" — a love story from Chilean director Sebastian Lelio with a much-praised star turn from transgender actress Daniela Vega — in the foreign film category. And Jordan Peele won the award for best original screenplay for his highly acclaimed debut film, horror satire "Get Out."

Organizers were looking to rebound after last year's flubbed announcement by Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway of the best picture winner — the trophy was initially given to "La La Land," when the actual winner was "Moonlight."

In a surprise turn of events, Beatty and Dunaway were tapped to present the same prize this time around, and the presentation went without a hitch. "It's so nice seeing you again," joked Beatty, to laughs from the audience.—AFP ■



US singer Miguel (L) and Mexican singer Natalia Lafourcade perform "Remember Me" from "Coco," which won the Oscar for best animated feature. **PHOTO: AFP**



A guest views old and new photos of Bagan and its temples at a photo exhibition in Bagan. PHOTO: MDN

Bagan from the Heart to be seen in Yangon

THE photo exhibition titled “The Bagan from The Heart” is scheduled to have a second show in Yangon’s National Museum in early May, according to the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Bagan branch).

Its first photo exhibition was held in Bagan on 2 March to welcome the new title of “World Heritage for Bagan 2019” which is a way to recognize the transi-

tion of Bagan from being a Myanmar heritage site to a world heritage site.

“It is an exhibition that showcases photographers who love Bagan with all their heart. The photographers will join together to show their photographic work. Old and new photos taken of temples in the ancient city will be exhibited,” said U Aung Aung Kyaw, Director of the Department of Archaeology

and National Museum (Bagan branch). The number of photos to be displayed in the second exhibition will be more than the first show in Bagan, he said. The first photo exhibition showed 200 photos shot by 100 photographers.

The exhibition aims at promoting the culture, history and traditions to people in Myanmar and around the world.—Myanmar Digital News

Myanmar traditional bullock cart race attracts local people

A Myanmar traditional bullock cart race is being held in Khinmon Village, ChaungU Township in Sagaing Region.

The event which is celebrated in honour of Peasants’ Day attracted around 120 participants from Monywa, Sagaing, ChaungU, Salingyi, Nganzun, Myaung and Myinmu townships. Apart from the race, there is also a “beauty contest race” where the contenders race their bullocks down the track without carts.

“We organize the event annually to honor Peasants’ Day

and this year marks the fourth time. We categorize the bullock cart race into four classes.

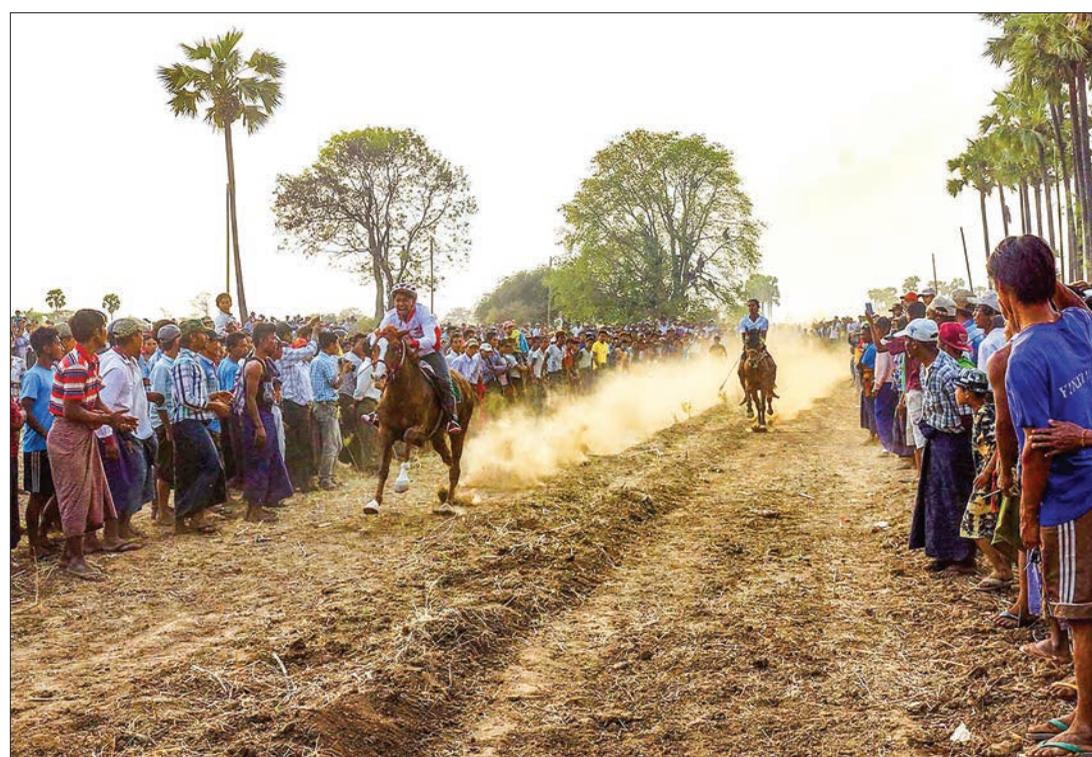
The first prize winner will take home a refrigerator while the second and third prize winners will get a 19 inch television and a cash award respectively,” said a local, who is a secretary of the committee for organizing the event.

The five day competition commenced on 4 March and continues till 8 March, according to an event organizer.—Myanmar Digital News



A bullock cart heading towards the finish line at a competition in honor of Peasants’ Day in ChaungU Township, Sagaing Region. PHOTO: MDN

Traditional horse races in Meiktila



Two horse riders race past hundreds of cheering spectators at an annual competition held on the 4th Waning day of Tabaung in Meiktila, Mandalay Region. PHOTO: CHAN HA (MEIKTILA)

A traditional horse racing competition for the 59th Sutaung Chantar Shwebonthar Pagoda Buddha Puzaniya festival in Khanni Village-tract in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region was held yesterday.

The annual event is held every 4th Waning day of

Tabaung. The event lasts for only one evening and the horse riders are usually invited from around Meiktila. Since this event is only held once a year and only for one evening, people from over 50 neighboring villages, including Thitakan, Teepingone, Kanni, Lun Ngin,

Thaepingone, Konethar, Tee-gone, Letkhotepin, and Tharyargone, come spectate

This year’s event saw five horse riders compete for first prize of Ks 150,000, second prize of Ks 70,000, and the third prize of Ks 50,000. —Chantha (Meiktila)

Tibetans greet new year with giant Buddhas, dancing and lamb carcasses

REBKONG COUNTY — Despite a few elbows to the face, Tsering pushed through the broil of Tibetan worshippers and lifted her bawling two-year-old over the mad crush, briefly pressing the girl’s forehead to a passing sacred scroll.

Scores of monks and men heaved the enormous thangka — an image of Buddha painted on silk, rolled up in a tight cylinder while in transit — through the packed streets around Rongwo Monastery in China’s northwestern province of Qinghai for a religious ritual wrapping up Losar, the Tibetan new year.

“It’s good luck, especially for children,” said Tsering, breathless and flushed with success, before whirling away to search rather fruitlessly for her daughter’s missing right shoe.

China has long been accused of trying to eradicate Tibetan culture through political and religious repression. Beijing insists that Tibetans

enjoy extensive freedoms.

Rebkong county is a major centre of traditional Tibetan culture and the Gelug — or “Yellow Hat” — sect of the exiled Dalai Lama. It has witnessed numerous self-immolation protests against Chinese rule since 2009.

Police were a constant presence throughout the new year celebrations, watching over the various ceremonies, stopping all cars entering the county seat and checking the few hotels allowed to receive foreigners.

But Losar passed without incident in a riot of colour and celebration. Like the Chinese lunar new year, the first few days are dominated by family and feasting.

The climax for the Gelug sect is the annual “sunning of the Buddha”, as it is known in Chinese, where a colossal thangka painting multiple stories tall is paraded through the streets and briefly displayed.—AFP

Mickelson ends drought with WGC Mexico playoff triumph

MEXICO CITY — Five-time major winner Phil Mickelson seized his first title in nearly five years on Sunday as he edged Justin Thomas in a playoff to win the WGC Mexico Championship.

Mickelson, who hadn't won since his victory at the Open Championship at Muirfield in 2013, parred the first playoff hole, the par-three 17th at Club de Golf Chapultepec, where Thomas missed the green and was unable to get up and down for par.

"It's been a tough go the last four years, not playing my best," Mickelson said. "But to have the believe that I was going to get there and finally break through and do it feels incredible.

"I feel that more is to come," added the 47-year-old. "I'm starting play some of my best golf."

The 24-year-old Thomas, one of the hottest young stars in golf and the reigning US PGA Tour Player of the Year, was coming off a victory at the Honda Classic last week.

He made six birdies and holed out from the fairway for an eagle at the 18th for a closing

seven-under 64 that put him atop the leaderboard on 16-under 268.

With Thomas in the clubhouse with a two-stroke lead, Mickelson birdied 15 and 16 to reach 16-under and parred the last two-holes to cap a 66 and force the decider.

England's Tyrrell Hatton was 16-under through 17 holes, but bogeyed the last to miss the playoff.

His 67 left him tied for third on 269 with Spain's Rafa Cabrera Bello (67).

Mickelson, whose drought stretched over 101 worldwide starts, had sounded a confident note when he finished the third round two shots off the 54-hole lead of India's Shubhankar Sharma. He opened with back-to-back birdies, and after a three-putt bogey at the third birdied the fourth and sixth, adding another birdie at the 10th to hold sole possession of the lead on 15-under.

He gave a stroke back at the 11th, however, where his second shot ended up in the undergrowth between ivy-covered trees.—AFP ■



US golfer Phil Mickelson holds his trophy at tee 18 after winning the World Golf Championship in Mexico City on 4 March, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

From Man Utd to Hong Kong Forlan's still going strong

HONG KONG — Former Manchester United striker Diego Forlan said he hasn't lost his passion for football and has no plans to retire as he embraces his latest challenge: firing Hong Kong's Kitchee in the Asian Champions League.

Uruguay's Forlan, now 38, has shone on the sport's biggest stages with Manchester United and Atletico Madrid, and also when he won the golden ball at the 2010 World Cup.

After ending a one-year stay with Inter Milan in 2012, Forlan has played for five clubs, including Mumbai City in the Indian Super League last year.

But Forlan, who has now played for clubs in eight different countries, said he is enjoying a new lease of life with Kitchee, where he is regularly finding the net.

"It's great. Great relationship, good guys from different countries, so I'm really enjoy-

ing my time here," Forlan said in an interview with AFP.

"I really enjoy (it), it's beautiful. It's been my work for almost 20 years and it's been great. I don't feel (it is) like working, it's something that I enjoy playing, something that I'm privileged (to do), so that's why I'll keep going and keep playing."

Forlan isn't the only footballer to enjoy a late-career flourish in Asia, whose increasingly wealthy leagues have attracted a steady stream of veteran players.

This week he will return to Japan, where he had an 18-month spell with Cerezo Osaka in 2014-15, as Kitchee face Kashiwa Reysol looking for their first win in the AFC Champions league.—AFP ■



Diego Forlan.

PHOTO: KITCHEE

Mourinho to join Kremlin-funded Russian channel for World Cup

MOSCOW — Jose Mourinho is coming to Russia for the World Cup to provide analysis for a Kremlin-funded channel that offers no live coverage of this summer's tournament.

RT television announced the signing on Monday without disclosing the payment Mourinho will receive for appearing on a channel pushing Russia's take on news to a foreign audience.

"Enigmatic football manager and self-styled 'Special One' Jose Mourinho has become RT's latest signing," the channel said.

"He'll offer his unique insight into the game for the channel's FIFA 2018 World Cup Russia special coverage."

RT has several foreign language services besides English and is particularly active on YouTube.

It was forced to register as a "foreign agent" in the United States in November for being part of "Russia's state-run propaganda machine" — a

charge RT denies.

RT quoted the Manchester United boss as saying that he was "very happy" and "looking forward to attending the World Cup in Russia this summer and sharing my insights into the games." The channel already has two former players as presenters: former Manchester United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel and former Liverpool and Aston Villa striker Stan Collymore.

RT does not have the television rights to show World Cup matches but says it will provide "live text commentary" and reports. The channel has hired a number of high-profile but controversial figures to present shows. These have included the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange while the channel currently airs shows hosted by former British MP George Galloway and former Scottish Nationalist Party leader Alex Salmond.—AFP ■