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TOURISM GROWS IN MYANMAR

Myanmar observes World Tourism Day with responsibility and accountability

WITH the tourism industry booming globally, Myanmar expects to attract seven million tourists in 2020.

In his address at the ceremony to mark 2016 World Tourism Day held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, Vice President U Henry Van Thio said that as long as those involved in tourism are working with a sense of responsibility and accountability, the tourism industry will progress.

Myanmar has seen its tourism sector improve year after year, receiving 4.6 million visitors in 2015, with arrivals expected to reach 7 million in 2020, according to the vice president.

Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is implementing community-based tourism development projects as an initiative for the progress of tourism at designated areas nationwide.

The ministry is making arrangements for travelers to observe traditions and customs of local people and to enjoy the ways of ethnic people, it is learnt.

The tourism industry has been universally recognized as the world's biggest and most rapidly developing business, he said.

According to the World Tourism Organization, it was estimated that the industry managed to create one-eleventh of global job opportunities, especially for women and youths.

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A tourist couple visiting Myanmar's national landmark Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon . PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Permission for utilising farmland to be revoked if rules and regulations violated

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will make inquiries into permitted farmland that has not yet been utilised and will revoke the permit if it is found that rules and regulations have been violated.

“The State will confiscate the vacant, fallow and virgin land which has not yet used yet and will confiscate the insurance fee and the right to utilising land will be revoked,” said Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irriga-

tion Dr Tun Win.

He made the remarks in reply to the question raised by U Myo Win of Constituency 8, Mon State, as to how the farmland acquired by license-holders who failed to abide by the provisions of the Vacant,

Fallow, Virgin Land Management Law-2012, would be dealt with, at the 41st meeting of the Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

Deputy Minister Dr Tun Win said according to the Farmland Law 2012, those who get per-

mission to use the land prior to the promulgation of the law must perform their duties in compliance with the provisions, or failing that, surety will be confiscated as the State Finance and permission will be revoked. See page 2 >>



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

MPs question regional government on measures to prevent abuse of maids

THE Yangon Region Government is accelerating its efforts to reduce human rights abuses in Yangon Region in cooperation with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Social Welfare, according to Yangon Region Security and Border Affairs Minister Col Tin Aung Tun.

"In cities like Yangon, most families hire housemaids. Some of them treat maids like their family members but there are also some who treat them simply as

"So, we are investigating and those who were responsible will be dealt with according to the law"

maids," the region minister said. "Therefore, abuses of maids are sometimes committed. As such cases are likely to continue, we have taken measures to prevent them in cooperation with the Ministry of Home Welfare and the Department of Social Welfare," he added.

The minister was responding

to questions raised at the Yangon Region Hluttaw by Representative Daw Kyi Pyar of Constituency 1 in Kyauktada Township. The representative asked the regional government how it planned to prevent maid abuses like the one that occurred over a five-year period at the Ava Tailoring in Kyauktada Township.

Another representative from Kawhmu Township asked the regional government how it was handling rights abuses against the maids from the same tailoring who happened to be residents of his constituency.

The police have launched an investigation to take action against the members of the police who failed to perform their duty in accordance with the law. "When we reviewed the case, it was found out that the police failed to take action against the offenders. So, we are investigating and those who were responsible will be dealt with according to the law", the regional minister said. In 2016, a total of 60 human trafficking cases were exposed in Yangon Region. Ninety-eight people were arrested in those cases, but 67 remain elusive.

—Zaw Gyi (Panita)

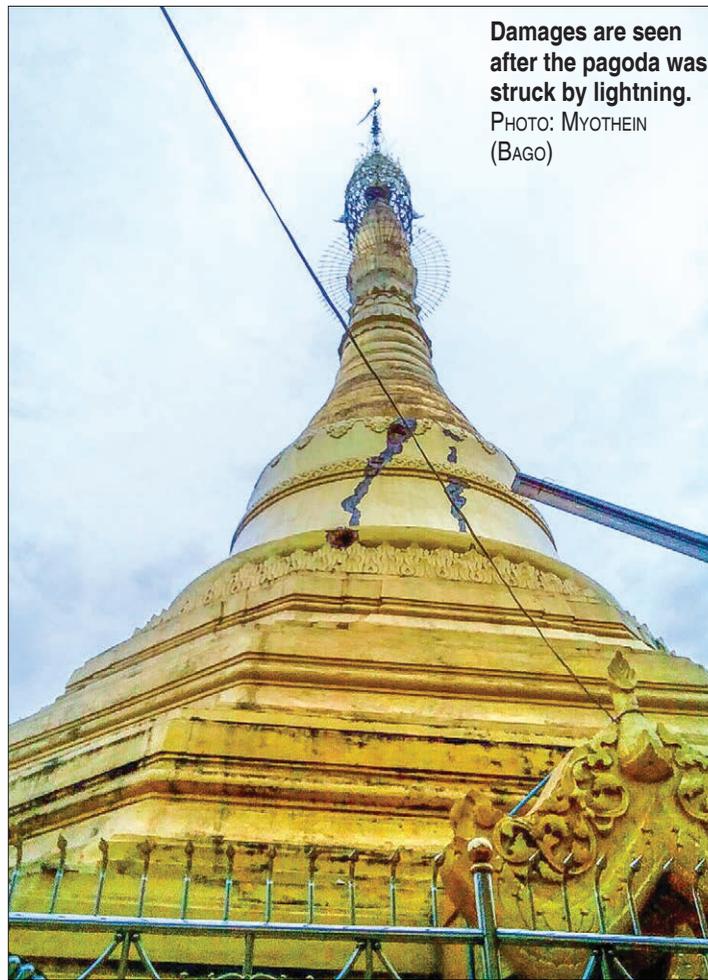
Thailand nationals mostly visited to Kyaikhtiyo pagoda among tourists

PEOPLE from Thailand were the most numerous among visitors who came to Kyaikhtiyo pagoda, Kyaikhtiyo Township, Mon State this year, according to the pagoda board of trustees. Over 4,000 Thai visitors come to the pagoda every month, on average.

In May, among 8,750 visitors to Kyaikhtiyo pagoda, 5,312 tourists were from Thailand. In June 3,361 Thais were among 5135 visitors. In July 4,233 Thais were among 6273 visitors.

"Half are Thai visitors among the tourists who come here. After

Thailand the second most numerous group are from Vietnam. Kyaikhtiyo pagoda is very famous and it can attract tourists from around the world," said a member of the board of trustees of the pagoda. Kyaikhtiyo pagoda is known as Golden Rock or Great Pagoda in Myanmar. It is one of the three Greatest Pagodas for Buddhists in Myanmar. Even though it is expensive to stay overnight at the mountaintop, many people spend the money in order to see the spectacular sunsets and sunrises at this location. —200



Damages are seen after the pagoda was struck by lightning. PHOTO: MYOTHEIN (BAGO)

Lightning strikes pagoda in Shwegyin

A HISTORIC pagoda in Shwegyin, Bago Region, was struck by lightning several times yesterday after a heavy rainstorm.

The five strikes of lightning caused some damages to the pagoda. There were no casualties in the accident, according to local reports.

Following the lightning strikes, local authorities went inside the pagoda and inspected the damages.

Arrangements are being made to repair the pagoda. — Myothein (Bago)

Permission for utilising farmland to be revoked if rules and regulations violated

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It was also disclosed that the Region/State farmland management committees which would be reformed in accordance with the 2012 Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Law will make inquiries into the farmland and will report the findings to the central committee, which has the authority to revoke the permission for land use, said the deputy minister.

As regards the question raised by U Khin Win of Constituency-2 of Magwe Region, Deputy Minister Dr Tun Win replied that land in the oil field are not entitled to define arable soil as prescribed in the Farmland Law, and henceforth there is no plan to disburse permission to

use the land.

"Only if these areas are erased from the oil-field area and surrendered to the State in accordance with rules and regulations, local peasants are legitimate to have the official permission. But, those who have not yet obtained form-7, are not entitled to get agricultural loans," he added.

Over the query made by Daw Ei Ei Pyone of Constituency-8, Ayeyawady Region, Dr Tun Win went on to say that in the fiscal year 2017-2018 to come, agricultural loans will be disbursed to farmers on the group-based guarantee system.

In terms of seed-sector development, the ministry is sustainably making arrange-

ment for producing pedigree and high-yield seeds, conducting courses and discussions for sharing knowledge, techniques and know-how, development through the help of foreign projects. He added, "the ministry is conducting seasonal lectures on agriculture, discussions and workshops, knowledge on uses of fertilizer and insecticides, to farmers across the nation.

U Thant Zin Maung, Union Minister for Transport and Telecommunications, submitted to the parliament the bill revoking the inland water transport law for discussion and the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker approved the proposal with the approval of the parliament. —Myanmar News Agency



Senior citizens gather at the free clinic to receive health care. PHOTO: ARTIST THAN WIN (KYAUKKYI)

Philanthropic group to provide free medical care to senior citizens in Bago Region

A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS in Bago Region has invited senior citizens to receive medical care at its clinic free of charge every Saturday.

The young volunteer group led by Dr Nay Zaw Lwin of Mone Station in Kyaukkyi Township, Taung-Oo District, Bago Region, established a philanthropic team in September 2014, with the purpose of offering necessary care to elderly people through a free clinic.

Since its establishment, the clinic, named Nyeinmyitta, located within the compound of Mone Station, has helped over 5,000 elderly patients, most of

them being poor. According to a volunteer, between 50 and 70 elderly patients receive healthcare every Saturday.

The programme provides young people with an opportunity to discover their philanthropic spirit through volunteering opportunities, said a member, adding that the team normally raises funds from well-wishers across the country.

A spokesperson of Warm Hands Organization, a local NGO working for the elderly, said rising living costs have made healthcare a challenge for older people with low-income.

He also pointed out that the

country's standards, assistances, laws and systematic management about care for the aged are still weak.

A survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in cooperation with Help Aged International in 2012 shows that nine per cent of the country's total population is above 60 years of age, 0 per cent of whom are in need of care.

According to the initial data of the 2014 nationwide census, Myanmar has 2,897,563 people above 65 years of age, 415,349 of whom are from Yangon. —Artist Than Win (Kyaukgyi)

Myanmar observes World Tourism Day with responsibility and accountability

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Moreover, the industry has been creating jobs for skilled and semi-skilled employees both in urban and rural areas.

In 2015, the number of globetrotters was found to have reached up to 1,184 million, increasing by 5 per cent compared to that of 2014. A forecast for 2020 is 1.4 billion and 1.8 billion for 2030. As per the expectation of the World Tourism Organization, 540 million tourists will visit the Asia-Pacific region in 2030, occupying 30 per cent of the world market, added the vice president.

Following the address of U Henry Van Thio, Mr Rory Nungouen, Liaison Officer of ILO, read out the message sent by the UN Secretary-General and showed a video recorded by the General Secretary of the World Tourism Organization.

Union Ministers awarded prizes to winners in an essay contest, extemporaneous speaking, Myanmar's Wonder Land photo contest and the best hotel and tourism agencies for best service.

The vice president and dignitaries visited the booth displaying the prize-winning photo. —*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President U Henry Van Thio visiting the booth displaying the prize-winning photos. PHOTO: MNA

Mol takes a step toward digital media

THE Ministry of Information held talks with the Myanmar Journalism Institute yesterday, taking steps to turn its traditional media into an online product.

At the meeting with experts from private media and the institute, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint discussed cooperation in conducting training for staff of the ministry as part of preparation for publishing online newspapers both in Myanmar

and English.

The Ministry of Information would like to put the plan into practice as soon as possible, in cooperation with local and international media to develop its media standards, according to the meeting.

Also present at the meeting were responsible personnel from the Ministry of Information, MJI, Seven Day News Journal and Frontier Magazine. —*GNLM*



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint holds talks with experts from private media over cooperation in digitalizing state-owned print media. PHOTO: MNA

Mine Nar KBC IDP camp in Waingmaw faces food shortage

THE Maina KBC Internally Displaced Person -IDP camp, located at Mine Nar village, Waingmaw Township, Kachin State, is running out of food, according to Daw Khan Taung, secretary of the food section of the camp.

All the families in the camp receive Ks9000 per month, but that amount is not enough for them to survive, they say. They have thus submitted a request letter to give Ks 1000 more for war victims to the organisations that are helping them, Daw Khan Taung said.

In that region, the price of the goods are too high for the IDPs to afford, with a package of

rice costing from Ks45,000 up to Ks48,000.

There are 967 males, 1153 female and 725 students in Maina KBC IDP camp.

"They have five family members. The husband has suffered lung or pulmonary injuries. He has not been able to find permanent work. The students have no chance to pay for tuition. The family members want to go back their home town," said a woman who is living at the IDP camp.

In Kachin State, there are 135 IDP camps, with 122 under government control and 13 under KIO control. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Pyithu Hluttaw discusses teachers, education for all, parent involvement

IT was an educational day during the 43rd session of the Pyithu Hluttaw, a day during which they discussed schools, universities, teaching and parent involvement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, U Khin Maung Thein of Sagaing Constituency made a query as to whether there were plans for fulfilling needs to upgrade the Sagaing Technology University, for building up a convocation hall and for finishing a three-storey building under construction.

U Soe Myint (a) U Aung Zaw Myint of Amarapura Constituency asked which arrangements are being made to appoint teachers needed across the country including Amarapura Township, while U Nyan Hein of Thanbyuzayat Constituency questioned whether the ministry had plans for allotting expenses of primary, pre-primary and post-primary and for appointing voluntary teachers as permanent teachers.

As regards these, Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Education replied individually that more budget for the completion of the three-storey building would be submitted in the 2016-2017 fiscal year budget (revised), and in case of insufficiency, the ministry would demand more in 2017-18 financial year.

The Union Minister added that 115 teachers (SAT, JAT and PAT) more have been appointed in Amarapura Township, and now that ratio of teachers and students are 1:24 (primary level). It was also replied that there was no plan to appoint more teachers for now.

"Locally appointed pre-primary teachers are currently being paid by village elders and they are legitimate to apply for the permanent posts in compli-



Dr Myo Thein Gyi. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Maung Thinn. PHOTO: MNA

ance with the principle designated for the post," he said.

Then, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced that "Law for the Aged (draft) with amendment" approved and sent back by Amyotha Hluttaw was received.

U Aung Sein, member of Pyithu Hluttaw Law drafting committee read out the report on the law.

Concerning the report, the Speaker announced that anyone wishing to amend the report was able to submit with accurate facts describing particular sections and sub-sections.

Seventeen parliamentarians took part in the discussion over the proposal submitted by Dr Maung Thinn of Meikhtila Constituency, which urged the government to hold educational talks comprising people from all walks of life for seeking of better opinion and advice in drafting national education law.

U Tun Wai of Phaung Pyin Constituency pointed out mosaic of suggestions— abortive discussions of National Network for Education Reform, lack of parents' active participation, being void of power in administrative sector by scholar, scanty allotment of educational budget, unwillingness to invest in educational sector.

U Sai Thant Zin of Thipaw Constituency discussed that emergence of the National Education Law should be emphasized urgently.

Lt-Col Hla Naing, military

representative, as well discussed on education, especially to achieve the goal. Education for All and All-Inclusive Education. He pointed out that it was needed to accomplish Public Education, Public Input, Public Interaction, in drafting the Educational Law by considering various opinion from people.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi clarified that the ministry is making arrangements for speeding up cooperation between parents and teachers through the parent-teacher associations, and in accord with the National Education Law, educational laws and principles are being made in collaboration with scholars, experts, teachers and students and interested persons. Hence the Hluttaw need not adopt the proposal submitted by Dr Maung Thinn.

Afterwards, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker collected the parliament's opinion and Hluttaw announced the proposal was disapproved: 151 votes in favour and 230 against with 8 votes in absentia. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Correction

Please read "Mr Raneo E ABU" for the name of the Deputy Speaker of the Philippines Lower House in the news story "37th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly wraps up" on page-1 of October 3 Issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Opening of new elephant camp aims to catch tourists' interest



Hmawyawgyi Elephant Camp in Kyaukdaga. PHOTO: KHIN KO (KYAUKDAGA)

AS PART OF the government's environmental conservation programmes, Bago Region Authorities have opened Hmawyawgyi Elephant Camp near the Yangon-Mandalay expressway in Kyaukdaga Township.

The new camp, with 12 elephants, is situated in the northern part of the region which is one mile away from Mile Post 105/7 on the highway near the

original undamaged natural environment for elephants.

The camp is also aimed at promoting the country's eco-tourism through beautiful landscapes. In the opening day, Yangon-based philanthropic organisations made several donations and provided free healthcare to residents.

They offered solar devices and related materials as well as food. The Ministry of Hotels

and Tourism expect that International tourist arrivals in Myanmar are likely to reach over 7 million by 2020.

The country received over 4.6 million international visitors last year.

That number increased by 52 per cent compared with 2014. The ministry estimates the number will increase to 5.5 million this fiscal year.—*Khin Ko (Kyaukdaga)*

Number of untaxed vehicles increases in Kachin State

REVENUE authorities received a reduced amount of tax due to an increase of vehicles without licenses across Kachin State, according to the Road Transport Administration Department.

There are roughly 120,000 registered motorbikes and automobiles in the state, said U Ye Naing, deputy director of the department.

According to the department, till the end of August this year, the number of registered motorcycles reached 113,850, while 3,634 numbers of cars below three tonnes completed the licensing process in Myitkyina and PutaO districts.

A local traffic policeman said awareness raising programmes have been carried out by the authorities to raise traffic-related knowledge, including the risks of vehicles without number plates

among the general public, as well as to reduce road accidents in the state.

Police are facing difficulties to arrest the offenders in traffic accident cases because of unregistered cars and motorcycles.

A local resident said a person normally spends over K30,000 for licensing of a car. If the car owner made the vehicle registration through agents, the charges rise to K100,000. That is why the department received fewer numbers of people taking part in the registration process. The state authorities performed vehicle registration through its one-stop service programme last year. Currently, the local authorities received no additional instructions relating to vehicle registration and they mainly conduct issuance of driving licenses.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Netherlands to provide maize growers with technical assistance

THE NETHERLANDS will offer technical assistance to local maize growers to promote the cultivation of quality seeds in the country through De Heus Myanmar Co, an animal feed producer which has invested 10 million euros in the country.

Under its plan, the Netherlands government will spend US\$2.5 million on the new project in cooperation with Yezin Agricultural University.

Agricultural techniques will be shared through special training to 2,500 growers in target areas by experts, said Mr Johan

Van Den Ban, managing director of De Heus Myanmar Co.

The company also has plans to provide technical support to 250 poultry farming business operators in cooperation with the Netherlands-based company to boost the country's poultry production and reduce farm expenses, said Dr Aye Maung Zan, sale manager of De Heus Myanmar Co. According to the new programmes, training institutes will be opened in Yangon and Mandalay regions as well as Nay Pyi Taw council area.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

1,400 yaba pills seized in Patheingyi Township

AN anti-drug squad in Patheingyi Township seized 350 yaba pills from two women on Sunday, according to a police source.

The squad discovered the drug hidden in the motorcycle driven by Ma Thandar Aung, 22, with Ma Than Than Sein, also known as Than Sein, 41, on

board during the surprise check near a toll gate in the township.

After interrogation, the police members of the squad searched their house in Htonbo Village and also discovered further 1,050 yaba pills.

Action has been taken against them under the anti-narcotic drug law.—*GNLM*



Ma Thandar Aung and Ma Than Than Sein (a) Than Sein. PHOTO: MPF

Crime NEWS

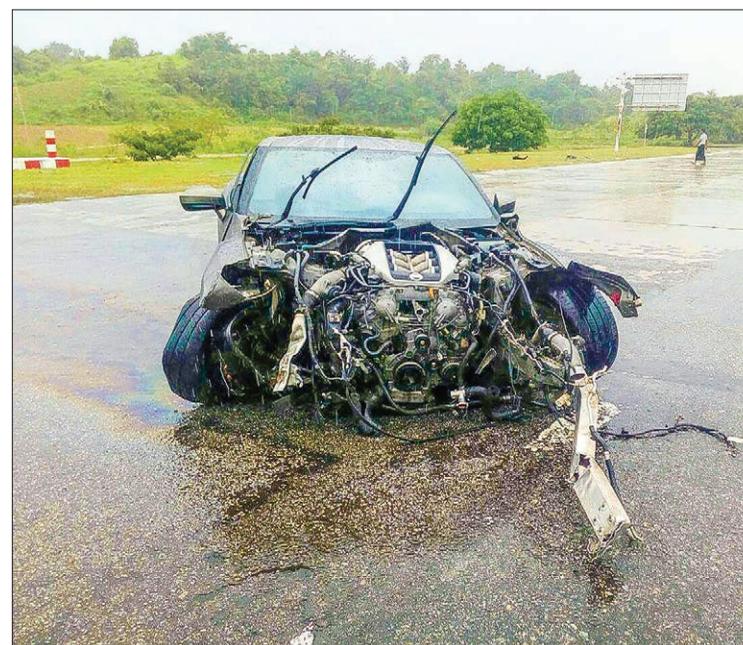
Nissan Saloon kisses road dividers on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway

A Nissan GTR Saloon driven by Phone Kyaw, en route from Mandalay to Nay Pyi Taw, crashed into the road dividers on the Yangon-Mandalay expressway yesterday when the driver lost control of the car.

The incident occurred between the mileposts 223/6 and 223/7 at 1:20 p.m. The driver received injuries to his left foot.

He was sent to a nearby hospital in Nay Pyi Taw. The crash caused damage to the car, which is worth about Ks2million.

Police have filed charges against Phone Kyaw for reckless driving.—*Than Oo (Laymyethnar)*



The badly damaged Nissan Saloon being seen. PHOTO: THAN OO (LAYMYETHNAR)

LOCAL Business

News of auto policy causes licensed car price to rise

THE news of the impending return to their point of origin for imported cars older than 2016 under a consignment system has caused car imports to decrease, resulting in the rise in the price of licensed cars, said Ko Lin Myat Soe, a car dealer.

The auto policy is submitted by heavy dealers of the cars. The slip price of the cars is on the rise. Currently, the cars with a legal license plate are offered at a high price, said Ko Min Min, a car dealer.

The prevailing price of the cars are Ks15 to Ks18 million for Honda fit (1300CC) with 2012 model and Ks14 to Ks17 for that of 2011 Model, Ks18million for Honda Insight (1300CC) with 2012 model; Ks14million for that of 2011 model and Ks13million for that of 2010 model, Ks15million for Toyota



A worker cleans cars at a sales centre in Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Ratics (1300CC) with 2013 model and Ks13million for that of 2012 model, Ks13million for Toyota Vitz (1300CC) 2011 Model and Ks11million for that of 2009model, it

is learnt from a car market.

The Road Transportation Administration department (RTAD) has no plans yet to extend the period to make registration at RTAD for imported cars

under 2015 consignment system. Over 10,000 cars are left without a permit, it is learnt.

Those imported cars under the 2015 consignment system have to be

registered before the end of 2016. Some cars were withdrawn from the port in the middle of 2016. This being so, we would like to request to extend the prescribed period for registration, said an official from a car sale center.

Over 19,000 cars were individually imported in 2015 whereas Brand New Auto Showrooms imported over 6,300 cars, it is learnt.

The model year limit of the cars for 2017 is under discussion with the authorities concerned, although the rumour of the model year limit is spreading around the car market. The cars with 2009 and 2010 model are said to be permitted to import for the following year. However, the individual importers will be allowed to bring the cars with 2012,2013 and 2014 models, it is learnt from the car market.—200

Share of MTSH stock to split into 10 units

AN ordinary share of Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH) Public Co., Ltd will be split into ten units to enhance share trading and to encourage more investment. The price of the shares will be set at Ks1,000 per unit, it is learnt from an announcement released by MTSH.

The ordinary set price of MTSH's share is Ks10,000 and thus, the price of a split unit of MTSH will be Ks1,000. The effective date of the split will be announced soon. The split of shares requires an amendment of memorandum of the association. Therefore, the split of shares is subject to approval from the shareholders by way of a special resolution at a general meeting which will be held on 23rd October, it is learnt from this announcement.—200

2016 model Toyota Vios to be sold under installment

VIOS, the latest Toyota brand for 2016, can be bought under an installment plan starting from October, through a link with Ayeyawady Bank.

"We introduced the new model Vios in a market at a cheap price. The car warranty is valid up to 3 years or 100,000 kilometers under the standard Manufacturer's warranty, covering the charges of repair during the warranty period, said U Myo Myint Thein, the Chief Operating Officer from TTAS Company.

Both manual and au-

tomatic transmissions are available for the Toyota Vios Sedan. This car with manual transmission sells for US\$17,700 while that with auto transmission, US\$20,000. This car can be bought in five-year installment through a link with Ayeyawady Bank.

Buyers will have to pay US\$5310 as down payment and then they will pay in over US\$240 in 5-year installments. The amount of money will vary depending on the value of the car, said U Zar Ni Lin, the senior manager of Ayeyawady

Bank.

These Toyota cars can be purchased at Toyota's official representatives TTAS Co., Ltd and Toyota Mingalar showroom starting from 2nd October.

Toyota Vios Sedan has the options for colors: Attitude Back Mica, Super White, Silver Metallic, Gray Metallic, Red Meca Metallic, Silky Beige Metallic, Grayish Metallic and Frozen Blue Metallic.

The car is utilized with 6-speed automatic gear and has 1300CC engine.—Myit-makha News Agency

Seven statements concerning potatoes submitted to Shan State government

SEVEN statements including both short and long-term projects have been submitted to the Shan State government to produce the pedigree potatoes, it is learnt from Potato Association from Heho.

Currently, the local growers are dealing with difficulty in finding the pedigree potatoes. "The input in potato cultivation is high. Therefore, we would like to know how the Shan

State government will cooperate with us concerning this matter", said U Chan Htwe, the chairman of this association.

Agricultural experts need to distribute the pedigree potatoes after analysis at the laboratory under a long-term plan. Under the short-term project, the certified variety of potatoes is required to be imported in accordance with the existing Myanmar Seed law.

"Previously, we did not realise that the potato can be bothered by disease. We thought the land is not well cultivated. If we cultivate the low quality potato, we cannot get the quality potatoes", said Ko David, an owner of 15 acres of potatoes cultivation. The growers also require the method of processing after harvesting and the sufficient cultivation loan. —Wint Yee Mon (AMIA)

State Bank of India launches branch office in Yangon

THE State Bank of India opened its representative office in Yangon yesterday, becoming the first Indian bank to open a branch in Myanmar, with aspirations of becoming an important link in trade and commerce between Myanmar and the world.

Mrs Arundhati Bhat-tachara, Chairman, State Bank of India (SBI) inaugurated the 54th foreign branch of SBI in the presence of Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar Daw Khin Saw Oo and top management from SBI.

The bank has an initial capitalisation of US\$75 million and has more than 12 clients in Myanmar currently with focus areas of business in the fertilizer, oil and gas sector, said Mrs Bhat-tachara to *the Global New Light of Myanmar*.

"We have many customers in India and they already have business connections with Myanmar," she added.

"Definitely, Indian firms in Myanmar are one of the focused area (of SBI) in Myanmar," said an official of the bank.

On inauguration day, the bank saw two new bank accounts, she added.

The bank's target customers are foreign corporations in Myanmar, both local and foreign financial institutions and local corporations partnered with local financial institutions.

Earlier this year, SBI was awarded a banking license to open a branch in Myanmar.

Bilateral trade between India and Myanmar rose from US\$ 328 million in 1997-98 to US\$ 2.052 billion in 2015-2016.—GNLM



Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar Daw Khin Saw Oo lights candles to officially open representative office of the State Bank of Myanmar. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Thailand considers Zika tests for all pregnant women

BANGKOK — Thailand is considering testing all pregnant women for Zika, the health ministry said on Monday, following confirmation last week of its first known cases of microcephaly, a birth defect marked by small head size, linked to the Zika virus.

The two confirmed cases of microcephaly were the first in Southeast Asia linked to mosquito-borne Zika, which has been spreading in the region after outbreaks in the Americas.

“The health minister has asked us to study whether this is necessary and cost-effective,” health ministry permanent secretary Sophon Mekthong told Reuters, referring to free tests for all pregnant women.

A Zika test costs about 2,000 baht (\$58) but repeat tests are often needed, Sophon said.

“At the moment, we check pregnant women in Zika-affected areas only, not all pregnant women. So far, we’ve tested about 1,000 pregnant women.”

Zika infections in pregnant women have been shown to cause microcephaly — a severe birth defect in which the head and brain are undersized — as well as other brain abnormalities.

The connection between Zika and microcephaly first came to light last year in Brazil, which has since confirmed more than 1,800 cases of microcephaly.

Thailand has confirmed 392 Zika cases since January, including 39 pregnant women, and Singapore has recorded 393 Zika cases, including 16 pregnant women.

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has said people should consider postponing



A city worker fumigates the area to control the spread of mosquitoes at a temple in Bangkok, Thailand, on 14 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

travel to Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Philippines, Thailand, East Timor, and Viet Nam.

The CDC has already issued a “travel notice” for

Singapore.

There is no vaccine or treatment and an estimated 80 per cent of people infected with Zika have no symptoms, making it difficult for pregnant women

to know whether they have been infected.

Sexual transmission of the virus has also been reported.

Zika testing is free in Singapore for pregnant

women with symptoms of the virus or with male partners who are Zika-positive. Pregnant women without symptoms get subsidized tests.

Some health experts have accused tourism-dependent Thailand of playing down the Zika risk but health officials have dismissed that.

Health authorities in the region say they are stepping up monitoring, but there has been little testing and some officials say the real number of cases was bound to be higher than the confirmed figure.

The Philippines, Malaysia, Viet Nam and Indonesia have all reported at least one case.

In adults, Zika infections have also been linked to a rare neurological syndrome known as Guillain-Barre, as well as other neurological disorders. — Reuters

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

Philippines' Duterte says China, Russia supportive when he complained of US

MANILA — Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte said on Sunday he had received support from Russia and China when he complained to them about the United States, in another broadside that could test his increasingly fragile alliance with Washington.

Duterte said that during a meeting on the sidelines of a leaders' summit in Laos last month, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev had agreed with him when he railed against the United States.

“I met with Medvedev, I am revealing it to you now,” Duterte said in a speech. “I told him this is the situation: They are giving me a hard time, they are disrespecting me; they are shameless.”

“He said: ‘That is really how the Americans are.’ He said: ‘We will help you.’”

Duterte gave no further details about the nature of his complaints.

His ire towards the United States has intensified since US President Barack Obama said he would raise concerns about Duterte's deadly war on drugs.

The White House cancelled a meeting between them in Laos after Duterte had called Obama a “son of a bitch.”

Duterte said on Sunday he had raised objections about the United States to China also.

China said the Philippines would not benefit from siding with the United

States, according to Duterte. It was not immediately clear which Chinese official he was quoting and when the remark was made.

Duterte has said repeatedly during recent, frequent speeches that he planned to open new alliances with Russia and China, particularly for trade and commerce, as part of his pursuit of an independent foreign policy.

Several commercial and diplomatic sources have confirmed to Reuters that a Philippine business delegation will accompany Duterte on a visit to Beijing from 19-21 October.

In another swipe at Washington, Duterte said he would review a landmark security deal agreed upon with the United

States, arguing it may not be legally binding because no president had signed off on it.

Duterte's remarks show his intent to challenge or test the limits of a historic alliance that US Defence Secretary Ash Carter on Thursday called “ironclad.”

That came the day after Duterte declared joint US-Philippines war games starting this week would be “the last.”

The Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement, signed a few days before Obama visited the Philippines in 2014, allows US troops to build storage facilities for maritime security and humanitarian and disaster response operations. It also provides broad access to Philippine military bases. Duterte said the agreement would be reviewed because it was signed by the then Philippine defence secretary and the US ambassador, and not the country's president.

Duterte did not explicitly say that he would try to scrap the deal, but in comments aimed at the United States, he said: “It does not bear the signature of the president of the Republic of the Philippines ... ‘Better think twice now, because I would be asking you to leave the Philippines altogether.’” — Reuters



Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte. PHOTO: REUTERS

Militant attack on Indian army base in Kashmir kills one

SRINAGAR (India) — At least six militants attacked an Indian army camp in north Kashmir on Sunday night, killing one border guard and wounding another, two weeks after a similar attack killed 19 Indian soldiers and ratcheted up tensions between India and Pakistan.

The attack on the camp of India's 46 Rashtriya Rifles in Baramulla, which also houses a unit of the Border Security Force, started at around 10:30 pm (1700 GMT) and repeated exchanges of fire ensued.

One border guard was killed and one wounded when militants tried to enter the army camp, said Baramulla Superintendent of Police Imtiyaz Hussein.

Nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan have been at odds over Kashmir ever since independence nearly 70 years ago, fighting two of their three wars over the territory that they each rule in part but claim in full.



An Indian army soldier stands guard on a road on the outskirts of Srinagar, on 3 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Hussein said the militants in the latest attack, who appear to have reached the camp by boat on a river that passes through the town, had escaped.

"They fled under the cover of darkness," he told Reuters on Monday morning.

India called its 4 Para

special forces unit in to Baramulla and an operation continued into the morning to search and secure the army camp.

Baramulla is a district capital that lies on the road from Srinagar, the summer capital of India's northernmost state, to the frontier settlement of Uri, where the 18 September attack on

the army base took place.

India launched retaliatory "surgical strikes" in the early hours of Thursday against militant camps on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control, announcing it had inflicted significant casualties.

Pakistan denied any such attack had taken place.—Reuters

Japanese scientist wins Nobel medicine prize for work on "self-eating" cells

STOCKHOLM — Japan's Yoshinori Ohsumi won the 2016 Nobel prize for medicine or physiology for his discovery of how cells break down and recycle their content, which could lead to a better understanding of diseases like cancer, Parkinson's and type 2 diabetes. "Ohsumi's discoveries led to a new paradigm in our understanding of how the cell recycles its content," the Nobel Assembly at Sweden's Karolinska Institute said in a statement on awarding the prize of 8 million Swedish crowns (\$933,000).

"His discoveries opened the path to understanding ... many physiological processes, such as in the adaptation to starvation or response to infection," the statement added.

Ohsumi's work on cell breakdown, a field known as autophagy, is important because it can help explain what goes wrong in a range of diseases.

"Mutations in auto-

phagy ('self eating') genes can cause disease, and the autophagic process is involved in several conditions including cancer and neurological disease," the statement said.

Ohsumi, born in 1945 in Fukuoka, Japan, has been a professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology since 2009.

"I am extremely honoured," he told Kyodo News agency. The prize for Physiology or Medicine is the first of the Nobel prizes awarded each year. Prizes for achievements in science, literature and peace were first awarded in 1901 in accordance with the will of dynamite inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel.

This year, the Karolinska Institute, the institution that awards the medicine prize, has been immersed in a scandal over the hiring of a controversial surgeon. The Swedish government dismissed several members of the board in September.—Reuters

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Opinion

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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.

To improve the representational faithfulness of financial statements

Khin Maung Aye

AS in all cases, the principles-based accounting has both advantages and disadvantages. The primary advantage rests in its broad guidelines that can be employed in numerous circumstances. Broad principles avoid the pitfalls accompanied with precise requirements that allow contracts to be written specifically to manipulate their intent.

It is worth recalling here in this juncture that managers try, on purpose, to structure leases as operating leases to avoid incur-

ring additional liabilities. Providing broad guidelines may improve the representational faithfulness of financial statements. Principles-based accounting standards allow accountants to exercise professional judgment in assessment of the substance of a transaction. This approach is dramatically different from the underlying box-ticking approach common in the rules-based accounting standards.

In this regard, FASB chair Robert Herz would like to be quoted as saying that profession-

alism of financial statements would be enhanced if accountants are required to use their judgment instead of relying on the detailed rules. A principles-based system would result in simpler standards. In fact, principles would be easier to comprehend and apply to a broad range of transactions. As standards are developed based on rules, they are insufficiently flexible to accommodate future developments in the market places. This has resulted in accounting for unanticipated transactions that are less

dangerous. In fact, the financial statements which are prepared under accounting standards, clearly state the accounting objectives and have few exceptions. The financial statements should be easier to understand, more meaningfully and informative; they are likely to result in similar transactions and events being accounted for similarly, and more likely to reflect the economic substance of a transactions partly because there will be less opportunity for financial engineering (Heffes, Ellen M, 2004).

The Implications of the new MAC Law for Private Business Enterprises and management's and the auditor's responsibilities in regard to the financial statements

Tin Shein
CEO, MICPA

(continued from yesterday)

THUS, management is responsible not only for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the MFRS, and the provisions of the Myanmar Companies Act, but also for:

- the institution of a sound and effective internal control system, including the internal audit and internal check, to prevent misappropriation of funds, assets, misstatement of facts, accounting errors, etc.;
- Proper maintenance of accounts in accordance with the Myanmar Accounting Standards as well as the provisions of the Myanmar Companies Act;
- adequate disclosure of accounting and other related information in the financial statements;
- adoption of appropriate accounting policies and practices;
- risk assessment to protect its financial interests by eliminating or minimizing such risks identified in the process;
- safeguarding of the entity's assets and inventories from misuse.

Of course, it is clear that the management of corporate bodies need to take these measures to make the financial statements free from material errors and show a true and fair position of the business enterprise's financial affairs as of the fiscal year-end.

Moreover, it also has the responsibility to make available all the books of account, records, documents and related financial information, which have been maintained, and must certify that no

other accounts, records and documents than those already provided for audit have been maintained.

While on this subject, it won't be out of place to say something about the external auditor's responsibility. He is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Myanmar Standards on Auditing, which are applied to ensure that:

- the financial statements are prepared in compliance with the applicable Myanmar Accounting Standards (MAS) and Myanmar Financial Reporting Standards (MFRS) that have been prescribed by the MAC and Income-tax and other applicable laws of Myanmar;
- the adopted accounting policies and practices are consistently applied;
- the financial statements are free from material errors and misstatements, complete with transparency and accountability for its business operations;
- the financial statements are properly drawn up in accordance with the MFRS, and the provisions of the Myanmar Companies Act, so as to fairly reflect the status of the financial affairs of the entity as of the fiscal year-end and the financial results for that year.

An auditor shall carry out the audit in accordance with the Myanmar Standards on Auditing (MSA) prescribed by MAC. The standard audit procedure that an auditor employs includes:-

- the initial survey of organizational structure/set-up and operations of the organization to be audited;
- review and test-check of the internal control system, including internal audit and internal check;
- audit program showing

months selected for audit checks to be done as well as the time to be taken and audit staff to be deployed;

- analytical review of the accounting system and the financial statements;
- compliance with MAS and MFRS (the same as IAS and IFRS), provisions of the Myanmar Companies Law and MAC Law;
- engagement letter;
- management representations letter;
- management letter
- Adequacy of disclosures of accounting, and other related information in the financial statements;
- Future prospects as a going concern;
- Conflict of interests between the audit staff and auditee;
- Observance of professional ethics in business dealings;
- Proper maintenance of accounting records and books;
- risk assessment.

Therefore, an audit involves examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It needs judgment about the number of transactions to be examined and the areas to be tested, depending on sound and effective system of internal control, internal check and internal audit in place at the auditee. The auditor has to plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable rather than absolute assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, errors, fraudulent financial reporting by using accounting gimmicks to distort the true financial status, misappropriation of assets, or violations of applicable laws or regulations by management or employees acting on behalf of the entity. The audit procedures will include tests designed to

gather adequate documentary evidence supporting the transactions recorded in the accounts, and may also consist tests of the physical existence of inventories, and direct confirmation of receivables and certain other assets and liabilities by correspondence with selected individuals, funding sources, creditors, and financial institutions.

At the conclusion of our audit, we will require certain written representations from you about the financial statements and related matters.

Here it may be pointed out that it is not for the auditor to provide assurance that the financial statements as totally correct and free from all sorts of errors and misstatements. If he were to do so, his audit would have to cover the whole spectrum of transactions in all aspects and nothing should have been left unaudited. However, it would be impracticable, if not impossible, for the auditor to do so, not only because of the enormous amount of time such coverage would have involved, but also because the audit fees would have become too much of a financial burden for the auditee. Audit fees are usually charged by the period of time that the audit team members spend on their audit work during the course of audit, the rates of fees varying with rank, qualifications and experience of the audit staff deployed. Thus, the more time is spent on audit, the more audit fees will have to be paid.

The implication of all this is that the audit can't bear the blame for any fraud, misappropriation, etc. as long as he has adopted the standard audit procedures and exercise due diligent care in doing the audit in accordance with MSA as mentioned above.

What is more, in these days of computerized accounting, accounting transactions are pro-

cessed in no time through the computer by the use of advanced accounting software, without leaving almost little or no paper trail for the auditor. The modern accounting software is crafted in such a way that even when wrong accounting entries are made, they will easily pass through the system without showing any error, because the system ensures that every debit entry will have a corresponding credit entry, thereby balancing the accounts automatically in the end.

In such a case, the auditor will conduct the audit only on a selected check basis to gather adequate audit evidence to back up his audit opinion, as 100% detailed checking will not be justified in terms of the time employed or of the amount of audit fees the auditee has to pay. He will, of course, have to rely on the internal control procedures and practices that have been put in place by management to test the soundness and reliability of the accounting data processed by the EDP system. He will then determine the extent of audit checks to be done in the light of the results of the internal control and internal audit being reviewed.

Moreover, since an audit is designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance, it will not perform a detailed examination of all transactions. So there is a risk that material misstatements or non-compliance may exist and not be detected by us. However, if during the course of audit the auditor becomes aware of such errors, fraud, or illegal acts, he will bring them to the attention of management.

His responsibility, as an auditor, is limited to the period covered by audit as agreed in the engagement letter and does not extend to any later periods for which he is not engaged as an auditor.

Clinton expected to hit Wells Fargo in speech on 'bad corporate actors'



US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton boards her campaign plane in Charlotte, North Carolina, United States on 2 October, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton on Monday will unveil a plan to make it easier for consumers to take legal action against “bad corporate actors,” citing Wells Fargo & Co and Mylan Pharmaceuticals, according to a campaign official.

While campaigning in Ohio, the Democratic nominee will explain how she would, if elected on 8 November, curb the prevalence of contractual clauses that require consumers, employees and other individuals to resolve legal disputes in private arbitration proceedings instead of in courts, her campaign said. Mandatory arbitration clauses sometimes require that claims be pursued on an individual basis instead of on behalf of a class of similarly situated individuals. Consumer advocates say this makes it prohibitively expensive to take legal action.

Clinton will call on the US Congress to give agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Communications

Commission and the Department of Labour the authority to restrict the use of arbitration clauses in consumer, employment and antitrust agreements, according to a preliminary plan reviewed by Reuters.

Clinton will also discuss how she believes that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and other agencies already have the authority to curb the use of such clauses under the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act. The planning document said she would urge the Securities and Exchange Commission to exercise its authority to make related rules authorised by the financial reform law. Wells Fargo (WFC.N) is expected to be in the crosshairs when Clinton discusses how she would curb mandatory arbitration clauses.

For years, the bank's employees opened as many as 2 million checking, savings and credit card accounts without the customers' permission in order to meet sales quotas. Wells Far-

go reached a \$190 million settlement with federal regulators earlier this month.

When Wells Fargo chief John Stumpf testified before Congress recently about the unauthorised accounts, he said he did not expect the bank to waive a clause signed by its customers in order to open their authorised accounts. The clause said they would arbitrate disputes instead of suing Wells Fargo in court.

Democratic lawmakers in Congress, including Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, have called on Wells Fargo to toss out the mandatory arbitration clause and allow customers to sue. Clinton is also expected to criticise Mylan (MYL.O) for sharply raising without justification the price of EpiPens, which deliver life-saving drugs to those with allergies. The criticism will be part of a larger push to curb excessive market concentration and encourage competition that benefits consumers, her campaign said.—Reuters

Sturgeon says British PM May does not care about Scotland over Brexit

EDINBURGH — Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon accused Theresa May of ignoring Scots over Britain's exit from the European Union after the British Prime Minister indicated that Scotland will not have a veto.

Sturgeon, whose nationalist party is not ruling out a new Scottish independence vote, said on Twitter that May was “going out of her way to say Scotland's voice and interests don't matter”.

“Strange approach from someone who wants to keep (the) UK together,” Sturgeon said.

May, who says she will trigger the process to leave the EU by March, has said Scotland's

concerns will be taken into account.

When asked directly if Scotland could have a veto over Brexit, she told the BBC: “The United Kingdom will have a position in the negotiations and we, as a United Kingdom government, will be negotiating with the European Union.”

Scotland, one of the United Kingdom's four constituent parts, overwhelmingly voted to stick with the EU in June but England and Wales voted out.

The United Kingdom's devolved parliaments could complicate or slow an EU withdrawal as their remit over such a major change is unclear and there is a convention for giving

the assemblies a say on matters that concern them.

British government lawyers have argued there is no need to have the agreement of Britain's devolved parliaments in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales for Brexit. The lawyers argue such assemblies do not have any “competence” over foreign affairs which they say is for the UK government to decide.

A spokesman for the Scottish government said on Sunday that it was unlikely Scotland would approve legislation that does not guarantee access to the EU's single market for goods and services, but it is not clear what say Scotland will have in the process.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police fire teargas at pensioners during Athens protest

ATHENS — Greek police made limited use of teargas against pensioners protesting in central Athens on Monday over cutbacks to their benefits.

About 1,500 pensioners attempted to march to Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras's office. Police blocked their path.

Tensions flared when dozens of pensioners attempted to push over a police bus blocking their way a few hundred metres from Tsipras's office.

The left-led government is expected to submit its budget for 2017 in parliament on Monday evening.—Reuters

Turkey's Erdogan says EU yet to deliver on aid pledge for migrants

ANKARA — Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan criticised the European Union on Monday, saying the bloc had failed to fulfil its pledge to provide 3 billion euros of aid for migrants as part of a landmark deal to stem refugee flows to Europe.

“The year is coming to a close,” Erdogan said at a science and technology conference in Ankara. “They promise but do not deliver,” he said. The deal agreed in March has almost completely stopped migrants from setting sail to Greek shores by boat, after thousands have died on the way last year.

The European Commission, the EU's executive, has said disbursements under the deal are based on projects and not being paid as a lump sum.—Reuters

Germany wants to support Iran with its reforms: Economy Minister

TEHRAN — Germany wants to help Iran push ahead with reforms, Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said on Monday, adding he believed the Islamic Republic was a reliable credit partner as he courted closer trade ties.

“Our aim is to support the current government with its path to opening up to the world,” Gabriel said in Tehran, adding he would raise topics such as Iran's role in the war in Syria, Israel and legal state issues with the Iranian leadership.

Gabriel said Iran was a reliable credit partner that kept agreements as a rule.—Reuters

India ratifies Paris agreement on climate change

NEW DELHI — India on Sunday ratified the Paris agreement on climate change when the country's UN ambassador handed over the signed instruments to UN officials in New York, the government said.

India decided to ratify the Paris agreement after assessing its impact on domestic laws and taking into account the opinions of different stakeholders, particularly industry, environment minister Anil Kumar Dave said in New Delhi on Saturday.

“Through its participation in the Paris agreement, India will articulate the interests of the poor and the vulnerable groups,” the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change said in a statement.

The next session of the UN-sponsored climate change talks, COP-22, is to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco from 7 to 18 November, where, Dave said, India would strongly raise the issues of finance and technology transfer to developing nations to help them combat climate change.

India declared a voluntary goal of reducing the emissions intensity of its gross domestic product by 33-35 per cent by 2030 over 2005 levels.—Kyodo News

Syrian rebels aim to reach IS-held Dabiq in 48 hours

BEIRUT — Syrian rebels aim to reach the Islamic State-held town of Dabiq within 48 hours if all goes to plan, one of their commanders said on Monday, as a Turkey-backed operation in northern Syria targets an area of great religious significance to the group.

Ahmed Osman of the Sultan Murad rebel group also said that advances near Dabiq had been slowed because Islamic State had heavily mined the area. “If matters proceed as planned, within 48 hours we will be in Dabiq,” Osman told Reuters.

He said 15 rebel fighters killed on Sunday had been killed by landmines and a mortar attack in the village of Turkman Bareh, which the Turkey-backed fighters had seized from Islamic State.—Reuters

Libyan forces foil ambush, lose eight men in Sirte battle — officials

SIRTE — Libyan forces repelled an attempted ambush but lost at least eight of their men as their battle with Islamic State militants encircled in their former stronghold of Sirte resumed on Sunday, officials said.

A Dutch photojournalist, Jeroen Oerlemans, was also killed in the fighting.

A spokesman for the Libyan forces, Rida Issa, said militants who staged an ambush east of central Sirte had apparently arrived from the desert, in the latest sign of an enduring jihadist threat beyond the battle lines.

Forces dominated by fighters from Misrata and aligned with Libya's UN-backed government have been battling to capture Sirte for more than four months.

Supported since 1 August by US air strikes, they have taken control of most of the city and have been besieging militants trapped in a thin residential strip

near Sirte's seafont for several weeks. Their advance has been slowed by Islamic State snipers, improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings in close-quarter street battles. Occasional ground attacks are interspersed by rest periods that allow fighters to regroup and hospitals to clear casualties.

Issa said fighting had erupted "when Daesh (Islamic State) ambushed our forces at the Sawawa front line. Our forces foiled the ambush." Misrata-led forces believed the militants had come from the desert and were trying to reach Sirte's port, captured from Islamic State several weeks ago.

Militants have staged several attacks including suicide bombings from behind the front lines in Sirte, adding to fears that militants who are thought to have escaped in the early stages of the battle might have regrouped to launch counter attacks.



Libyan forces allied with the UN-backed government walk through a destroyed building during a battle with Islamic State militants in Sirte, Libya on 2 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

A Reuters witness said there had been heavy tank fire and several air strikes during Sunday's fighting, though it was not clear whether the strikes were conducted by US or Libyan planes. As of Friday, the United States said it had carried out a total of 177 air strikes against Islamic

State in Sirte.

Misrata-led forces were held up for several hours by sniper fire as they tried to advance across an open area of approximately 100m, before the sniper positions were eventually demolished.

A field hospital casualty list name eight fighters from the gov-

ernment-backed forces who were killed, five of them from Misrata. Issa said several dozen bodies of Islamic State militants had been counted on Sunday. The report could not be independently verified. At least 40 of the government-led forces were wounded, Issa said. —Reuters

Taliban fighters enter northern Afghan city of Kunduz

KUNDUZ — Taliban fighters attacked the northern Afghan city of Kunduz overnight, entering urban areas and threatening a repeat of the assault in which they seized the city exactly a year ago.

Sheer Ali Kamawal, commander of the 808 Tandar police zone in Kunduz, said the attack began at around midnight (1930 GMT Sunday) and fighting was going on in and around the city. Some Taliban fighters had entrenched themselves in homes.

The fighters appear to have slipped through a defensive security line set up around Kunduz, entering the city itself before clashes broke out, witnesses in the city said.

In Kabul, Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, spokesman for Afghanistan's NATO-led force, said he was aware of reports of sporadic fighting in Kunduz but said he had not seen evidence of a major Taliban offensive.

"At this point, we are not observing evidence via our internal means to support the reports that Kunduz is under significant attack," he said in an emailed statement.

Police spokesman Mahfuzullah Akbari said security forces were preparing to drive out the fighters, who had infiltrated the Khak Kani area in the city's southwest.

"The Taliban are inside some civilian houses and we have to carry out operations very carefully," he said.

The interior ministry said



Afghan policemen keep watch in the downtown of Kunduz city, Afghanistan on 3 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

reinforcements were being sent.

Military helicopters flew overhead and gunfire could be heard in Kunduz, where a year ago to the day, Afghan troops backed by US air strikes and special forces battled to drive out Taliban who had raised their flag in the city center.

On Monday, a Reuters reporter saw at least five Taliban fighters armed with AK-47 assault rifles, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades in the city. He saw fighters entering homes and taking up position on roofs.

The attack, a day before the start of a major donor conference

in Brussels, underlines Afghanistan's precarious security. Government forces are estimated to have control over at most two-thirds of the country.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in his official Twitter account four government checkpoints in Kunduz had been captured and some soldiers had been killed.

"A massive operation started on Kunduz capital from four directions early this morning," he said.

The attack came as the Taliban have stepped up attacks in different parts of Afghanistan, including the southern province

of Helmand, where they have been threatening the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah.

On Monday, Taliban fighters, positioned just across the Helmand river from the centre of Lashkar Gah, also took control of Nawa district to the south, killing a district police chief, officials said.

Heavy fighting has also continued along the main highway to Tarin Kot, the provincial capital of Uruzgan, also in the south, where a Taliban raid on 8 September sparked fears of another collapse like that in Kunduz last year.

The raid on Tarin Kot was beaten back but alarmed security officials because the militants were able to enter the city without significant resistance after police abandoned dozens of checkpoints.

The fall of Kunduz last year was one of the most serious blows suffered by the Western-backed government in Kabul since the withdrawal of most international troops at the end of 2014.

Although the insurgents abandoned Kunduz after a few days, their capture of a provincial capital underlined their growing strength and exposed flaws in Afghan security forces.

Afghanistan's international partners are expected to approve maintaining billions of dollars in funding for the government over the next four years at the two-day Brussels meeting. —Reuters

Turkish military says 15 rebels killed in clashes in Syria

ISTANBUL — Clashes in northern Syria have killed 15 Turkey-backed rebels fighting Islamic State in the last 24 hours, according the Turkish military, which launched a cross-border incursion in late August. The latest fighting marks an escalation since Turkish troops crossed the border into Syria on 24 August to back opposition fighters battling Islamic State. Turkey says the operation is aimed at removing the border threat the jihadists pose. Turkish special forces and the air force are providing support to the rebels, who are engaged in intense fighting with Islamic State near the towns of Azaz and al-Rai, the military said in a statement. The operation continued on Monday, it said. In 11 air strikes by the US-backed coalition, 13 Islamic State militants were killed. The air operation is designed to push the hardline Islamists back from the Turkish border, the statement said. The army also fired on Islamic State targets from inside Turkey after the jihadists used rockets to target the Turkish border town of Kilis, damaging buildings, it said.

Turkey says international law gave it the right to enter Syria, in an operation it has dubbed "Euphrates Shield," to cleanse its border region of Islamic State militants who had launched attacks on Turkish cities. —Reuters



A view of clusters of private homes in Singapore on 14 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Singapore private home prices fall most in seven years in Q3

SINGAPORE — Singapore's private home prices fell at the fastest pace in seven years in the third quarter, as sluggish domestic demand adds further pressure on the export-reliant economy ahead of a central bank policy review expected later this month.

The private residential property index fell 1.5 per cent to 137.9 in the July-September quarter, according to a flash estimate released by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), after falling 0.4 per cent in the previous quarter.

The latest drop was the largest quarterly decline since home prices slid 4.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2009, when fallout from the global financial crisis slammed into Asia and pushed Singapore's economy into contraction.

"The main reason why this time around the drop is steeper is the market is finally feeling the brunt of the economic slowdown

on top of the downward pressure from the supply spike in 2016, 2017," said Christine Li, head of research for Cushman and Wakefield in Singapore.

Including the drop in the third quarter, private home prices have fallen 10.8 per cent from a peak in the third quarter of 2013, having declined for 12 straight quarters. The price declines have come after authorities introduced a series of property market cooling measures in recent years.

"Vacancy rates are rising and there is still a large supply. And we think that the non-residential industrial sector is likely to feel the biggest headwinds as global trade remains weak. So it is not just residential that is feeling the pinch," said Trinh Nguyen, senior economist for Natixis in Hong Kong.

Cushman and Wakefield's Li said an adjustment to the way the URA compiles the property price

index probably added to the fall in the property price index in the third quarter. The change takes into account various incentives and discounts that developers may use to sell property after they are completed and delicensed.

Starting with the third-quarter data, the URA has started including net prices of delicensed projects in the property price index data, which is based on all property sale transaction both in the new sale and resale market, a URA spokesperson said.

"For new sales, the majority of units are sold by licensed developers before the projects are completed and delicensed. A small percentage of all property sales is from completed delicensed projects," the URA spokesperson said.

The URA is due to release full data on third-quarter private home prices four weeks later.—Reuters

Japan big manufacturers' mood flat in fragile economic recovery — BoJ tankan

TOKYO — Confidence among big Japanese manufacturers was flat in the three months to September and service-sector sentiment worsened to its lowest in nearly two years, the Bank of Japan's closely watched tankan survey showed on Monday, underscoring a fragile economic recovery.

Big firms plan to raise capital expenditure in the current fiscal year, the tankan survey showed, offering some relief to policy-makers hoping the Bank of Japan's aggressive stimulus will boost business investment.

The results followed a mixed run of recent indicators, which highlighted doubts over whether years of massive mon-

ey-printing are doing any good, as the central bank rebooted its monetary policy framework last month.

"Big manufacturers' sentiment showed itself relatively resilient considering the worsening environment such as a strong yen and weak domestic demand," said Atsushi Takeda, chief economist at Itochu Economic Research Institute.

"Today's tankan itself is not the one to push the BoJ into further easing."

The headline index gauging big manufacturers' sentiment stood at plus 6 in September, unchanged from three months ago and roughly in line with a median market forecast of plus 7, the

quarterly survey showed.

By sector, motor vehicles rebounded due to fading effects of earthquakes that hit a manufacturing hub of Kumamoto earlier this year. On the other hand, general-purpose machinery, production machinery, shipbuilding and heavy machinery sank, reflecting weak overseas demand for capital goods.

Big non-manufacturers' sentiment slipped to plus 18 from plus 19 three months ago, falling for three straight quarters and hitting the lowest level since December 2014, due to typhoons and a slowdown in spending by foreign tourists in the face of a strong yen. Markets had expected the lower reading.—Reuters

Facebook rolls out pared down Messenger app for emerging markets

SAN FRANCISCO — Facebook Inc launched a stripped down version of its popular Messenger app for emerging markets on Monday as it seeks to expand its international footprint.

Messenger Lite, which uses less data and is designed to work in areas with slower internet connections, will roll out in Kenya, Tunisia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Venezuela. Facebook said it will expand to other countries in the coming months.

Facebook has largely saturated Western markets, including North America and Europe, and has set its sights on developing countries, in part by rolling out "lite" versions of its main Facebook app and now Messenger, which have fewer capabilities than the main apps.

Users with Android phones will still be able to use the core features of Messenger, including the ability to send text messages, photos and links but will not be able to make video or voice calls or make payments.

"We want to make sure



The Facebook logo and emoticons are seen on a coffee mug at the reception of its new office in Mumbai, India, on 27 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Messenger products are truly for everyone," David Marcus, head of Messenger, said in an interview.

Facebook also offers a pared-down version of the internet in more than three dozen countries, called Free Basics, to connect people to the internet who do not have a reliable connection.

Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg has repeatedly said the company's mission is to get everyone in the world connected to the internet.—Reuters

Toyota unveils robot baby to tug at maternal instinct in aging Japan

TOKYO — Toyota Motor Corp on Monday unveiled a doe-eyed palm-sized robot, dubbed Kirobo Mini, designed as a synthetic baby companion in Japan, where plummeting birth rates have left many women childless.

Toyota's non-automotive venture aims to tap a demographic trend that has put Japan at the forefront of aging among the world's industrial nations, resulting in a population contraction unprecedented for a country not at war, or racked by famine or disease.

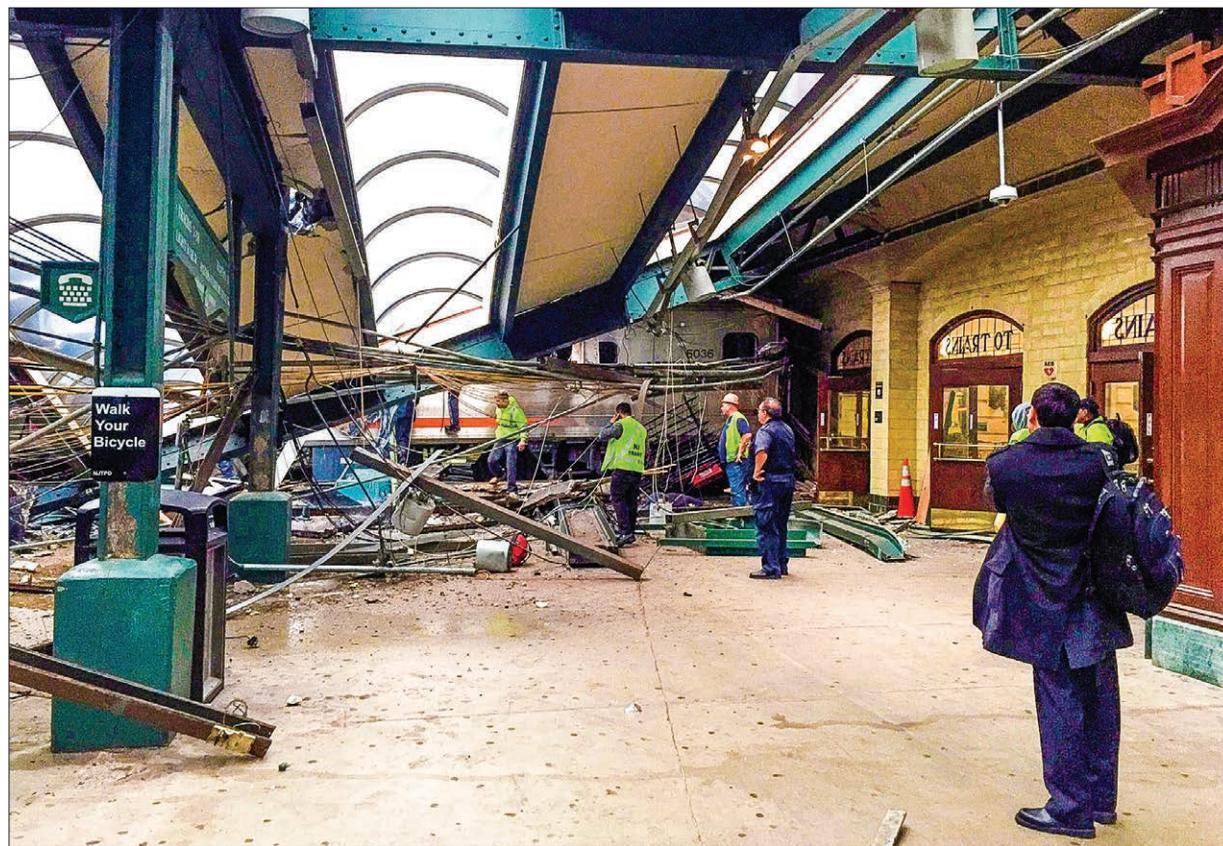
"He wobbles a bit, and this is meant to emulate a seated baby, which hasn't fully developed the skills to balance itself," said Fuminori Kataoka, Kirobo Mini's chief design engineer. "This vulnerability is meant to invoke an emotional connection."

Toyota plans to sell Kirobo Mini, which blinks its eyes and speaks with a baby-like high-pitched voice, for 39,800 yen (\$392) in Japan next year. It also comes with a "cradle" that doubles as its baby seat designed to fit in car cup hold-



Toyota Motor Corp's Kirobo Mini robot is pictured during a photo opportunity after a news conference in Tokyo, Japan, on 27 September. PHOTO: REUTERS

ers. The Toyota baby automaton joins a growing list of companion robots, such as the upcoming Jibo, designed by robotics experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that resembles a swivelling lamp, and Paro, a robot baby seal marketed by Japanese company Intelligent System Co Ltd as a therapeutic machine to soothe elderly dementia sufferers. Around a quarter of Japan's population is over 65 with a dearth of care workers putting a strain on social services.—Reuters



A New Jersey Transit train that derailed and crashed through the station is seen in Hoboken, New Jersey, US in this picture courtesy of Corey Futterman taken on 29 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Engineer of crashed NJ train was fully rested; questions remain

NEW YORK — The engineer of the New Jersey commuter train that crashed on Thursday told investigators he was fully rested but has no memory of the incident, and a recovered data recorder was not working, a National Transportation Safety Board official said on Sunday.

The derailed train at a Hoboken station killed a 34-year-old woman on the platform and injured 108 people during the morning rush hour. The terminal has some 60,000 people pass on a typical weekday.

NTSB Vice Chairman Bella Dinh-Zarr told a news conference that the agency was still in the “fact-gathering phase of the investigation.”

New Jersey Transit said on Sunday that all rail service into and out of

the Hoboken terminal remained suspended.

Thomas Gallagher, a 29-year New Jersey Transit veteran who was injured when the train derailed, told investigators the train was running at 10 miles an hour when it was approaching the station, Dinh-Zarr said.

Investigators at this time could not ascertain the speed of the train when it was near the station.

When interviewed by investigators, Gallagher said he conducted various procedures, including checking the train’s speedometer, and put his cellphone away during the trip.

He also said he had no memory of the accident.

The train’s conductor, meanwhile, told investigators he “didn’t recall anything unusual” before the

crash, Dinh-Zarr said.

One of the data recorders recovered was not working, but there is another one which is newer, Dinh-Zarr said.

“We are hopeful it would be working,” she said.

While waiting for possible information from the second data recorder and a full review of available videos, investigators could not verify what steps Gallagher may have taken to slow or stop the train before the crash, according to Dinh-Zarr.

The NTSB official reiterated the agency found nothing on the track that would have affected the train’s performance.

Recovery of evidence has been slowed due to damage to the station’s columns, leaving the facility unstable. Environmen-

tal and structural problems have delayed the extraction of the second data recorder and forward-facing video recorder that could help investigators understand the causes of the crash.

The Federal Railroad Administration had begun an investigation into New Jersey Transit’s safety practices prior to Thursday’s crash, the *New York Times* reported on Saturday, citing an official who it said had been briefed on the investigation but was not authorized to discuss it publicly.

An initial safety audit was completed in June, the newspaper reported.

The FRA and New Jersey Transit did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the *New York Times* report. — *Reuters*

Colombia’s Santos, FARC scramble to revive peace after shock vote

BOGOTA — Colombia’s government and Marxist FARC guerrillas will scramble on Monday to revive a plan to end their 52-year war after voters rejected the hard-negotiated deal as too lenient on the rebels in a shock result that plunged the nation into uncertainty.

Putting on a brave face after a major political defeat, President Juan Manuel Santos offered hope to those who backed his four-year peace negotiation with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in Cuba. Latin America’s longest conflict has killed 220,000 people.

“I will not give up, I will keep seeking peace until the last minute of my term,” he said moments after losing Sunday’s plebiscite to those who want a re-negotiation of the deal or an obliteration of the FARC on the battlefield.

Santos plans to meet all political parties on Monday and send lead government peace negotiator Humberto de la Calle back to Havana to speak to the FARC

leadership.

Rodrigo Londoño, the top FARC commander better known by his nom de guerre Timochenko, also offered reassurance the rebels remain committed to becoming a peaceful political party.

“The FARC reiterates its disposition to use only words as a weapon to build toward the future,” Timochenko said after the result. “Count on us, peace will triumph.”

Santos, 65, who was not obliged by law to hold a plebiscite, had said there was no Plan B for the failure of the peace vote, but now appears ready to consider options. Colombians, even those who backed the “No” vote, expressed shock at the outcome and uncertainty about the future.

“We never thought this could happen,” said sociologist and “No” voter Mabel Castano, 37. “Now I just hope the government, the opposition and the FARC come up with something intelligent that includes us all.” — *Reuters*



Colombia’s former President Alvaro Uribe casts his vote for referendum on a peace deal between the government and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels, at Bolivar Square in Bogota, Colombia, on 2 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS MYANMA RAILWAYS INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

1. Open Tenders are invited for supply of the following items in Euro:

Sr No.	Tender No	Description
1.	12(T)17/(MIT) 2016-2017	Axle Steel Solid Type (YD) - 600 Nos Axle Steel Solid Type (YD 1) - 600 Nos Axle Steel Solid Type (W) - 200 Nos Wheel Steel Solid Type (YD) - 1500 Nos
2.	12(T)18/(MIT) 2016-2017	Taper Bearing Unit (TBU) AAR Class “C” - 1500 Sets Seal for Taper Bearing Unit (TBU) AAR Class “B” - 1000 Sets Seal for Taper Bearing Unit (TBU) AAR Class “C” - 1000 Sets

Closing Date & Time - 17.11.2016 (Thursday) (14:30) Hrs

2. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 3.10.2016 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Deputy General Manager Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Corner of 51st Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung, Yangon. Phone: 95-1-291985, 291994

India arrests six suspected of plotting Islamic State attacks

NEW DELHI — Police have arrested six members of an Islamic State-inspired group suspected of plotting attacks on key figures and public places during the Hindu festival of Diwali, the national counter-terrorism agency said on Monday.

Islamic State has struggled to win over many recruits in India, which is home to the world’s third-largest Muslim population.

But over the past year or so, the National Investigation Agency has found small groups of people in Kerala and Tamil Nadu who have either travelled to Syria to join the militant Sunni group or planned attacks inside India.

On Sunday, the NIA picked up six men while they were in a meeting in a hilltop shrine in Kerala and said they were gathering ex-

plosives and other material to mount attacks in southern India during Diwali later this month.

“During the searches, incriminating material including electronic devices have been seized from their possession and search of their premises,” the agency said in a statement, calling them members of an “Islamic State-inspired terror module”. — *Reuters*



Supplied photo taken in November 2011, in northern Congo shows a Grey Parrot, a popular pet bird known for quickly picking up human words. A panel of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora adopted a proposal during a meeting in Johannesburg on 2 October 2016, to ban international trade in the bird, listing it among the most endangered animals in its Appendix I. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Wildlife panel adopts proposal to ban int'l trade in Grey Parrots

JOHANNESBURG — An international panel on trade of wildlife products adopted a proposal Sunday to ban international trade in Grey Parrots, popular pet birds known for quickly picking up human words.

The panel of CITES, or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, decided to list the large parrot among the most endangered animals in its Appendix I during a meeting in Johannesburg.

Native to forests in African countries like Congo and Ghana, the parrot, more than 30 centimeters in height and characterised by a grey body and red tail, is said to have an intelligence equivalent to a five-year-old human being.

It frequently appears on online video-sharing sites like YouTube, sometimes mimicking the

words of comedians or conversing fluently with humans and attracting hundreds of thousands of views.

Tomoaki Nishihara at the Wildlife Conservation Society in Congo said the parrot is a social bird that moves in flocks in the wild, meaning that being raised alone could inflict great stress on them.

He said countries like Cameroon are still exporting the bird and many of them die during the course of capture and transporting.

"They are different from dogs and cats which have established themselves as pets," he said, urging people against keeping such rare animals.

Japan imported more than 2,400 of the bird between 2010 and 2014 from Congo and elsewhere, according to the CITES database.—*Kyodo News*

Hurricane Matthew's threat to Haiti grows, some resist shelters

LES CAYES/PORT-AU-PRINCE — Hurricane Matthew edged closer to Haiti on Monday, bringing 130-mile-per-hour (215 kph) winds and torrential rain that could wreak havoc in the Caribbean nation, although some 2,000 people in one coastal town refused to evacuate.

Matthew's centre is expected to near southwestern Haiti and Jamaica on Monday night, the US National Hurricane Center said.

Crawling towards Haiti's Les Cayes, Jamaica and Cuba at five miles per hour (seven kph), the storm could be just as slow leaving, giving its winds and rain more time to cause damage.

"We are worried about the slow pace of Hurricane Matthew, which will expose Haiti to much more rain, and the country is particularly vulnerable to flooding," said Ronald Semelfort, director of Haiti's national meteorology centre.

The storm comes at a bad time for Haiti. The poorest country in the Americas is set to hold a long-delayed election next Sunday.

A combination of weak government and precarious living conditions make the country particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. More than 200,000 people were killed when a magnitude 7 earthquake struck in 2010.

"Even in normal times, when we have rain we have flooding that sometimes kills people," said Semelfort, comparing Matthew to 1963's Hurricane Flora, which swept away entire villages and killed thousands in Haiti.

In Jamaica too, officials were scrambling to protect the vulnerable, as residents boarded up windows and flocked to supermarkets to stock up on food, water, flashlights and beer.

In Cuba, which Matthew is due to reach on Tuesday, evacuation operations were well underway, with people voluntarily moving their belongings into neighbours' houses or heading to shelters. Some even found cliff-side caves they said were the safest places to ride out storms.

Matthew was about

245 miles (395 km) south-southeast of Jamaica's Kingston early on Monday and moving north toward Haiti. The hurricane centre ranked it at Category 4 on the five-step Saffir-Simpson scale of hurricane intensity.

In Haiti, some streets were already flooded in Les Cayes, a town of about 70,000 people that was previously ravaged by hurricanes in 1781 and 1788.

But Haitian officials said about 2,000 residents of the La Savane neighbourhood of Les Cayes refused to heed government calls to move out of their seaside homes, even though they were just a few miles from where the centre of the hurricane is forecast to make landfall.

As the wind died down at night, people remained outside in La Savane, hanging out on porches, playing checkers and dominoes outside, and listening to music.

"The police and local authorities and our evacuation teams have been instructed to do all they can to move those people," Interior Minister Francois Anick Jo-

seph said.

"They have also been instructed to move them by force if necessary. We have an obligation to protect those peoples lives, even against their will."

However, the chief of police for the southern region, Luc Pierre, said it was almost impossible to force such a large number of people to leave their homes.

"I would have to arrest all those people and take them to a safe place. This is very difficult," he said, adding that the power had already gone off in the town.

Poor Haitians are at times reluctant to leave their homes in the face of impending storms, fearing their belongings will be stolen after they leave.

Only a few families had opted to move to a high school in La Savane, designated as a shelter for up to 600 people. It was without electricity and lit only by candlelight.

"There are babies crying here; there is nothing at all," said Nadja, 32, who was pregnant with her fourth child.—*Reuters*



Residents stand on a pier ahead of Hurricane Matthew in Les Cayes, Haiti, on 2 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC MERGUI VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC MERGUI VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.10.2016 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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 02 VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 02 VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.10.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO (016N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO (016N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.10.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

'Miss Peregrine' tops with \$28.5 million, 'Deepwater Horizon,' 'Masterminds' bomb

LOS ANGELES — Tim Burton's "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children" topped a feeble crop of new releases to pick up first place at the weekend box office, opening to \$28.5 million.

That's a mediocre start given the fantasy film's \$110 million budget. However, the adaptation of Ransom Riggs' best-selling young adult novel is doing well overseas where it made \$36.5 million from 59 territories, so its global grosses could push it into the black. Burton is responsible for blockbusters such as "Batman" and "Planet of the Apes," but his commercial touch has been spotty of late. He hasn't had a major hit since 2010's "Alice in Wonderland," with audiences rejecting the likes of "Dark Shadows," "Frankenweenie," and "Big Eyes." Fox and Chernin Entertainment backed "Miss Peregrine's."

Fox domestic distribution chief Chris Aronson said he was pleased with the results, but said it was too early to say whether or not a new franchise had been created.

"It's a promising start, but it's too early to tell," he said. "There are multiple books and they are best-sellers, so the door is open."

Sequels or not, "Miss Peregrine's" is in a much better position than "Deep Water Horizon," after the expensive adventure drama from the "Lone Star" team of Mark Wahlberg and Peter Berg collapsed with a \$20.6 million opening. The look at the men and

women who were forced to grapple with one of the worst oil spills in history cost roughly \$120 million to produce after incentives are taken into account. The hope is that strong word-of-mouth will bolster sales in the coming weeks and that the film will follow the blueprint of other adult dramas such as "Fury" and "The Town" by showing some endurance. But analysts are skeptical.

"You don't spend that much money on this kind of film," said Jeff Bock, an analyst with Exhibitor Relations. "It's a tough sell."

Critics liked the film, handing it an 82% "fresh" rating on Rotten Tomatoes. However, the strong reviews didn't translate into ticket sales. Lionsgate, the studio behind the film, has had a rough period at the box office. It is struggling to find a replacement for "The Hunger Games," the hugely successful young adult series that concluded last year, and has seen the likes of "Gods of Egypt," "Blair Witch," and "The Divergent Series: Allegiant," falter at the multiplexes. At the same time, the company's share price has dropped more than 50% since last fall. Lionsgate's movie arm hopes to regain its stride with the upcoming release of "La La Land," an acclaimed musical with Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone, and "Hacksaw Ridge," a war drama from Mel Gibson.

Then there's "Masterminds." The heist-comedy about a hapless

band of robbers was originally scheduled to be released last year, but found itself entangled in Relativity Media's bankruptcy proceedings. Freshly emerged from Chapter 11, Relativity had hoped that its release would signal to Hollywood that the studio has put its financial troubles behind it. Yet, "Masterminds" eked out a feeble \$6.6 million, a disastrous result for the mid-budget comedy. At one point during its bankruptcy proceedings, Relativity predicted that "Masterminds" would generate \$125.4 million in revenues for the studio over its lifetime and \$47.1 million in profit. Those projections now look very rosy.

Disney's "Queen of Katwe" also bombed in its expansion. The drama about a chess prodigy from Uganda only managed to generate roughly \$2.6 million after moving from 52 to 1,242 screens. It has made a disappointing \$3 million since it opened. Disney is primarily in the blockbuster business, offering up Marvel adventures, "Star Wars" sequels and spin-offs, and the latest Pixar fantasies. It has, however, tried to do a series of uplifting, lower-budgeted dramas such as "Million Dollar Arm" and "McFarland, USA," with middling results.

Last weekend's champion, "The Magnificent Seven," slid to third place, earning \$15.7 million. The Western remake with Denzel Washington has racked up \$61.6



Actor Mark Wahlberg (L) poses alongside Mike Williams as he arrives at the European premiere of "Deepwater Horizon" at Leicester Square in London, Britain on 26 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

million in its first two weeks of release.

The animated comedy "Storks" and Clint Eastwood's "Sully," took fourth and fifth place, earning \$13.8 million and \$8.4 million, respectively. "Storks" has made \$38.8 million in its first two weeks in theaters, while "Sully" has racked up an impressive \$105.4 million over its first month of release.

In limited release, Bleecker Street's "Denial," a drama about a Holocaust denier, debuted to \$102,101 on five theaters for a \$20,420 per-screen average. The indie studio will continue to expand the film's release in the coming weeks pushing it into ten new markets and more than 25 theaters.

"It's accessible, it's intelligent, and it's riveting," said Jack Foley, Bleecker Street's distribution chief. "People come away

having had an outstanding time at the movies."

A24 also bowed "American Honey," a buzzy look at a mag crew that took Cannes by storm, in four theaters where it made \$75,370 for a per-screen average of \$18,843.

Overall ticket sales fell short of the year-ago period when "The Martian" kicked off to a massive \$54.3 million. Revenues were down nearly 25% at roughly \$114 million, the third straight weekend of declines.

"There's so much competition for the movies," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst at ComScore. "You've got the fall television season kicking into high gear and people are so distracted with the presidential election. The films out there are not resonating on their own or there are too many distractions."—Reuters

Armed jewel thieves leave 'shaken' Kardashian tied up in Paris bathroom

PARIS — Masked men robbed Kim Kardashian at gunpoint in the early hours on Monday, leaving her tied up in the bathroom of her luxury residence in Paris and stealing millions of dollars' worth of jewelry, police and her publicist said.

Five attackers, wearing ski masks and clothes with police marking, struck around 3 am (0100 GMT) inside the exclusive apartment block where Kardashian was staying while attending Paris Fashion Week, a police source told Reuters.

They stole a box with 5-6 million euros' (\$5.6-\$6.7 million) worth of jewels and a ring worth about 4 million euros, the source said.

After she was discovered

— "badly shaken but physically unharmed," according to her publicist — and news of her ordeal spread, the reality star's husband, rapper Kanye West, abruptly ended a performance in New York less than an hour into his set.

"I'm sorry I have a family emergency, I have to stop the show," West told the audience in video tweeted by fans at the Meadows Festival in Queens.

Police were guarding the apartment block on Monday morning, a discreet building behind the city's Madeleine church, with several secret entrances, often frequented by movie and music stars who pay up to 15,000 euros a night. Kardashian's spokeswoman, Ina Treciokas, initially said two masked gunmen dressed as policemen held up the star in her room. The robbery set social media alight, with many users expressing disbelief at the latest headline-grabbing event in the life of a TV star whose every

living moment seems to be documented on screen and the internet.

"Looking forward to accompanying album and TV show detailing event," said Twitter user Jay. Most comments, however, were supportive.

"Kim Kardashian is a mother, a wife, daughter and sister. Despite the fact that you don't like her, being held up at gun point is not funny," said one post by Alieusha. The armed robbed could add to worries about safety in Paris, hit by a series of attacks by Islamist militants last year.

Tourist numbers to what is traditionally the most visited city in the world, fell 6.4 per cent in the first half of 2016 as many Asians and Americans stayed away.

"We worry about the image of Paris. This will be all over the news channels, imagine the negative publicity," Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, head of the conservative opposition in Paris, told Europe 1 radio.—Reuters

Lindsay Lohan gets severely injured in boating accident

LOS ANGELES — Actress Lindsay Lohan got injured in a boating accident over the weekend. The 30-year-old actress had shared a picture of the gruesome injury on Instagram but later deleted it, reported TMZ.

"This is why I shouldn't try to help get the rope to anchor the boat. I lost half of my finger....," she wrote.

In the picture Lohan's hand was coated with blood. She severed the tip of her ring finger. She was rushed to the emergency room to undergo a surgery to have it reattached. The accident happened when she was hanging out with some friends in the ocean off Turkey. She reportedly fell into the water when trying to pull up the boat anchor. She sliced her finger when trying to untangle herself from the anchor and get back in the boat.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

Holder tops Red Bull Illume again with stunning BMX photo

CHICAGO — German photographer Lorenz Holder has been crowned Red Bull Illume Image Quest overall winner for the second edition running, thanks to an atmospheric BMX shot.

Holder's victory was unveiled at a ceremony in Chicago, USA that celebrates the world's greatest action and adventure sports photography alongside a host of other breathtaking shots in 11 categories.

The judges did not know the identity of each photographer making Holder's victory in the overall category, together with the Masterpiece by Yodobashi and Playground categories, even more astonishing following his 2013 triumph.

His classy shot of athlete Senad Grosic riding his BMX across a bridge in Germany received the most



Winner image of Red Bull Illume Image Quest 2016 photo by German photographer Lorenz Holder at Cape Town, South Africa. PHOTO: REUTERS

votes from the panel of 53 respected judges.

It also garnered the coveted Athletes' Choice Award to cap off a great night for the German. He received a €40,000 vouch-

er from Yodobashi, a Sony iLCE-A7RII camera with a full set of lenses, a Broncolor Sirius Kit and a G-Technology G-Drive ev RaW SSD. Red Bull Illume founder Ulrich Grill

was on hand to celebrate Holder's rare feat that coincided with the 10th anniversary of the prestigious photo contest.

Snowboarder Louie Vito and TV star Tina Dix-

on hosted the event at the Art Institute of Chicago with the likes of Grosic and freeskier Johnny Collinson also in attendance.

The winners were able to see the top 55 images

displayed in 2.2m light boxes to mark the opening of the Red Bull Illume Exhibit Tour 2016, which will continue on around the world now for the next two years.—Reuters

Bengali/Kashmiri works share best documentary award at SiGNS

KOCHI — The tenth edition of the SiGNS digital video festival, which will be remembered for recording the highest-ever participation, concluded here today.

Awards at festival's tenth edition reflected its unique character as space for alternative films, organisers said.

"Randu Kurippukal" (Two Notes, 2015), a Malayalam short film directed by Gireesh Kumar K, took home the SiGNS 2016 award for Best Short Fiction.

The award for Best

Documentary in competition was shared between Bengali entry "Tender is the Sight" (2014), helmed by Torsha Bannerjee, and "Vanishing Glaciers" (2015), a production in Kashmiri, by Raja Shabir Khan.

The winning selections — the themes of which are in keeping with the festival's unique subaltern character — were judged to be the best of strong fields in both competition categories by an eminent jury chaired by documentary filmmaker Rakesh Sharma with film

critic Premendra Mazumdar and cinematographer Fowzia Fathima.

The function also saw the John Abraham Award for Best Malayalam Feature Film 2015, with Rs 1 lakh in prize money, awarded to P S Manu's "Munroe Thuruth".

Special Mention awards for S Sunil's "Marubhagamand" Sanal Kumar Sasidharan's "Ozhividivasathe Kali" were also handed out.

"It is heartening to note that the short film and documentary scene in India is vibrant and thriving.

Especially impressive was the varied range of thematic concerns as well as narrative styles and cinematic treatments in the selected films," said Sharma, who delivered the jury report during the closing ceremony at Ernakulam Town Hall.

Recommending greater emphasis on films about contemporary social, economic and political complexities, he commended the inclusion of films on the LGBTQ community's concerns as also other films probing issues surrounding culture and gender.—PTI

Musical fountain attracts visitors in east China



People view a large musical fountain at Quancheng Square in Jinan, capital of east China's Shandong Province, on 2 October, 2016. The night scene of the musical fountain has attracted many visitors during the National Day holidays. PHOTO: XINHUA

Shanghai food authority fines fast food supplier over meat scandal

SHANGHAI — Shanghai Municipal Food and Drug Administration on Monday ordered a major fast food chain supplier and its parent company to pay fines for producing and selling sub-standard products.

According to the authority, Shanghai Husi Food Co. and OSI Group's China office were fined approximately 17 million yuan (2.5 million US dollars) and 7.3 million yuan respectively. The district market regulators have also added the two companies to a blacklist of those who have committed serious legal violations, meaning stricter regulations in the future. In a statement, the two companies accepted

the punishment and promised to pay the penalty on time. Husi is a subsidiary of US-based global food processor OSI Group and a former supplier to major fast food chains including McDonald's and Yum! Brands KFC and Pizza Hut. The case was first exposed after a local TV station reported in July 2014 that Shanghai Husi had supplied products tainted with reprocessed, expired meat to a string of fast food chains and restaurants across China.

A Shanghai court in February ordered Husi's Shanghai and Hebei plants to pay fines and sentenced 10 people to prison terms.—Xinhua



(4-10-2016 07:00am ~ 5-10-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Back To A Paradise (Ep-1)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre-Hmawbi
08:38	Am	Htan Taw Drums (Part-II) "Dobat"
08:54	Am	Let's Enjoy Fish Crispy
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Culture Show: Abdication of King Thibaw
09:42	Am	Art Students: Theatrical Art
09:48	Am	Today Myanmar "Zika Virus Disease"

10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Shwe Bo Township Bearing Five Names

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Monday 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	A Day Out With Sarah (EP-6)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	A Highland with Peace and Charm
08:45	Pm	Aye Aye Soe: Myanma Pioneer Female Bodybuilder
08:54	Pm	Now in Yangon

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

Spurs end City's unbeaten run, Arsenal snatch last-gasp win

LONDON — Something was always likely to give when the Premier League's two unbeaten sides met at White Hart Lane on Sunday where Tottenham Hotspur swept Manchester City aside 2-0 to inflict Pep Guardiola's first defeat as the visitors' manager.

The victory switched the focus from City's best opening to a top-flight campaign to what has become Spurs' finest start to a season since 1960-61 when they won the league and FA Cup double.

No wonder Tottenham's Argentine manager Mauricio Pochettino described their performance as "nearly perfect".

Spurs are now one point behind City, who have 18 from seven games, and one ahead of third-placed Arsenal, who lived up to their 'lucky' tag with a bizarre added-time winner from Laurent Koscielny's deflection at unfortunate Burnley.

Elsewhere, there were draws for Stoke City at Manchester United (1-1) and Southampton at champions Leicester City (0-0).

Manchester City, who had not dropped a point in their first six games, went behind when Aleksandar Kolarov diverted a Danny Rose cross past his own keeper Claudio Bravo after nine minutes.

Dele Alli added a second after good work from Son Heung-min and, with City failing to cope with Spurs' pressing and pace, the hosts also had an Erik



Manchester City's Jesus Navas in action with Tottenham's Kyle Walker during Premier League at White Hart Lane on 2 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Lamela penalty saved by Bravo.

No doubt regular taker Harry Kane would have done better from the spot, but in every other respect Spurs coped well without their injured England striker as South Korea's Son produced another dazzling performance.

By contrast, City struggled without their own missing talisman, Belgium midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, who had inspired their scintillating start to the season.

Guardiola was gracious in defeat, admitting Spurs had been the better side.

"They are sharper for the second ball, in England you have to control that. We had problems to control the game," he said.

The day's most extraordinary finish came at Turf Moor where Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was celebrating 20 years in charge of the Gunners and saw his team snatch a trademark last-gasp victory just when the hosts

thought they had earned a draw.

As the clock ticked down, Arsenal's Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain pounced on a knockdown by Theo Walcott and shot from close range against the elbow of their French defender Koscielny, who was looking the other way when he deflected the ball into the net.

Burnley boss Sean Dyche was unhappy with almost everything surrounding the goal. "You have to question the added

time, the corner and whether it should have come in, the handball and question whether we should have dealt with it," he said.

Manchester United also had a frustrating day as lowly Stoke registered their first point at Old Trafford since 1989 as Joe Allen popped up late to equalise for the visitors in a 1-1 draw after Anthony Martial had put United ahead in the 69th.

Wales midfielder Allen's second goal in consecutive games, after 82 minutes, moved Stoke off the bottom of the table, above Sunderland, and eased some of the pressure on boss Mark Hughes.

Once again United's Jose Mourinho chose to start with Wayne Rooney on the bench, bringing him on in a double substitution with Martial. Within two minutes United were ahead, though it was the Frenchman, not England's record scorer, who netted.

Despite the result, which left United in sixth place three points worse off than at the same stage last season under Louis van Gaal and five points adrift of neighbours City, Mourinho said it was his side's "best performance of the season".

"It was much better than against Leicester (when United won 4-1 last week). It could have been 3-0 or 4-0 at halftime, 6-0 at the end of the game, but the result was 1-1. That's football," said the Portuguese.—Reuters

Woods savours mentor role but hopes to play Ryder Cup again

CHASKA (Minnesota) — Tiger Woods, sidelined from playing for more than a year due to persistent back problems, threw himself into his role as assistant captain on the United States' Ryder Cup team and loved the experience.

"As a player that has been on these teams, to be on a different side of it, to be on the vice captaincy side of it has meant so much to me," Woods told reporters after the US beat Europe for the first time since 2008, clinching a 17-11 triumph at Hazeltine on Sunday.

"To be part of getting to know these 12 guys, and these vice captains and our captain on a deeper level has meant so much to me.

"And the relationships that we've forged here this week and actually before this week, these are bonds that will last a lifetime."

Woods, 40, has played in seven Ryder Cups but only in one winning team and has a record of 13 wins, 17 losses and

three halves.

Players including Patrick Reed, the top US points earner with 3.5 from five matches, and Brandt Snedeker, a spotless 3-0 in the competition, have praised Woods for his dedication and the help they received from him.

Although enthused by the idea of becoming a future Ryder Cup captain, Woods hopes to make yet another comeback to competitive golf in coming months and ultimately return as a playing member of the US team.—Reuters



Team USA vice-captain Tiger Woods talks with Patrick Reed of the United States during a practice round for the 41st Ryder Cup at Hazeltine National Golf Club. PHOTO: REUTERS

17-year-old Hataoka 1st amateur to win Japan Women's Open

NASUKARASUYAMA (Japan) — Seventeen-year-old Nasa Hataoka became the first amateur to win a major tournament on the Japan LPGA tour by capturing the Japan Women's Open Golf Championship on Sunday.

Starting the day four strokes behind leader in fifth, Hataoka carded five birdies and two bogeys in her final round at par-71 Karasuyamajo Country Club in Tochigi Prefecture and claimed the tournament at 4-under 280 and was cheered on by the crowd of 10,712.

Hataoka also surpassed Ai Miyazato's record as the youngest champion of a major. Miyazato won this event in 2005 at the age of 20.

"It's unbelievable. I'm so happy," said Hataoka, who won her second consecutive Junior World Championship in July in the United States. "I've learned a lot at the (amateur) Japan national team training, and on how to tackle courses, and I could show them today."



Seventeen-year-old Nasa Hataoka poses with the winner's trophy after her victory in the Japan Women's Open Golf Championship at Karasuyamajo Country Club in Tochigi Prefecture on 2 October 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Kotone Hori was a stroke behind in second and Shin Ji Yai of South Korea a stroke further back in third, while overnight leader Minori Nagano, 15, finished 10th and a third teenager, Yuna Nishizawa, 16, finished sixth.—Kyodo News