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CLUE TO LOST WORLD

Scientists analyse 99 mln year old lizard fossil

GAINESVILLE — A fossilized lizard found in Southeast Asia preserved in amber dates back some 99 million years, Florida scientists have determined, making it the oldest specimen of its kind and a “missing link” for reptile researchers.

The lizard is some 75 million years older than the previous record holder, according to researchers at the Florida Museum of Natural History, who announced the finding this week.

It was found decades ago in a mine along with other ancient, well-preserved reptile fossils, but the US scientists were able to analyse the finds only recently. “It was incredibly exciting to see these animals for the first time,” Edward Stanley, a member of the research team, said on Saturday.

“It was exciting and startling, actually, how well they were preserved.”

Scientists believe the chameleon-like creature was an infant when it was trapped in a gush of sticky resin while

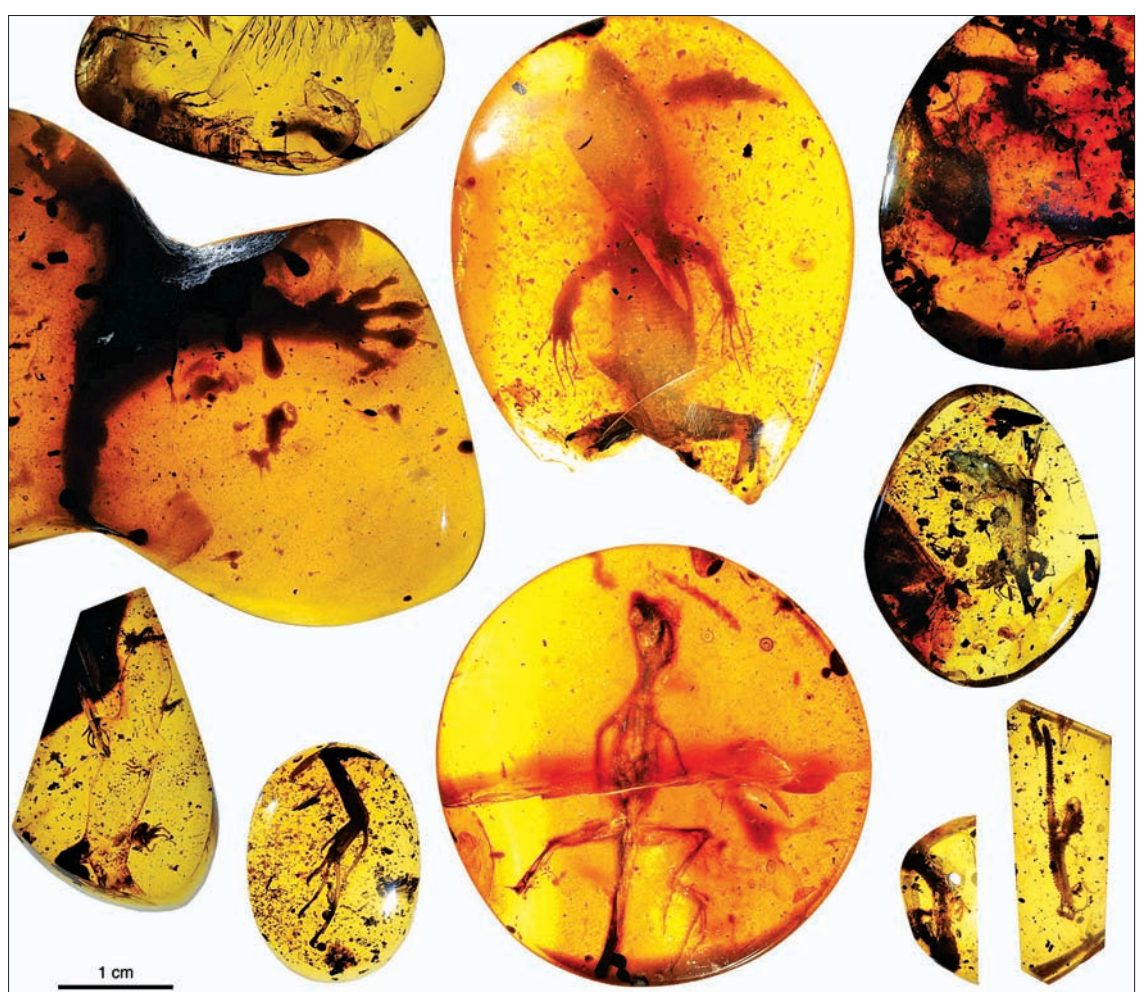
darting through a tropical forest in what is now Myanmar, in Southeast Asia. The creature’s entire body, including its eyes and colourful scales, is unusually well-preserved, Stanley said.

The other reptiles trapped in the amber, including a gecko and an arctic lizard, were also largely intact. Small reptiles have delicate bodies and typically deteriorate quickly, he said. Being encased in solid amber helped to lock the specimens together.

Stanley and other researchers used high-resolution digital X-ray technology to examine the creatures and estimate the age of the amber without breaking it.

The discovery will help researchers learn more about the “lost ecosystem, the lost world” to which the creatures belonged, Stanley said, and it may help researchers learn more about the creatures’ modern relatives.

“It’s kind of a missing link,” Stanley said.—Reuters



Various lizard specimens are shown preserved in ancient amber from present-day Myanmar in Southeast Asia, in this handout photo provided by the Florida Museum of Natural History on 5 March 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Record drug haul seized by police in Mandalay



Kyaw Thu Min, Aung Naing, and Pho Chan.
PHOTO POLICE

MILLIONS of dollars’ worth of drugs were seized in Pyigyidagun Township, Mandalay Region, on 5 March, following a search of a

container inside the compound of a house, the local drug squad said, calling it the largest ever seizure in the region.

The search of Kyaw Kyaw’s house led to the arrests of three people in possession of stimulant pills and drug paraphernalia.

The seizures were valued at K30 billion (US\$24.5 million), with one police officer citing the carriers as saying that they were each paid K500,000 (\$409) per trip from Kutkhai to Mandalay to transport drugs. Police have filed charges against four people in connection with the case.

Kyaw Thu Min, 27, Aung Naing, 28 and Pho Chan, 25, have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Kyaw Kyaw, the owner of the home, is still on the

run.

As a prequel to the record drug haul in Mandalay, six drug dealers were arrested in Mayangon Township, Yangon Region, on 3 March, following a police raid on a house. The raid resulted in the arrests of Saw Talar Saw, Zaw Than, Thet Naing, Kyaw Min Oo, Ma Nayuhat and Ma Shisami together with hundreds of thousands of yabba pills, drug paraphernalia, two vehicles, barrels of liquid chemicals and millions of kyats.

The Bayintnaung Police Station has taken action against the six drug dealers.—Aung That Khaing

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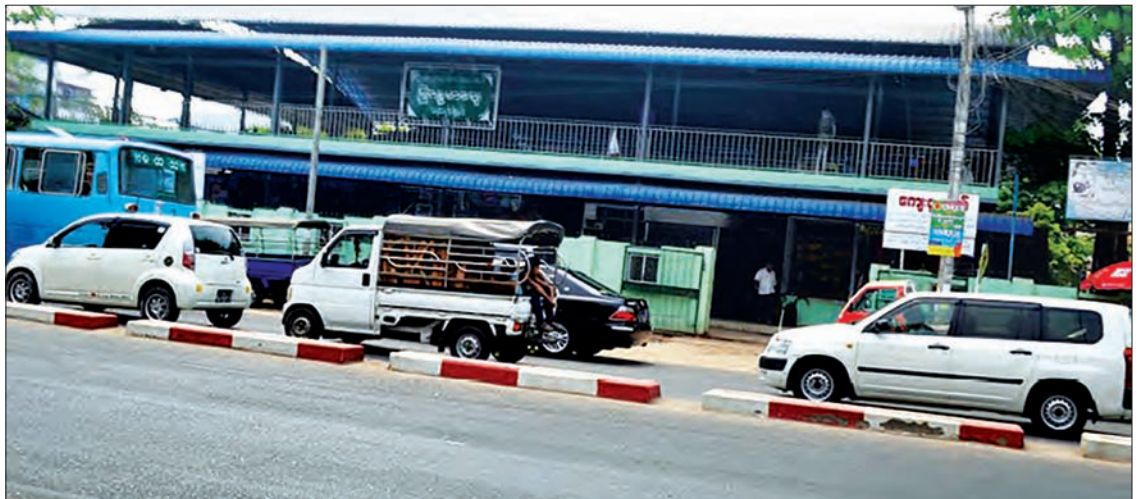
Renovation of Myagandama Market nearly complete

THE renovation of Myagandama Market in Mayangon Township, Yangon, is 90 per cent complete, and it is estimated to be finished at the end of this month, said U San Myint, chairman of the market development committee.

After the renovation project, the market will offer numerous booths for vendors.

Fire safety measures at the new market include a 2,000-hold tank installed in the market compound.

With Kyats 515 million (US\$418,019) funded by Yangon City Development Committee, the project began the in first week of June last year. —*Myo Min Thein*



Myagandamar Market seen under renovation. PHOTO: MYO MIN THEIN

Summer shooting course aims to cultivate young talent

THE Myanmar Shooting Sport Federation under the Sports Ministry plans to open a summer shooting course in Yangon with the aim of turning out a new generation of competitive shooters.

The course will run between 14 March and 1 April at International Shooting Range in North

Dagon Township, Yangon. It is scheduled to be open from 9am to 11am daily.

Children above 13 years of age are invited to join the free course. For more information, dial 018011074 and 018011075 to reach the federation's office. —*Thi Thi Min*

Job fair to help youths find out what professions fit their personalities

JOB website work.com.mm, which connects job seekers and employers, will organise a job fair at the end of March in Yangon, focusing on finding skilled workers for services businesses.

The event is scheduled to be run on 27 March at MICT Park from 9am to 5am, and qualified workers to serve both local and international-based hotels and restaurants are

encouraged to attend.

Work.com.mm also organised its second job exhibition in Yangon on 16 and 17 January. More than 3,000 applicants got jobs during the past event, which included 30 companies.

At the moment, there are many sales and marketing, travel and tours, IT technician and banking jobs available in Yangon, said U Tin Maung Thein,

chairman of the Myanmar Society for Human Resource Management.

Despite the high demand for staff, local companies are facing the scarcity of skilled workers as well as salary negotiation problems with experienced workers, he added. For details on the job fair, readers are invited to dial 09261601095. —*Moon Oo Nadi*

Crime NEWS

Fire destroys 42 homes in Bago

FORTY-TWO homes were destroyed by a fire near mile post No. 84 on the Myohcaung Village Road in Kyaukdaga Township, Bago Region, at noon on Saturday 5 March.

According to an investigation, the fire started in the kitchen of a house owned by Sikuma, who resides in Myochaungzaytan Ward-1. The flames spread quickly, as homes in the area are positioned closely together.

The fire was put out by fire fighters and neighbours, along with 10 fire engines from fire departments in Pyu, Phado, Paenwgon, Daik-U, Ohnshitgon, Kanyutkwin, Tawkywelinn, Nyaunglebin and Kyaukdaga townships. They had the fire under control by around 2pm that day.

The fire victims will be provided temporary shelters within the village. —*Khin Ko*

K3 bn worth of yabba pills, opium seized in Yangon

A CACHE of tablets, black opium and crystal meth worth more than K3 billion (US\$2,400,579) were found in a house in Mayangon Township, Yangon, by local police on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off, police officers from the Mayangon Police Station searched a house located within the Mudita housing complex on Baho Street in Ward-2 of the township that

day and discovered the illegal drugs, including 640,000 yabba tablets, 52 grams of black opium and 44 grams of crystal meth, as well as K10 million (\$8,000). The house owner Saw Bar Lar Saw (a) Wunna Soe and five others named Zaw Than, Thet Naing, Kyaw Min Oo, Ma Nar Yu Hatt and Ma Shi Sar Mi were placed under arrest by the police. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Broken bridge in Hpa-an kills a woman

A WOMAN was killed in a bridge accident on Wednesday in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State, police reported yesterday. Thin Thin Aung and her niece Chit Thitsa began walking over the three-foot wide, 200-foot long bridge while villagers carried out renovations on it that day.

The two women fell 12 feet into the creek as they were walking over a damaged part of the bridge. During the accident, Thin Thin Aung sustained serious injuries and died on the spot. Chit Thitsa sustained minor injuries.

Local police are still investigating the case. —*Tun Tun Htwe*

Police save disabled woman from traffickers



Hu Kyan Main (a) Ar Hsan Kyae.



Daw Kyin Woo (a) Aye Sein.



Li Lout Wun.



Phon Yin Chain.

MYANMAR'S Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division recently investigated a human trafficking case in Lashio, a major trading town in northern Shan State, re-

sulting in the arrest four traffickers. A Chinese citizen named Hu Kyan Main (a) Ar Hsan Kyae, 42, Daw Kyin Woo (a) Aye Sein, 63, Li Lout Wun, 42, and Phon Yin

Chain, 42, were seized by the police for attempting to collect local women to sell them in China as fraudulent marriage partners.

According to the police investigation, Hu Kyan Main, who resides in China's Yunnan Province, visited Lashio to look for a marriage partner for a Chinese man in early March.

With the help of a local couple, Hu Kyan Main discovered the 24-year-old woman with a mental disability within a short period of time. He sold an 18-year-old local girl to the Chinese man in Yunnan Province in December last year. She received 8,000 Chinese yuan from the buyer, who also paid K500,000 (US\$400) to the girl's grandma and K50,000 to a local agent.

The four suspects were arrested after being interrogated at the township administration office in the presence of witnesses. The suspects have been charged under Section 24/32 of the Trafficking-in Persons Law. —*Min Naing*

Nine people injured in road accident

NINE passengers of a three-wheel vehicle sustained injuries in a traffic accident on the Thaton-Yangon road near Zayitchaung Village in Thaton Township, Mon State, on Friday. According to the police investi-

gation, a Probox car driven by Nyein Chan, 29, en route from Myawady to Bilin, collided with the back of the three-wheel vehicle carrying nine passengers on the highway. Upon collision, the three-wheel vehicle fell into the

drain on the roadside, and every passenger sustained injuries.

They are receiving treatment at the district hospital. The reckless driver has been charged under the law by the Thaton Myoma Police Station. —*The Too*

Myanmar nationals travelling to Korea for employment first require screening for lung disease

MYANMAR nationals headed to Korea for employment with EPS must apply to be screened against lung disease at either Asia Royal or Pun Hlaing hospitals, according to a statement from the government overseas employment agency which falls under the department of labour administration.

“[Myanmar] workers travelling to Korea for employment purposes with EPS must undergo an x-ray at either Asia Royal or Pan Hlaing hospitals. They will only be accepted with a medical check for lung disease from an x-ray specialist,” said U Win

Myint, managing director of the government overseas employment agency.

Workers travelling to Korea in the past could be tested at Nine Star, Moe The, Kembangan, Asia Pacific, and Bo Aung Kyaw medical clinics, but lung screenings must be carried out at either Asia Royal or Pan Hlaing hospitals.

Those who have sat the EPS-TOPIK exam to be eligible to travel to work in Korea, must attach their health examination record to their application, while those who are successful with securing employment in Korea must then be tested a second time before

leaving the country.

“I think it would be better if the information of medical records [of prospective employees] was sent to Korea to be examined. It would take a while but it would be of benefit to those workers arriving in Korea to get a definitive medical result,” said U Toe Thura, employee of the Busan workers assistance centre.

This year sees the first time in which Myanmar workers travelling to Korea for employment via the EPS-TOPIK (Korean Language Proficiency Examination) have had to undergo health examinations.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Health Department survey shows link between Hepatitis B, C and liver cirrhosis cases

A SURVEY conducted by the Health Department in 2015 indicates that 3.3 million people in Myanmar are currently diagnosed with hepatitis B and 1.3 million people with hepatitis C, with the department saying these hepatitis viruses are associated with the rise in liver cirrhosis cases.

Liver Specialist Professor U Khin Maung Win expects the actual number to be larger than

the department's figures, citing international statistics as ranking the country among the highest in outbreaks of liver diseases.

The liver specialist spoke at the opening of the gastrointestinal and liver department at Pin Lon Hospital, North Dagon Myothit, Yangon, yesterday. The G&L department is the first of its kind in the country and was established in partnership with Sin-

gapore-based Asian American Medical Group, Pin Long Hospital and the 30th Street Clinic.

The professor said the newly opened facility can offer all kinds of liver treatments, except liver transplants.

Pin Lon Hospital was established with 300 beds in 2007 and now has departments for cancer, cardiac disease and hemodialysis treatment.—*Min Thit*

Nearly 100,000 acres rendered uncultivable as reservoirs dry up in Sagaing Region



File photo shows farmers planting rice in rain-fed field in upper Myanmar: PHOTO: TUN TUN WIN

THE drying up of three reservoirs in the village of Ywar Tharyar, located in the Sagaing Region township of Yinmabin, has rendered almost 100,000 acres of land uncultivable, according to local farmers.

“Many farmers from our village have depended upon the large water reservoirs for paddy cultivation for over a decade. But, there's absolutely no more water to be found in these reservoirs anymore. The drying up of these water supplies has deprived us of the chance to plant paddy. Farmers are going to have to stay strong and cultivate paddy with rain water that will

come with the monsoon season,” said U Theik Aung, a paddy farmer from Ywar Tharyar village.

Local farmers have encountered difficulties for decades with roughly over 100 farmers having been unable to grow paddy for over that last 20 years because of droughts.

“The farmers would be better off if the State dug more reservoirs. The reservoirs we have are devoid of water, so as a result we aren't able to plant paddy anymore. In the past these reservoirs used to be full to the brim with water - we could cultivate paddy all year round. It

would be good for us farmers if the State once again carried out a national initiative to create more of a water supply,” said U Thauung Htun, a Ywar Tharyar village farmer. The village of Ywar Tharyar consists of over 300 households, making up a population of over 1,500 residents. The drying out of the aforementioned three reservoirs has forced local farmers to plant substitute crops to paddy in order to survive.

According to local residents the reservoirs were first dug over 90 years ago.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Japanese man falls to death from hotel window



Photo shows the site where Japanese man falls to death. SUPPLIED BY MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

A Japanese man fell to his death from the window of the tenth floor of Alfa Hotel in Dagon Township, Yangon Region, yesterday, local police said.

Mr Kurihara Kentaro, 53, was staying in Room 1003 on the tenth floor of the hotel before his death. A police investigation revealed that he checked into the hotel on 28 February

and that he was supposed to do business in foodstuff in partnership with Sojitz Corporation Yangon. He stayed first in Room 1009 but then moved to Room 1003, saying he needed better internet connection.

The Dagon Township Police Station has launched further investigations into the cause of his death.—*Zaw Gyi (Panita)*

Nine pilgrims killed in car crash on Nay Pyi Taw highway

NINE pilgrims on their way to Lashio, Shan State, were killed in a car crash on the Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay highway yesterday, according to the highway police force.

A light truck headed for Lashio mounted the median strip near mile post 301 on the highway and overturned, leaving three men and six women dead on the spot, police have confirmed, adding that other injured passengers were taken

to Mandalay Hospital.

Only a 19-year-old girl was fully conscious following the accident, but she was too traumatised to recount how many people in total were there in the car, according to Ko Khin Maung Lay, a volunteer from Mandalay.

“She is the only one who can talk, but she is deeply shocked at the loss of her family members,” he added.—*Highway Red Cross*

Swathes of Kayin State could suffer El Niño-induced water shortages

THE Department for Rural Development in Kayin State has made it known that approximately 36 village within the state could face water shortages during this year's dry season as a result of the El Niño weather front.

“According to the findings from field trips conducted by the Kayin State government and village-level civil servants, there are villages within the state that are vulnerable to water shortages, in which provisions will be made so that we can respond immediately

if shortages occur,” said U Nay Oo of the Department of Rural Development for Kayin State.

U Budi Man, the chair of the Township Development and Assistance Organisation, said officials from various departments in the area will coordinate to provide water in the event of a natural disaster. In 2014, some parts of Kayin State experienced water shortages, during which parliamentarians, journalists and members of the public donated water to the affected villages.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

LOCAL Business



Yadana Gas field. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY ENERGY MINISTRY

Yadana Gas field launches new wells to boost production

THE Yadana Gas project has begun drilling more wells in its off-shore M-5 and M-6 blocks to keep its level of high production on track until 2020.

Union Minister for Energy U Zeya Aung visited the field yesterday, where he assisted with the launch of the new wells.

The Yadana Gas project is a joint-venture between the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise under the Ministry of Energy and Total E&P Myanmar Company, established in 1992. The project exports more than 500 million cubic feet of gas per day while supplying 200 million cubic feet of gas for domestic consumption every day.

During his visit, the Union minister and general manager Xavier Preel of Total E&P discussed the firm's production, corporate social responsibility and plans for to boost gas production.

The joint-venture firm has

spent about US\$38 million so far on education, health, agriculture and the construction and maintenance of basic infrastructure as part of its corporate social responsibility, which is meant to ensure the benefit of people living in the vicinity of the project, since 1995.

The production-sharing contract for the Yadana natural gas project will expire in 2020.

The firm accounts for 50 per cent of Myanmar's energy consumption, while the remaining 50 per cent is from the Zawtika project, the Shwe gas pipeline and onshore blocks.

Myanmar's individual consumption of electricity stands at 222 kilowatts, with demand for power increasing by 15 per cent annually, due to the rising number of factories and workshops and the rising population.

Official statistics show that 66 per cent of electricity comes

from hydropower stations, 29 per cent from gas-fired power stations, 3 per cent from coal-fired power stations and the rest from wind, solar and biomass sources.

Myanmar's installed electricity capacity rose from 3,400 megawatts in 2010 to 5,089 megawatts in 2015, supplying power to 15,000 of 60,000 villages across the country.

The National Electrification Plan, conducted in partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) since 2012, aims to enable all parts of the country to have full access to electricity by 2030.

The plan has covered 33 per cent of the whole country, said U Maw Tha Htwe, Deputy Minister for Electric Power.

"Much remains to be done to meet the target as only one third of the population lives with electricity," he said.—GNLM

Myanmar pulse exports rising

MYANMAR exported 1.54 million tonnes of beans and pulses in 2015, witnessing 25 per cent up from the previous year, largely because of increased demand from India, according to official government statistics.

Productive rate of beans in central Myanmar region declined 30 per cent due to drought, with pigeon pea at K24,000, green gram at K33,000 and mung bean at K 3,3500 per basket last year.

Myanmar export 70 per cent

of mung beans to India, while 50 per cent of green gram to China. Demand of pigeon peas to western countries also contributes to a certain extent although purchasing volume of this variety in those countries is gradually increasing.

A recent study by the International Food Policy Research Institute showed that pulses imports of India rose from 0.1 million tons in 2000 to a staggering 4.1 million tons in 2012. In terms

of value, pulses import has joined the billion-dollar club, rising US\$ 45 million in 2000 to \$1.93 billion in 2012.

The bean exporter said the reasons for increasing local prices of beans and peas are because of declining Myanmar currency rate against hard currency, as well as higher demand of foreign markets where crops were devastated amidst natural disasters such as floods and heavy rains.—Kay Khaing

Private freight train services to run between Yangon, Mandalay, Myitkyina

MYANMA RAILWAYS announced yesterday that Asia Sun Logistics Co. Ltd and Resources Group of Logistics won the tender to establish freight train services as a joint venture along the Yangon-Mandalay and Mandalay-Myitkyina routes.

U Thurein Win, managing director of Myanmar Railways, said the new freight lines will begin operating in the near future.

"With the operations of the two freight services under the joint venture system, fuel and construction materials for building infrastructure will be transported at reasonable prices," he added.

According to the agreements in the tender, each company will receive the right to

operate the freight services for 20 years.

Currently, Myanmar Railways operates freight services along the Yangon-Mandalay route, Yangon-Mawlamyine route, Yangon-Pyay route, Mandalay-Myitkyina route, Mandalay-Lashio route, Thazi-Shwenyaung-Myingyan route and Pyinmana-Taungd-wingyi-Kyaukpadaung route, among others.

The volume of freight shipped by Myanmar Railways has declined from about 3.58 million tonnes in the 2011-2012 fiscal year to 2.18 million tonnes in the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Expired engines and coaches have been blamed for Myanmar Railways' decrease in business.—Soe Win



A train running between Yangon and Mandalay is seen at Yangon Railway Station. PHOTO: MYANMA RAILWAYS

Tourists arrivals rise by 1 million each year on average

With the consistent rise in tourist arrivals every year, Myanmar has drawn a master plan for 2013 to 2020, when it expects about 7 million visitors.

Tourist arrivals into Myanmar increased by 52 per cent in 2015 compared to 2014.

The Myanmar tourism industry grew by 50 per cent between 2013 and 2015, and is anticipated to grow even more in 2016.

Jovago, a French online hotel booking agency, has announced that the Myanmar tourism industry could expand two-fold within the coming decade.

"Myanmar is a top destination within the world tourism

industry for its beautiful scenery and friendly people," said Hugo Schleicher, the Myanmar country manager for Jovago.

Tourist arrivals have been increasing in the country from 1.6 million in 2012 to 4.68 million last year, with a difference of more than a million each year, on average. The number of visitors increased 1.5 fold last year compared to 2014.

However, Myanmar's tourist arrivals are still lower than other countries in the region; neighbouring Thailand receives about 24 million international tourists each year. China receives around 100 million, and Malaysia 30 million, each year.—GNLM

Two years on, MH370 families say search for missing jet must continue

KUALA LUMPUR — The families of passengers lost aboard Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 say the two-year search for the missing aircraft must go on beyond a June deadline, as new hope emerged last week of resolving the aviation mystery.

Debris found off the African coast rekindled hope for many, prompting relatives like Grace

Subathirai Nathan to demand investigators go back over mistakes made early on.

"A lot of it was based on calculations that had never been used before, where there's room for human error," Nathan said in an interview. Nathan's mother, Anne Daisy, was on board when MH370 disappeared on its way to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur on 8 March,

2014, with 239 passengers and crew on board.

Some 120,000 sq km (46,300 sq mi) of the sea floor is being scoured at an estimated cost of about A\$170 million (\$124.17 million). But no trace of the missing Boeing 777 has been found except for a wing part, known as a flaperon, which surfaced on Reunion island off Madagascar last

July. Australia said in August that initial drift models of where debris from the jet might first wash up had incorrectly identified Indonesia as the most likely location.

"If that could be wrong, what else could be wrong?" Nathan, a 28-year-old lawyer, said.

A meeting set for June between Australia, Malaysia, and China will determine whether to extend the search.

But families are calling for the search to continue after the discovery last week of a white, metre-long chunk of metal suspected to be from MH370 off the coast of Mozambique. Just as they prepare to mark the two-year anniversary of the jet's disappearance, the relatives are asking for efforts to focus on the southeast African coast.

Voice370, a support group for MH370 next-of-kin, said last week in a statement that the claims of funds drying up was "unacceptable" as a reason for ending the investigation, which they say could benefit the broader industry and increase safety.

On Sunday, scores of family and friends of those on board the plane gathered at a mall in Kuala Lumpur in a memorial seeking to "re-investigate, re-evaluate, re-start" the search.

Accompanied by poignant musical and dance performances, the next-of-kin made an impassioned plea for search efforts to continue until the plane is found.

"They can stop the search, but where do we stop the feeling of loss? We want them to try, if possible, to continue searching for MH370," said Jacquita Gonzales, the wife of MH370 in-flight supervisor Patrick Gomes.

MH370 vanished from radar screens shortly after taking off from Kuala Lumpur, and investigators believe it was flown thousands of miles off course before eventually crashing into the ocean off Australia.

A 584-page interim report into the disappearance of the Boeing 777-200ER released on the first anniversary provided details on how radars tracked the plane going off course and issues concerning the battery of the flight data recorder's underwater locator beacon.

However, it did not identify a definitive cause for the disappearance, adding there was nothing suspicious in the financial, medical or personal histories of pilots or crew.

The next interim report will be released on Tuesday.

"It is definitely their duty to continue to investigate this case, because until now they have not made any substantial progress," said Beijing resident Steve Wang, whose mother was on the flight.—Reuters



Lawyer Sangeet Deo (R) speaks to members of the media, accompanied by relatives of passengers Tan Ah Meng, his wife Chuang Hsiu Ling, and son Tan Wei Chew, who were aboard the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, during a hearing for the compensation suit brought against the Malaysian government and Malaysia Airlines over claims of negligence and breach of trust, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 4 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

Line of green tea dumplings sets Guinness record in Kyoto

KYOTO — A line of 16,291 green tea dumplings running between two World Heritage sites in Kyoto Prefecture's history-steeped city of Uji set a Guinness World Record for the longest such line yesterday.

Volunteers from local charities and businesses took three hours to set up the line of roughly 3-centimetre-wide dumplings on wooden stands stretching between Byodoin Temple and Ujigami Shrine, both UNESCO-designated World Heritage sites.

A Guinness official was on hand to measure the longest unbroken section of the line at 341.57 metres, recognising it as a world record.

One of the younger volunteers, 6-year-old Akane Matsui from Higashiosaka in neighbouring Osaka Prefecture, successfully lined up her dumplings "although it was hard because (the dumplings) stuck to my fingers."

After clinching the record, the volunteers took home the dumplings, which were made with the area's renowned Uji green tea. —Kyodo News



People put green tea dumplings about 3-centimetre-wide on wooden stands stretching between Byodoin Temple and Ujigami Shrine, both UNESCO-designated World Heritage sites in Uji, Kyoto Prefecture on 6 March 2016, during a event to set a Guinness World Record for the longest such line. About 2,000 people formed a 341.57 metre-line of 16,291 dumplings to set up a world record. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

India issues terror alert in western state of Gujarat

NEW DELHI — Indian authorities yesterday issued a terror alert in Gujarat in the wake of intelligence inputs that 10 suspected Pakistani militants may have entered the western state to carry out a big strike.

"A terror alert has been issued in Gujarat. Security has been beefed up in bus stands and railway stations across the state and other vital installations," sources said. "Security forces have launched a major combing operation to track down the militants who may have entered Gujarat through searoute from Pakistan. A team of elite National Security Guard commandoes has also reached the state to avert any kind of any Mumbai-style terror attack," they added.

The terror alert was issued after a Pakistani boat was seized by the Indian border guards in the Koteswar creek area off the Kutch coast in Gujarat along the India-Pakistan border. However, all the occupants of the boat managed to flee. In November 2008, 10 Pakistani militants entered Mumbai through a sea route and carried out a series of 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks lasting four days. At least 170 people were killed and over 300 others injured in the massacre.—Xinhua

China's Xi says won't allow Taiwan to be 'split' off again

BEIJING — China will never allow the tragedy of Taiwan being "split" off from the rest of the country to happen again, state media yesterday quoted President Xi Jinping as saying, offering a strong warning to the island against any moves towards independence.

China considers self-ruled and democratic Taiwan a wayward province, to be brought under its control by force if necessary. Defeated Nationalist forces fled to Taiwan in 1949 after the Chinese civil war.

Beijing has repeatedly warned against any moves towards independence since January's landslide win by Tsai Ing-wen and her Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan's presidential and parliamentary elections.

Meeting with Shanghai delegates to the annual meeting of parliament, Xi made apparent reference to the Qing dynasty's loss of Taiwan to Japan in 1895, who then ruled the island as a colony until the end of World War II.

"We will resolutely contain 'Taiwan independence' secessionist activities in any form, safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and never allow the historical tragedy of the nation being split to happen again," Xi said.

"This is the common wish and firm will of all Chinese people. It is also our solemn commitment and our responsibility to history and the people," he added.

Tsai has said she would



China's President Xi Jinping arrives for the opening session of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, China, on 5 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

maintain peace with China, and Chinese state-run media have also noted her pledges to maintain the "status quo" with China.

Without making direct mention of Tsai, who assumes office in May, Xi said Beijing's policy towards Taiwan was clear and consistent and "will not change along with the change in Taiwan's political situation".

"Compatriots from both sides of the Taiwan Strait are expecting the peaceful development of cross-strait relations, and we should not disappoint them," he

added. Many in China are deeply suspicious of Tsai.

Speaking yesterday at a meeting on sidelines of parliament, Lin Xianshun, a Chinese military officer who defected from Taiwan in 1989, said she was a "schemer" who wanted to have the benefits of good economic ties with China at the same time as coveting Taiwan's independence.

The past eight years have been marked by calm between China and Taiwan, after the election of the China-friendly Ma

Ying-jeou as president in 2008 and his subsequent re-election.

Ma signed a series of key economic deals with Beijing and held a landmark meeting with Xi in November in neutral Singapore.

But a controversial trade pact has languished in the island's parliament after protests in 2014 over trade dealings with Beijing.

Xi said both sides should deepen economic and social integration, and enhance the "sense of a community of common destiny."—Reuters

Bangladesh arrests three suspected militants

DHAKA — Bangladesh's elite anti-terrorism unit detained yesterday three suspected members of a militant group believed to be behind a spate of recent attacks in the south Asian country.

Muslim-majority Bangladesh has seen a rise in Islamist violence in which liberal activists, members of minority Muslim sects and other religious groups have been targeted.

The detainees were members of the banned Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh and were arrested in a raid conducted in the northwestern district of Rajshahi, said Rumman Mahmud, a deputy director of the Rapid Action Battalion.

Sixteen crude bombs, seven petrol bombs and jihadi books were also found in their possession, he added.

The group is believed to be behind attacks such as the bombings of a Shi'ite shrine and the killing of two foreigners.

Islamic State has claimed responsibility for some of the attacks, including the killing of a Hindu priest last month, but the government has denied the militant group has a presence in Bangladesh. At least five militants of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen have been killed in shootouts since November, as security forces stepped up a crackdown on Islamist militants seeking to make the moderate Muslim nation of 160 million a sharia-based state.—Reuters

Ships to carry Japan plutonium to US arrive in Kobe

WASHINGTON — A US civic group said Friday two ships have arrived in Kobe to transport the plutonium which Japan agreed in 2014 to return to the United States.

The British-flagged ships will pick up the cargo in Tokaimura and transport it over a 52-day voyage to South Carolina, where the US government-run Savannah River Site nuclear fa-

cility is located, according to Savannah River Site Watch.

The Pacific Heron and the Pacific Egret, now anchored in Kobe, Japan, will transport 331 kilograms of plutonium, including weapons-grade plutonium, from the Fast Critical Assembly run by the Japan Atomic Energy Agency in Tokaimura, northeast of Tokyo.

This will be the largest ship-

ment of plutonium by sea since 1993 when the Japanese Akatsuki Maru carried 1 ton of the material from France to Japan, according to Tom Clements, head of the civic group monitoring nuclear issues.

It is believed the amount of plutonium is enough to make 50 nuclear bombs.

The United States provided the plutonium, including

some that originated in Britain and France, to Japan for research purposes during the Cold War era.

In March 2014, at the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe agreed with US President Barack Obama to return the plutonium, and to also send highly enriched uranium kept at the FCA.

Once it arrives in the United States, the plutonium will be disposed of, according to the bilateral agreement.

Obama, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to seek a world free of nuclear weapons, will host the next round of the biennial Nuclear Security Summit on 31 March and 1 April in Washington.—Kyodo News

Sri Lanka arrests 29 Indian fishermen for poaching

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka arrested 29 Indian fishermen who were poaching in Sri Lankan waters yesterday.

The navy said it assisted the Sri Lanka Coast Guard in arresting the fishermen at two different locations in the north and north-western seas.

The navy also seized a trawler and three small boats. The fishermen along with the boats were handed over to the officials of the local Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the police.

Indian fishermen have been arrested over the past

few years for poaching in Sri Lankan waters and both countries are still struggling to resolve the issue.

Indian media reports last week quoted Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj as saying she had held consultations with top Sri Lankan leadership

to resolve the issue of fishermen from India.

She said a meeting of ministers dealing with fisheries from both countries will be convened in May to evolve a mechanism to resolve the lingering issue.

The Indian minister also said the government will enforce

installation of GPS systems on fishing boats to steer them clear of maritime boundaries.

Last week fishermen in the south Indian Tamil Nadu state staged protests demanding the immediate release of fellow fishermen lodged in Sri Lankan jails.—Xinhua

Cruz, Trump split four states in setback for Republican establishment



US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump shows his hands to supporters in response to criticisms from opponent Senator Marco Rubio during a campaign rally before the Kansas Republican Caucus at the Century II Performing Arts and Convention Centre in Wichita, Kansas on 5 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz split victories in four nominating contests with front-runner Donald Trump on Saturday, bolstering Cruz's argument that he represents the party's best chance to stop the brash New York billionaire.

The results were a repudiation of a Republican establishment that has bristled at the prospect of either Cruz or Trump winning the party's nomination and has largely lined up behind US Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, who was shut out in all four contests.

"I think it's time that he dropped out of the race," Trump said of Rubio after the contests. "I want Ted one on one."

Cruz won Kansas and Maine on Saturday, while Trump won the bigger states of Louisiana and Kentucky, holding onto his lead in the race for the Republican nomination for the 8 November presidential election, even though Cruz captured more delegates on Saturday.

The next big contest, and a crucial one, will be Tuesday's primary in the industrial state of Michigan. Republicans in three other states, Mississippi, Idaho and Hawaii, also will vote on Tuesday. Puerto Rico Republicans will vote on Sunday.

In the Democratic race, front-runner Hillary Clinton won in Louisiana, and her rival Bernie Sanders, a US senator from Vermont, won in Kansas and Nebraska, in results that did not substantially change Clinton's big delegate lead.

Mainstream Republicans have blanched at Trump's calls to build a wall on the border with Mexico, round up and deport 11 million undocumented immigrants and temporarily bar all Muslims from entering the United States.

But the party's establishment has not been much happier with Cruz, who has alienated

many party leaders in Washington.

"It looks like it will be the angry Trump voters against the purist conservative Cruz voters," said Washington-based Republican strategist Ron Bonjean. "The establishment is just being left out."

A spokesman for Rubio, who spent the past week launching harsh personal attacks on Trump, said the senator would push on with an eye on the 15 March contest in Florida.

"After we win the Florida primary, the map, the momentum and the money is going to be on our side," spokesman Alex Conant said in a statement.

Cruz, a first-term US senator from Texas who has promoted himself as more of a true conservative than Trump, said the results showed he was gaining momentum in the race to catch the real estate mogul.

Cruz, 45, has run as an outsider bent on shaking up the Republican establishment in Washington.

A favourite of evangelicals, he has called for the United States to "carpet bomb" the Islamic State militant group and has pledged to eliminate the tax-collecting Internal Revenue Service and four cabinet agencies and to enact a balanced budget amendment.

"The scream you hear, the howl that comes from Washington, DC, is utter terror at what 'We the People' are doing together," Cruz told supporters in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, after his early win in Kansas.

"What we're seeing is the public coming together, libertarians coming together, men and women who love the Constitution coming together and uniting and standing as one behind this campaign," Cruz said.

Trump, 69, has a substantial lead in the delegates needed to secure the nomination at the Republican National Convention,

but since winning seven of the 11 contests on Super Tuesday he has come under withering fire from a Republican establishment worried he will lead the party to defeat in November's election.

But endorsements from establishment Republicans have failed to sway voters. Rubio won the backing of Kansas Governor Sam Brownback but still came in third there.

The four Republican contests on Saturday together accounted for just 155 delegates. Cruz won 64 delegates on Saturday, while Trump took 49.

The races on Saturday were open only to registered Republicans, excluding the independent and disaffected Democratic voters who have helped Trump's surge to the lead.

The anti-Trump forces have a short window to stop the caustic businessman, who ahead of Saturday had accumulated 319 of the 1,237 delegates needed to win the nomination at July's Republican national convention, outpacing Cruz, who had 226 delegates.

On 15 March, the delegate-rich states of Florida, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri and North Carolina will vote. Both Florida and Ohio use the winner-take-all method to allocate Republican delegates, making the stakes in those states particularly high.

All of the Republican contests on Saturday, and through 14 March, award delegates proportionate to the popular vote, although some states set minimum thresholds to qualify for any delegates.

If Trump takes both Florida and Ohio he would be nearly impossible to stop. There are a total of 358 delegates at stake in the five states voting 15 March, including 99 in Florida and 66 in Ohio.

On the Democratic side, Clinton has opened up a big delegate lead and Sanders might have a tough time making up the difference.

All states in the Democratic race award their delegates proportionally, meaning Clinton can keep piling up delegates even in states she loses.

The three states holding Democratic contests on Saturday had a total of 109 delegates at stake. The early estimates were that Clinton, who appeared headed to a smashing nearly 50-point win in Louisiana, had won at least 48 delegates on Tuesday and Sanders 37.

But Sanders made it clear he was not planning to end his White House quest anytime soon. "We have the momentum. We have a path toward victory. Our campaign is just getting started," he said in a statement after his wins on Saturday.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Serbian and US armies hold defence consultations

BELGRADE — The armed forces of Serbia and the United States have held bilateral defence consultations, preceded by a meeting of Serbian Defence Minister Zoran Djordjevic and Chief of General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces, Gen. Ljubisa Dikovic, with Michael Carpenter, US deputy assistant secretary of defence with responsibility for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia.

According to a release from the Ministry of Defence, it was stressed during the meeting on Friday that bilateral military cooperation was the best developed segment of overall relations between the two countries.—Tanjug

Slovak Prime Minister Fico says will try to form government as election winner

BRATISLAVA — Slovakia's leftist Smer party will try to form a new government after Saturday's election in which it won the most votes but fell short of an overall majority, Smer leader and Prime Minister Robert Fico said yesterday.

Fico said the results, which brought at least eight parties to parliament, were "very complicated" and building a cabinet would take some time.—Reuters

Man held following explosion at Sapporo ski event attended by princess

SAPPORO — Police have taken a man into custody following an explosion yesterday morning at the venue of an international skiing event in Sapporo, northern Japan.

Nobody was hurt in the blast around 10:15am, the police said.

They are questioning the man, who was seen holding a pipe at the scene of the blast, they said. Princess Akiko, the eldest daughter of the late Prince Tomohito of Mikasa, a cousin of Emperor Akihito, gave a speech at the opening ceremony just before the explosion was heard. The games were unaffected by the incident, according to the police and event participants.—Kyodo News

Germany's Schaeuble says Brexit would be economic 'poison'

LONDON — A British vote to leave the European Union would damage the British, European and global economies, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said in an interview with the BBC.

"We would have years of the most difficult negotiations, which would be very difficult for the EU as well. And for years we would have such insecurity that would be a poison to the economy in the UK, the European continent and for the global economy as well," Schaeuble said. In response to a question about Turkey, he said the German government had major doubts about whether it should become an EU member. Negotiations would take a long time, and this was "not a worry at the present time".—Reuters

Iran says court sentences billionaire to death in graft case

DUBAI — A court in Iran sentenced to death Iranian businessman Babak Zanjani and two accomplices for embezzlement, the judiciary said yesterday, in a case widely watched due to Zanjani's prominent role in helping the government evade oil sanctions.

The Islamic court convicted the defendants of "spreading corruption on earth", a capital offence, and ordered them to repay funds embezzled from, among others, state-run National Iranian Oil Company, judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei said on live television. The defendants can appeal against the ruling.—Reuters

Turkish PM says no bargaining on new constitution — A Haber

ISTANBUL — There will be no bargaining over a new constitution for Turkey and the ruling AK Party will seek the 330 votes it needs in parliament to put the matter to a referendum, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was quoted as saying yesterday.

In an interview with broadcaster A Haber, Davutoglu said his AK Party would have the full support of all of its 317 deputies and that it would seek additional opposition backing to win the 330 votes needed for a referendum.—Reuters

— OPINION —

Citizenship, not a new phenomenon

Khin Maung Aye

IT is conventionally believed that the word 'citizen' was derived from 'civitas', which in Rome and its empire gave rise to the nation of a civitatus. Later on, this word developed into the French word 'citizen', referring to an ensemble of citizens enjoying limited rights within a city. The notion of the citizen—is both ancient and continuous.

In this era of globalisation, citizenship is understood as having legal rights—having a

specific nationality, possessing certain government documents like passport, voter identity card or UID, having basic fundamental rights and duties according to the nation a citizen resides in. On the other hand, counter claims are made whereby a citizen demands special rights based on cultural affinity or identity politics. At the same time, older notions of citizenship as active participation in the political life of a place are also gaining ground popular protest movements round the world.

Accordingly, it is argued that the provision of universal and equal political rights for all individuals is not sufficient in the modern time. Marxists and feminists have criticised this definition of citizenship as exclusionary and have highlighted structural problems such as capitalism and patriarchy, respectively. In the same vein, multiculturalists and civil society theorists have offered alternative understandings of citizenship suitable to modern contexts, which are also rejected by other theorists on various grounds.

All this being the case, what constitutes citizenship remains complex and confusing. This makes it more interesting and provides ample opportunity to scholars to explore its various dimensions and reflect upon the manners in which it suits a particular society. In a nutshell, citizenship has historically been a contested concept and invited a wide range of interpretations depending on the time and place. As such, it is clear that citizenship is not a new phenomenon. It has been a feature of political communities across time and space.

Write for us

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

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

Tabaung, the queen of twelve months in Myanmar Lunar Calendar

Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

TABAUNG [March] is the month of transition between winter [Heyman] and Summer [Geinman]. It is the month in which days are warm and nights are cool. Hence there is a Myanmar saying နေပူလို့ညချမ်းတပေါင်းလဆန်း [Days are warm and nights are chilly, Tabaung is the month so unruly].

Although many trees and plants bloom in Tabaung as it is the beginning of springtime, Tharaphi [Orchocapus siamensis] and Pon Nyet [Callophyllum Inophyllum] are traditionally designated as flowers of this month.

The word Tabaung has two meanings. First, it is the month for yearning or longing or memiruscence. The beauty and pleasantness of the month makes you recall your sweet memories and long for your loved ones. The second meaning is that in Tabaung jiggery [palm sugar] is made from toddy juice.

Tabaung is described as the queen of 12 months because in this month natural landscape bursts forth all its beauties and splendors. Landscape, waterscape and skyscape change displaying their varieties of columns, designs created by the sun, the clouds and the breeze. Avian, terrestrial and aqual creatures frolic. Insects begin their mating games. The atmosphere is green and changed with fragrances and brightened with riots of flora.

Ashim Kuludayi composed 64 stanzas of Pali poem describing the beauty of Himalayang gladders in Tabaung, to request Lord Buddha to return to Kapilavatthu, where his royal father King Suddhodana and relatives lived. Lord Buddha after hearing the chanting of this 64 poems, returned to the capital on foot through the glades.

Hpo Thu Daw U Min a noted poet of late Kon baung Period composed this stanza on Tabaung as follows:-

ပန်းရွှေဖိုကြိုင်လျှောက်လို့ပိတောက်ကယ်တဲ့သင်းချို
ခုတ္တရာစာရုဏ်ကတိမ်ဘုံမှာရောင်ခြည်လင်းလို့
လမ်းသော်တာနင့်တူမကွာထိန်ဝါလို့ထွန်းတဲ့ခါကို
သောင်သံငယ်မိုးရေညိုကရစ်မိုးလေညင်းကယ်လာစုံဟေ
မာမြိုင်ထဲကလမ်းဘဲရွှေစင်ယောင်တို့ဖော်ခေါ်သံမောင်မယ်
ကျူးတယ်မြူးပျော်ကြလို့

This is the time when climbing high,
Orion glitters in the sky.
And shining with the moon at night.

Mingles with her's his yellow light
The sweet scent of the Tharaphee
And faint smell of the Padauk tree
Is wafted from the misty trees
Upon a gentle soughing breeze
About the sandbanks of the stream
The white arms of a river gleam
I hear the clamorous return
Of wild duck and of silver Tern."

Sand Pagoda festival is held in Tabaung. All agricultural activities are over in this month. Farmers and peasants have a rest waiting for next monsoon. They have cash after they have sold out their products so they turn to amusements. Religious festivals are held locally. Vast sand banks appear in the rivers and lake. Communities gather to build Sand Pagoda. Five Fier Pagoda made of sand and bamboo wailings are made and decorated village monks consecrated Sand Pagoda. Then the entire communities make Buddha Puja Celebrations with folk music songs and dances. The earliest historical evidence of Sand Pagoda festival is found in the literature Inwa Period of Myanmar history. Shin Maha Thilawun Tha are four noted monk poets of that time mentioned and Pagoda festival in his pyo poem named Buddha-pati Pyo as follows:-

"Cat fish, carps and all their members.

Florice in the river

Seagull and Sheldrake make lovely call

Aquatic birds Brahminy duck hamsa and river tern

Gleefully greet each other in ecstasy

On the silvery Sand Pagoda is celebrated

The festival of Sand Pagoda.

But we have architectural evidence of Sand Pagoda in old Bagan. To-day Shwezigon Pagoda was originally called Shwe The gon because it was a Sand Pagoda built on a vast Sand bank. Supported by hewn sand bricks brought from quarries at Tu-Yin hill range 7 miles north of Bagan.

In the legends and history of Buddhism, Sand Pagoda festival was often referred to just as grains of Sand are countless, so also numbers of Buddha already revealed and numbers of future Buddhas are countless. Sand Pagoda to dedicated to countless Buddhas.

In Buddhist literature we find the origin of Sand Pagoda. Buddha Sasanika Kyans (ဗုဒ္ဓသာသနိကကျမ်း) say that the building and worship of Sand Pagoda was a cultural tradition of Buddhist religion dating far back to aeons of

time. History of the first building of Sand Pagoda is mentioned in Apadan Pali, Palinupadaka Mahathera Apadan (အပဒါန်ပါဠိတော် ပုလိနပ္ပိဒက မဟာထေရ်အပဒါန်) It is as follows:

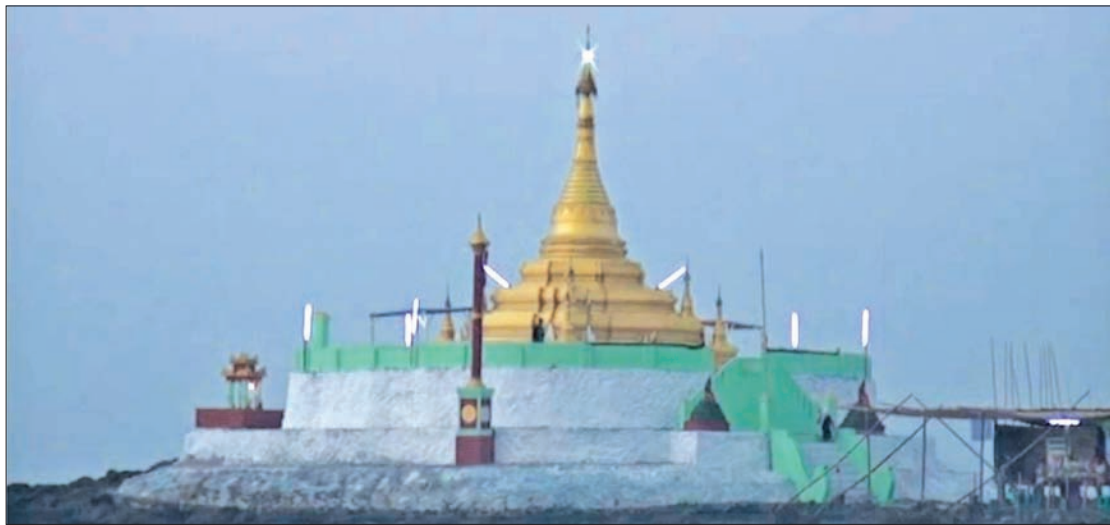
"In the time of hundred thousand kabas (Cosmic Aeon) ago there lived a hermit named Devala in a hermitage at the Himalayas. The hermitage was created by the Devas. He had several pupils and disciples. One day he came out from his hermitage and made a Sand Pagoda which he decorated with flowers and reverently worshipped it as representative of the Lord Buddha. He received peace of mind and spiritual bliss. His pupils and disciples asked the hermit why he built and worshipped the Sand Pagoda. The hermit replied that ancient literature of Vedas say that the Lord Buddha was attended by many pupils and disciples and he was the Exalted Sage to revere. I built this Sand Pagoda dedicated to the Lord Buddha and worshipped it as his representative. The hermit further explained the peculiar marks, extraordinary traits, glories, infinite qualities, moral character and sila of the Lord Buddha. On hearing the hermit's explanation the pupils and disciples became inspired to pay homage to the Lord Buddha. So they also made Sand Pagodas to worship.

In the hagiography of Pulinahtupiya Mahathera it was mentioned that the hermit Narda who was the future Pulinahtupiya Mahathera made Sand Pagoda to worship all Previously extinct Buddhas who had entered Parinivirna. He decorated the Sand Pagoda he made with three thousand small bells and worshipped it day and night.

The shape of original Sand Pagoda is simple. It is like a heap of paddy or ant hill in which sacred objects are enshrined for worshipped. All stupas [solid pagoda] are shaped like Sand Pagoda. But later, architectural designs and decorative arts were added.

We can still find little Sand Pagoda [သံပုံစေတီ] on the water fronts in some cities, towns and villages.

The Tabaung festival of Shwedagon Pagoda in March Originated from Sand Pagoda Festival. Through Shwedagon is not on sand bank but on a hilllock its legends and geology hint at its hilllock's connection with sea. There are 99 natural hilllocks surrounding Shwedagon Pagoda hill clock wise. The writer of his article notice some of them during his flights. He has collected the names of 99 hill locks which will appear in this next article.



Maw Tin Soon pagoda. PHOTO: MINISTRY OF HOTELS AND TOURISM

Maw Tin Soon pagoda festival crowded with local pilgrims and tourists

MYAT Maw Tin Soon pagoda festival is predicted to receive many visitors at the peak of tourist season this year. The Pagoda board of Trustees are taking necessary measures to provide accommodation of high standard.

Maw Tin Soon pagoda festival is annually held from 1st Waxing to full moon of Tabaung for 15 days in the previous years. The pagoda festival has extended from full moon of Tabo-dwe to full moon of Tabaung since 2015 because visitors can explore the socioeconomy of local residents and enjoy the natural scenic beauty while taking a pilgrimage.

This pagoda is situated at Maw Tin Zun, Ngaputaw Township in the Patheingyi District of the Ayeyarwaddy Division. There was a temporary guest house including 34 rooms and 16 bathrooms in 2014. There were 13 guesthouses which have 392 rooms and 37 camps in 2015. There are now 19 guesthouses including 272 permanent rooms and 319 temporary rooms in 2016 in order for the local visitors and tourists to stay conveniently during the festival.

Maw Tin Soon pagoda festival attracted over 5000 local visitors and 11 tourists in 2015. The pagoda festival receive 40 tourists,

367 local visitors and 5,095 local visitors of day trip up to 2nd March from 29th February (full moon of Tabo-dwe) and many visitors will come to the festival than those of last year.

The visitors can enjoy many things along the sand bank while drinking the cool coconut juice: picking the sea shells, playing around, biking, driving, swimming, taking photos, exploring the life of fishermen and the handicrafts business. They can pay homage to Shwe Nat Taung, Mya Taung and Shwe Taung pagodas, too, it is learnt.—*Ministry of Hotels and Tourism*

El Niño may still bring high crop yields

THE Magway Region Agriculture Department is bracing for El Niño by assisting local farmers in fast-growing crops. The Agriculture Department has stored around 4,000 baskets of fast-growing seeds. The department will provide the seeds at cost and demonstrate agricultural methods to the farmers. It will hold discussion with

farmers on the plants they should choose for various weather conditions. “These seeds don’t need too much irrigation water because they can mature in a short time, and we do not need to worry about the yield,” said U Khin Maung Win, director of the Agriculture Department. The department said it will negotiate with the Irrigation

Department to ensure that farms in the region have sufficient water to grow their crops.

“The department is seeking to ensure that both drinking water and irrigation water are available in the villages. Farmers also need to cooperate to get better irrigation in the fields,” said the one agricultural expert.—*Zayatu*

Daily-life of Labors attracts tourists at Gaw Wein Jetty

TOURISTS arriving in Mandalay explore the historical places as well as the daily life of labours at Gaw Wein Jetty. Tourists usually research on freight business at Gaw Wein Jetty.

Gaw Wein means West gate or entrance of Mandalay. It is located at the corner of 35th Street and Kanna Road in Mandalay. Gaw Wein Jetty mainly provides the commodity among the Jetty in Ayeyawady jetties which bring many job opportunities for labors. The vessels are running based on the goods and river conditions. The ships mainly run



Tourists shouldering bags of rice at Gaw Wein Jetty. PHOTO: TAINTAMAN

to Bamaw from December to June and they run to Kalay and Chindwin when the river water is up and the freight which is slipped to Bamaw has become

less. The ships bring freight and charcoal up and down the river and it takes a month for a ship to cruise up and down, it is learnt.—*Taintaman*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Apropos to the excellent report ‘Endangered Ayeyawady dolphin population increases’ (GNLM, March 2); my heartiest congratulations to GNLM for proving readers with the welcome news. The honorable GNLM editorial board is highly appreciated for their dedicated coverage of environment and wildlife conservation reports for educating as well as building awareness among the public regarding the need for conservation. The outstanding report and simple non-technical approach has connected the plight for dolphin conservation in Myanmar and SE Asia from the perspectives of serious anthropogenic pressures impacting dolphin population in the Ayeyawady. To the best of my knowledge it would possibly be the first of such report related to dolphin census and effective conservation from Myanmar. Would appreciate seeing more such articles!

Thanking you
Sincerely yours
Saikat Kumar Basu

Recollections of a Visit to the Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda

POEM:

In my recollections, it was some thirty or so years ago that I visited the Pagoda of Myanmar known as Kyaikhtiyo located in the Mon State to the South-East of Yangon Region accessible by all means of public and private transportation.

From the foot of the rocky mountain range extending to the far end of it, where the Pagoda has been standing, we climbed on foot with help of trusty bamboo staff, walking from one mountain top to another, seven miles of hiking along paths made by peoples’ footsteps under the trees of the thick evergreen jungle, teeming with birds and bees and tribes of monkeys and other small animals abound, habitats, with humans of the mountain range all year round.

At places climbing uphill by steps into the rock face built by people of goodwill, reaching the mountain’s flat summit some three thousand feet high, on the edge of which is perched precariously, a huge granite boulder in the form of a human head. Known in the legends as resembling the head of a hermit free who resided on the rocky mountain in the misty pre-history

And wonder of wonders, on top of the boulder for all to see is the Kyaikhtiyo pagoda crowned by a golden ‘Htee’ Legend has it that King of Celestial Beings, built the Pagoda to enshrine the holy strand of hair of Lord Gottama Buddah that was in the hermit’s possession, as was his death wish for devotees to pay homage and the ‘Sasana’ to flourish.

The boulder overhangs the edge of the Mountain precipitously, and the point of contact between them is small exceedingly such that, wedging at the point, a short flexible bamboo strip and giving the boulder a gentle heave, causes it to sway and dip seen from the flexing strip, yet the delicate balance maintaining; to all who witness it, indeed an awe-inspiring happening.

The Pagoda’s ‘Htee’ adorned with bells and ‘Bawdi’ leafs golden, emitting sweet musical tinklings as gently by the wind shaken wafted softly through the stillness of the misty moonlit night to those silently paying homage on the ‘Yinbyin’ on the summit after the climb’s end the tiredness of their bodies relieving and the blending of the pristine environment, with their being.

Lokethar

Preventive measures against water shortages taken in Kawlin

IN the coming El Niño weather front, rural areas in Myanmar may face water shortages, heat stroke and the outbreak of fires next season.

Four teams from the Rural Area Development Department in Kawlin Township, Sagaing Region, are taking preventive measures against shortages of drinking water and bathing water in rural areas in the coming dry season.

In order to avoid drinking wa-

ter shortages during the summer of 2016, officials of the Township Rural Area Development Department have been making arrangements to provide drinking water to the rural people residing in 210 villages in 47 village-tracts in Kawlin Township.

The department has urged the public to contact the authorities when they face water shortage during the summer.—*Ko Ko Nyein*

UN seeks to build peace talks on fragile Syria truce

BEIRUT — A total of 135 people were killed in the first week of a partial truce in Syria in areas covered by the deal, a monitoring group said on Saturday, highlighting its fragile nature just days before the United Nations attempts to reconvene peace talks.

UN envoy Staffan de Mistura said the talks, originally due to begin on Monday in Geneva, would get off to a staggered start later in the week, with delegates arriving from Wednesday onwards.

The UN said the delay was due to “logistical and technical reasons and also for the ceasefire to better settle down”.

“I see us beginning on (Thursday) 10 March when we will launch the process,” de Mistura said in an interview with pan-Arab newspaper *Al Hayat*.

A pro-Damascus Lebanese TV channel, al-Mayadeen, reported from its own sources that talks had been moved to 13 March. Reuters could not independently verify this.

The five-year Syrian civil war has killed more than a quarter of a million people and created a massive refugee crisis in Lebanon, Turkey and the European Union.

The partial truce, drawn up by Washington and Moscow, came into force a week ago and has slowed the pace of the war, although it does not include Islamic State militants or the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front.

The opposition is dissatisfied with the implementation of the deal and has yet to say whether it will attend the new talks. Fighting continues in many parts of Syria, and rebels say the Syrian government, backed by Russian air power and fighters from Iranian-backed Hezbollah, has kept up attacks on strategically important frontlines. Fighting has also continued between rebel groups and Kurdish-backed forces in north Aleppo, and between rebel groups and Islamic State.



A protester waves an opposition flag as he takes part in an anti-government protest inside a 2nd century Roman amphitheater in the historic Syrian southern town of Bosra al-Sham, in Deraa, Syria on 4 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

On Saturday Islamic State regained control of a border crossing with Iraq seized by a group of rebels on Friday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The Observatory said 135 people have been killed in areas covered by the ‘cessation of hostilities’ agreement since it came into force on 27 February. In areas not covered by the truce, 552 people were killed, said the Britain-based group, which tracks the conflict via sources on the ground. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and US Secretary of State John Kerry, in a phone conversation late on Friday, called for a prompt start to the peace negotiations, Russia’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

“The two sides called to start the negotiations as soon as possible...between the Syrian government and the whole spectrum of the opposition, during which the Syrians themselves should determine the future of their country,” the ministry said.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, whose country backs the rebels, said on Saturday that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must leave at the beginning of a political transition, not at the end.

“For us it is very clear it’s at the beginning of the process, not at the end of the process, it’s not going to be 18 months,” Jubeir said during a visit to France.

Assad, however, enjoys firm backing from Iran and Russia and his military position has strengthened, especially since Russia entered the war by launching waves of air strikes last September. The United States and other Western governments that previously called for the president’s early departure have quietly backed away from that demand.

De Mistura attempted to convene peace talks in January, but these failed before they had even started in earnest. The new talks will be conducted indirectly, not face-to-face, he told *Al Hayat*. The fall-off in violence

has made aid deliveries easier in some areas of the country, but de Mistura said the Syrian government should be processing aid faster.

“Lorries are waiting for 36 hours,” he said. “And medical aid must be allowed.”

On Wednesday the World Health Organisation said Syrian officials had rejected the delivery of medical supplies, including trauma and burn kits and antibiotics, in a convoy to the besieged town of Moadamiya two days earlier. Syrian opposition coordinator Riad Hijab said on Friday conditions for talks were “not favourable” and medical and food supplies were being blocked despite the truce.

On Saturday, the opposition Syrian National Coalition, which is part of the main Saudi-backed opposition High Negotiations Committee, said it had named a new president. Anas Abda will replace Khaled Khoja as head of the group, the SNC said in a statement on its Twitter account. —Reuters

German vice chancellor says Trump poses threat to peace and prosperity

BERLIN — German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel has criticised leading US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump as a right-wing populist whose political views pose a threat to peace and prosperity.

The comments by Gabriel, economy minister and leader of the Social Democrats, are the clearest sign yet that ruling politicians in Europe are increasingly worried about the outcome of the US presidential elections.

“Whether Donald Trump, Marine le Pen or Geert Wilders — all these right-wing populists are not only a threat to peace and social cohesion, but also to economic development,” Gabriel told *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper in an interview published yesterday.

Gabriel said that Trump and France’s Le Pen were promising voters “a way back into a fairytale world” in which economic activity only happened within national borders but that history has shown such isolated economies have no chance to develop.

“We have to make the effort to explain how we want to shape globalisation in a fair way,” Gabriel said. Politicians in Germany and elsewhere in Europe have watched as businessman and reality TV star Trump has moved from long shot to front-runner of the Republicans seeking the party’s nomination ahead of the 8 November presidential election. Trump has described German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s welcoming policy towards refugees as “insane” and predicted it would cause rioting in Germany. He has also praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has been at odds with Europe since Moscow’s annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea region two years ago. —Reuters

Freed Italian hostages flown home from Libya

ROME — Two Italian hostages freed in Libya after two fellow captives were allegedly killed by Islamic State militants were flown back to Italy yesterday, officials said.

The four were employees of Italian construction company Bonatti and were seized last July near the western Libyan city of Sabratha, near a compound owned by the energy group Eni.

Gino Pollicardo and Filippo Calcagno were transferred by helicopter to Tripoli from Sabratha at night and boarded an Italian plane, Libyan officials said.

They arrived at Rome’s military airport of Ciampino at 0400 GMT and were due to be interrogated by magistrates, Italian media said. According to a spokes-

man for Libyan security forces in Sabratha, fellow captives Salvatore Failla and Fausto Piano were shot dead by Islamic State militants shortly before Libyan forces attacked them on Wednesday.

The spokesman, Sabri Kshada, has said Pollicardo and Calcagno were released during a raid early on Friday. However the exact circumstances of both the killings and the release remain unclear. The two freed hostages have made no comment.

Sabratha is one of several Libyan cities in which militants loyal to Islamic State have established a presence, taking advantage of the chaos that has plagued Libya since Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in an uprising five years ago. Libya is a former Ital-

ian colony, and Rome is working with other Western powers and the United Nations to try to convince two rival Libyan governments to create a single, unity coalition and focus their energy on the fight against Islamic State.

Pollicardo and Calcagno were questioned by Libyan forces at Tripoli’s Mitiga airport for about 45 minutes before departing for Italy and briefly appeared beside Ali Abu Zakouk, the foreign minister of Tripoli’s self-declared government.

“We need support and co-operation from the Italians to tackle the criminal organisation of Islamic State in Libya,” Zakouk said, without giving details on how the hostages were released. —Reuters

French PM Valls says no blackmail to pass labour reform

PARIS — France’s prime minister, Manuel Valls, said yesterday he will not commit blackmail by threatening to resign, as the government is facing opposition to pass the new labour reform.

In an interview with French weekly newspaper *Le Journal Du Dimanche* (JDD), Valls said the reform is a “win-win” for both employers and employees and that he will try to convince the Socialists, Far Left and Green party members to vote for the bill.

When asked about rumours that he could put at stake his title, Valls said: “I never did and I will not blackmail to resign”.

Rising unemployment, at an 18-year high of 10.6 per cent, is a

reminder to voters that President Francois Hollande failed to live up to promises to put the jobless rate on a convincingly downward path, which he set as a precondition for running in the next presidential election in 2017.

The reform, which would put almost all aspects of the country’s strictly codified labour relations up for negotiation between employers and unions, has widened divisions in the governing Socialist party. “We must enrich and complete this preliminary bill. But what would be terrible is the status quo,” Valls told JDD. “I could have said there are 14 months left, I would slow down, take no risks ... It’s not my vision of politics”. —Reuters

Rare large sinkhole found in south China

NANNING — Groundwater found at a huge doline in Donglan County, Hechi City of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Scientists from China and France have discovered a rare huge doline in Guangxi, the local publicity department said yesterday.

The 420-metre deep doline, or sink hole, was among a number discovered by scientists during an eight-day expedition that began on 26 February in Donglan County. Dolines found in Guangxi are normally around 250 metres deep.

Many species live in these dolines, including bats and snakes. Scientists also found some as-yet unidentified vertebrates and plants. Dolines are special geological landscape formations found in karst regions, formed by repeated cave-ins of underground caves. They are common in China, Mexico and Papua New Guinea. —Xinhua



The 420-metre deep doline, or sinkhole, was among a number discovered by scientists during an eight-day expedition that began on 26 February in Donglan County. Many species live in these dolines, including bats and snakes. Scientists also found some as-yet unidentified vertebrates and plants. PHOTO: XINHUA

Heart attack, stroke risk doubles after drinking alcohol

BOSTON — Moderate consumption of alcohol may double the risk of heart attack and stroke in the hour after drinking, a new study has warned.

Researchers analysed data from 23 studies involving 30,000 participants to better understand the risk of heart attacks and strokes in the hours and days after drinking alcohol.

"We found that even moderate alcohol consumption — one drink a day for women and up to

two drinks a day for men — may raise a person's risk of a heart attack or stroke approximately two-fold within the hour following consumption compared to other times," said Elizabeth Mostofsky from Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health in the US.

"After 24 hours, though, only heavy alcohol intake conferred a continued heightened risk. In other words, heavy drinking increases risk both in the

short-term and the long-term, but drinking smaller amounts has different effects in the subsequent hours than it does in the subsequent days and weeks," she said.

Immediately following alcohol intake, heart rate increases, blood pressure rises and blood platelets become stickier. This may increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, researchers said.

But over time regularly drinking small amounts of alco-

hol appears to lower cardiovascular risk by increasing levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL), the so-called "good" cholesterol, and by reducing the tendency to form blood clots, they said. "It is possible that the briefly higher cardiovascular risk in the hours after drinking small amounts of alcohol may be outweighed by the longer term health benefits of regular moderate drinking," said Mostofsky. —PTI

'Ghostlike' octopus found in Pacific may belong to new species



An incirrate octopod is shown at a depth of 4,290 metres taken by a remotely operated underwater vehicle Deep Discoverer near Necker Island, or Mokumanamana, on the northwestern end of the Hawaiian Archipelago in this image courtesy of NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research, Hohonu Moana 2016, released on 5 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — An underwater research craft has spotted a "ghost-like" octopus that appears to belong to a previously unknown species on the ocean floor near Hawaii, a discovery that highlights how little is known about the deep sea, a US zoologist said

on Saturday. The milky white creature, nicknamed "Casper the Friendly Ghost" by Twitter users, was caught on cameras mounted on the craft as it explored the Pacific Ocean at a depth of 4,290 metres, or about 2-1/2 miles, the National Oceanic and Atmospher-

ic Administration said.

Describing the animal as an incirrate octopod, one of two main groupings of octopods, NOAA said it was the first time an incirrate was spotted so deep in the ocean.

"This animal was particularly unusual because it lacked the pigment cells, called chromatophores, typical of most cephalopods, and it did not seem very muscular," said Michael Vecchione, a research zoologist at NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. Cephalopods belong to a biological class that includes octopuses, squid and cuttlefish.

"The deep sea is so poorly known that finding new or unexpected things happens fairly often," Vecchione said in an email, adding that he was excited by the images. "What is unusual is the opportunity to explore this deep."

The octopod "almost certainly" was one of a species never previously described by scien-

tists, and it may well belong to a genus that has yet to be identified, wrote Vecchione, who is affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

To be certain, he said in the email, scientists would need at least one specimen, and preferably several of them.

NOAA has posted a video on the website showing a pale, rounded form with expressionless eyes and languid tentacles resting on the ocean floor. Its appearance led some Twitter users to say it resembled the cartoon character Casper the Friendly Ghost.

Last week's discovery came during the first dive of the 2016 season from the Okeanos Explorer, a ship operated by NOAA that explores little-known parts of the oceans. The remotely operated underwater vehicle Deep Discoverer came across the octopod near Necker Island, or Mokumanamana, on the northwestern end of the Hawaiian Archipelago. —Reuters

Chilean scientists develop ointment to combat skin cancer

SANTIAGO — Chilean scientists have developed an ointment that early trials have proved effective in combating melanoma, the most aggressive variety of skin cancer, announced University of Santiago on Friday.

The cream, said the Chilean university, has been made by a research team from its Faculty of Chemistry and Biology and contains a plant that is endemic to the South American country.

It is currently in the early stages of testing and being applied to animals, and so far it has proved to be an effective solution for melanoma, according to Sofia Michelson, who along with Claudio Acuna led the research team.

Every year between two and three million people all over the world are diagnosed with melanoma, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) figures.

"We are fighting melanoma because it is the most aggressive skin cancer. Also, other creams currently exist for treating skin cancer but they do not specifically treat this type," said Michelson.

The experts' main objective is to find a mechanism that can counteract the organism's progression before the presence of a tumour.

"The problem is that the human body does not react to tumours because they make bodies believe they are normal," Acuna explained. "For that reason, the idea was to find an immunological response for when a bacterial as well as a viral or parasitic infection appears."

The ointment is for external use and should be applied every third day for a period of about a month, during which the application zone should be protected, said the researchers.

The medication contains an extract of a shrub that can be found between the Chilean regions of Coquimbo in the north and Biobio in the south, they added, noting that the substance affects the viability of the tumor cells.

"We had already carried out other researches into treating melanoma cancer and, while searching for how to improve them, we found this compound," said Michelson. The effectiveness of the treatment has been encouraging, noted the researchers. —Xinhua



US Defence Secretary Ash Carter (R) is briefed on the capabilities of the National Guard Cyber Unit at Joint base Lewis-McChord, Washington, on 4 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

US National Guard may join cyber offense against Islamic State: Carter

WASHINGTON — US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said the National Guard's cyber squadrons will play an increasingly important role in assessing the vulnerabilities of US industrial infrastructure and could be asked to join the fight against Islamic State.

The National Guard — a reserve military force that resides in the states but can be mobilized for national needs — is a key part of the military's larger effort to set up over 120 cyber squadrons to respond to cyber attacks and prevent them.

One such unit, the 262nd squadron, is a 101-person team that includes employees of Mi-

crosoft Corp and Alphabet Inc's Google. The unit is "famous throughout the country" for several high profile vulnerability assessments, Carter said at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington late on Friday.

He told reporters the squadron was not currently engaging in offensive cyber missions but could be in the future.

"Units like this can also participate in offensive cyber operations of the kind that I have stressed we are conducting, and actually accelerating, in Iraq and Syria, to secure the prompt defeat of ISIL, which we need to do and will do," Carter said. "We're looking

for ways to accelerate that, and cyber's one of them."

The 262nd squadron's work includes a study last year on the control system used by Snohomish County Public Utility District in Washington state, which helped the utility strengthen its security, and a 2010 case in which the US Air Force briefly lost contact with 50 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The 2010 assessment cost about \$20,000, much less than the \$150,000 that a private sector company would likely charge, said Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Borchers, deputy commander of the 252nd Cyber Operations Group, which oversees the

262nd squadron.

Borchers said the squadron is the only National Guard group that currently assesses industrial control systems, but it is now looking to train others. It is also studying the security of big weapons programs, such as the B-52 bomber.

Using National Guard units for such work made sense because it allowed the military to benefit from private sector cyber experts, Carter said.

"It brings in the high-tech sector in a very direct way to the mission of protecting the country," he told reporters. "And we're absolutely going to do more of it." —Reuters

UAE launches 1st eco-friendly facility to develop food, fuel

ABU DHABI — The world's first research facility to grow both food and fuel, using desert lands irrigated with seawater, began operations yesterday on a two-hectare site in the environmental settlement in Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"Research and innovation underpin the UAE's ability to overcome environmental and social challenges, such as food and water security, while protecting our ecosystems," UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment Thani Ahmed Al Zeyoudi said. He added that the project would not only produce bio-energy, but also offer a pathway to grow aquaculture industry, which supports food independence.

The UAE imports roughly 90 per cent of its food, at a cost, that if is left unchecked, is predicted to increase 300 per cent over the next decade.

The new facility, operated by Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, is funded by the Sustainable Bioenergy Research Consortium (SBRC), a group advancing the aviation industry's commitment to reduce its carbon emissions by developing a clean, sustainable and alternative fuel supply.

Energy, water and food security are key, inter-linked needs for the UAE, said Behjat Al Yousuf, interim dean of Masdar Institute, a graduate research-based university in Abu Dhabi, and a founding member of the SBRC.

He added that "Masdar Institute is committed to supporting the country's strategic goals, and we are proud to be operating this research facility, which not only develops sustainable bio-energy and food to help fuel and diversify the UAE economy, but also serves as a training ground for a new generation of innovators." —Xinhua

Japan's MSDF submarine to make port call in the Philippines

TOKYO — Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force plans to send one of its submarines to the Philippines for a port call next month to Subic Bay, a Defence Ministry source said yesterday.

While the envisaged voyage is aimed at training MSDF officers and fostering goodwill with the Philippines, Japan is keen to help Southeast Asian countries improve their surveillance capabilities in the South China Sea where China is pursuing militarization. The plan is for a submarine to leave Japan together with two destroyers in the latter half of this month, the source said.

The vessels are scheduled to cross Bashi Channel between Taiwan and the Philippines, and dock at Subic Bay, north of Manila, in April, according to the source. The destroyers will then proceed to make a port call to Cam Ranh Bay in Viet Nam. The Japanese government is also considering leasing a number of MSDF TC-90 training aircraft to the Philippines, according to government sources. China claims almost the entire South China Sea and has competing territorial claims with Viet Nam, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan. —Kyodo News

Second bookseller detained in China returns to Hong Kong — police

HONG KONG — A second Hong Kong bookseller who went missing and was found to have been detained in China returned home yesterday, refusing to discuss his case, Hong Kong police said.

Cheung Chi Ping was one of five Hong Kong booksellers specialising in gossip publications about Chinese leaders to go missing last year. A colleague from the same store re-appeared in the city on Friday.

"Cheung Chi Ping requested police to cancel his missing person case and stated that he did not require any assistance from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government or police," the

police said in a statement.

"Cheung refused to disclose other details," it added.

Two of the others, Gui Minhai and Lee Bo had been outside mainland China when they disappeared. Gui was in Thailand and Lee in Hong Kong.

Gui appeared on state television in January and tearfully confessed to a fatal drink-driving incident over a decade ago. He appeared on Chinese television again late last month with three of his colleagues confirming for the first time they had been detained for "illegal book trading" in mainland China.

British passport holder Lee, in an interview with China's Phoenix Televi-

sion last week, said he had not been kidnapped by Chinese authorities, as many suspect, but had sneaked into China illegally and that he would renounce his British citizenship.

The booksellers' plight had provoked concerns that China was using shadowy tactics to weaken Hong Kong's broad freedoms under the "one country, two systems" formula under which the global financial hub has been governed since its return to China from British rule in 1997.

Police had said on Wednesday that authorities in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong had told them Lui and his colleagues, Cheung Chi

Ping and Lam Wing Kee, would be released on bail in coming days.

A number of governments have expressed concern about the disappearances, which some diplomats fear were abductions by Chinese agents.

China's Foreign Ministry has said its law enforcement officials would never do anything illegal, especially not overseas, and called on foreign governments not to interfere in Hong Kong affairs.

Hong Kong police said they would continue to follow the other missing person cases with the Interpol Guangdong Liaison Office of Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department. —Reuters

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China warns Hong Kong not to politicise issues

BEIJING — China's third-ranked Communist Party leader Zhang Dejiang said Hong Kong shouldn't "politicise everything" and should instead focus on integrating its economy with China's, according to members of China's parliament who met with him yesterday.

A day after Premier Li Keqiang pledged greater economic support for Hong Kong at the opening of annual parliamentary sessions in Beijing, Zhang said that while a recent riot in Hong Kong was a concern, it was one the city's government could handle.

"He (Zhang) said one needed to take a broader perspective to look at it, and to not politicise everything," said Rita Fan, a standing committee

member of China's parliament chaired by Zhang.

Chinese media has blamed the riot in early February on "radical separatists" seeking to destabilise Hong Kong.

Other delegates who met with Zhang said that while Zhang didn't single out anyone for blame, there remained concern among Beijing's top leaders towards an embittered cluster of youth groups in Hong Kong using increasingly radical or violent means to demand greater autonomy.

China maintains Hong Kong is an inseparable part of China and as such resolutely opposes any moves towards independence.

Reuters was not able to contact Zhang for comment. Calls to China's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office in Beijing after regular business hours went unanswered.

"They worry about the rise of separatism," said Lau Siu-kai, a former senior Hong Kong government adviser who met with Zhang on Friday with other members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a top parliamentary advisory body.

"If something big happens in Hong Kong that is seen as threatening national security, I don't expect China to wait, they may take the initiative to protect national security," Lau told Reuters.

Hong Kong was returned from British to Chinese rule in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework granting it



A ferry sails at Victoria Harbour in front of the financial Central district, featuring AIA Central (C) and Cheung Kong Center behind it, in Hong Kong, China on 17 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

broad freedoms and an independent judiciary, though with Beijing having ultimate authority.

As for the disappearances of five Hong Kong booksellers who published gossip books of China's leaders, the issue wasn't raised by Zhang despite

lingering questions about the cases.

All of the booksellers recently surfaced to give interviews on Chinese television saying they had travelled voluntarily to China. But the British government maintains one of the men, Lee Bo, had been "involun-

tarily removed" from Hong Kong. China's Foreign Ministry has said its law enforcement officials would never do anything illegal, especially not overseas, and called on foreign governments not to interfere in Hong Kong affairs.—Reuters

Austria to shun refugee quota system — minister in paper

SYDNEY — Austria does not want to take part in any quota system for distributing refugees among European countries because it has done enough on its own, its defence minister was quoted as saying.

The comments by Social Democrat Hans Peter Doskozil to the *Oesterreich* newspaper threaten to

make even more complicated an emergency EU summit with Turkey on Monday on handling the worst refugee crisis in generations.

Austria — the last stop before Germany, the top destination for migrants fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and beyond — has already come

under fire from the European Commission and human rights groups for capping its intake of refugees.

The Alpine republic of 8.5 million people got 90,000 asylum requests last year and has curtailed the number this year while imposing daily limits on the numbers it processes.

"We are taking the

lion's share and taking in 37,500 asylum seekers this year alone. Now the others are called upon. Why should Austria take refugees from Greece? That would send the wrong signal," Doskozil was quoted as saying.

He reiterated Vienna's call for a quota system, saying many countries

that are net recipients of EU funding had to step up and do their share to resolve a difficult situation with thousands of people stranded on Greece's border with Macedonia.

In a separate report, Swiss newspaper NZZ am Sonntag said Switzerland was set to take in 600 asylum seekers from Greece

who had been registered by Greek authorities and had a good chance of being allowed to stay in the neutral Alpine country.

Although Switzerland is not an EU member, the Swiss government agreed last year to take in 1,500 asylum seekers under an EU relocation programme.—Reuters



3rd March, 2016: The Scholarship Donation by Cathay United Bank and Yangon University of Economics supports total USD 36,000 for 20 students up to 4 academic years this year. Mr. Peter Pan Chung En, Chief Representative of Cathay United Bank, and Dr. Khin Naing Oo, Rector of Yangon University of Economics, signed

the Scholarship Donation at Nilar Yatu Hall in Yangon University of Economics, witnessed by Pro-Rector Dr. Tun Aung and Executive Vice President, Ms. Nancy Hung Yuan Lan in the presence of delegates from Central Bank of Myanmar.



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Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-085(15-16)	Spares for ATLAS COPCO Compressor (8) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-086(15-16)	Spares for 50 Ton QY 50K Mobile Crane (53) Items	US\$
(3)	IFB-087(15-16)	Assorted Sizes of Hot Bend (1) Lot	US\$
(4)	IFB-088(15-16)	Projector, Computer, Printer, Amplifier, Sound Box and Cordless Mic (5) Items	US\$
(5)	IFB-089(15-16)	Auto Voltage Regulator and Constant Speed Mixer with Microprocessor (2) Items	US\$
(6)	IFB-090(15-16)	1 1/2" Pitch Quadruple Chain (ANSI Standard) with Connecting Link Cotter Pin Type (2) Items	US\$
(7)	DMP/L-016(15-16)	Core Drilling Machine/Atomic Absorption Spectrometers & Binocular Microscope (3) Items	KS
(8)	DMP/L-017(15-16)	Dell Server and Accessories (1) Set	KS

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Newly-weds Rupert Murdoch and Jerry Hall blessed in London church

LONDON — Media mogul Rupert Murdoch and actress and model Jerry Hall celebrated their marriage with a blessing service on Saturday at St. Bride's church on London's Fleet Street, the spiritual home of British journalism.

A star-studded guest list included actor Michael Caine, Irish rockstar Bob Geldof, composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and British Justice Secretary Michael Gove, a senior figure among those who want the UK to leave the European Union.

But conspicuous by their absence were Prime Minister David Cameron and finance minister George Osborne, who want Britain to stay in the 28-member bloc.

Murdoch and Hall wed on Friday in a private ceremony in central London, after which the now four-times married 84-year-

old said he was the happiest man in the world.

Murdoch, executive chairman of News Corp and owner of 21st Century Fox Inc, and Hall, 59, posed for photographs after the service at the historic church, which is famed for its wedding-cake spire, but simply smiled and made no comment to the waiting media.

Texan model and actress Hall was wearing a pale blue chiffon and silk wedding gown, reported to have been designed by Vivienne Westwood, while Murdoch was dressed in a navy suit, white shirt and brown

shoes. He sported a single white rose in his breast pocket.

The couple's 10 children from previous relationships attended the service, as did Rebekah Brooks, who returned to run Murdoch's British newspapers in September, and Robert Thomson, CEO of News Corp.

Other guests included former Rolling Stone Bill Wyman, artist Tracey Emin, photographer David Bailey and UK employment minister Priti Patel, who like Gove is backing Brexit.

Murdoch is an influential figure in Britain through his ownership of a clutch of news-

papers.

Last month his Sun on Sunday publication said Cameron had failed to get a proper deal for Britain from other EU leaders and on Thursday he tweeted that the UK government had made false claims about the implications of Brexit aimed at scaring voters.

Murdoch and Hall began dating last summer after being introduced while in Australia and were first seen in public together at the Rugby Union World Cup Final in London in October. They got engaged in January.

Hall was previously in a long-term relationship with Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger. St. Bride's is located on Fleet Street, where Britain's major newspapers were located from the 1700s to the 1980s.

—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS



Singer and judge Jennifer Lopez attends the party for the finalists of "American Idol XV" in West Hollywood, California, on 25 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jennifer Lopez coming up with new music 'soon'

LOS ANGELES — Singer Jennifer Lopez is planning to come up with new music soon.

The 46-year-old "American Idol" judge, whose last single came more than a year ago, promised to make a comeback after cutting ties with Capitol Records and the Island Def Jam Music Group to link up with Epic Records, reported ET online.

"I've been working on music for the past couple months. We should be putting something out real soon," Lopez said.

Apart from working on new music, the singer and actress loves to watch television and is looking forward to the new seasons of "House of Cards," "Game of Thrones" and "Homeland.—PTI

Lady Gaga returning to 'American Horror Story'

LOS ANGELES — Lady Gaga won her first Golden Globe for playing the Countess on "American Horror Story: Hotel," and the singer says she will return for the anthology series.

The 29-year-old "Poker Face" hitmaker gave positive response when asked about her return on the series, but did not give out any details about her character, reported Entertainment Weekly.

When one of her interviewers asked, "Are you back on American Horror Story?" She said "yes". But "I can't

promise you how or when or anything like that." Gaga also talked about sexual assault and her performance of The Hunting Ground's "Til It Happens to You" at Academy Awards.

"I want young people and old people to see that it's okay, that you don't have to hide from difficult topics. Who experienced sexual violence 10 years ago."

"It's okay to talk about these things, and it's okay to feel uncomfortable for a second so you can help somebody else," she said.—PTI

My heartbreak inspired my album: Rita Ora

LONDON — Singer Rita Ora says her new album is inspired by her split from her former flames including Calvin Harris and Ricky Hilfiger.

The "Body On Me" hitmaker has revealed she has drawn on her past relationships as inspiration for her latest record, reported Femalefirst. When asked if her music had been influenced by her break ups, she said, "Yeah, I've got about two of those records. But the thing is I get angry first then I get emotional. I hate hate hate hate that person and then I'm like, 'Wait a minute, hold on ...'"

"It's amazing because it is a big transition in my life. It's definitely the most emotional album I've ever done, but not in a sad way. It's angry, it's happy, it's love — it's everything in one.—PTI



Rita Ora. PHOTO: REUTERS



Lady Gaga arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Beverly Hills, California, on 28 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Alaska's famed Iditarod race to start along shorter ceremonial route

JUNEAU (Alaska) — Alaska's famed sled-dog race is set to get underway on Saturday when dozens of mushers and dog teams from around the world begin their near 1,000-mile (1,600-km) journey through the US state's frigid wilderness.

The ceremonial start in Anchorage sets the stage for the official timed start yesterday of a race that commemorates a 1925 rescue mission that carried diphtheria serum to Nome by sled-dog relay.

The trail cutting through Alaska's tundra to the Bering Sea coastline is marked by darkness, steep climbs, temperatures expected to dip as low as 60 F below zero (-51 C), and fierce winds powerful enough to throw teams off the trails.

"Last year is done and gone," said two-time defending champion and course record holder Dallas Seavey, 29, who is seeking to become the sixth racer to record four victories. Each of the last four races has been won by either Seavey or his father, Mitch.

"I would assume most of my competitors are coming back with better teams than they brought in the past. I know I am."

Saturday's events are known for drawing hordes



A team heads out at the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race to begin their near 1,000-mile (1,600-km) journey through Alaska's frigid wilderness in downtown Anchorage, Alaska, on 5 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

of fans armed with cameras and banners who gather to cheer on the 85 mushers, a number of them from as far away as the United Kingdom and Sweden, as they ride through the streets of downtown Anchorage.

A lack of snow in the state's largest city, however, forced race organisers to shorten the race's ceremonial start to three miles (4.8 km) from 11 miles (17.7 km), despite efforts

to bring in fresh snow by train from Fairbanks, Hooley said.

Mushers will hit 21 checkpoints with distances between stops ranging from 18 to 85 miles (29 to 137 km) before reaching the finish line in the coastal community of Nome, after traveling some 975 miles (1,569 km).

Winners usually cross the finish line between the eighth and 10th days.

The winner will receive \$50,400 and a new truck.

"I'm more nervous about the ceremonial start than the timed start," said Miriam Osredkar, 38, one the 17 rookie mushers. She grew up in Ohio and has completed races in Idaho, Wyoming, Russia, and Alaska. "For me, the (timed) re-start, it's just --get me out on the trail and let me be with my dogs."—Reuters

Italy seeks UNESCO recognition for Neapolitan pizza making

ROME — Italy on Friday put forward the Neapolitan pizza as a candidate for inclusion in UNESCO'S cultural heritage list for next year.

The national commission for UNESCO said in a statement that it had voted unanimously to protect the Neapolitan pizza as part of the country's cultural and gastronomic tradition.

If UNESCO accepts the bid it will win a place on the world body's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as "The Traditional Art of Neapolitan Pizza Makers".

Traditional Neapolitan Pizza has a relatively thin crust with the exception of the rim, which, when baked, bloats like a tiny bicycle tyre. It is religiously made in a wood-burning brick oven and has two classic versions: Marinara (tomato, garlic, oregano and oil) and, the most famous, Margherita (tomato, mozzarella, oil and basil). According to tradition, the Pizza Margherita was created in 1889 by a local chef in honour of Queen Margherita, who was visiting the city. It has the red, white and green colours of the Italian flag.—Reuters



A pizza is removed from a wood-burning oven. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chicken burger named after Canada's 1st Sikh Defence Minister!

TORONTO — Canada's first Sikh Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan now has a chicken burger named after him and it is called 'The Minister of National Deliciousness'.

45-year-old Sajjan, who was in November named Canada's Minister of National Defence

in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's 30-member Liberal cabinet, stopped by a downtown Vancouver eatery to sample the burger named in his honour.

"National Deliciousness indeed! Tried my namesake burger at #Vancouver's @TheCannibal-

Cafe and was not disappointed," Sajjan tweeted after eating the burger.

Sajjan, who represents the Vancouver-South, was in town last week for the Liberal government's first ministers meeting, but made time to visit 'The Cannibal Cafe' and try out his namesake burger 'The

Minister of National Deliciousness'.

"I approve," Sajjan said after taking the first bite.

"It's got pakoras on it. Who would've thought to put it into a burger? Now that — that makes sense," he was quoted as saying by CTV News.—PTI



Entertainment Channel

(7-3-2016, Monday)

6:00 pm

• Music Programme

6:20 pm

• Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:40 pm

• Music Programme

7:00 pm

• Korea TV Drama Series

7:45 pm

• Korea TV Drama Series

8:30 pm

• Cartoon Programme
"BEN 10 ALIEN FORCE (Part-V)"

9:00 pm

• Music Programme

9:15

• Myanmar Traditional Instruments (MYANMA HARP)

9:40 pm

• Myanmar Classical Songs

10:00 pm

• Myanmar Video

12:00

• Close Down

From 7.3.2016 (Monday) 06:00 Pm

To 8.3.2016 (Tuesday) 06:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.



News Channel in Brief

(7-3-2016, Monday)

6:00 am

• Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

7:35 am

• People's Talks

8:35 am

• Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)

9:35 am

• Documentary (ASEAN)

10:35 am

• Weekly Entertainment News

11:35 am

• MRTV's Youth Programme

12:35 pm

• TV Drama series

1:20 pm

• Tasty Trip

1:50 pm

• Gitadagale Phwintbaohn

3:15 pm

• MRTV Job Opportunity Programme

4:35 pm

• University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) Fourth Year (Math)

5:35 pm

• Socio Economic Scenes

6:35 pm

• Yes or No Talk Show

7:15 pm

• TV Drama Series

8:00 pm

• News / International News/ Weather Report

8:35 pm

• Documentary

9:00 pm

• News

• TV Drama Series

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



Myanmar International

(7-3-2016 07:00am ~ 8-3-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	The Rising Glory Of Myanmar Arts
07:54	Am	Scented Buddha Images
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Ambassador's View: Korea-Myanmar Bilateral Ties
08:47	Am	A Pilgrimage To Prominent Pagoda In Pakokku
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Part-1)
09:43	Am	Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Family"
09:53	Am	Modifying Natural Thanakha Bark into Ready Made Skin Care Product

10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The Richly Blessed Gem Land
10:53	Am	School for the Blind
(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Food Trip (EP-4) (Part-1)
07:45	Pm	"Moe Hnyin Than Buddh", The Unique Pagoda In Monywa
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Taste Of Myanmar (Rakhine Monte Ti)
08:49	Pm	Entrepreneur - Dr. Thant Thaw Kaung
(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		

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

Mahrez sends Leicester clear, Spurs held by Arsenal

LONDON — Leicester City's Riyad Mahrez scored a brilliant goal to earn a 1-0 win at Watford that sent them five points clear at the top of the Premier League after Tottenham Hotspur drew 2-2 with 10-man Arsenal on Saturday.

Manchester City revived their fading title hopes with a 4-0 rout of bottom club Aston Villa and the pressure mounted on Newcastle United manager Steve McClaren after a 3-1 home defeat by Bournemouth.

Leicester dominated the first half against Watford but were unable to breach a disciplined defence until the 56th minute when Mahrez produced a moment of class with a fine strike from the edge of the penalty area.

"It was very tough, we knew coming here would be a tough ask," Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel told Sky Sports.

"Riyad has come up with a bit of magic so we are delighted," he added.

"I think all the way through we have had the belief that we have the players going forward to do something special."

Arsenal, who had Francis

Coquelin sent off early in the second

half, will be happier than Spurs with a point in the north London derby after Alexis Sanchez grabbed a late equaliser to end a run of three successive defeats in all competitions.

Toby Alderweireld's low angled drive and Harry Kane's

brilliant

curling shot had put Tottenham ahead after Aaron Ramsey's clever flicked finish gave Arsenal the lead.

"You feel frustrated and disappointed because at 11 against 10 you need to keep that result," Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino said.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger thought Coquelin's sending-off for a needless foul wide on the touchline had been decisive.

"I'm happy and proud of our attitude, we refused to lose the game," Wenger said after his side avoided suffering four straight defeats for the first time since 2002.

"But we have big regrets because I couldn't see when it was 11 versus 11 how we would drop points today. We made a big mistake at 1-0. (Coquelin) knows he made a mistake."

Leicester lead the standings on 60 points with Tottenham on 55, Arsenal 52 and Manchester City 50.

City's Sergio Aguero scored twice and missed a penalty as they overwhelmed Villa, who are eight points adrift at the foot of the table, with four second-half goals at the Etihad Stadium.

Newcastle remained second-bottom, a point from the safety zone, after the defeat by

Bournemouth and McClaren was roundly booed by the St James' Park crowd.

Steven Taylor's first-half own goal put Bournemouth ahead and Josh King doubled their lead in the 70th minute. Ayoz Perez pulled one back for the hosts 10 minutes later before Charlie Daniels ended Newcastle's hopes of a fightback.

"I'm very disappointed. That was definitely a poor performance and 'going down' material. The only positive is that we have 10 games to go," McClaren said.

Champions Chelsea were held to a 1-1 draw by Stoke City at Stamford Bridge, Mame Biram Diouf heading a late equaliser for the visitors after Bertrand Traore had put the Londoners in front.

West Ham United scored three goals in the last 12 minutes to secure a dramatic 3-2 win over 10-man Everton, who had Kevin Mirallas sent off after 34 minutes, at Goodison Park and climb to fifth on 49 points.

Southampton's Virgil van Dijk struck in stoppage-time to earn his side a 1-1 draw with fourth-bottom Sunderland and Swansea City won 1-0 against fellow strugglers Norwich City, who stayed in the relegation places.—Reuters



Leicester's Christian Fuchs in action with Tottenham's Nordin Amrabat during Barclays Premier League at Vicarage Road on 5 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Ronaldo hits four as Real Madrid crush Celta 7-1

MADRID — Cristiano Ronaldo, fired up by rival Lionel Messi's midweek hat-trick for Barcelona, struck four goals in 26 second-half minutes as Real Madrid crushed Celta Vigo 7-1 at the Bernabeu on Saturday.

Substitute Gareth Bale, playing his first match since a calf injury in mid-January, rounded off the rout nine minutes from time as Real recovered from the 1-0 derby loss at home to Atletico Madrid last weekend.

A return to form may be too late for Real in La Liga, nine points adrift of leaders Barca who play at Eibar on Sunday, but it has come in good time for next week's Champions League last-16 second-leg tie against AS Roma which they lead 2-0.

After a first-half opener from defender Pepe, Ronaldo struck four times between the 50th and 76th minutes to take his La Liga tally to 27 and overtake Barcelona's Luis Suarez, who has 25, as the league's top

scorer. Substitute Jese scored Real's sixth goal a minute after Ronaldo's fourth.

Messi had caught up with Ronaldo on 35 hat-tricks each in all club competitions with a treble in Barcelona's 5-1 win at Rayo Vallecano on Thursday.

"Madrid had a great game, they were a whirlwind," Celta defender Hugo Mallo told Spanish TV.

"We stopped playing... We suffer a lot when we don't have the ball, it was rather like what happened to us at the Nou Camp," he added referring to a 6-1 loss to Barca three weeks' ago.

Pepe opened the scoring five minutes before halftime with a bullet header from a corner.

Real took flight in the second half when Ronaldo got off the mark with a trademark shot from outside the box that dipped over Sergio Blanco who was well off his line.

The Portugal forward made it three with a superb free kick eight minutes later, whip-

ping in a hard shot that dipped over the wall and beat Blanco for sheer speed.

The visitors pulled one back just past the hour when Iago Aspas beat Ramos and Pepe to a long clearance out of the Celta defence and lobbed goalkeeper Keylor Navas.

But Real kept Celta pegged back in defence and Ronaldo completed his hat-trick inside 14 minutes from a pass by Isco after a good combination with Lucas Vazquez.

His fourth goal was a header from a cross by Jese, who scored the team's sixth a minute later after a dribble through the defence and a shot that went in at the base of the post.

Bale put the icing on the cake with a thunderbolt from outside the box on the left that went in off the far post.

The win put Real one point behind Atletico Madrid before they visit Valencia on Sunday and seven clear of Villarreal, who are at home to Las Palmas later on Saturday.—Reuters

Beaten Tomic tees off at absent Davis Cup team mate Kyrgios

MELBOURNE — Frustrated Australia number one Bernard Tomic questioned team mate Nick Kyrgios's withdrawal from the Davis Cup tie against the United States in Melbourne after the hosts crashed out of the tournament's first round yesterday.

Rising talent Kyrgios withdrew from the tie with a virus days before the opening singles on Friday, leaving 77th-ranked Sam Groth to battle world number 11 John Isner at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club.

Groth was beaten easily by Isner and the big-serving American returned on Sunday to grind down 20th-ranked Tomic in four sets and put the US into the quarter-finals for the first time in three years.

During a change of ends while playing Isner, Tomic was picked up by court-side microphones complaining to team captain Lleyton Hewitt that Kyrgios had "faked" injuries twice to avoid Davis Cup ties.

"Nick's sitting down in Canberra. It's bullshit he's sick," the 23-year-old said.

World number 27 Kyrgios also missed Australia's first round tie against Czech Republic last year with a back injury but returned to

the court at Indian Wells two weeks later.

Tomic noted that Kyrgios was on the entry list for this year's Indian Wells and told reporters he would "lose respect" for the 20-year-old if he competed there.

"He didn't come to Czech and had stress fractures and somehow played Indian Wells and felt good," Tomic said at the post-match media conference.

"Now it's going to be funny for me to see whether he plays.

"If he plays Indian Wells, then he's definitely lost a little bit of my respect."

Tomic carried a wrist injury into the tie and said he had played with pain.

"In a situation where it wasn't Davis Cup, I would have pulled out and not played with the pain I was playing with," he said.

Tomic's tirade tore apart the veneer of harmony that captain Hewitt has been at pains to present after in-fighting overshadowed Australia's run to the semi-finals last year. Tomic was kicked off the team last year for a second time in his career after publicly criticising top Australian tennis officials at Wimbledon last year.—Reuters