

Nationwide bird population survey scheduled for early April

PAGE 3



Renovation begins on U Pein Bridge

PAGE 2



ANALYSIS
BE PERSUASIVE,
NOT ABRASIVE

PAGE 8

MODERN INFANT CARE

Yankin Children's Hospital equipped with cardiac cath lab, neonatal ICU

THE Ministry of Health has installed a cardiac catheterisation laboratory and a neonatal intensive care unit within the Yankin Children's Hospital in Yangon to better facilitate child health care and ultimately save lives, according to Union Minister Dr Than Aung.

Speaking on the occasion of the official announcement the union minister said that the installation of modern medical devices at the 500-bed hospital yesterday was part of the government's commitment to reducing the maternal and child mortality rate in Myanmar and particularly in Yangon, the nation's most populous city, in line with the United Nations' millennium development goals. The country currently still experiences a high mortality rate during the neonatal period and in areas related to pregnancy compared to the Asia region and the world at large.

Financed by the government, the cardiac catheterisation laboratory and the neonatal intensive care unit will now be able to provide advanced health care to infants in need. After the opening ceremony Dr Than Aung toured the neonatal intensive care unit and inspected medical staff giving essential treatment to newborns.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Union Minister for Health Dr Than Aung inspects Yankin Children's Hospital. PHOTO: MNA

Receding Ayeyawady prompts vessel draft restrictions

THE Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems in Mandalay has issued draft restrictions to be followed by vessels navi-

gating the Ayeyawady River in response to news that the river is receding.

Deputy Director U Toe Aung Lin stressed that cargo

ships should stick to the draft limitations suggested by the department in order to avoid being grounded on the sandbar.

Deputy Director U Than Zaw Htwe of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology in Mandalay, however, predicted that an unusual drop in the water level in the river is highly unlikely, despite the noticeable effects of El Niño.

According to recent measurements, the surface of Ayeyawady River in Mandalay Region stood at 409 centimetres yesterday, down from 434 centimetres three days ago.—*Aung Thant Khaing*



Vessels are urged to follow draft restrictions in Ayeyawady River. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

Rice consumption to be surveyed

THE Rice Merchant Association and the Yezin Agricultural University intend to jointly undertake a survey of individual rice consumption in Myanmar as a follow up to their last survey regarding the matter undertaken twenty years ago, according to an official of the association.

U Aung Than Oo said that 146 students from the university will take part in the nationwide survey which is expected to begin at the end of this month and be conducted over two months. The organisers intend to spend approximately K45 million (US\$37,000) on the project that will cover 1,750 urban sites and 2,250 rural sites across the country, Associate Professor Dr Theingi Myint said, pledging that her team will do their

best to make the report as broad, comprehensive and informative as possible despite the short run time of the programme. The outcome of the individual rice consumption survey will help weigh domestic demand against exports. According to the Ministry of Commerce, the country has exported 1.47 million tonnes of rice up to 18 March of this fiscal year.

Currently, the country has an annual rice output of around 11.5 million tonnes yielded from 19 million acres of farmland. In a report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation the country was described as one of the highest rice consumers in the world with an annual per capita consumption ranging from between 190 and 210 kilograms.—*Ko Moe*

Renovation begins on U Pein Bridge

REPAIR works began on the more than 160-year-old U Pein Bridge in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region, on 23 March.

The repairs are meant to ensure the durability of the bridge ahead of the coming water festival, said U Nyo Myint Tun, director of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Mandalay).

A 27-member team from the Inle region of Shan State is conducting the bridge renovations, which are slated for completion

before the Myanmar New Year, in line with suggestions by experts, historians and local people, added the director.

The regional government spent K13.4 million (US\$11,020) on bridge repairs last fiscal year.

Renovation works include the replacement of decayed teak pillars with new ones from Kayah State, the installation of wooden bridge guardrails on both sides of the bridge and repairs to damaged parts of the bridge.—*Aung Thant Khaing*



U Pein Bridge being repaired. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

KOICA supports wash & school rehabilitation in Bago

THE Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), through its World Friend Korea volunteers' program, has announced its support for a new project involving voluntary activity in Win Ka Yin village, Bago Township with the goal of improving the living conditions of village residents.

KOICA WFK-Volunteer Ms. Shin Yong Jin, dispatched to the Early Childhood Care & Development Resource Centre under the Wash & School rehabilitation voluntary activity programme, arrived at Win Ka Yin primary school in Bago on Friday. The project budget is set at US\$1,689. The launching ceremony was successfully held in the presence of Mr. Moon Sang Won, Senior Deputy Representative of the KOICA Office in Myanmar, KOICA WFK-Volunteers and other related representatives including teachers, officials and esteemed members of the community. Win Ka Yin village is a remote area that receives limited

support from the government making the ideal village for the programme to begin operating in. The programme aims to improve the health knowledge and conditions of local residents by providing medical check-up services, sustainable water purifiers and solar panels for electricity generation. Also at the Win Ka Yin primary school, in order to strengthen the capacity of teachers and enhance children's creativity, KOICA is carrying out various activities such as painting, introducing the children to animation and playing field day games.

KOICA, through its World Friends Korea volunteers program has been supporting a number of projects to facilitate the access and activities of the volunteers, enhance the capacity building of host organisations and improve the quality of life of people in the local community. Currently there are around 100 World Friends Korea volunteers serving in Myanmar.—*GNLM*



A man receives medical check-up. PHOTO: KOICA

Mandalay Region govt to trim cabinet

THE National League for Democracy is planning to reduce the number of regional ministries in Mandalay Region, according to Dr Zaw Myint Maung, the NLD's CEC member and an MP representing Amarapura Constituency-1.

Speaking to the media after a regional parliamentary meet-

ing on 24 March, Dr Zaw Myint Maung, who is also a spokesperson for the NLD, said the new number of ministries will be between five and nine.

"The Mandalay Region government currently has nine ministries; we are thinking about how many ministries will be reduced," he added.

Dr Zaw Myint Maung is thought to become the next chief minister of Mandalay region.

"I think reducing the number of ministries will not harm the government's work. The parliamentary affairs committee can help by submitting reports," said Zaw Myint Maung.—*Aung Thant Khaing*

Over 1,000 cattle-drawn carts descend on Shwe Nat Taung Pagoda Festival

IN an effort to keep traditional customs alive, villagers in the area of the Shwe Nat Taung Pagoda Festival, located in the western Bago Region township of Shwetaung, have arrived en-masse with cattle drawn carts, with the number of carts in attendance totalling over 1,000. The pagoda festival runs from 16 to 24 March.

"When a whole village comes to the festival, they bring about 100 carts with them. Our village, however, has brought about 200 carts with us. People come in family groups, piling everything they're going to need onto the cart: tarpaulin, cooking equipment, food and hay for the cattle. On arrival to the pagoda festival, villages set up their camps, sleeping and eating on their carts, before returning home once the festival is over," said a festival attendee from Thayettaw Village.



Ox-carts arriving at pagoda festival. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

The Shwe Nat Taung Pagoda Festival is the only one of its kind in Myanmar in which people arrive by cattle cart and parade on them during the festival. In addition to the villages in Shwetaung Township, cattle-driven carts from over 30 villages along the Ayeyawady River also made the journey to the festival.

"Of course, in these changing times, people also arrive by motorcycle or van. However, the majority still arrives on carts. Flooding this year has affected crop production, so people have had to tighten

their purse strings somewhat compared with previous years. But it hasn't stopped villagers from making this annual trip," said cart-owner U Maung Gyi. This year marks the 178th Shwe Nat Taung Pagoda Festival. Over 700 stalls and shops, selling farming and kitchen equipment, clothes and snacks lined the northern entrance of the pagoda, reaching all the way to the eastern side of Mayarman Village. Traditional theatrical performances and cattle races were key features of the celebrations.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

NLD to hold talks with ANP on appointment of Rakhine State PM

THE National League for Democracy (NLD) will hold talks with the Arakan National Party (ANP) at the end of March over the appointment of the Rakhine State Chief Minister, it is known. Aung San Suu Kyi, chair of the NLD, met with representatives of the ANP for discussion in Naypyidaw on the evening of

March 24 during which it was agreed that dialogue on matters concerning appointment of the Rakhine State Chief Minister would be convened at the end of the month.

"The ANP has selected three candidates from the party for the position of Rakhine State Chief Minister. We have since

released an announcement of the fact. The NLD have also chosen three candidates for the position from their party and we've agreed to hold talks on the issue during the last week of March," said Daw Khin Saw Wai, member of Pyithu Hluttaw for representing the ANP. The ANP has selected Dr Aye Maung, U Htun

Aung and U Thar Htun Hla as candidates for the position of Rakhine State Chief Minister. It is known that State Ministers do not operate in their own separate political sphere, rather they work in coordination together with central government.

"I think it would be more fitting if those selected Rakh-

ine State Chief Minister candidates were a part of the coming week's talks. [The NLD] has said they've extended invitation to the three individuals in question. We're still to be made aware of the exact day of the dialogue though," added Daw Khin Saw Wai.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Myanmar mountaineers leave for Nepal to climb Everest

THREE Myanmar climbers will climb Mount Everest, the earth's highest mountain, located in the Mahalangur Mountain Range in Nepal and Tibet, later this month.

Nyi Nyi Aung, Win Ko Ko and Pyae Phyo Aung, the selected members of the Technical Climbing Club of Myanmar, left Yangon for Nepal on Saturday in order to climb the world's tallest peak at 8,848 meters above sea level.

Normally, the climb to the top of Mt Everest is expected to take more than two months.

"This is our first attempt to go to the top of the snow-capped Mt Everest. We plan to start climbing on 29 March. We will be joined by three Brazilian climbers in Nepal, and we expect to wrap up the expedition between 1 and 3 June," Nyi Nyi

Aung said.

The expedition is sponsored by the Htoo Foundation.

"Our support is aimed at raising the Myanmar flag on the peak of Mt Everest," said U Paw Myint Oo, chief executive officer of the Htoo Foundation.

Since 2011, the Technical Climbing Club of Myanmar, one of five active Myanmar climbing organisations, was established to empower local climbers.

The first recorded efforts to reach Everest's summit were made by British mountaineers.

There are two main climbing routes—one approaching the summit from the southeast in Nepal and the other from the north in Tibet. There have been 5,104 ascents to the summit by about 3,142 individuals as of the end of the 2010 climbing season.—*Ko Moe*



The north face of Mt. Everest seen. PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

EITI to select experts for writing of second report

A PLAM is currently being drawn up for the selection of experts from an independent verification organisation to write up the second Myanmar Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (MEITI) report, initiated to bring about more transparency within Myanmar's extractive industries.

"The first report was drawn up on three main sectors. Since oil and natural gas [extractive industry] sectors were comprehensively included in the first report, a plan is being made for the calling of experts on the forestry sector for the second report," said Dr Maung Maung Thein, chair of the MEITI.

An application was made to the board of the EITI in May, 2014 for Myanmar to become a candidate for EITI member country status. Upon a successful application, the first Myanmar EITI

report was published in January on this year.

"The first [MEITI] report is a good step for our country. Working for transparency within Myanmar's extractive industries is a good opportunity to attract foreign investment [into the sector]," said Dr Zaw Oo, national coordinator of the Myanmar EITI. The first MEITI report included thirteen companies involved in Myanmar's oil and natural gas sectors, thirty companies involved in the gems and precious stones sector, and fourteen companies active in the industrial mineral sector.

According to the criteria of the EITI, as a EITI candidate, Myanmar is required to submit its second EITI report to the central board of the EITI by January 2017 in order for it to become a full member of the EITI body.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and wife are being welcomed by Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Myanmar Mr Mohammad Sufiur Rahman at the reception to mark the 45th Anniversary Independence and National Day of Bangladesh in Yangon on 26 March, 2016. PHOTO: MNA

Nationwide bird population survey scheduled for early April

A NATIONWIDE bird population survey is scheduled to be conducted on 1 April by bird observers and wildlife conservationists, according to an organiser.

With the assistance of Nuisance Wildlife Control Specialists (NWCS), the survey will mainly be conducted in Yangon,

Mandalay and Taninthayi region as well as Kachin, Shan and Chin states.

This is the first time bird conservation organisations will carry out a population survey on a national scale.

"We will count the population of migrant birds and water birds and record their characters

and habits," said the organiser. "More than 80 kinds of water bird species usually migrate to Myanmar for wintering."

Myanmar is home to at least 1,114 different bird species, including new species found within the late five years. Forty-nine species are in danger of extinction.—200



Inndaw Gyi Lake in northern Myanmar. PHOTO: BJORN / FFI

UMFCCI organises disaster workshop in Yangon

A disaster preparedness workshop took place at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon yesterday, drawing the participation of officials from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Participants from UN agencies and NGOs shared their experiences of how best to respond

to humanitarian needs and carry out emergency relief and recovery measures in the face of disaster, UMFCCI joint general secretary U Aung Zaw Oo. The federation promised more disaster workshops in all the states and regions in the country.

According to the survey conducted by the Global Disaster Watch, Myanmar is ranked ninth in 191 disaster-prone countries.

The country experienced unusually torrential downpours that caused floods and landslides

in its 12 of 14 states and regions in June last year.

An earthquake in March 2011 claimed 76 casualties, left 100 people injured and caused a loss of K3 billion, according to the National Seismological Centre. The country was struck by Cyclone Giri in 2010 and Cyclone Nargis in 2008, suffering hundreds of thousands of casualties and losses of K10 trillions, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.—*Ko Moe*



Charge d' Affaires of Pakistan in Myanmar, Shakil Ahmed Siddiqui is presenting a cheque/letter of transfer of US Dollars 100,000/ (one Lakh) to U Aung Lynn, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday, 25 March, for the flood victims of Myanmar. PHOTO: EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN

Three-wheeled motorbike turns over

A THREE-wheel motorbike being driven by one Maung Arr Tay, 19, with two passengers on board turned over on Thursday whilst travelling along Keng Tung-Tachilek road in Shan State (East) after the driver lost control.

The motorbike driver re-

portedly died at the scene while passengers Kya Thar, 12 and Lao Hsay, 15, suffered serious injuries. The two are undergoing medical treatment at Keng Tung General Hospital. The driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by police.— *Maung Maung Naing (Keng Tung)*

Falling tree kills man

A MAN died on the spot when a large tree fell onto him on Wednesday in Thanaetkone Village, Thongwa Township, Yangon.

According the testimony of U Aung, he and U Mya Han were

trying to fell a tree that was 15 feet tall and 6 feet in diameter at U Tin Win's house. The tree fell onto U Mya Han, 48, when the wind picked up.

The police are still investigating the case.—*Kyi Soe Lwin*

Large water tank vehicle collides with motorbike

A LARGE water-moving truck collided with a motorbike in Kawthang on Thursday resulting in the serious injury of the motorbike rider. According to an investigation, the water vehicle, driven by one Ah Naing, collided with the motorbike when the driver lost control. The motorbike rider jumped from his motorbike at the last moment when he saw the vehicle veering. The accident badly damaged the motorbike. The police have filed charges against Ah Naing.— *Kyaw Soe (Kawthang)*

Raw opium and yaba seized

A LOCAL anti-drug squad seized 1,000 yaba tablets from a house owned by Min Thein on Sin Hnakaung Street, Yay Nge Village, Pyin Oo Lwin, on 21 March. Hsan Win Hlaing and Thant Zin were arrested together with the host.

Similarly, police discovered 650 yaba pills and 0.1 grams of raw opium in a house owned by Tin Myo in Nyaung Pin Tha Village, Inndaw Township, on 20 March. Tun Tun Hlaing was reportedly with the host, and both men fled the scene.

Tun Tun Hlaing was eventually arrested by police. Police also seized yaba 408 tablets from Ye Min Than (a) Rajitsu on Lay-

dauntkan Road, Thingangyun Township, on 21 March. Police filed charges against him under

the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Tin Myo and Tun Tun Hlaing and Ye Min Than (a) Rajitsu. PHOTO: MPF

Car accident kills six, injures fourteen

A SIX-wheel vehicle en route to Koepin from Thargaya that was carrying wood and bamboo in addition to timber workers overturned between mileposts 61/2-3 on Koepin- Thargaya road in Sin

Paung Wai town, Magwey region, on Wednesday, leaving six dead and fourteen injured.

According to an investigation the vehicle turned over when the driver lost control. The six

people killed in the accident died at the scene. The fourteen injured are currently receiving medical treatment at Chaung Kauk station hospital. The driver has been charged by police.— *The mirror*

Crime NEWS

Bus collides with taxi in Lanmadaw



Damaged Taxi seen at the scene of the accident in Lanmadaw.

PHOTO: KHIN HSAI

A TAXI collided with a passenger bus at a traffic light junction on the corner of Mahabandoola road and Phone Gyi street in Lanmadaw township on Friday

A witness said that the taxi driver, who had three passengers on board, attempted to run a red light, causing him to sideswipe a passenger bus being driven by one Ko San Htway,

25. The passenger vehicle fled the scene following the incident.

The accident seriously injured the taxi driver and his three passengers. They are currently receiving medical treatment at Yangon general hospital. Police located the passenger vehicle near Lanmadaw Hledan road. The reckless driver has been charged by police.— *Khin Hsai*

Truck hits parked taxi in Kyimyindine



The truck and its unfortunate victim. PHOTO: SHEW TAING THAR

A TRUCK carrying gneiss crashed into concrete blocks laid in the middle of the road as barriers and a taxi parked on Kannar Road in Kyimyindine Township, Yangon, on 23 March.

The truck was en route from Thiri Mingla Market to Bagaya Road.

It was driven by Thiha Kyaw, 38. Police are still investigating the case.—*Shew Taing Thar*

Police bust Bingo gamblers

POLICE have arrested five women who allegedly were gambling on the game Bingo in the home of Daw Mi Than's Ward-3 of Patheingyi, Ayeyawady Region, on 23 March.

Police searched the house owned by Daw Mi Than, 40, and found K22,700 and docu-

ments related to Bingo.

Chaw Su Hlaing, 29, Thazin Khine, 30, Phone Myint Aung, 24, and Khant Sithu, 14, were found together with the host.

Local police filed charges against them.—*Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business



Farmers grow rice in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: TUN TUN WIN

State-owned agricultural bank to increase loans to rice farmers

THE Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank has announced plans to increase the availability of agricultural loans to rice farmers as part of its concerted efforts to assist the country's rice production, said Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing yesterday.

The Union minister announced and spoke about the plan at a meeting with farmers gathering at a pollination event held at a 100-acre field for the production of rice seeds in

Dekkhinathiri Township yesterday.

The Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank delivers K100,000 per acre to rice farmers, an increase from the previous K50,000 that was offered in 2012.

The bank at this time has a nationwide network comprising 14 regional offices, 169 branches and 44 agency offices with 3,357 staff providing short term and long term credit to over 2 million farmers. —GNLM

Traditional weaving industry in Salin brings employment

LOOM weavers in Salin Township, Minbu District are seeing higher income due to increased demand for their traditional hand-woven clothes, mostly from Mandalay, Yangon and surrounding areas.

"I studied how to weave in Seikkan village, Shwebo Township in order to gain a profitable skillset as there were no secure jobs in our village. Now we are running 15 loom machines and business is good", said U Min Naing Htwe, establisher of a weaving business.

Locally employed weavers produce a range of garments but particularly traditional Kachin dresses. Each set of clothing costs between K4,500 and K30,000 depending on design and difficulty of production.

"Generally we can produce between 15-20 dresses per day. We supply more than 500 per week to market" he added.—*Tin Htun Oo*

Mat producers in Inwa seeing handsome profits

THE demand for hand-woven mats from Inwa has reportedly been growing rapidly as the warmer weather takes effect across the country.

The traditional-mats are made from thin reed, a material favoured for its lightness and availability.

"Our workers are currently quite happy as they are earning between K4,000 and K6,000 per day", said a local mat manufacturer.

Thin reed products are mainly supplied by producers in Kachin State as well as Pantanaw in Ayeyawaddy Division but thin mat manufacturers are using mostly Pantanaw reed products.

Mat weaving and manufacturing is a lucrative home business. The demand for hot-weather friendly mats is always higher in summer, it has been learned from producers.—*Tein Taman*



Hand-woven mats made of reed are popular in summer. PHOTO: TEIN TAMAN

Labour shortage could raise tea prices

A SCARCITY of tea pickers following the flight of thousands of villagers from Kyaukme, Shan State, in February could result in a rise in the price of tea, according to local tea plantation owners.

Conflict between ethnic armed militias in the area caused thousands of villagers to flee to refugee camps earlier this year.

The labour shortage is exacerbated by a large exodus of workers to China in the hope of finding better employment opportunities, according to tea plantation owners and internally displaced villagers from Nyaung

Maung Village.

"Tea plantation workers are so scarce this year. We've had to go door-to-door pleading with people to come and work our tea crops. People are scattered all over the place from the fighting. There are lots of people who've left to find work elsewhere, leaving behind nobody to pick tea," said U Sai Kyaw Yi, a tea plantation owner from Maing Ngaw Township.

The number of tea pickers in Kyaukme Township fell from a workforce of 4,000 in 2015 to half that number this year.

The current market value of tea is normal, but this could rise in the near future as a shortage of workers has caused the wages of tea pickers to increase.

"You can see the anxiety on the faces of those called to pick tea. They've only gone because the tea plantation owners have come to get them personally. There are far fewer tea pickers now than in previous years," said U Chan Thar, a trader of Wah Yint tea.

The township of Kyaukme features 25 large-scale and small-scale tea wholesalers, which are

frequented by tea sellers from villages in the northern Shan State towns of Hukwet, Pankhun, Panthapyay, Maing Ngaw, Naunglaing and Lwayhsar.

The current value of a viss (1.63 kilos) of high-quality dried tea leaves fetches K6,000; the same quantity of rough, wet leaves goes for K1,600, and medium quality leaves sell for K2,000. A tical of high-quality tea buds is currently being sold at a market price of K3,600, according to traders of the Wah Hso tea variety, which is grown in Kyaukme Township.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Watermelon fetching high prices in Inndaw

WATERMELON farmers in Inndaw Township, Sagaing Region are reportedly pleased to be seeing increased profits over this year's harvest due to increased demand and consumption. "We've been selling (our watermelons) for between K1,000 and K2,000 per fruit", said U Kyaw Myint, a local farmer. Watermelons can be harvested after 120 days of growth in the field. Farmers are planting watermelon after they complete the harvesting of their paddy crop.—076

Thai army conducts ground combat exercise

BANGKOK — The Thai army conducted a ground combat exercise in the northern part of the country on Friday.

The Third Army Region organised the one-day exercise in open space and hillside terrains of Sukhothai province, about 440 kilometres north of Bangkok, to demonstrate its combat readiness, effectual uses of varied weapon systems and rapid deployment of servicemen. About 3,800 army troops participated in the exercise which used live ammunition.

Taking part in the exercise were infantry troops, artillery units, anti-aircraft-artillery units, main battle tanks as well as attack and utility helicopters while a squadron of the air force's F-16 jet fighters joined in a mock bombing mission. Defence Minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwan, who viewed the army exercise, said it was a satisfactory event in which the army was capable of maintaining its combat readiness in peace time.—Xinhua

Donations scandal another headache for Australian PM Turnbull

SYDNEY — Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's ruling Liberal Party is embroiled in a financial scandal, an unwanted additional challenge for the Australian leader as he takes the major political gamble of calling an early federal election.

Turnbull, who has already sacked three ministers over misdemeanours in the past few months, faced calls yesterday to dismiss Cabinet Secretary Arthur Sinodinos over donations made to the ruling Liberal Party's New South Wales (NSW) state branch.

The NSW Electoral Commission said this week it will withhold A\$4.4 million (\$3.3 million) in public funding for the party after it failed to disclose the source of donations made in the lead-up to an election victory in Australia's most populous state in 2011.

The commission ruled that the party's so-called Free Enterprise Foundation was used by senior Liberal officials to disguise prohibited donors including property developers, who are banned from making political donations to NSW campaigns.

"If these people were illegally



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull reacts during Question Time in the House of Representatives at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia, on 17 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

donating to the Liberal Party when Arthur Sinodinos was in charge of the money then his position really becomes untenable," Jason Clare, the opposition Labour Party's communications spokesman said.

Sinodinos, who was the state division's finance director and treasurer at the time, said in its ruling, the NSW Electoral Commission "used loose language which could convey erroneous impres-

sions". "I have never been accused of corruption," he said in an emailed statement yesterday.

"I deny any wrongdoing or illegality."

The affair adds to the pressure on Turnbull just days after he called an election for 2 July, well before it falls due in January 2017, as he looks to capitalise on early—but fading—popularity.

Turnbull has consistently led opinion polls since he came to power in a party-room coup last year. His ruling Liberal-National coalition has led Labour in recent polls but there are signs his honeymoon period may be ending.

One Newspoll released on Monday showed Turnbull's popularity falling into negative territory for the first time.

If successful, Turnbull's high-risk election strategy will also clear out parliament's upper house, the Senate, potentially giving the coalition a clearer passageway for favoured bills. Australia has become notorious in recent years for its revolving door political leadership. If Turnbull was to lose the election, Australia would have its 6th prime minister since 2010.—Reuters

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US-China cooperation on nuclear energy helps build trust in relations

WASHINGTON — Nuclear energy cooperation between the United States and China has yielded tremendous benefits for both countries and can contribute to trust in the larger bilateral relationship, a US nuclear energy expert told Xinhua.

The United States and China could further enhance cooperation on nuclear energy as there are vast commercial opportunities for both countries and the world, Daniel Lipman, vice president of Washington-based Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), said in an interview ahead of the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington from 31 March to 1 April.

Bilateral nuclear energy co-

operation "requires a strong foundation of mutual respect and trust that shared technologies will be used only for peaceful purposes," Lipman said, adding that it is "not something the United States enters into lightly."

Through extensive person-to-person and institutional contacts, commercial nuclear trade can also share best practices on nuclear safety, security and nonproliferation, the expert said.

In 2015, a new agreement formalising civil nuclear cooperation between China and the United States entered into force. The US nuclear energy industry, led by the NEI, played an instrumental role in securing congressional approval for the new deal.

The agreement is "critical for American nuclear suppliers and US foreign policy priorities," said an NEI report before the pact was approved. "Nuclear cooperation with China advances economic interests, safety culture and climate goals."

Besides nuclear energy cooperation, China and the United States also share an interest in nuclear non-proliferation.

Earlier this month, the two countries agreed to broaden an established programme on combating illicit movements and smuggling of nuclear materials.

"In the past few decades, China has made huge strides in nonproliferation and the US nuclear energy industry certainly

hopes that China will continue this progress," Lipman said.

"From an industry perspective, we are counting on China's leadership in this area," he said, adding that US laws and international norms permit nuclear commerce only on the basis of successful cooperation in nuclear security and nonproliferation.

China adopts a "rational, coordinated and balanced" approach to nuclear security. In January, the Chinese government issued a nuclear white paper, assuring the world that China has "the most advanced technology and most stringent standards" to ensure safe and efficient development of nuclear power.—Xinhua

Traditional medicines popular among Bruneians despite free healthcare

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — There is a high prevalence of traditional medicines used in Brunei despite the free healthcare system provided in the sultanate, local media quoted a scientific study as saying yesterday.

According to Dr Dk Nuro-laini, deputy dean of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, over 62 per cent of the Bruneians perceive traditional medicines to be a safe form

of medication in her study. She conducted the questionnaire based study to find out Bruneian's perception, attitude, knowledge and practices on the use of traditional medicines. The study saw a total of 2,400 randomly administered patients attending health centres and hospitals across the country, aged between 16 to 85 years. Out of the total respondents, over 62 per cent of the participants perceived tradi-

tional medicines to be a safe form of medication as it is made up of natural sources and had been used for generations.

More than 400 participants agreed that traditional medicines can be easily found at specialised shops and supermarkets in the sultanate. Meanwhile, 59 per cent or 1,396 Bruneians were found to have used some form of traditional medicines throughout their life,

with a majority of their users from the older age group (56 years and above). According to the World Health Organisation, traditional medicine is the diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal or mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques to maintain well-being, as well as to treat, diagnose or prevent illness.—Xinhua

Beijing extends leave for new parents as China hopes for more children

BEIJING — Authorities in China's capital will extend leave from work for new mothers and fathers, state media reported on Friday, in what appeared to be the latest incentive to encourage families to have more children.

The world's largest economy faces a shrinking labour force and aging population, meaning it could be the first country in the world to age before it first gets rich.

Last year, the ruling Chinese Communist Party announced it would relax its long-standing and controversial "one-child policy", allowing all couples to have two children.

The government, keen to address the looming aging crisis, is concerned many people will choose not to exercise that right, worried about the cost of raising two children in an increasingly expensive country.

The state-run China News Agency, in reporting the new rules for leave for new parents, did not link them to hopes people

would have more children.

Fathers in Beijing will now be entitled to 15 days of paternity leave under the new regulation, the news agency said. New fathers in China now get three to 10 days paternity leave depending on where they live, according to state media.

Mothers in Beijing can extend their leave to a maximum of seven months if their employers agree, the news agency said, which is 30 days longer than now.

Under the new regulations for Beijing, couples who already have a child each from a previous marriage can have another baby, the news agency said.

Several provinces and major municipalities have similarly amended their maternity and paternity leave policies, state media has reported.

China's population is set to peak at about 1.45 billion by 2050 when one in every three people is expected to be more than 60 years old, with a shrinking proportion of working adults to support them.



A couple takes pictures with their baby on the Tiananmen Gate in Beijing, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

The one-child policy was introduced in the late 1970s to prevent population growth spiraling out of control.

But it is now regarded as outdated and responsible for a

shrinking the labour pool and an aging society, with a smaller number of productive young people, a phenomenon usually seen in industrialised countries.

Critics say the relaxation of

the one-child policy and related reforms have come too late to avert a dangerous population imbalance as many couples are now not keen on having more children.—Reuters



A single-engine aircraft that crashes on a taxiway at Yao airport in Osaka Prefecture, western Japan on 26 March. All four people aboard the aircraft died. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Four die in small plane crash at airport in Osaka

OSAKA — A light aircraft crashed at a regional airport in Osaka Prefecture yesterday, killing all four people aboard, local firefighters said.

The single-engine Mooney M20C was returning from Kobe Airport in Hyogo Prefecture when it crashed at Yao Airport at around 4:20pm while trying to land, according to the transport ministry.

All four victims were male, but their identities were not immediately known.

The plane may have dropped around 20 metres to the ground and crashed when trying to climb again to go around and make another landing approach, according

to the ministry. Aerial footage showed a mangled plane on one of the two runways at the airport, with only its wings and tail section left somewhat intact. Eyewitnesses said the aircraft was engulfed in fire after the crash. The plane had left Yao Airport for Kobe Airport around 2:30pm and arrived there in about 15 minutes, according to the ministry and an aviation company with an office at the airport. It then left for Yao around 4:05pm.

Yao Airport, located about 20 kilometres southeast of central Osaka, is in the middle of an urban area. It has no scheduled flights and mainly serves general aviation.—Kyodo News

Cambodian police seize over 4 kg of drugs in raid

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian police have arrested a Laotian man in northeastern Stung Treng Province on suspicion of trafficking about 4.3 kg of drugs, an anti-drug police officer said yesterday.

Yin Panharith, head of an anti-drug team at the Interior Ministry's Anti-Drug Department, said Kham Saiyavongsa, 46, was arrested late Friday when the suspect used his luxurious car to smuggle the drugs from Laos into Cambodia.

"Some 2 kg of crystal methamphetamine and 2.32 kg of heroin were seized during the raid," Panharith, who led the crackdown, told Xinhua.

"The confiscated drugs are estimated to cost more than

100,000 US dollars."

He added that the raid was made after the police had been tipped off about the drug trafficking.

Cambodia has no death sentence for drug traffickers; under its law, a person who traffics more than 80 grams of drug will be facing life imprisonment.

The Southeast Asian country saw a sharp rise in drug arrests in 2015.

According to the National Authority for Combating Drugs, about 7,008 drug suspects were caught last year in 3,061 cases and some 1,620 kg of drugs, including marijuana, heroin, cocaine, ketamine, ecstasy and methamphetamine, were confiscated.—Xinhua

Bicycle bomb in Kabul embassy district wounds guard



A member of Afghan security forces keeps watch at the site of an explosion in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 25 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

KABUL — An explosion at an apartment complex close to the US Embassy and other diplomatic missions in Kabul wounded a policeman on Friday, breaking a rare period of calm in Afghanistan's capital.

"Explosives planted in a bicycle went off," Kabul's Deputy Police Chief Salem Almas said.

The bicycle bomb wounded a police guard outside the Macroyan apartment complex, Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said.

The guard was stationed at the complex because a member of the country's Election Complaints Commission lives there, though it was unclear if the commissioner was the intended target, he said.

Suicide bombings and other attacks by Taliban insurgents routinely target Afghan government figures and NATO allies, but Kabul had recently enjoyed several weeks of relative calm.—Reuters

OPINION

Be persuasive, not abrasive

Khin Maung Aye

THE two terms ‘good governance’ and ‘clean government’ have become popular during the years of president Thein Sein’s government. As the phrase ‘clean government’ is self-explanatory, a discussion would like to be made only upon good governance, which is not very familiar to the readers. In this regard, the word governance will be dealt with only from the structural perspectives – governance and hierarchy, governance and market, governance versus networks or associations, governance and communities, and governance versus persuasion.

Among the five above-mentioned struc-

tures, governance and hierarchy is an ideal model of state, under which control is conducted by vertically integrated state structure of bureaucracy. Nevertheless, this model has been criticized and calls for small scales, flexibility, diversification, informal exchange rather than formal control. Concerning governance and market, market seems to be a facilitating mechanism for efficient allocation of resources. As the nature of market is viewed as based upon self-interest, governance in this context is seen as a mechanism in which economic actors can co-operate and solve common problems without challenging or distorting the basic market mechanism. In regard to governance versus networks or associations, the policy networks comprise different actors inclusive of state, organized interests etc within the given policy sectors. The policy networks foster co-ordination between private and public interests and resources. And what is more, it promotes efficiency in policy implementation. The policy networks have been strengthened by the shift from government to governance on account of the declining dependence upon the formal legal process. Thanks to the emergence of a new structural aspect of governance versus communities, the communities can participate better in the collective matters. In fact, the state or the

local government is too big and bureaucratic to deal with the issues of collective interests of the communities. Thus, governance seeks to solve common problem and encourage civil spirit in the community without large public bureaucracies. Last but not the least, a mode of governance is achieved through a mode of self-discipline or compliance on the part of the citizens. This means encouraging citizens to change their behavior through laws, taxes, regulations along with persuasion in matters such as persuasion of citizens to drink less, smoke less, eat moderately, report suspected terrorists and be engaged in voluntary work etc.

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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.

Nation Building and the Role of Youth

Sayar Mya

THE author of this article has been sharing knowledge with the esteemed readers of the Global New Light of Myanmar on the theme “**Nation Building**” since a few months back.

In this article, the writer would like to share “**Nation Building and the Role of Youth**”.

The role of the youth towards the nation building is very much vital in the 21st century.

Grim fact of unemployment

Despite a mild recovery in the 2012 - 2014 periods, the youth unemployment rate remains well above its pre-crisis level. For millions of young people around the world finding a decent job is still a drawn-out uphill struggle.

According to the ILO’s Global Employment Trends (GET) for Youth 2015 report released last year, the global youth unemployment rate has stabilized at 13 per cent following a period of rapid increase between 2007 and 2010 but it is still well above the pre-crisis level of 11.7 per cent. The report highlights a drop in the number of unemployed youth to 73.3 million in 2014. That is 3.3 million less than the crisis peak of 76.6 million in 2009.

“It is encouraging to see an improvement in the youth employment trends compared to the GET for Youth 2013,” says Sara Elder, the report’s lead author.

“But we shouldn’t lose sight of the fact that recovery is not universal and that almost 43 per cent of the global youth labor

force is still either unemployed or working yet living in poverty. It’s still not easy to be young and starting out in today’s labor market.”

Gloomy side of pandemic disease

More than thirty years into the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it remains one of the most serious challenges to global public health. Around the world, 5 million young people ages 15-24 are living with HIV. Young people ages 15-24 represent 41 percent of all new HIV infections, and 890,000 acquire HIV each year – meaning that around the world, nearly 2500 young people acquire HIV every day. At least 95 percent of all new infections occur in less developed countries, with sub-Saharan Africa by far the hardest hit region.

Young women are more vulnerable to the HIV epidemic than are men. Unfortunately, young women comprise 60 percent of all young people with HIV. In some regions, the populations most at risk include young injecting drug users, young commercial sex workers, and young men who have sex with men. Millions of young people are at risk for HIV.

The author of this article would like to share in a broader and general approach on the role of youth in the global context, and therefore, the endeavor and struggle of Myanmar youth for the country would be dealt with in a few paragraphs.

Youth in Myanmar History

Throughout the history of Myanmar, the liberation movements of the country, whether that was against the colonial rule

or against the oppressive regime, were led by the students and youth of the country. Thus, the students and youth of Myanmar played a dynamic and decisive role of the country, shaping the nation’s destiny.

They enjoy a dignified status which the people entrusted for their fight against injustice, oppression and repression.

Youth on this planet

For many years, the power of youth is a recognized force in the world today. The youth are filled with tremendous energy and towering ambition. They can be utilized for good purpose as well as destructive force by any nation.

During the eighties, the youth power made itself prominent in many socialist countries of Europe and in China.

During the Tianmen Square upheaval in Beijing, China witnessed a powerful demonstration. The Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, commonly known as the June Fourth Incident or 1989 Democracy Movement in Chinese, were student-led popular demonstrations in Beijing. It happened in the first half of 1989 and received broad support from city residents, exposing deep splits within China’s political leadership.

The protests were forcibly suppressed by hardliner leaders who ordered the military to enforce martial law in the country’s capital. The crackdown that initiated on 3 and 4 June became known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre or the June 4 Massacre as troops with assault rifles and tanks inflicted casualties on unarmed civilians trying to block

the military’s advance towards Tiananmen Square in the heart of Beijing.

In the protest, the students and other demonstrators had occupied for seven weeks. The number of civilian deaths has been estimated at anywhere between hundreds and thousands. The Chinese government condemned the protests as a counter-revolutionary riot, and has largely prohibited discussion and remembrance of the events.

Thousands of Chinese youth sacrificed their lives in order to bring democracy in that autocratic State.

On this planet wherever there are riots in any country, political forces use the youth power to promote their interest and divert the situation.

During the riots against Mandal Commission in India, thousands of college students agitated in the streets of cities. Many of them committed self-immolation.

The Mandal Commission was established in India in 1979 by the Janata Party government under Prime Minister Morarji Desai with a mandate to “identify the socially or educationally backward.” It was headed by Indian parliamentarian B.P. Mandal to consider the question of seat reservations and quotas for people to redress caste discrimination. The criterion was used eleven social, economic, and educational indicators to determine backwardness.

In 1980, the commission’s report affirmed the affirmative action practice under Indian law whereby members of lower castes known as **Other Back-**

ward Classes (OBC), Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST)) were given exclusive access to a certain portion of government Jobs and slots in public universities, and recommended changes to these quotas, increasing them by 27% to 50%.

Mobilization on caste lines had followed the political empowerment of ordinary citizens by the constitution of free India that allowed common people to politically assert themselves through the right to vote.

India is a large country with a population of (1.252) billion. More than 50% of India’s current population is below the age of 25 and over 65% below the age of 35.

The students, employees, workers, farmers and persons from various professions - - including the unemployed educated - - are the citizens. They really matters in all walks of life and disciplines of the nation’s life and nation building.

Defining Youth

Youth is the time of life when one is young, but often means the time between childhood and adulthood or maturity. It is also defined as “the appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit, etc., characteristic of one who is young”. Its definitions of a specific age range varies, as youth is not defined chronologically as a stage that can be tied to specific age ranges; nor can its end point be linked to specific activities, such as taking unpaid work.

First of all, we have that the “**Youth**” are the period between childhood and adulthood.

See page 9 >>



The meeting in progress. PHOTO: HTEIN LINN AUNG

Working Coordination Meeting 1/2016 of Supervision committee for Conservation of Waterways and Borderlines held

THE Supervision Committee for Conservation of Waterways and Borderlines held its first official meeting of 2016 in Myawady, Kayin State on Thursday.

Addressing the meeting Chairman of the Committee U Lwin Ko Oo, the district administrator, outlined the aims of the committee, its responsibilities and the gravity of its work.

We need to safeguard and ensure our territorial integrity, this means preventing our territory from being eroded by river currents, he said.

We need to be organised and alert in watching whether the banks of the Thaungyin river and Gawli Creek are eroding or not and whether there are significant changes being made to the landscape by the forces

of nature affecting the current of the river and the creek.

Committee members then held discussions on matters related to the conservation of the waterways and the prevention of erosion and other unwanted changes with a special focus on preventing changes to borderlines because of human activity in those areas. —Htein Linn Aung

Nation Building and the Role of Youth

>> from page 8

Secondly, the “**Nation**” is a country considered as a group of people living in a certain territory under one Government.

Thirdly, we also have to know the meaning of “**Building**” which does not necessarily means masonry construction. Instead, it means the development of the nation, the future of each country.

The vision of a country lies in the hands of the youth. They are filled with tremendous and towering ambitions. It will be a great wastage of human resources if these youths are not given an opportunity to exercise their talent. All the nations need these youths in order for the soil to become a brighter one.

The primary role of young people is to get a good education in order to become better citizens of tomorrow. They need to learn skills to do the job that their country's economy needs. They also need to know how to read, write, think, understand, analyze, and discuss the issues their country faces.

The entire success of the nation depends on the youth.

However, in order for continuous success to take place; it is the Government's responsibility to provide the youth with proper facilities for development and getting equipped with the knowledge of the modern era.

Youth is the spring of life. It is the age of discovery and dreams. They have the power to transform the nation into a better place. They also have the ability to lead their fellow citizens into the right direction.

Youths are fighters

They fight for an identity in society, equality, the homeless, bullying, unemployment, exploitation, poverty and other problems which the world faces today.

All of them hopes for a world full of opportunities, so great minds can conquer them and become better individuals. They need good morals and values to handle conflicts in a positive way.

The nation has aspiring doctors, entrepreneurs, scientists, and

who knows; maybe the next good leaders of the country.

Illiteracy is a major problem around the world

Illiteracy threatens over **785 million** adults worldwide, translating into one in every five people on the planet, with either no or just basic reading skills.

About large portion of people who reside in villages across the world are illiterate. The reason is their utter ignorance and lack of initiative of the governments to lead them in the right direction. Someone has to pull them up.

In this regard, the young people can be of immense help.

The role of the youth is the most important in today's time. They have never ever underplayed themselves in the field of the politics. Youth are strong forces in social movements.

Youths are problem solvers. All nations need them to resolve most of the problems.

Many nations are facing a lot of problems, and that the youths are capable of solving them. They just need to be given a chance to prove themselves. Youths have the power to unite individuals in the various ethnic groups and nationalities.

Racism is an ongoing issue around the world. Individuals are fighting against each other because of the complexion of their skin and the texture of their hair.

Religion is another issue, the youths can convince their fellowmen to live in peace, harmony and love.

All of us are one and we should not allow these little differences to push us away from each other.

There are also a lot of crimes taking place. Women are being killed by their abusive and violent husbands. Person's homes, businesses, are being broken into. All of this crime and violence needs to stop. The youth once more has the ability to bring about a change in their country.

Youths seems to have the ability to face any challenges and problems. They have a positive influence on their fellow young

people. They are able to persuade and teach them the positive things in life.

Regrettably, some young ones are destroying their own future; however, they tend to listen to their peers and fellow youths. They will make them understand the importance of a good education.

The wise youth that we have out there should be taken into consideration. Some of them, though educated are unemployed. They should be given an opportunity to expose their intelligence to the world and make themselves into someone.

Some organizations, corporate and other firm should assist the youths; so they can make the nation great and better one. They will make a huge difference in society and the entire world.

The youths are the life of a nation. They will make the country proud. The country will be recognized. The youths just need the support from their fellow citizens and they will perform their duties.

One can say that the role of the youth in the nation building is crucial. They are problem solvers, have a positive influence on other young people and the nation, and are extremely ambitious. They have the ability to create an identity for themselves and move the nation forward. However, they will not be able to do this without the support of their Governments and fellow youths. So the youths can make their beautiful land flourish and shine in success.

Unfortunately, a large number of these are without proper guidelines about their futures. It is dangerous to allow them to remain idle as it would increase their frustration which would result in chaos and disturbances.

It is a great national wastage of human resources if these strong hands are not allowed some suitable jobs. No country can afford such wastage. They should be directed appropriately to engage in some constructive tasks. This manpower can do wonders provided it potential is tapped for the

developmental projects of the nation.

Let there be no doubt about the strength, power and capabilities of youth all over the world. They were instrumental in pulling down or dethroning the rulers; namely - - the Czars of Russia; Sukarno of Indonesia; Hitler of Germany; Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi of Iran; and may more.

On 20 August 1968, the Soviet Union led Warsaw Pact troops in an invasion of Czechoslovakia to crack down on reformist trends in Prague. The massive youth movement in Czechoslovakia succeeded against the military invasion of their country. The recent histories of Kampuchea, Korea, Cuba, and France provide evidences of their invincible might.

First of all, the youth should be made to understand a specific project and its importance to the society and also the part they could play in for making it to success. Given a suitable direction, they are sure to work hard to fulfill the task.

There can be a large number of schemes, projects and programs where the youth could involve bringing quicker and better results. Dynamic young men can play a pivotal role in the socio-economic reconstruction of the society.

There may be schemes connected in raising the levels of production in the agricultural sector. The youth may be assigned the job of dissemination of scientific knowledge for better farming, new techniques and proper usage of fertilizers and pesticides.

In another sector, the youth should be encouraged in the adult education. Community colleges should be created in less developing countries so that the working youth could elevated their work related skills and better knowledge.

It may be advisable that the youth must be trained in vocational streams. They should be allowed to develop in scientific research. Education should be made job oriented.

Involvement of the youth in

the community development program would cost lesser in terms of money. The young people may be inspired and encouraged to participate in community development tasks or other suitable units of operation that leads all round development of the society.

The present trend of the society, especially in the less developing world, has already created havoc across the globe. The youth have gone berserk owing to invasions of shoddy satellite television, unethical Internet shows and motley assortment of computer games. PC games, also known as computer games or personal computer games on personal phones are a waste of time and money for the youth. It is driving the youth crazy on non-productive activity.

Due to various reasons, some youth are unscrupulous, corrupted, dirty and rotten by alcohol and narcotic tendencies. Youth are copying anything and everything in the dishonest and unfair movie series that are unethical and immoral, including the showing of the body and flesh through the designers' fashion as sex crazy youth.

HIV / AIDS are on the rise on the globe, unless this dangerous disease is effectively checked. Heroin and narcotic pills are available at every street corner and all dens of villages. It is spreading like wild fire.

Further neglect in this danger zone of narcotic field would push our society in serious trouble. It is high time for the leaders of the developing world to inject a fresh vigor in our youth, arouse their confidence and develop a sense of honor, an appreciation for their cultural heritage. It is very important to uplift patriotic fervor.

Only then, the nations in the less developing world would be able to construct a healthy and strong nation in the region.

The writer of this article would highly appreciate if the esteemed and valued readers of the Global New Light of Myanmar accept the simple notion that the role of youth is vital to building a nation.

Italy rejects Egypt's claim to have found student's killers

ROME — Italy rejected on Friday Egypt's claim that it had identified the killers of an Italian graduate student whose tortured body was recovered last month, and Rome vowed to press on with its own murder investigation.

The broken body of Giulio Regeni, 28, was found on the outskirts of Cairo.

Human rights groups have said the signs of torture indicated the 28-year-old had been killed by Egyptian security forces, an allegation Cairo has vigorously denied. Regeni had written articles critical of the Egyptian government. On Thursday Egyptian authorities said a criminal gang that had been killed in a shootout had had Regeni's bag and passport in its possession - a statement that failed to convince

Rome investigators, Italian politicians and also Regeni's family.

"We are wounded and embittered by the latest attempt by Egyptian authorities to throw off track (the investigation) into the barbaric killing of our son, Giulio," the newspaper *La Repubblica* quoted the parents as saying in a statement.

Rome's chief prosecutor, Giuseppe Pignatone, said the investigation into Regeni's murder would continue.

The evidence so far shared with a team of Italian investigators in Cairo "is not adequate in clarifying the death of Giulio Regeni and in identifying those responsible for the homicide", he said in a statement.

Pignatone called on Egyptian investigators to provide the seven-member Italian team sent

to Cairo almost two months ago with all the evidence they have requested.

"Italy insists: we want the truth," Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni said in a tweet.

The case has caused friction between Egypt and Italy, though it looks unlikely to drive a permanent wedge between them because of the two countries' economic ties and Egypt's strategic role in the Middle East.

"I don't believe at all the 'truth' coming from the Egyptian authorities about Regeni's death," Giacomo Stucchi, president of Italy's parliamentary secret service committee, said in a tweet.

"Egypt's garnished truth shows total lack of respect for Italy and further offends the memory of Regeni." —*Reuters*

Nails and nail varnish: Brussels bombers prepared a 'satanic' cocktail



Broken windows of the terminal at Brussels national airport are seen during a ceremony following bomb attacks in Brussels metro and Belgium's National airport of Zaventem, Belgium, on 23 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

BRUSSELS — An empty apartment block on a quiet street turned out to be the perfect place for the three suspected Brussels attackers to prepare the home-made nail bombs used in Tuesday's airport and metro attacks that killed at least 31 people.

In a building undergoing renovation, there were no near neighbours to notice them taking in large quantities of strong-smelling household chemicals, as well as a suitcase of nails, to concoct an unstable white explosive powder known as TATP, or triacetone triperoxide, that they later used in their attacks.

"Even if someone had

stopped them, they could have said the materials were for renovation," said Hassan Abid, an official at the local town hall, who was trying to determine why authorities had no knowledge of the men living illegally on the fifth floor.

Belgian investigators do not answer questions on the case.

Having moved in two months ago, the Belgian brothers Khalid and Brahim El Bakraoui used the apartment in the largely middle class borough of Schaerbeek as a laboratory-cum-hideout, from where Brahim and two other men took a taxi on Tuesday morning to the airport to commit their attacks.

Their choice of low-cost ex-

plosives — among ingredients are drain cleaner and nail varnish remover — apparent knowledge of chemistry and ability to set up in an apartment 15 minutes drive from the airport should offer clues about IS bombmaking methods to investigators struggling to understand how the Syria-based group built a violent network of radicalized young Belgians.

The ready availability of ingredients, compared to military explosives favoured by older militant groups like the IRA in Northern Ireland or Basque separatists ETA in Spain, highlights the risks across Europe of more big attacks. —*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran denies involvement in cyber attacks on US institutions

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry denied any involvement in alleged cyber attacks against US financial institutions, official IRNA news agency reported yesterday.

The Islamic republic does not support dangerous cyber acts and has always urged international efforts to counter cyber crimes, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari was quoted as saying. Washington in the past targeted Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities by a cyber attack and put the lives of millions of people at the risk of environmental disaster, Ansari said. On Thursday, the White House announced charges against seven hackers linked to the Iranian government, who allegedly infiltrated dozens of US banks as well as a dam outside New York. —*Xinhua*

Interpol says providing support after Brussels bombings

PARIS — Interpol said on Friday it was supporting Belgium's efforts to track down links between the attackers who killed at least 31 people in Brussels this week and other dangerous individuals.

"Interpol is providing analytical and operational support to Belgium following the Brussels terrorist bombings to help identify potential links with other individuals and attacks around the world," the France-based international police body said in a statement.

The statement said one key aim was to provide member countries with the opportunity to update their national databases and cross-check information they hold on suspects and wanted persons. —*Reuters*

Ukraine extends Russia sanctions over Savchenko case

KIEV — Ukraine has extended a sanctions list against Russia to include people and institutions involved in the detention of pilot Nadezhda Savchenko and other Ukrainian citizens, its Security and Defence Council said on Friday.

Kiev has already imposed economic and other restrictions on more than 400 Russian citizens and companies following Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in March 2014 and the ensuing pro-Russian separatist uprising in the east.

The latest additions to the list follow a Russian court's decision on Tuesday to sentence Savchenko to 22 years in jail over her alleged involvement in the killing of two Russian journalists.

"The entities included on the sanctions list include the managers and works of the FSB (security service), the Russian Investigative Committee, prosecutors, the judiciary, military and others," the Council said in an online statement. —*Reuters*

Russian warplanes flew 41 sorties to support Syrian offensive near Palmyra

MOSCOW — Russian warplanes carried out 41 sorties in Syria between Tuesday and Thursday in support of a Syrian army offensive near Palmyra and destroyed 146 targets, Russian news agencies reported on Friday, citing Russia's defence ministry.

The ministry added in separate comments that it had registered seven ceasefire violations in the past 24 hours in the Syrian province of Latakia but said the cessation of hostilities was holding "in general" in Syria. A ceasefire backed by the United States and Russia covers most of Syria but not areas held by Islamic State. —*Reuters*

Serbia must not go back to past or stop advancing

SABAC (Serbia) — We want to ensure Serbia develops faster and faster, as we succeeded in halting its decline, we have managed to stand on our own feet again and lay foundations, and now we need to build a stable house and make sure that people see a future for their children here, leader of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Aleksandar Vucic said at an election rally in Sabac on Friday evening.

"No foreign investor will come here if you do not cooperate with the European Union, and no Russian investor will come here if you impose sanctions on their state," Vucic said, urging citizens to think about their children and grandchildren before casting their ballots.

"We will pursue the only policy that is good for people," he pledged. "Serbia must look ahead, to the future, and that is Serbia's only path. Serbia must not go back, and must not stop advancing," Vucic said. —*Tanjung*

Syrian army pushes into Palmyra amid heavy bombardment

BEIRUT — Syrian government forces advanced into Palmyra on several fronts yesterday with support from air strikes and artillery bombardment, state media and a monitoring group said, and live television showed waves of explosions inside the city.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights described it as the heaviest assault yet in a three-week campaign by the Syrian army and allied militia fighters to recapture the desert city from Islamic State fighters.

Observatory director Rami Abdulrahman said Syrian soldiers and allied militias had taken control of one-third of Palmyra, mainly in the west and north, including parts of its ancient Roman-era ruins. Soldiers were also fighting on a southern front, he said.

State-run television also said the army was advancing inside Palmyra, recapturing several neighbourhoods.

Television footage from the slopes of the medieval citadel, which was seized by the army on Friday and overlooks the city, showed tanks and armoured vehicles firing into Palmyra.

Waves of explosions hit buildings, and smoke could be



Forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad gesture as they advance into the historic city of Palmyra in this picture provided by SANA on 24 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

seen rising from many locations. Earlier, the Observatory said that Islamic State militants had launched counter-attacks — including car bombings — against advancing soldiers.

The recapture of Palmyra, which the Islamist group seized in May 2015, would mark the biggest reversal for Islamic State in Syria since Russia's intervention turned the tide of the five-year conflict in President Bashar al-Assad's favour.

The group, and al Qaeda's Syrian branch the Nusra Front, is excluded from a month-long cessation of hostilities agreement that has brought a lull in fighting between the government and rebels battling Assad in western Syria.

The limited truce has allowed peace talks to resume in Geneva. But progress has been slow, with the government and its opponents disagreeing fundamentally on the terms of such a

transition, including whether Assad must leave power.

Russia has reduced its military presence in Syria but has strongly supported the Palmyra offensive, carrying out dozens of air strikes this week and acknowledging that a Russian special forces officer was killed in combat near the city.

Palmyra had a population of 50,000 according to a census more than 10 years ago. Those numbers were swelled hugely by

an influx of people displaced by Syria's conflict, which has raged since 2011, but most fled when Islamic State took over.

Recapturing the city would open up eastern Syria, where Islamic State controls most of the Euphrates Valley provinces of Deir al-Zor and Raqqa, to the army.

"Our heroic forces are continuing to advance until we liberate every inch of this pure land," a soldier told state-run television in a broadcast from slopes of the citadel, which overlooks the city's monumental ruins.

In August, Islamic State fighters dynamited two ancient buildings, the temples of Bel and Baal Shamin, which had stood as cultural landmarks in Palmyra for nearly two millennia. The United Nations described their destruction as a war crime.

Television footage in the last 24 hours from the edge of Palmyra has shown some of the city's structures and famed colonnades still standing, although the extent of any damage was impossible to assess. Syrian officials said last year they had moved hundreds of ancient statues to safe locations before the city was overrun by Islamic State.—Reuters

Yemen Houthi chief hopes for peace but will confront aggression

DUBAI — The leader of Yemen's Houthi rebel movement said on Friday he wanted efforts to end a year-long war to succeed but his group was ready to confront its enemies if violence persisted.

The Iran-allied Houthis are battling Yemeni government forces backed by a Saudi-led military coalition in a conflict which has killed more than 6,000 and spread a humanitarian disaster across large parts of the Arab world's poorest country.

This week a United Nations envoy said the warring parties had agreed to a cessation of hostilities starting at midnight on 10 April and peace talks in Kuwait as part of a fresh push to end the crisis following two rounds of failed talks last year. "We hope that efforts to end the aggression will be successful, it is in the interest, and a demand, of our people" Abdel-Malek al-Houthi said in a televised speech.

"If those efforts do not succeed, we are ready to make sacrifices ... it is important to confront aggression if it continues." He also called on supporters to rally yesterday in the capital Sanaa, which is Houthi-controlled, to mark a year since the Saudi-led campaign started. The coalition is trying to prevent the Houthis and forces loyal to ex-President Ali Abdullah Saleh from taking control.—Reuters

Serbs complain of unfair treatment after Karadzic verdict

BELGRADE/SARAJEVO — Serbs are unfairly bearing the brunt of war crimes verdicts, the Belgrade government said on Friday, after a UN tribunal convicted former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic of genocide.

The tribunal in The Hague on Thursday found Karadzic, former president of the breakaway Bosnian Serb Republic, guilty of 10 of 11 charges arising from the 1992-95 Bosnian war, including genocide for the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. He was sentenced to 40 years in jail but will appeal.

Many Serbs, both in Serbia and Bosnia, regard the war crimes tribunal as a pro-Western instrument, believe Karadzic is innocent and that his conviction is an injustice for all Serbs.

The Belgrade government is committed to pro-Western policies and to respecting the UN court but is anxious to prevent the Karadzic case boosting hardline nationalist parties in a parliamentary election due on 24 April.

"Any politicisation and burdening of certain nations with collective guilt over crimes committed by people with names and surnames is not permissible," the government said in a statement read out by Justice Minister Nikola Selakovic after a special cabinet dedicated to the Karadzic verdict.

"The Serbian government believes that the justice of punishing members of only one nation for the crimes which were committed by all is in fact selective," he said,

adding that all sides committed atrocities during the wars of the 1990s that tore Yugoslavia apart.

The government of the Bosnian Serb Republic, which Karadzic helped to found, also criticised the tribunal's verdict, saying it "does not contribute to reconciliation and trust-building among the peoples" of the former Yugoslavia.

Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, an ex-nationalist who now hopes to lead his country into the European Union, is expected to win re-election next month, but small hardline nation-

alist groups are seeing a resurgence, picking up voters tired of tough economic reforms and high unemployment. Two nationalist groupings hope to get more than 5 per cent of the vote, the threshold to get into parliament.

"The Karadzic verdict can contribute to nationalism (in Serbia) particularly ahead of the elections, as the Hague tribunal failed to present itself here as a legal institution. It had an approach of a political body," said Nebojsa Spasic, a Belgrade journalist and media consultant. The Serbian tabloid Informer plans to distribute a poster

of Karadzic with its Saturday edition, its editor-in-chief said on his Twitter account. The poster shows a uniformed Karadzic with the slogan "Serbia remembers".

Vojislav Seselj, head of the hardline nationalist Serbian Radical Party, protested against the EU and NATO at a rally on Thursday attended by 5,000 supporters and said the verdict on Karadzic was "a sentence against the entire Serbian nation".

Serbs also noted that Thursday marked the anniversary of the launch of NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia in 1999.—Reuters



A supporter of Serbian ultra-nationalist leader Vojislav Seselj wears a mask depicting Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic during an anti-government rally Belgrade on 24 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

US approves \$3.2 billion sale of Boeing P-8A patrol planes to UK

WASHINGTON — The US government has approved the sale of up to nine Boeing Co (BA.N) P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol planes to Britain in a deal valued at up to \$3.2 billion, the US Defence Department said on Friday.

The Pentagon's Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), which oversees foreign arms sales, notified Congress about the potential sale on Thursday. Lawmakers now have 15 days to block the sale although such action is unlikely given close ties between the United States and the UK.

The proposed sale will enhance Britain's capabilities to provide national defence and contribute to NATO and coalition operations, DSCA said in a statement. It said the deal was a top priority for Britain.

Britain announced its intention to buy the submarine-hunting patrol planes in November as part of a five-year plan that will increase spending by 12 billion pounds (\$16.96 billion) to 178 billion pounds (\$251.60



A US Navy Boeing Poseidon P8 sits on display at the Singapore Airshow in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

billion) over the next decade.

At the time, British Prime Minister David Cameron said the planes would help the UK protect its nuclear deterrent and fill a gap left by a much-criticised decision to scrap the Nimrod spy-plane programme in 2010. DSCA said Britain had retained core skills in maritime patrol and reconnaissance following the retirement of the Nimrod aircraft through person-

nel exchange programmes that have left UK forces work on the US Navy P-8A aircraft.

Additional contractors on the deal include ViaSat Inc (VSAT.O), Rockwell Collins Inc (COL.N), Spirit Aerosystems Holdings Inc (SPR.N), Raytheon Co (RTN.N), Northrop Grumman Corp (NOC.N) and Harris Corp (HRS.N) and General Electric Co (GE.N), the agency said.—Reuters

Kyrgyz, Uzbek border guards try to resolve standoff



Kyrgyz and Uzbek troops are seen in a disputed area near the town of Kerben, Kyrgyzstan, on 25 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

KERBEN, (Kyrgyzstan) — Uzbek and Kyrgyz border guards held their first face-to-face talks on Friday since both sides deployed troops and armored vehicles in a disputed area, Kyrgyzstan said.

The confrontation between the two ex-Soviet Central Asian republics has triggered public protests on the Kyrgyz side and President Almazbek Atambayev has accused his opponents of using the border standoff to try to destabilise the country.

Kyrgyz and Uzbek servicemen have set up two checkpoints each along a road which connects the Kyrgyz town of Kerben with Ala-Buka, a Kyrgyz village, but crosses an area which Uzbekistan has claimed as its own territory since last Friday.

"The meeting has been initiated by the Uzbek side," the Kyrgyz border service said. It gave no

details on how the talks went.

The border zone is not clearly demarcated. Uzbekistan stationed two armored personnel carriers and about 40 soldiers in the area last week, prompting smaller Kyrgyzstan to send two of its own APCs and a similar number of troops.

The sides had reduced the number of deployed servicemen to about 10 on each side by Friday but the APCs remained there. Both governments say the confrontation is taking place on their side of the frontier. But locals on the Kyrgyz side say they used to travel along the road in question until last week without having to pass any checkpoints.

Nurlan Aitmurzayev, a deputy of the local council in Kerben, said the Bishkek government had informed the council on 18 March that Ungar Too, a nearby moun-

tain, belonged to Uzbekistan. The council has asked the government to provide legal proof.

"Ungar Too is ours, we have used this mountain for ages and we will not cede it to anyone," Aitmurzayev said.

"If the government cannot protect our lands, we will do it ourselves," said Janarbek Nadyrbekov, a businessman from Kerben. Kyrgyzstan's foreign ministry said this week Bishkek had demanded a complete withdrawal of Uzbek troops from the area and had discussed the matter with a Russia-led security bloc.

Uzbekistan has not commented on the matter since a statement run by Uzbek media a week ago. This said it had reinforced its side of the border because the frontier had been temporarily closed due to road repairs and a public holiday.—Reuters

Web of agencies at US airports could hinder security overhauls

NEW YORK — Travellers passing through New York's John F Kennedy International Airport this week witnessed a show of force following the Brussels airport attack: US Army soldiers in khaki camouflage bearing assault rifles, police officers in black bullet-proof vests and private security guards directing traffic in neon-yellow vests.

The variety of uniforms is a sign of the overlapping jurisdictions that determine which federal, state or local agency - or even airline - is responsible for security on any particular patch of turf. That could make sweeping security changes at JFK or other major US airports difficult in the wake of the deadly Brussels attack.

At JFK, the police department of the Port Authority - itself run jointly by two states, New York and New Jersey - primarily controls law enforcement. US Customs and Border Protection checks identity documents while the Transportation Security Administration, part of the Department of Homeland Security, handles screening at security checkpoints.

Less visibly, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is often on the premises along with other national agencies such as the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Airlines have their own uniformed security personnel. The Port Authority can also call in the New York Police Department if something goes wrong.

The show of force may reassure travellers, but the patchwork of agencies could be a barrier to changes in security procedures, such as making airline terminals a single security zone.

Some have suggested that as a way to prevent attacks such as the one at a check-in area at Brussels' main airport on Tuesday, part of a series of explosions that killed at least 31 people.

JFK is not unique, and other major US airports share similar complexities.

"It's gotten a lot worse. There

are a lot more law enforcement agencies involved now than there used to be," said Robert Mann, an aviation industry consultant, who described the complicated choreography of security at airports as "ballet."

The airlines and the airport operators dislike disruption, and are counting costs minutely, while security agencies tend to want complete control, said Mann. "There is a natural tension between all of these parties, and it's brought to a head every time you try to make a change."

Even the smallest adjustments require effort.

"Prior to redeveloping Terminal 5 at O'Hare, we engaged with all of our stakeholders including TSA, as a major element of the redesign was reconfiguring the security checkpoint," said Rosemarie Andolino, recalling her experience as commissioner of the Chicago Department of Aviation. She is now chief executive of the US unit of Manchester Airports Group.

Lines of demarcation differ from region to region. At O'Hare and Midway airports, the Chicago Department of Aviation has a police force whose officers carry collapsible batons but not firearms, which are instead wielded by city police on Chicago airports' premises. At Reagan and Dulles airports in the Washington metro area, airport police carry guns.

Even if JFK were to be reorganised, the intense bureaucratic upheaval may not provide a model for other airports.

"If you've seen one airport, you've seen one airport," said Mark Crosby, director of public safety and security at Portland International Airport, suggesting that one solution does not fit all.

A spokeswoman for the Port Authority, which operates New York's airports, said "coordination is critical" when it responds to a security event, and it runs regular drills with security partners. She declined to comment on whether the multiplicity of agencies at JFK might hinder change.—Reuters



Security officers patrol inside New York's John F Kennedy International Airport in New York, on 22 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

More frequent attacks on Western countries lifts demand for specialist insurance



A small Belgian flag is seen next to candles and tributes during a vigil for the victims of the Brussels bomb attacks, at Trafalgar Square in London, Britain on 24 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Rising risks in developed countries after a string of deadly attacks are driving up demand for specialist insurance to cover losses stemming from such events, putting upward pressure on premiums, underwriters and brokers say.

Insurers have generally excluded the risks of such attacks from standard property, event cancellation or travel insurance policies since the 9/11 attacks in New York in 2001,

though customers can ask for the addition of specialist cover known in the industry as “terrorism insurance”.

Attacks in Paris, Istanbul and San Bernardino in California in the past year had made company boards increasingly concerned about safety even before this week’s attacks in Brussels, said Tarique Nageer, of broker Marsh.

“We have seen a change in demand as more of these events have oc-

curred in more developed countries,” said Nageer, who heads Marsh’s New York department specialising in cover against such events. The number of attacks and fatalities has risen sharply since 2011, insurance broker Jardine Lloyd Thompson said in a report published on Thursday, adding that the likelihood of further major attacks is expected to remain high.

The economic costs of the Paris attacks in Novem-

ber, which killed 130 people, were between \$9 billion and \$12 billion, the report said, though it added that insurance payouts on property losses are “likely to be minimal”.

Cover for such events allows the largest companies to recoup losses ranging from about \$250 million to \$1 billion, according to Russell Kennedy, a divisional director at insurer Brit.

Other specialists in the sector have noticed a significant increase in demand for cover. “The take-up of terrorism insurance has increased since Paris, that is definitely the case,” said Julian Enoizi, chief executive of British specialist reinsurance fund Pool Re.

Rising demand has come from event organisers, as well as hotels, catering companies and breweries that supply the events, said Rob Montgomery, senior underwriter for contingency at insurance firm Ark. “The higher demand, combined with the greatly increased exposure, is causing rates to rise,” he said.—*Reuters*

Argentine president Mauricio Macri envisions more US investment following Obama’s visit

BUENOS AIRES — Argentine President Mauricio Macri said Friday that “an enormous wave of investment from the United States” would come following US President Barack Obama’s just-concluded visit to the country.

“In the next two years, we will see a growing wave of investment from the United States toward Argentina,” Macri said in an interview with local radio station Mitre, adding that the investment will be made in such areas as renewable energy, mining, tourism, petrochemicals and software.

“This is an enormous investment trend from the United States, which will be added to that from China...and to that from Europe, with

whom we are restarting relations,” Macri said.

Obama paid a state visit to Argentina on Wednesday and Thursday, which coincided with the 40th anniversary of the US-supported military coup that began a seven-year crackdown on labor unions and leftist opponents.

Meanwhile, the two countries decided to enhance their trade relations, which are currently at their lowest point in 20 years.

Macri said he had discussed with Obama how Argentine products, such as meat, pears, honey, lemons and tea, could best gain access to the US market.

“We are working on an agenda to achieve greater bilateral trade,” Macri said.—*Xinhua*

Pakistan, Iran to open new border crossings to help boost trade

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan will open two new crossing points on its border with Iran, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said on Friday, helping to encourage trade hampered by years of Western sanctions against Tehran.

Sharif spoke at a news conference with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who arrived in Islamabad

on Friday on a two-day trip, the first by an Iranian head of state in 14 years.

Prior to the visit, Pakistan’s foreign ministry said bilateral talks would focus on increasing Pakistan’s electricity imports from Iran, boosting trade relations and reviving plans for a gas pipeline between the two countries.

“These additional

crossing points will greatly reduce the (transit)... time between our two countries and contribute towards economic integration of our region,” the Pakistani PM said.

Trade between Pakistan and Iran fell to \$432 million in 2010-11 from \$1.32 billion in 2008-09, according to the Trade Development Authority of Pa-

kistan, after western powers imposed sanctions aimed at halting a nuclear programme they suspected was aimed at developing a nuclear bomb.

Most of the sanctions were lifted in January in return for Iran complying with a deal to curb its nuclear ambitions.

Iran currently exports around 100 megawatts

(MW) of electricity to the areas of Pakistan that border Iran. Pakistan is in the final stages of negotiating a deal that will increase that to 1,000 MW, the ministry of water and power has said previously.

Energy-starved Pakistan suffers about 12 hours of power cuts per day and is keen to import Iranian oil, gas, iron and steel.

Iran is interested in Pakistani textiles, surgical goods, sports goods and agricultural products.

Pakistan also plans to set up industrial sites in the impoverished border area, especially petrochemical storage, and link the infrastructure to a \$46 billion project with China dubbed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.—*Reuters*

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV IRRAWADDY STAR VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV IRRAWADDY STAR VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (146W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (146W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KUO HSIUNG VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KUO HSIUNG VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Mariah Carey cancels show in Brussels amid safety concerns

BRUSSELS — US pop star Mariah Carey said on Friday that she was canceling a tour stop in Brussels amid safety concerns following attacks this week that killed 31 people and injured some 270 more.

The songstress, one of the best-selling female solo artists of recent times, was slated to perform in the now-racked Belgian city on Sunday as part of her “Sweet Sweet Fantasy” European tour.

“I love my fans in Brussels and at this time I am being advised to cancel my show for the safety of my fans, my band, crew and everyone [...] involved with the tour. I hope to see you soon and send my prayers and eternal love,” she said in a statement on her Twitter account.

Carey, perhaps best known for her 90s hits like “Hero,” “Fantasy,” and “Always Be My Baby,” is set to wrap up her tour with back-to-back performances in Johannesburg in May.

Belgian police arrested three more people on Friday as investigations into Tuesday’s suicide bombings by Islamist militants in Brussels threw up more links to killings in Paris last year. Friday’s arrests brings the total taken into custody to nine. —Reuters



Singer Mariah Carey arrives at the Elton John AIDS Foundation Academy Awards Viewing Party in West Hollywood, California, on 28 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

Popular Korean TV series draws online paying users

BEIJING — Chinese audiences accustomed to watching free or even pirated TV shows on their phones and tablets are now paying for VIP packages to watch a popular Korean drama online.

The provider of the online stream is offering VIP members priority viewing of the latest episodes.

“Descendants of the Sun” is a record-breaking 16-episode rom-com broadcast on Korean channel KBS2. It dominates the Wednesday-Thursday evening slot and was watched by a staggering 31.6 per cent of the Korean audience on Thursday.

Exclusive rights to stream the show in China are owned by iQiyi. In December of last year, iQiyi had 10 million paying users. Zhang Yuxin, an intellectual property rights (IPR) manager at the provider, claims more than 1.2 billion views on the series since it premiered on 24 February. The company’s VIP package is ad-free and broadcast at the same time as the TV version in Korea, two episodes ahead of free users.

The exact increase in subscriptions is not yet available and the drama will not conclude until the middle of April, but iQiyi estimates that at least 3 million new VIP users have signed up to

watch. With annual membership priced at 198 yuan (30 US dollars), this could represent as much as more than half a billion yuan in revenue.

Set in the fictional war-torn Republic of Uruk, Song Joong-ki plays a dashing captain in the army alongside Song Hye-kyo, a beautiful volunteer doctor. Their love grows week by week as they battle earthquakes and epidemics, massacres and mayhem together.

Zhang Xinyi, 21, a student at Wuhan University is a big fan. What appeals to her most about the series is that in traditional TV dramas, the heroine is almost invariably subservient to the leading male character, but “Descendants of the Sun” steps away from such stereotypes and depicts a relationship of equals. Both main characters are excellent in their field; both have strong, independent minds; and both are highly regarded by their peers.

Zhang paid 19.8 yuan for a one-month membership just to watch the series and has joined the swelling ranks of Song Joong-ki’s Chinese followers. “I have heard he may come to Wuhan. If he does, I will try to see him at the airport or at his hotel,” she said.

“Descendants of the Sun” is not the first drama to bring a sharp rise in paying viewers. Last

July, the Chinese series “Grave Robbers’ Chronicles,” based on a best-selling series of young-adult novels, attracted 1 million new VIP members to iQiyi. In that case, VIPs were allowed immediate access to all episodes, rather than the regular updates provided to free users.

Other online players, such as LeTV and Youku, have begun to offer a range of VIP memberships alongside their free services. At Youku, for example, free users can watch the first two episodes of “Yong Pal,” another popular Korean TV series, but only VIP users can watch the remaining 16. LeTV allowed free users to watch the whole of its latest cliffhanger drama, except the final installment, which was only available to those prepared to pay.

According to last year’s white paper on individual paying members of online streams in China by consulting firm iResearch, the China Internet Network Information Center and iQiyi, the number of people prepared to pay up front for what they watch is rising steeply, described in the paper as “the beginning of a new era” in China’s viewing habits. The amount paid for such services has jumped from 210 million yuan in 2014 to 590 million in 2015.—Xinhua

Rolling Stones tell giant crowd ‘times are changing’ at Cuba debut

HAVANA — The Rolling Stones rocked a massive crowd at a free, outdoor concert in Havana on Friday, capping a week of engagement with the West for the Communist-led country that once censored the veteran British band’s music.

The Stones started their first-ever show in Cuba with “Jumpin’ Jack Flash,” a song recorded in 1968, when Cuban rock fans were secretly sharing pirated vinyl records and risked being sent to rural work brigades to cure “ideological deviation.”

“We know that years back it was hard to hear our music in Cuba, but here we are playing. I also think the times are changing,” lead singer Mick Jagger said in Spanish to a roar from the crowd.

The singer spoke in Spanish throughout of the 18-song show of hits that lasted more than two hours. The band played “Sympathy for the Devil” as a yellow moon rose through clouds, and they finished a two-song encore with “Satisfaction.”

Fans started gathering 18 hours ahead of time at Havana’s Sports City football and baseball fields, including Cubans who traveled from across the Caribbean’s largest island and foreigners who flew in for the occasion.



Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones is seen on a giant screen as he performs during a free outdoor concert at Ciudad Deportiva de la Habana sports complex in Havana, on 25 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

While no official estimate was immediately available for the crowd size, Cuban state media estimated half a million people could fit in the venue, which was nearly full.

The audience ranged from teenagers to pensioners and re-

served some of the biggest cheers for Jagger’s snakey dance moves.

“I love Mick Jagger so much. I’ve always dreamed about this. I couldn’t sleep knowing he would be here,” said Angela Menendez, who cleans floors in a hospital.

Security was low key and

there was a noticeable absence of would-be entrepreneurs selling T-shirts or memorabilia.

People were dressed in all manner of jeans, T-shirts and boots with the Stones’ tongue and lips logo.

Cubans have taken to color-

ing the tongue with the stars and stripes of the US flag, whether in the mistaken belief that the British rock stars were American or in the spirit of this week’s historic visit by US President Barack Obama.

The Stones formed in London in 1962, three years after Fidel Castro’s bearded rebels toppled a pro-American government.

Castro’s revolutionary government came to see counterculture bands like the Stones and the Beatles as dangerously subversive and prohibited their music on TV and radio.

Half a century later, both the Rolling Stones and Cuba’s leadership share a longevity, performing well beyond what most people would consider retirement age.

The band’s advancing years did not stop the youngsters in the audience enjoying the show, however.

“Don’t let anybody tell you different, this is the best concert in the history of Cuba,” said Cristian, 18, a reggaeton fan who this month saw electronic music act Major Lazer in another free gig.

For Juan Carlos Leon, 57, the event was more than special.

“To me, this is a consecration,” Leon said. “I’ve waited my whole life for this. The Stones are the greatest.”—Reuters

Japan to see warmer weather during April-June



A woman in a kimono takes a picture of cherry blossoms in full bloom in Tokyo in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

TOKYO — Japan will see mostly warmer weather from April to June, the official forecaster said on Friday.

Eastern Japan, including the most densely populated Tokyo area, will have a 50 per cent chance of higher-than-average temperature for the period, the Japan Meteorological Agency said in its monthly three-month forecast.

The table below gives the temperature forecast for the coming months in terms of the percentage below average, average or above average, with Okinawa, Amami referring to those islands in southwestern Japan.—Reuters

‘Pharaoh’, the king of Cairo strongmen

CAIRO —In Cairo’s Imbaba, strongman Karim Hussein pulls trucks with his teeth, swallows nails and casually steps on mounds of broken glass, offering one of the few forms of live entertainment for residents of the poor and crowded district.

Dubbed “The Pharaoh” by friends and family, Hussein seemed destined to be a strongman from a young age, and claims to have a unique biological makeup that easily absorbs pain.

“I began this journey when I was around seven or eight years old. I was drinking a glass of milk, half of which was filled with ghee, and the glass broke,” he said. “I started eating the glass from my hand, and until today I have between three to four cups (of glass) for breakfast. One day when I was at the barber shop, I took the razor from him and ate it.”

He leaves crowds spellbound along dusty, potholed lanes by placing his foot under the tire of a moving SUV, clenches a heavy wooden bench between his teeth or eats chunks of raw meat — Imbaba’s equivalent of street performers in cities like New York.

“When my parents noticed that I eat glass and razors, and saw me chewing on hammer nails, they took me to see several doctors and found that I can digest glass and metal as any other food,” said Hussein.

He says his abilities have been passed down to his children, who also lie shirtless on their backs over broken glass as he stands on them.

The ‘Pharaoh’ also has a soft side. He hopes his notoriety as Imbaba’s ultimate tough guy will enable him to one day perform for the masses and donate his earnings to an orphanage or children’s cancer hospital.

Time may be on his side. Hussein says he is only getting stronger and healthier with age.—Reuters



Egyptian strongman Karim Hussein, 38, sleeps on glass as a man uses an axe to break in half a concrete block rested on his chest in Cairo, Egypt, on 18 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Beatle Ringo Starr’s childhood Liverpool home bought by fan

LONDON — A Beatles fan, who already owns two other properties linked to the band, has bought the small terraced Liverpool house where the pop group’s drummer Ringo Starr grew up.

Ringo, born Richard Starkey, moved to the modest two-up two-down house at 10 Admiral Grove in Dingle, Liverpool, when he was three years old and lived there until he was 21. Jackie Holmes from London, who bought John Lennon’s mother’s home last year and George Harrison’s home the year before, was the highest bidder at an auction on Thursday night, paying 70,000 pounds (\$99,000) — 15,000 pounds over its initial valuation.

“I’m so glad I’ve got this house because Ringo’s childhood home, like the other two Beatles properties I own, have got so much history behind them, which is what I love about them all,” Holmes said. “I’m a massive Beatles fan so I’m delighted.”

She said she hoped to rent it out to a Beatles fan who would “cherish” the house. Paul McCartney, Lennon and Harrison first found fame with Ringo at the Cavern Club in Liverpool in the 1960s, and went on to be one of Britain’s most successful and influential pop groups. The auction was held in the rebuilt club of the same name, one of the magnets for about 54 million tourists who visit the northwestern English city every year.—Reuters

MRTV

News Channel in Brief

27-3-2016 (Sunday)

5:30 am

• Live Broadcast of 71th Tamadaw Day Parade

9:35 am

• Weekly Entertainment

10:35 am

• Poem For Children

11:15 am

• Documentary

11:35 am

• Amazing World

12:35 pm

• Round up of The Week’s International News

3:35 pm

• Business News

4:15 pm

• Documentary

4:35 pm

• MRTV Job Opportunity Programme

5:15 pm

• Documentary

5:35 pm

• People’s Talk

6:35 pm

• Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)

7:15 pm

• Variety Song

8:00 pm

• News / International News/ Weather Report

8:35 pm

• Documentary

9:00 pm

• News

• Tasty Trip

Note / Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

mitv

Myanmar International

(27-3-2016 07:00am ~ 28-3-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am News

07:26 Am Elegant and Exquisite Myanmar Cotton Fabrics

07:38 Am Pagoda Forest in Pa-O Land

08:03 Am News

08:26 Am School For the Blind (Kye Myin Dine)

08:53 Am Modifying Natural Thanakha Bark into Ready Made - Skin Care Product

09:03 Am News

09:26 Am To The Land Of Countless Temples - Bagan Trip (EP-2)

09:48 Am TECH School

10:03 Am News

10:26 Am Philanthropists U Kyaw Thu: From Artist to Philanthropist (Part-I)

10:46 Am Products Of Myanmar - Mya Setkyar Pure Silk Fabric From Inle Lake

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Saturday 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 Mogok: The Colourful Land of Rubies

07:40 Pm One of the Useful Purposes of Bamboo

07:51 Pm Today Myanmar: Community Policing

08:03 Pm News

08:26 Pm Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part- 3)

08:53 Pm Myanmar Masterclass “Caricature”

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

MRTV

Entertainment Channel

(27-3-2016, Sunday)

6:00 pm

• Weather Report

• Music Programme

6:30 pm

• Special Movie “King Kaung”

9:40 pm

• Music Programme

9:50 pm

• Myanmar Movie

Midnight

• Close Down.

From 27-3-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm To 28-3-2016(Monday) 6:00 Pm This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

Suarez scores on Uruguay return in 2-2 draw against Brazil

SAO PAULO — Luis Suarez ended his nine-match biting ban in fine style on Friday, grabbing the second-half equaliser that gave Uruguay a 2-2 draw in an enthralling battle with Brazil in the 2018 World Cup qualifiers.

Playing his first competitive international since being banned for biting Giorgio Chiellini in the 2014 World Cup Finals, Suarez, along with striking partner Edinson Cavani, dragged Uruguay back into the game after they went 2-0 down after 25 minutes.

"As always, we showed character," the Barcelona striker said after the game.

Playing in front of a capacity crowd at the Pernambuco arena, Brazil took the lead after just 39 seconds thanks to Douglas Costa.

Willian whipped a cross in from the left and the Bayern Munich striker nipped in between two defenders to poke the ball home with the sole of his boot.

Brazil got a second 24 minutes later thanks to Renato Augusto. Defender Mauricio Victorino could not quite cut out a long pass from Neymar and the loose ball fell to the



Luis Suarez (9) of Uruguay and Neymar of Brazil during World Cup Qualifiers at Arena Pernambuco stadium, Recife, Brazil, on 25 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Beijing Guoan midfielder who wrong-footed the goalkeeper with a sublime dummy and knocked the ball into the empty net.

The home side were domi-

nating the game but Uruguay got back into the match after 31 minutes when Carlos Sanchez headed a ball down to Cavani and the Paris St Germain striker hammered home from 10 yards out.

Uruguay came out for the second half looking the hungrier of the two sides and Suarez got the equaliser with the help of slack marking by David Luiz.

Luiz stood off the striker

and allowed him to fire home an angled drive that Alisson got a hand to but could not save.

Suarez, who was booked for stamping, almost grabbed a winner with five minutes to go when a loose header from Luiz left him free on goal but Alisson got down well to save with his feet.

"I think that when we were winning 2-0 we had the game in the hand but we let them get back in the game," Renato Augusto told reporters.

"And when they scored they closed us down and played on the counter attack. Our big mistake was conceding the first goal."

The result means Uruguay retain second place in the 10-team South American qualifying group three points behind Ecuador, who lead with 13 points.

Brazil are in third place with eight points.

The top four teams qualify for Russia 2018 and the fifth place side go into an intercontinental play off. Brazil now go to Asuncion to face Paraguay on Tuesday, and will be without captain Neymar, who was booked. Uruguay will be at home to Peru.—Reuters

Ronaldo misses penalty as Bulgaria shock Portugal

LEIRIA, (Portugal) — Brazilian-born Marcelinho scored on his Bulgaria debut while Cristiano Ronaldo missed a penalty for Portugal as the visitors pulled off a shock 1-0 friendly win over the Euro 2016 finalists on Friday.

Marcelinho, born in a small town in the Amazon region of Brazil and making his first international appearance at the age of 31, struck in the 20th minute of a game almost totally dominated by Portugal.

The hosts were repeatedly foiled by Bulgaria goalkeeper Vladislav Stoyanov who capped an outstanding display by diving to his right to save Ronaldo's penalty, awarded for handball, in the 69th minute.

Ronaldo, who has missed three penalties this season for Real Madrid, also turned the rebound wide.

His unhappy night began when he fired over with the goal at his mercy from an unmarked position in the seventh minute.

The former FIFA World Player of the Year also had four attempts at goal from long-range free kicks, two hitting the wall and the others forcing

saves from Stoyanov.

The visiting keeper made six stops in the first 10 minutes alone, including one excellent effort denying Nani, as Portugal threatened a goal spree.

Bulgaria then went in front when Marcelinho, who qualified for them after spending five years with Ludogorets Razgrad, forced his way past two defenders and poked the ball past Anthony Lopes.

After that the game became predictable as Portugal poured forward and played plenty of neat football around the Bulgaria area but either lacked the killer pass or were foiled by Stoyanov.

The goalkeeper completed his evening's work by making a superb stop to turn away a close-range header by a frustrated Ronaldo with five minutes left.

"We are not satisfied with the result. We started brilliantly, in the first 15 minutes, we were strong, consistent, the goalkeeper make some fantastic saves and then we lost some concentration," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.—Reuters

Djokovic continues winning run, Del Potro out

MIAMI — Novak Djokovic barely got out of first gear but had more than enough in the tank to beat Briton Kyle Edmund 6-3, 6-3 in the second round of the Miami Open on Friday.

The top seed, who is trying to join Andre Agassi as a six-times Miami winner, improved his record since the start of 2015 to 105-7, picking up 14 titles along the way.

Just five days after an emphatic victory at Indian Wells, the Serb adjusted well to the steamy conditions in south Florida. He was broken once, in the first set, but broke 21-year-old Edmund four times.

Earlier in the day, Juan Martin del Potro had two surprises — the first when his scheduled opponent Roger Federer withdrew with illness, and the second when he fell 6-4, 6-4 to lucky loser and fellow Argentine Horacio Zeballos.

World number 112 Zeballos did not face a break point en route to his first tour-level win of the year.

Former US Open champion Del Potro, on the comeback trail after missing nearly a year due a left wrist injury, was clearly bothered by the joint.



Novak Djokovic waves to fans after his match against Kyle Edmund (not pictured) during day four of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Centre at Key Biscayne, FL, USA, on 25 March. Djokovic won 6-3, 6-3. PHOTO: REUTERS

"He played well," said del Potro of Zeballos. "He's a lefty, he can play to my backhand easier than anyone else. He played very smart."

"I was suffering a little bit. It was worse than in my first match, but I hope it's nothing dangerous."

"It'd be a surprise for me to win a match at this moment

because I'm not 100 per cent yet. But I'm here playing tennis. That's good for me."

Jeremy Chardy of France, the 28th seed, went down 6-4, 6-4 to Spaniard Fernando Verdasco.

Briton Andy Murray, Spaniard Rafa Nadal and Japan's Kei Nishikori will be among those in action on Saturday.—Reuters