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ONE MORE DEBATE

Amyotha Hluttaw members give nod to State Counsellor Bill

THE proposed State Counsellor Bill that would create the post of the State Counsellor for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in the new cabinet was passed by the Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) by 137 to 68 votes.

The bill, reviewed by *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, would guarantee Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's right to contact government ministries, departments, organisations, association and individuals for counsel. She will be accountable in her duties to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

During the debate yesterday military representatives of the upper house derided the bill as being possibly unconstitutional.

Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aye, Defense Service personnel Amyotha Hluttaw representative, debated that though the State Counsellor Bill under discussion is said to be aimed at contributing to and supporting the interests of the State and all Myanmar citizens the bill seems to be intended to vest both legislative and executive power in a sole individual belonging to one political party. The bill is found to adversely effect Article 11 (a) of the constitution, which is an important basic principle, he added.

Article 11 (a) says, "The three pillars of the Sovereign power of the State— the legislative power, the executive power and the judiciary power shall be separated as much as possible and counter balance one another".

He also suggested the bill be revised to bring it more in line with the constitution before it is enacted into law.

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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi smiles with army Union ministers appointed by army the handover ceremony of presidency in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

New govt should invest more in transportation sector: ADB

THE new Myanmar government should invest more in the transportation sector in order to develop the country's economy, said a report released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The report was officially released at the Asian Development

Outlook 2016 ceremony, held at Yangon's Park Royal Hotel.

31-3-2016

"The GDP of the country has only risen by just over one per cent in the last few years. Investment should be made within the transportation sector to aug-

ment the GDP by three or four per cent," said Peter Brimble, the deputy country director of the ADB in Myanmar.

The report said Myanmar needs to invest US\$60 million into its transportation sector

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The circular train is seen at a station in outskirts of Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Nay Pyi Taw council gets new chairman

President U Htin Kyaw yesterday appointed Dr Myo Aung as Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council in line with the State Constitution, the Union Government Law and the Nay Pyi Taw Council Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker receives German Ambassador



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than welcomes Ambassador of Germany to Myanmar Mr Christian-Ludwing Weber-Lortsch. PHOTO: MNA

MAHN Win Khaing Than, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, received Ambassador of Germany to Myanmar Mr Christian-Ludwing Weber-Lortsch at the guest hall of the parliament yesterday. Also present at the call were U Aye Tha Aung, Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—*MNA*

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives German Ambassador



U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, holds talks with Mr Christian-Ludwing Weber-Lortsch, Ambassador of Germany to Myanmar. PHOTO: MNA

U WIN MYINT, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, received Ambassador of Germany to Myanmar Mr Christian-Ludwing Weber-Lortsch at the guest hall of the parliament yesterday. Also present at the call were U Ti Khun Myat, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, and officials of the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—*MNA*

Yangon Parliament approves two ethnic affairs ministers, seventh parliamentary committee

Ko Moe

THE Yangon Region Hluttaw has appointed two ethnic affairs ministers and approved the formation of the judicial affairs, rule of law, public complaints and petition scrutinising committee yesterday.

Nann Thinzar Myo was appointed as the Kayin Ethnic Affairs Minister while U Zaw Aye Maung as Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Minister at the regional

parliamentary session.

Thanks to the appointment of Ethnic Affairs Ministers at the Union and Region/State levels, the country's move to national unity could be realised, said Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Minister U Zaw Aye Maung.

Next, the formation of judicial affairs, the rule of law, public complaints and petition scrutinising committee that has become the seventh parliamentary committee of Yangon Re-

gion Hluttaw carried out its first meeting.

The seventh parliamentary committee is made up of nine members and led by U Myint Lwin of North Okkalapa Township Constituency 2.

I think it is needed to form parliamentary committees, said Col Tin Aung Tun, Yangon Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs, adding that the performance of the committees will decide their effectiveness.

Leaking natural landslide dam likely to collapse in Chin State

WATER in a natural landslide dam with a reported lack of durability in Tongzon Township, Chin State is likely to be released ahead of upcoming rainy season, said an official based on a field trip of GIS team recently.

The dam, at the top of Twili creek, is located 32 miles upstream from Yezagyo Dam in the township of Chin State.

The natural landslide dam with a water storage capacity of 12,000 acre-feet is said to be likely to collapse in the rainy season as water has been seen seeping out from the bottom of the dam, said U Maung Maung Than, a retired director from the Forest Department.

"If the dam broke, water could reach Kalay plain where

flooding is frequent over the course of the rainy season."

We are waiting for an order to release water from the dam, he added.

According to the director, the GIS team is currently surveying the water storage capacity of the dam, its durability and the socio-economic status of a nearby Chin village.—*Po Thant*

Ships anchored in the Ayeyawady River. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING



Water levels alert along Ayeyawady River

THE water levels of the Ayeyawady River at Myitkyina have risen about 6 ½ feet within 18 hours on 30 March, 2016. According to the 12.30 hr observation on 1st April, it has fallen about 4 ½ feet, according to the announcement of the Meteorology and Hydrology Department yesterday.

The water levels rose up about 4 ½ feet at Bhamo within two days and about 1 ½ feet at Katha within one day, according to the announcement.

The water levels in the Upper Ayeyawady may rise above their present water levels about 3 ½ feet at Katha during the next one to two days, and about

2 ½ to 3 ½ feet at Mandalay, Sagaing, Myinmu, Pakokku and NyaungOo during the next two to five days.

It is advised that vessels running along the river and those who have plantations on sandbank during low flow period take precautions due to the sharp rise in the water level.—*GNLM*

Construction Ministry halts its toll fees collection

MINISTRY of Construction announced yesterday that it would not collect fees for using roads and bridges at its toll gates nationwide as from 1st April 2016.

There are 161 toll gates across the country, according to the statistics of the ministry.

Myanmar's toll fees are the cheapest, compared with other

ASEAN countries.

Bridge crossing fees are collected based on the length of the bridges, not on withstand load and bridge types.—*Pho Thant*

Daw Suu has a soft spot for Tatmadaw

Interview with U Win Htein, Central Executive Committee member of the National League for Democracy.

News Team with MNA

'Time for Change' has made history when Myanmar people aspire to have changes and progress in the country's democratisation.

Myanmar's second hluttaws and governments were formed in accordance with the policies of the National League for Democracy led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

As all Myanmar people know, the handover ceremony of presidential duties was held on 30 March.

On 1 April, our news team had an opportunity to interview U Win Htein, CEC member of the NLD who took part in the presidential transition process, on the future of transformation in the country as well as his involvement in the process to ensure smooth transition of state duties.

Q: Please recount your involvement in the process of transferring duties from the outgoing government to the incoming government.

A: I was tasked to head the NLD transition committee to deal with the former government's committee for transfer of Head of State duties to ensure the handover of state duties following the party's election victory.

The government committee was led by Union Minister U Hla Tun with members Union Minister U Ye Htut, Director-General U Hla Tun, Deputy Director-General U Maung Maung Ohn and Deputy Director-General U Zaw Htay while I led the NLD committee formed with members Dr Myo Aung and Dr Aung Thu. U Zon Hlyal Htan and U Kyaw Thi-



Exclusive interview with U Win Htein, CEC member of the NLD. PHOTO: MNA

ha, Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, and Pyithu Hluttaw representative Daw Khin San Hlaing were set to support our committee.

Q: How did coordination ensure a smooth transition?

A: Smooth transition was important for the whole process. It was OK to transfer power from Senior General Than Shwe to President U Thein Sein during the first transition as U Thein Sein used to be a general and most of his cabinet members were from Tatmadaw. The transition was not significant. But this transition from U Thein Sein administration to a civilian government resulting from the 2015 general elections

made history.

I am very proud of being involved in the historic event and I felt I was rewarded to be tasked to lead this process.

We had five meetings at the President's Office during the transition period, focusing on ensuring smooth transition. We have not made any special demands. We just made it known that some of 36 ministries would be merged. From the government's committee side, they informed us of preparations they had done for matters including ministry buildings, budget and future projects.

We believed they have prepared for the handover. No specific demands were made at the

meetings. Before 30 March, arrangements were made for a meeting between the incoming and outgoing ministers. We visited places designated for our ministers. I have nothing special to say about this.

Q: Please share information about the role of the former government in the transfer of state duties.

A: Successful transition was due to cooperation of the other side as Myanmar failed to see such kind of transition for about 50 years. I would like to acknowledge and value collaborative efforts of Union Ministers U Hal Tun and U Ye Htut. I laud them for their efforts. The main

point is that U Thein Sein administration smoothly transferred duties to U Htin Kyaw administration. This was a great lesson we have learned.

Q: Do you have any predictions of your own to meet possible challenges that lie ahead for the NLD government?

A: Members appointed for the Cabinet, the Constitutional Tribunal and the Union Election Commission met qualifications needed for their posts. Some are not experienced but all have intentions to do good and work toward a developed country. Anti-corruption is a core principle prioritised by our leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

While speaking to the chosen Union Ministers, she called for a strenuous effort to be made for the country during the first 100 days of the new government. Then a set of priority actions will be taken within the next six or 12 months. Plans have been made for every department.

We are set to continue to work on administrative reform in which some success was achieved in the time of U Thein Sein's administration and works for mitigating corruption to reach a stage of success.

On national reconciliation involving the Tatmadaw and ethnic groups as well, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has a soft spot for Tatmadaw. She will have to work together with Tatmadaw. Leaders of Tatmadaw have vowed to cooperate with her.

Ensuring a better livelihood for all people is among the challenges that lie ahead for the NLD government.

Amyotha Hluttaw members give nod to Counsellor of state Bill

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"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has already gained rights to advise the President, the two Vice-presidents and other Union ministers as she is also the Union minister at the President's Office. So, contrary to the basic principle of power sharing described in the constitution, involvement in other legislative matters is contrary to the constitution," said Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aye, Defense Service personnel Amyotha Hluttaw representative, told reporters.

In his discussion, Col Hla Win Aung, another military representative of the upper house (Amyotha), said that a law, if it must be enacted, should be clearly aimed at upholding the public interest over personal interest, pointing out that the bill is likely to be drafted for an individual as its section 4 of Chapter Three mentions the name of the individual.

Likewise, Col Myin Swe put forward his thoughts that provisions of the bill do not conform to the Constitution as the bill goes far beyond its provisions.

Meanwhile, some elected MPs suggested seeking a bipartisan resolution for the bill at the Constitutional Tribunal.

However, Dr Myat Nyana Soe, secretary of Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, called for parliamentary approval of the bill as 13 members agreed that the bill was drafted and submitted to the Parliament for the sake of the people.

He also clarified his understanding the bill, saying that the position of counsellor of state would grant duties and rights only in relation to giving advice and gave no provision for the making of serious decisions or giving direct instructions.

The bill allows the counsellor

of state the right to give advice to governmental institutions, organisations and individuals as long as that advice is not contrary to the constitution and makes the position accountable to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, he added.

The bill includes five chapters and eight articles. The term of office for the Counsellor of state is the same as that of the president, who will be in office throughout the duration of the term of current second parliament, according to the bill.

The bill is aimed at helping create a multi-party democracy in Myanmar and to build a peaceful, modern and developed nation with a market-oriented economic system and to establish a democratic, free federal Union.

MPs of Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) will debate the bill on Monday at the parliament.—GNLM

New govt should invest more in transportation sector: ADB

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between now and 2030 in order to be in a position whereby it can follow the standards of transportation systems in foreign countries.

Years of weak levels of investment into Myanmar's transportation sector has left it unable to easily connect with markets and freight service enterprises, the report said.

"When comparing Myanmar's roads, bridges and transportation routes with neighbouring countries, [Myanmar] is still lagging behind. The country's basic infrastructure needs a lot of

work," said Winfried F Wicklein, ADB's country director for Myanmar.

Foreign investment is making its way into various sectors within the country, but such investment within the transportation sector are still lagging, delaying rural economic development and job opportunities, according to the report.

The ADB provides financial assistance for technology with the sectors of human resource development, economic policy, capacity building and basic economic infrastructure.—Myitmakha News Agency

IWT's ferry services rescheduled for Thingyan Water Festival



IWT's ship lines rescheduled for Thingyan. PHOTO: K KHAING

SOME ship lines run by Inland Water Transport will not operate during the upcoming Maha Thingyan Festival according to the Delta Branch of the IWT.

The delta branch has said that Yangon-Kyonmange, Yangon-Labutta and Yangon-Mawgyun lines will not be running during the Water Festival from 12 to 17 April as staff will be on holiday.

According to ships schedules the Yangon-Kyonmange line will depart from Yangon to Kyonmange on 9 April and it will resume its service at Kyonmange on 18 April.

Likewise, ships leaving Yangon for Labutta on 8 and 11 April will resume their services at Labutta on 18 and 19 April and the Yangon-Mawgyun ships departing from Yangon on 12 April and arriving at Mawgyun will also re-

sume its service at Mawgyun on 17 April.

Another line running on Yangon-Labutta waterway route will operate on 9 April, departing from Yangon and will resume its service at Kyarkan on 18 April.

Ferry ships running from Yangon's Pansodan to Dala is set to operate 26 times a day, re-scheduling its regular service of 46 times a day during the period from 12 to 17 April.

The Yangon-Khanaungto ships with a regular service of eight times a day will run four times a day only during the festival period.

Ferries running on the Wadan-Dala route will also operate four times a day on 12 and 17 April, taking a holiday break over the festival period between 13 to 16 April.

—K Khaing

Mandalay Mayor's Water Pavilion renamed to be the Mandalay City Maha Thingyan Water Pavilion

THE Mandalay Mayor's Thingyan Water Pavilion was renamed the Mandalay City Maha Thingyan Water Pavilion, according to sources in Mandalay. Myanmar's Thingyan Festival starts on 12 April every year.

The name of the water pavilion should be Mandalay City Maha Thingyan Water Pavilion as it is the central water pavilion of Mandalay City according to Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung who spoke

on the matter at a meeting on the holding of the water festival in the region.

The chief minister called for a review of the Mandalay City Development Committee's proposed festival spending at the meeting.

He said that alms will be offered to members of Sangha on the morning of festive days across the city.

The meeting decided to rename the Mandalay Mayor's

Water Pavilion as the Mandalay City Maha Thingyan Water Pavilion and discussed matters related to construction of the pavilion and preparation for alms offering ceremony, said U Thet Naing Tun, joint secretary of the MCDC.

During the water festival days, water throwing around the moat will be allowed for this year, but 2-inch water pumps are set to be used at pavilions.—

Aung Thant Khaing

Tourists go on sightseeing tour of Dawei and Myawady

A GROUP of 24 tourists from Thailand entered Dawei in a motorcade of 10 cars through the Hteekhee border crossing point on 17 March and visited places of interest including the Dawei deep sea port project. Under the arrangement of Khaing Linn Ton Travels & Tour Co Ltd, the Thai tourists went sightseeing in the town and left again for home on 20 March.

Similarly, the Myanmar Sense Family Travel & Tour Co Ltd took six German tourists on

tours of towns like Myawady, Kyaikhto, Nay Pyi Taw, Inle, Bagan and Kalay from 20 to 28 March. The German tourists departed Tamu and entered India. The group entered Myawady in a car and on four motorcycles.

The country is seeing an annual growth in the number of tourists coming to enjoy its scenic spots with officials saying that tourist police provide necessary assistance and security to visitors to the country.—Myanmar News Agency

Crime NEWS

Overheated refrigerator causes fire

A FIRE broke out due to an overheated refrigerator in Kandaw-Minglar ward, Thakkala town, Kawa township, Bago region on Wednesday.

The accident occurred in the early morning hours at the home of one Daw Yin Su, 60, due to the electric short-circuiting of an overheated refrigerator.

The fire was put out by firemen with the aid of neighbors. The police have filed charges against Daw Yin Su.—Myanmar Police Force

Strange truck fire attributed to energy build-up

THE act of cables rubbing against the cloth cover of a truck bed caused an outbreak of fire in ward 4, Minbu town, Magwe region on Wednesday.

According to an investigation the truck upholstery rubbed against cords to the point of combustion, engulfing the vehicle bed. The truck was being driven by one Ko Aung alias Pho Aung, 37.

The blaze was put out by firemen using five fire engines. The fire destroyed three motorbikes.

Police have taken action against Ko Aung.—Tin Tun Oo (Minbu)



Fire fighters pulling out the blaze. PHOTO: TIN TUN OO (MINBU)

Police arrest man for two counts of murder

A MAN has been charged with two counts of murders after allegedly killing Ye Lin Htet, 28, and Hein Zaw, 30, in Panpinzu village, Maubin township, Ayeyawady region on 25 March, according to the police.

According to an investigation, U Khine Maung Aye found two dead bodies with several external injuries in Kyaw Zaw alias Kyaw Zin Lat's bed on 26 March and immediately informed the local police. Police caught up with the suspected killer six hours later when they stopped Kyaw Zaw alias Kyaw Zin Lat, 33, in Kwine

Shar village.

When interrogated Kyaw Zaw alias Kyaw Zin Lat, 33, admitted that he had killed both victims after they allegedly abused him. Kyaw Zaw claims that Ye Lin Htet, 28, and Hein Zaw, 30, became drunk and belligerent before coming to see him. He asked them to return to their own home, causing a fight in which he was assaulted. The suspect then stated to police that in response he killed both victims with a knife he kept under the bed. The police have taken action against Kyaw Zaw.—Patheingyi

Fire destroys car on Asia highway

AN outbreak of fire apparently caused by electric short circuiting destroyed a car on Asia highway on Wednesday.

The accident occurred in the evening due to the electric short-circuiting of the car be-

tween 138/139 kilometer in Kawkaik.

The fire took four engines with full teams of firemen to put out. Police are searching for the car owner who fled the scene.—Soe Htet Aung (Kawkaik)

LOCAL Business



Men catch fish at the fish farm in Rakhine State. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

Malaysia's Texchem to explore Myanmar market further through new JV

TEXCHEM Resources Bhd (TRB), which already has a seafood processing factory in Myanmar, plans to explore further the market through a joint venture (JV) with Yangon-based frozen and dried seafood Mascot Industries Co Ltd and Brunei-based investment firm E-Sprint Co Ltd, according to Malaysia's Star Online.

The news reported that the

JV company Texchem Marine Labutta Ltd (TMLL), which will be 65% owned by TRB's unit Texchem Food Sdn Bhd, would carry out the business of processing and marketing of marine products such as soft shell crab, prawns and hamaguri (clams).

"The JV would enable the TRB group to tap into the technical know-how of E-Sprint and Mascot to further explore the

natural resources in Myanmar for the business activities of TMLL," it said.

TRB said upon signing up of the JV, the paid-up capital of TMLL would be increased to 2 billion kyats (RM6.44mil), of which E-Sprint would have 30% interest and Mascot 5%.

Shares in Texchem fell 2 sen or 1.16% to close at RM1.70 on Friday.—GNLM

Incomplete EIA reports made public: MCRB

ENVIRONMENTAL Impact Assessment (EIA) reports have only been issued for some of the tender winning off-shore and inland oil and natural gas exploration plots, according to a statement released on 30 March by the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB).

A study conducted by the MCRB reveals that an incomplete number EIAs and Initial Environmental Examinations (IEEs) at the aforementioned oil and natural gas plots have been made public.

"We've conducted this study out of a desire for public awareness over EIA initiatives. I believe it's ever so important for all stakeholders to be able to access these assessments via the internet," said Vicky Bowman,

director of MCRB.

The report was conducted primarily on those winners of oil and natural gas plot tenders after 2013.

The MCRB report states EIAs and IEEs from 11 of a total of 15 tender winning off-shore plots, together with 4 of 15 inland plots, have been publicly released online.

"If local government departments, parliaments, civil society organisations, citizens and stakeholders, together with the media, are left in the dark about the pacts and agreements of EIAs and IEEs due to a shortfall in their release, it will be difficult to know whether or not companies are complicit in activities detrimental to the environmental and society," Bowman said.

man said.

"This report informs those EIAs that can be read online. Maybe stakeholders will fulfil their responsibilities by reading the reports. I hope it will encourage the reports to be read," continued the MCRB director.

However, the report also reveals that more reports are made available in the oil and gas sector than in the mining and construction sectors in Myanmar.

The MCRB was established in Yangon in 2013 through a co-operation between the UK-based Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) and the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR). Its activities and initiatives are financially assisted by foreign donors.—Myitmakha News Agency

ARDC to repay Union government K844 million for misused funds

THE Ayeyawady Region Development Committee (ARDC) must repay the Union govt a total of K844.1 million (US\$694,079) in cash advances handed out for paving of roads in the regional capital of Patheingyi, according to the Patheingyi Township Development Committee (PTDC).

The repayment was demanded after an inquiry committee, comprising regional department officials, carried out inspections of the director of the ARDC, U Aung Min Naing, and roughly 50 of his staff, as to whether the 2015-16 fiscal budget allocated to the PTDC was used correctly or not.

"We have to pay back some of the state budget as we didn't realise we had to act in accordance with financial regulations and make submissions to Hluttaw every time we wanted to use the budget. Of course our town is going to suffer as a result of having to pay back to the state for the things our town received," said U

Tin Ohn, chair of the PTDC.

Over 300 concrete roads were paved within Patheingyi Township using 2016-17 fiscal year budget advances, but the ignorance of the PTDC over having to first request permission from Hluttaw in order to use the budget has resulted in those funds having to be repaid back to the Union government, according to the PTDC.

According to some PTDC engineers, the PTDC Engineer Group will make the repayment to the State on behalf of the ARDC.

"The money that we will use for the coming budget has to be repaid into this budget," explained U Aung Min Naing.

The PTDC was permitted to use the 2015-16 fiscal year budget of K1.2 billion (\$986,842). Thirty per cent of this budget was allocated for staff salaries as well as pensions for retired staff, according to the PTDC.—Myitmakha News Agency

Thai group to construct five hospitals in Myanmar

A TOTAL of five international standard private hospitals will be built within Myanmar from this year of 2016 until 2023 in a mutually beneficial joint operation by the Nay Myanmar and Bangkok Chain hospital groups.

Of the hospitals to be constructed within the country, two will be built in Yangon, while the remaining three hospitals have been earmarked for Mandalay, Shan and Mon States.

"Our Nay Myanmar company also provides medical services in Bangkok. A total of five hospitals will be opened in Myanmar by working together with the Bangkok Chain hospital group. Four of the hospitals will be female healthcare and maternity related with the other to be a general hospital," said U Nay Kyar Hlaing, chair of Nay Myanmar.

The Nay Myanmar company has opened a trading company and two construction companies within Myanmar, a car import and export company in the United States, together with trading and medical service companies in neighbouring Thailand.

"The hospitals will be

staffed with Myanmar and Thai physicians. Services will only be offered in Myanmar currency. [Our hospitals] will provide female health and maternity care, together with international standard cosmetic surgery," explained Dr Nilar Thein, director of the aforementioned hospital projects.

In a separate side-project, it is known the aforementioned groups of companies will also open a department for female examination and foreign patients within Myanmar's commercial capital of Yangon at the end of April this year.

According to the schedule of hospital construction, the end of 2016 will see the opening of a maternity hospital in Yangon, with a Women's Centre opening in Mandalay between 2017-19. A female healthcare hospital will be opened within Shan State during 2019-21 while a two hundred bed capacity general hospital is to open in Yangon between 2019-22. The last phase of the project is the opening of another maternity hospital, this time in Mon State, between 2021-23.—Myitmakha News Agency

Indian police file homicide case after flyover collapse kills 23

KOLKATA — Indian police on Friday opened a case of culpable homicide against the company building a flyover that collapsed in the eastern city of Kolkata, killing at least 23 people and injuring dozens more.

Rescuers worked all night with cranes and jackhammers to clear concrete slabs and steel girders from the 100-metre (110-yard) length of the flyover that broke off suddenly and crashed down on pedestrians and vehicles on the road below.

Ninety were rescued, many with serious trauma injuries, but chances of finding survivors in the wreckage had dwindled nearly a full day after Thursday's disaster in a teeming commercial district near the city's Girish Park.

"It is being ensured that there are no more dead bodies under the debris," S.S. Guleria, a deputy inspector general of the National Disaster Response Force, told Reuters Television.

Television channels broadcast images of a street scene with two autorickshaws and a crowd of people suddenly obliterated by a mass of falling concrete that narrowly missed cars crawling in a traffic jam.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, whose centre-left party is seeking re-election next month in the state of West Bengal, said

those responsible would not be spared and blamed the previous state government that had awarded the flyover contract in 2007.

Yet she herself faces questions about a construction project that has been plagued by delays and safety fears under her rule.

A newspaper reported last November that Banerjee wanted the flyover — already five years overdue — to be completed by February. Project engineers expressed concerns over whether this would be possible, the Telegraph newspaper said at the time.

The disaster could play a role in the election in West Bengal, whose capital is Kolkata. The poll is one of five being held this month that will give an interim verdict on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nearly two years in power.

Indian company IVRCL was building the 2-km (1.2-mile) Vivekananda Road flyover, according to its web site. Its shares fell another 6 per cent on Friday as police announced they had opened a case of culpable homicide.

The local offices of IVRCL were sealed and a police team was on its way to interview bosses at the company's headquarters in the southern city of Hyderabad, according to reports.

A senior IVRCL manager had drawn national condemnation



A man is seen trapped amid the debris of an under-construction flyover after it collapsed in Kolkata, on 31 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

for calling the disaster an act of God.

"We did not use any inferior quality material and we will cooperate with the investigators," the company's director of operations, A.G.K. Murthy told reporters on Thursday. "We are in a state of shock." Years of delays may have caused corrosion to metal elements of the flyover, undermining its stability, according to rescuers who examined the wreckage. Lo-

cals said that concrete was poured on the stretch the night before its collapse.

Rescue operations were slow initially, with local residents forming crowds several deep as they tried to help trapped people.

But three cranes working overnight managed to clear some of the wreckage and free access to vehicles with people believed to be still trapped inside.

Harrowing news images

showed the leg and arm of one dead man protruding from under a massive steel girder. The broken leg of an unconscious man flapped uselessly as rescuers gripped his other three limbs to carry him away.

Getting survivors to hospital was complicated by a lack of access for ambulances to the flyover, hemmed in by buildings on either side. Safety standards were lax, witnesses said.—Reuters

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer -

Nakagawa Kiyoshi
ceo@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Reporter - Ye Myint
chiefreporter@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Consultant Editors

Jacob Goldberg

counselanteditor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Alec Wilmot

counselanteditor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Editors

Ye Htut Tin

editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Kyaw Thura,

editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

International news

Tun Tun Naing

intnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Reporters

Khaing Thanda Lwin

reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Tun Aung Kyaw

reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Translators

Hay Mar Tin Win

translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Proof reader

Nwe Nwe Tun

Computer Team

Tun Zaw, Thein Ngwe,

Zaw Zaw Aung,

Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,

Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

Ads and subscription enquiries:

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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US, Japan, South Korea warn North Korea over 'provocations'

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama joined with South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday, vowing to ramp up pressure on North Korea in response to its recent nuclear and missile tests.

Meeting on the sidelines of a global nuclear security summit in Washington, the three leaders re-committed their countries to each others' defence and warned they could take further steps to counter threats from Pyongyang.

Obama held separate talks with President Xi Jinping of China, the closest North Korea has to an ally, and said they both wanted to see "full implementation" of the latest United Nations sanctions against Pyongyang. But Xi offered no sign that Beijing was prepared to go beyond its consent to the Security Council measures imposed in early March.

"We are united in our efforts to deter and defend against North Korean provocations," Obama told reporters after the US-Japan-South Korea meeting. "We have to work together to meet this challenge."

Relations between Park and Abe have been frosty in the past, but the two have been brought together in recent months by shared concerns about North Korea, which conducted a fourth nuclear bomb test on 6 January and

launched a long-range rocket into space in February. The United States has sought to encourage improved ties between Seoul and Japan, its two biggest allies in Asia, given worries not only about North Korea but also an increasingly assertive China.

The expanded UN sanctions aimed at starving North Korea of funds for its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes were approved in a unanimous Security Council vote on a resolution drafted by the United States and China. But even though Beijing has signed on, doubts persist in the West on how far it will go in tightening the screws on impoverished North Korea, given China's concerns about fuelling instability on its borders.

Appearing later with Obama, Xi said that while Washington and Beijing disagreed in some areas, they have had "effective communication and coordination" on the North Korean issue.

However, China, considered the most capable of influencing North Korea's reclusive leadership, has said repeatedly that sanctions are not the solution and only a resumption of international talks can resolve the dispute with Pyongyang. Six-party talks among the two Koreas, China, the United States, Japan and Russia aimed at curbing the North's nuclear ambitions collapsed after the

last round in 2008. Xi called for dialogue to denuclearise the Korean peninsula, but also said all parties should avoid doing anything to further raise tensions, China's foreign ministry said.

He alluded to a missile defence system the US wants to base in South Korea that China strongly opposes, saying no party should do anything to affect the security interests of other countries or that upsets the regional strategic balance. Thursday's meetings took place as leaders from more than 50 countries gathered in Washington for a two-day summit hosted by Obama and focussed on securing vulnerable atomic materials to prevent nuclear terrorism. North Korea's nuclear defiance was also high on the agenda.

Notably absent is Russian President Vladimir Putin, adding to doubts that a meeting without one of the world's top nuclear powers can yield major results.

Despite that, a joint US-China statement showed the two countries, while rivals on trade and at odds over the South China Sea, agreeing to work together to investigate and curb nuclear smuggling and to hold annual two-way talks on the issue.

Obama said he, Park and Abe had directed their teams to come up with additional steps they can take collectively against North

Korea. Park said the leaders had discussed ways to force North Korea to "alter its misguided calculus" on its weapons programmes, and Abe expressed a commitment to strengthening three-way security cooperation.

The meeting came just days after Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump caused an uproar by suggesting that Japan and South Korea should be allowed to build their own nuclear arsenals, putting him at odds with decades of US policy.

Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser, said Trump's comments did not come up in the three leaders' discussions. But he said: "It would be catastrophic were the United States to shift its position and indicate that we support somehow the proliferation of nuclear weapons to additional countries."

Obama has less than 10 months left in office to follow through on one of his signature foreign policy initiatives — locking down as much of the world's dangerous nuclear materials as possible — and this week's meeting is his fourth and final Nuclear Security Summit. While progress has been made, some arms-control advocates say the diplomatic process seems to have lost momentum and could slow even further once Obama leaves office in January.—Reuters

Cow bells in the DMZ — Swiss, Swedish generals uphold Korean truce their way

PANMUNJOM (South Korea) — In a tiny mess hall set amid pine trees and rose bushes on the heavily fortified Korean border, a lunch of steak and asparagus is served. Outside, birdsong competes with the drone of North Korean loudspeakers blaring propaganda.

“This is the best restaurant in the DMZ,” says Major General Mats Engman, who heads the Swedish delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC), set up after the 1950-53 Korean War to uphold a fragile armistice in place of a peace treaty.

Originally a four-nation commission including representatives on the North Korean side from Poland and the former Czechoslovakia, only the Swedes and Swiss remain, based in 1950s-era huts just metres from North Korea.

The camp is staffed by five Swedish and five Swiss officers, a fraction of the 200 based there in the mid-1950s.

The NNSC holds weekly meetings in a light blue hut straddling the border inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the world’s most heavily defended frontier, sharing with the North Koreans the minutes of its proceedings in a wooden mail box.

“Since May 1995, they’ve never emptied that pigeon hole,” said Swiss Major General Urs Gerber.

“Their argument is they can’t take mail from an organisation which doesn’t exist,” said Gerber, who this week presided over the group’s 3,500th meeting.

The NNSC empties the mail box every few months to stop it overflowing. North Korea, which has long sought a peace treaty with the United States, has said the armistice is “long defunct” and, with it, the NNSC has been “forgotten in history”.

Isolated North Korea and



Swiss Army Major General Urs Gerber (R) and Swedish Major General Mats Engman check a lamp inside a bunker at the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commissions (NNSC) headquarters near the truce village of Panmunjom, South Korea, on 30 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

the rich, democratic South are still technically at war after the 1950-53 conflict ended in the armistice, not a treaty. China and North Korea fought side-by-side against a US-backed South Korea, which joined forces under the UN flag.

US troops now in South Korea are under the command of a US general who also heads the United Nations Command — the only active UN fighting force in the world.

“North Korea stopped recognising the NNSC in 1995 when it expelled the Polish delegation after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Two years earlier it had kicked out its Czechoslovakian delegation after the country split into Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

“They call us a ghost organisation,” said Gerber.

The only independent military body on the Korean peninsula, the NNSC has reinvented its post-Cold War self as an impartial observer to the annual US-South Korea military exercises that the North complains are preparation for attack and the US-South Korean side says are defensive.

Through regular inspections, Swiss and Swedish officers make sure those exercises don’t infringe the armistice. The NNSC also operates an education programme, travelling to South Korean frontline units to lecture on the armistice that ended hostilities in 1953. And it is that document, not the Swedish, Swiss or US capitals, from which the NNSC takes its orders.

“Only a peace treaty or war would end our operation here,”

said Gerber.

A bright red Swiss Club houses a pool table and is decorated with cow bells, while its Swedish counterpart has a fireplace and Viking helmet.

In the early 1970s, before enemy soldiers were locked in a face-to-face stand-off at Panmunjom, North Korean generals would occasionally visit for a quiet drink at the Swiss Club bar.

“It’s like a resort here,” said Engman, a Swedish air force general. “It’s nice and quiet. The air is fresh”.

Wary of the complacency the holiday camp atmosphere can breed, NNSC staff remain on high alert to the dangers beyond the camp’s perimeter fence. No independent body exists to make sure Pyongyang upholds its side of the armistice.—*Reuters*

North Korea fires short-range missile into Sea of Japan

SEOUL — North Korea on Friday fired a short-range surface-to-air missile into the Sea of Japan, the latest in a series of provocations, hours after the leaders of Japan, South Korea and the United States confirmed their united front against Pyongyang’s defiant pursuit of nuclear arms.

The missile was launched around 12:45pm from an area near the eastern city of Sondok, South Hamgyong Province, and was believed to have flown some 100 kilometres before hitting the sea, according to South Korea’s military.

It was initially thought that North Korea fired a ballistic missile, but the trajectory analysed by the military showed that it was an anti-aircraft missile.

Pyongyang has, in recent weeks and months, asserted its right to build and use, should it feel the need, missiles and nuclear weapons, with regular threats of a “preemptive attack” against South Korea and the United States.

North Korea has ratcheted up its threats against the two countries, especially since the UN Security Council endorsed more severe sanctions last month in response to Pyongyang’s fourth nuclear test in January and launch of a satellite-carrying rocket, widely seen by the international community as a pretext for a banned test of ballistic missile technology, in February.

North Korea has also escalated its war rhetoric against South Korea and the United States over their ongoing largest-ever military exercises, seen by Pyongyang as a rehearsal for invasion.

At a time of high tensions involving North Korea, the trilateral summit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, South Korean President Park Geun-hye and US President Barack Obama took place in Washington just before the biennial Nuclear Security Summit started on Thursday.

“We are united in our efforts to deter and defend against North Korean provocations,” Obama told reporters after the three-way meeting.

For about a month, North Korea has fired a projectile or a ballistic missile every week.

A ballistic missile launched by North Korea, believed to be a medium-range Rodong model, on 18 March, flew some 800 km before landing in the Sea of Japan.

The latest launch of the short-range missile comes two days after a projectile was launched from North Korea’s east coast, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff saying they believed it was a test of a new multiple rocket launcher system.—*Kyodo News*



An official examines an elevator at Abeno Harukas, Japan’s tallest building, in Osaka, which was suspended after an earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.1 jolted western Japan on 1 April 2016. No one was trapped in the elevator by the quake. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

M6.1 quake hits western Japan, no tsunami warning issued

TOKYO — An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.1 jolted Wakayama Prefecture, western Japan, late Friday morning, the weather agency said.

No tsunami warning was issued following the 11:39am quake, which originated at a depth of around 10 kilometres off the coast of neighboring Mie Prefecture, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

As of noon Friday, there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries.

The quake temporarily

suspended bullet train services on the Tokaido Shinkansen Line between Shizuoka and Gifu-Hashima stations, affecting some 3,600 passengers, according to Central Japan Railway Co.

Local trains in Wakayama, Mie and Aichi prefectures were also briefly halted, operators said.

The temblor registered 4 on the Japanese seismic scale of 7 in the town of Kozagawa, southern part of Wakayama, according to the agency.

—*Kyodo News*

OPINION

The cry from the depths

Kyaw Thura

IT would be hard for the youth of today to believe that our country had had its glorious past in terms of education, economy and sports. It is due to more than half a century of mismanagement in governance and disunity among political forces that its glory days faded into a thing of the past.

Over five decades of political instability and ethnic strife have run our economic potential into the ground, forcing the people at grass-roots level to live on incomes below the poverty line. Having lived through hard times, they grew accustomed to their abject fate by accepting poverty as inevitable. Their fear might have originated in the assumption that any bad words against the people in power would see them end up in jail.

Now that the civilian government is in office, it is time for us to awaken ourselves to the fact that poverty is not a private but national problem. Only when the people at the bottom of the pile are able to escape poverty will our country be in a better position to keep abreast of its neighbouring countries in terms of education, technology, economy and sports.

It is encouraging to hear that the new government has instructed its ministries to draw a

100-day plan each for development measures to be carried out in order of priority. Undoubtedly, it will take time to recover from economic ills simply because there is no such thing as instant success. What is important for the government is to join hands with civil society in the fight against poverty and lend an ear to the cry from the depths.

Write for us

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

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

Growing Together: Reducing Rural Poverty in Myanmar

Nikolas Myint, Andrea Woodhouse, Reena Badiani-Magnusson and Sergiy Zorya

THE changes underway in Myanmar can be felt almost everywhere: in Nay Pyi Taw, portraits of Bogyoke Aung San grace the walls of parliament; in Yangon, traffic is choking roads while construction cranes dominate the skyline; and across the country, ports, airports and border crossings are booming with trade. Felt almost everywhere that is, except in rural areas, where the impacts of change have been less visible.

And yet, rural communities are home to the majority of Myanmar's population, the majority of its many ethnic groups, and 70 percent of its poor. Recognizing this disparity, policy makers in Myanmar have stressed rural poverty reduction to be a key priority for the coming years. This is a task as ambitious as it is critical – enabling rural communities to participate in expanding economic opportunities will be central to inclusive growth in Myanmar and to the growth of a strong, diverse and united nation.

What then will it take to reduce rural poverty in Myanmar? First and foremost, it will take an increase in agricultural productivity to make farmers richer. Second, improved access to essential services to create opportunities in rural communities will be critical. Third, more focused and efficient public spending is important, so resources flow to people who need them and to programs that work. A mix of policies and investments, informed by listening to both people and evidence, can help achieve all three.

Increasing agricultural productivity. Farmer U Phyoo from Zeegon Town owns nine acres of land where he grows rice, but can

barely make ends meet with his income. "All farmers are struggling with the same challenges. We are faced with very low prices after harvesting, the rising cost of rice production, and hardly any access to bank loans that are suitable for farmers like us," said U Phyoo.

More than half of Myanmar's labor force works in agriculture, but the average yield of the dominant crop, paddy rice, is amongst the lowest in Asia. Add in post-harvest losses and high transport cost, and profits from farming fall even further. Indeed, one hectare of monsoon season rice from the Delta region in Myanmar – the country's rice bowl and one of the most fertile growing regions in the world – on average generates just \$140 in profits, compared to \$340 in Cambodia and \$430 in Viet Nam.

Boosting productivity – and thus profitability – will require reforms to increase the availability and adoption of modern farm technologies, as well as investments in seeds and extension services. For example, in 2013-2014, total spending by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation on seed and extension programs was only 0.22 per cent of agricultural GDP (or 0.07 per cent of total GDP), well below the globally recommended benchmark of 1 per cent of agricultural GDP. Only one per cent of the demand for paddy seed is estimated to be met by supply in Myanmar, compared to nearly 100 per cent in Thailand and Viet Nam. Private investment can play a critical role in addressing these constraints, private investment which regulatory reforms can help unleash. Similarly, reforms in the land sector to in-



A woman works in cauliflower farm. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

crease security of tenure have had strong positive impacts on productivity in other countries in the region.

Increasing access to essential services. At present, more than 80 per cent of the rural population lacks access to electricity, 37 per cent lack access to clean drinking water, and only 12 per cent of roads are paved, which can make them impassable in the rainy season. This contributes to rural isolation, and limits access of rural people to markets, job opportunities, and services. Overcoming such constraints, if done in a way that empowers rural communities, could also help reduce geographic isolation and foster national unity by demonstrating the state's support for lagging regions. This includes in particular ethnic minority and border areas, which have been affected by conflict and where the presence of the state remains limited and sometimes contested.

Some of these policies, reforms and investments may involve increased spending, as is happening already: from 2012 to 2015, the level of general purpose transfers from the union level to States and Regions has increased from 0.6 per cent of GDP

to 2.3 per cent. This allows states and regions to fund important economic services (such as local roads, transport and communications, small scale energy projects, and cottage industries) that are critical to rural development. At the same time, changing the ways of doing business will be important to make public spending more effective, including empowering communities to lead local development efforts.

The country's national community-driven development program, launched in 2013, is demonstrating the impact of transferring grants for community-level infrastructure directly to village tract committees, elected by secret ballot with gender parity. Rolled out first in 27 rural townships across the country, some 3.1 million rural people have so far gained access to improved community infrastructure through the program, with over two thirds of households in project communities participating in planning, decision-making and implementation of subprojects, and 75 per cent of community members reporting high or very high satisfaction levels.

Spending public resources on people who need them and

programs that work. In a situation of significant needs and limited resources, prioritization is key. Generating the knowledge and systems to allow such prioritization to be made will be critical, both to help distinguish different groups (e.g. the poor from the non-poor) and to identify programmes that are delivering results and should be scaled up, versus those that aren't and should be phased out.

Several measures can help improve information available for better targeting. The 2014 National Population and Housing Census put forward a rich snapshot of Myanmar's townships and states and regions. Subsequent follow-up surveys, including the 2015 Myanmar Poverty and Household Living Conditions Survey, provide a more complete snapshot of the needs and profile of the poor. For the future, more frequent and better quality of data on living conditions can help to establish a household level targeting system that could identify and deliver support to those who are most in need. At the same time, independent, high-quality and regular impact monitoring of rural development programs can help to identify the strongest performing programs and make these available more widely.

Change is underway and moving fast in Myanmar. Ensuring that rural areas keep pace is critical to promoting unity and shared prosperity in a diverse and thriving country.

This blog is based on the World Bank Group's policy note "Growing Together: Reducing Rural Poverty in Myanmar." **Nikolas Myint and Andrea Woodhouse are senior social development specialists, and Sergiy Zorya and Reena Badiani-Magnusson are senior economists at the World Bank.**

Survey team discovers new species in Putao

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, teaming with a group of foreign specialists has conducted a survey in the Northern Mountain Forest Complex (NMFC) from 1 February to 23 March this year in an effort to study biodiversity of special significance in the Khakaborazi National Park and Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary.

The project was financed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

(UNESCO), with the survey reporting the discovery of a bird species in Putao district of Kachin State. According to foreign expert Dr Swen C. Renner, its variety is yet to be identified and will require further zoological analysis. The team has collected 86 species of birds, 32 species of bats, 21 species of rodents and seven species of reptile amphibians, with plans to bring them to the UNESCO for assessment of their habits and genetic makeup.—(OUV).—Myanmar News Agency



A new species discovered in Putao being seen. PHOTO: (OUV).—MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

Online Thingyan sale Festival started on 30th March

Online Thingyan sale festival started from 30th March to 21st April via Kaymu.com.mm by uploading the products online including the accessories related to Water Festival such as handsets and the waterproof handset covers; Thingyan Fashion products such as the blouses, shirts, etc.

“We will offer the reduced price. We will also make Thing-

yan promotional Campaign. We arrange to give the best service for our customers by selling the items at competitive price as other sale festivals offer, said Audrey, the sales manager of Kaymu. A Photo contest for Thingyan Fashion is going to be held at Kaymu starting from 31st March, and the winners will be announced on 11th April.

“We will mainly sell phone

accessories but there is higher demand for clothes related to Thingyan Fashion. The handset sale is usually on the decline during Thingyan period”, said Ko Kyaw Zeyya, sales manager.

Currently, the online shop kaymu.com.mm is working with over 2000 shops, a total of 200 to 500 shops are selling well daily.—PTK/Union Daily

Calls come for protection of ancient Dawei archaeology site

A SUBMISSION has been made to the Minister of Tanintharyi Region, with the same to be presented to Tanintharyi Hluttaw, for the designation of the historical Shin Motehti region, located within Dawei township, as a protected zone, according to the Department of Archaeology and Museum for Tanintharyi Region.

The submission was made to the Regional Minister on March 15 out of desire for the Shin Motehti pagoda, which lies among the historical Shin Ko Shin pagodas within the Shin Motehti region, along with other ancient buildings that still remain to this day, to be recognized as a being within the parameters of a conservation zone.

“The ancient city walls, together with wash stalls for elephants and horse, still remain to this day. Furthermore, preservation efforts are required in order to prevent the pathways leading up to the pagodas from disappearing. Calls for such efforts are also being made by local residents.” said U Tin Maung Htway, assistant director of the Department of Archaeology and Museum for Tanintharyi Region.

The department conducted a total of three field studies between 2015-16, signing agreements with the local public on three occasions for the conduction of preservation activities.

It is also known, on top of making a submission to the Re-

gional Minister, archaeological experts from Naypyidaw will also come and conduct field studies within the Shin Motehti region.

“We already have the area of an ancient city, but there isn’t much left it these days because it’s become destroyed, both through ignorance and from premeditated destruction. The authorities have also never carried out conservation activities within the region. It’s because of these factors that we’ve started to sign agreements with the majority of the local populace to mitigate damage to the ancient sites within the region.” said an individual from a local conservation group who wished to remain anonymous.

He continued by stating the urgent requirement for the region to be recognized as a zone of conservation in light some of the ancient city’s outer walls being destroyed through the current activities of some members of authority within the region which include the dividing up of land plots, construction of housing and turning areas of land into public parks.

It is known the villages of Shin Motehti, Sawhka and Kanaingda exist within the parameters of the ancient Shin Motehti region, while the ancient city walls of the four quarters of the erstwhile city still stand to this day.

—Myitmakha News Agency

Bullock cart races held at pagoda festival in Amarapura

THE Pahtodawgyi Pagoda in Amarapura township, Mandalay Region, will begin its festival from 1 to 7 April which includes traditional bullock cart racing, it has been learned.

The festival has so far attracted 100 participants from Mandalay,

Sagaing and Magwe regions, with organisers saying that the winning bullock carts will receive handsome awards. Local residents said that some attendees offered high prices for last year’s winning bulls in the hope that they would turn out to be champions this year too.

The champion bull that was worth K1.4 million last year has now been sold for K2.5 million to a contestant from Pyay.

The awards are K300,000 for first prize, K200,000 for second prize and K100,000 for third prize.—Aung Thant Khaing



A bullock cart seen participating in the cart race. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

Trump meets with Republican leadership; party unity discussed



US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump waves to onlookers and reporters as he departs through a back door after meetings at Republican National Committee (RNC) headquarters in Washington 31 March, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump made a surprise closed-door visit to the Republican National Committee on Thursday after a tumultuous two days on the campaign trail that included a reversal of his pledge to support the party's nominee.

Trump, who is also struggling to contain the fallout from his Wednesday comment that women who have abortions should be punished if the procedure is outlawed, said afterward he had a "nice meeting" to talk about party unity with RNC Chairman Reince Priebus.

"Looking forward to bringing the party together," Trump said on Twitter. "And it will happen!"

Priebus said the meeting was scheduled days ago and included a discussion about the process heading into the party's July convention in Cleveland. Trump leads the Republican race, but is at risk of falling short of the 1,237 delegates needed to become the party's nominee in the 8 November election, raising the prospect of a contested convention.

"We did talk about unity and working together and making sure when we go to Cleveland, and come out of Cleveland, that we're working in the same direction," Priebus told the Fox News Channel. Trump's relationship with the RNC has been contentious at times, and he recently complained the party was not treating him fairly as it prepared for a possible contested convention.

On Tuesday, Trump backed away from the loyalty pledge he signed in September promising to support the party's eventual nominee and not to run an independent campaign for the White House. The RNC pledge has unraveled as Trump's remaining rivals, US Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and Ohio Governor John Kasich, also indicated they were unlikely to observe the pledge if Trump was the nominee.

Priebus refused to say if the discarded loyalty pledge was discussed at the meeting with Trump, which lasted just under an hour. The billionaire businessman was in Washington for a morning gathering of his newly

established foreign policy team. A source who attended said the group discussed threats from Islamic State militants, nuclear proliferation, homeland security assessments and European security levels.

Trump's campaign also announced it was setting up a Washington office to run its convention and delegate operations and work with the RNC and Congress.

The campaign has been busy trying to dig out from under an avalanche of criticism over Trump's abortion comment, even though he quickly reversed his stance.

Trump pulled back from his initial comments within an hour, first in a statement saying that US states should handle abortion issues and later saying doctors who perform abortions are the ones who should be held responsible.

"You have a presidential candidate that clarified the record not once but twice," Trump spokeswoman Katrina Pierson told CNN, calling the initial comments a "simple misspeak." She said Trump was "pro-life with exceptions" and said his statements after the comments in an MSNBC interview were an accurate depiction of his views.

"We shouldn't make this a 24-hour headline when we have things like terrorism going on in the world."

Trump's latest controversy threatened to further erode his standing with women voters, many of whom have been offended by his use of vulgarities and insulting language to describe women during the campaign.

The abortion flap erupted as Trump campaigned in Wisconsin ahead of the state's primary on Tuesday. The primary will be particularly important because all 42 delegates will be awarded to the winner of the popular vote, rather than distributed proportionate to the vote. Two opinion polls released in the last two days showed Cruz moving ahead of Trump by 10 percentage points in Wisconsin.—Reuters

Former Australian ambassador to US warns of Donald Trump presidency

SYDNEY — Australia's former ambassador to the United States has said the nation's recently released defence strategy paper would need to be re-written to reflect more on self-reliance should US republican front-runner Donald Trump be elected the next US president.

Former ambassador to the US Kim Beazley who finished his post in Washington in December 2015, wrote in an opinion editori-

al that should Donald Trump win the US presidency, Australia could no longer rely on the US forward policy, local media reported early on Friday.

Donald Trump, though he hasn't yet secured the US republican nomination for president, is the likely candidate to contest the November US president election against Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton. "If Trump happens, the (Defence White Paper)

2016 will need a rewrite early next year and the strategic sectors will look very different," Beazley said. "We would still be deeply embedded in what might be seen as the American deep state — the intelligence community, the military and the arms industry."

"However, a lot more intellectual muscle would need to be put on the priority attached to defending our approaches." —Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

G7 summit should focus on weak global economy, Russia, North Korea — Japan

WASHINGTON — Japan said on Thursday a summit of Group of Seven (G7) nations it will host in May should send a clear signal that it is prepared to take steps to support the weak global economy.

Yasuhisa Kawamura, who is Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's spokesman, said weakness in Group of 20 major and emerging economies, especially in China, was expected to remain in 2016 through 2017.

Given that weakness, the G7 meeting should send a "clear message to the world so that those countries will make a contribution to the sustainable growth of the world economy," he said, speaking on the sidelines of the nuclear security summit in Washington.

He said the G7 summit should also take up "in a strategic way" issues such as global terrorism, Russia, Ukraine's conflict and the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

The group, which includes the United States, Italy, Germany, Japan, Britain, France, Canada and France cut Russia from the G8 in 2014 after Moscow annexed Crimea.—Reuters

Biden tells Ukraine's Poroshenko US to give \$335 million in security aid

WASHINGTON — US Vice President Joe Biden told Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Thursday that the United States was moving forward with an additional \$335 million in security assistance, the White House said in a statement.

Biden, who met with Poroshenko on the sidelines of a nuclear security summit, also told the Ukrainian leader that efforts by Kiev to form a reform-oriented government were critical to unlocking international economic assistance, including a third \$1 billion US loan guarantee, the statement said.—Reuters

FBI teams helping Belgium investigate recent attacks — White House

WASHINGTON — The United States has sent FBI teams to help Belgian authorities investigate the 22 March attacks that killed 35 people, including several Americans, and US and Belgian officials will discuss the cooperation this week, the White House said on Thursday.

"Belgium has accepted our assistance. We have FBI teams on the ground assisting with the investigation. We are sharing information and intelligence with Belgium as it relates to terrorist threats," White House deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes told a news briefing.

Rhodes said the Belgian interior minister was expected to discuss the security cooperation with US Attorney General Loretta Lynch during the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington this week.

"We do believe that Belgium is taking this very seriously and we have had effective coordination in supporting their investigation and trying to disrupt additional plots," Rhodes said.

Lynch met with Jan Jambon, Belgium's interior minister, on Thursday and discussed Justice Department resources and assistance, a department official said.—Reuters

Tariff cuts allow 92% of Australian exports to Japan to be duty-free

SYDNEY — A third round of tariff cuts has been applied to 1,200 products covered by an Australia-Japan trade agreement, it was announced on Friday, meaning 92 per cent of Australian exports to Japan will now be duty-free.

The cuts, which cover a range of imports and exports between the two nations, were announced as part of the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement. The move was announced by the office of Australian Trade and Investment Minister Steve Ciobo, who said the latest cuts would see the scrapping of duty on items such as Australian tuna, beef, oranges and nickel.

The agreement came into force in January 2015.—Kyodo News

Denmark extends controls on German border until 3 May

COPENHAGEN — Denmark decided on Friday to extend temporary controls at its border with Germany by 30 days to 3 May, the Ministry for Immigration, Integration and Housing said.

The government first implemented temporary border controls on 4 January as a reaction to similar steps from Sweden in response to an influx of migrants from the Middle East and Africa. The government still sees control as necessary to avoid accumulation of illegal immigration in Denmark, the ministry said in a statement.—Reuters

Libyan unity government starts work from 'secured' Tripoli naval base



Fayez Seraj, Libyan prime minister-designate under the proposed unity government, attends a meeting with officials of municipal council of Tripoli in Tripoli, Libya, on 31 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

TRIPOLI — Libya's UN-backed unity government held meetings at a heavily guarded naval base in Tripoli on Thursday and a senior

military official said it was working to secure state institutions in the capital.

The government's lead-

ers arrived at the base by ship from neighbouring Tunisia on Wednesday in a high-risk bid to take power, after opponents pre-

vented them from flying in by closing down Tripoli's airspace.

Western powers hope the new government will request and channel foreign support to confront the Islamic State militant group, deal with migrant flows from Libya towards Europe, and restore oil production to shore up its economy.

They have recognised it as Libya's sole legitimate government and called for a rapid transfer of power, but both the self-declared National Salvation government in Tripoli and the rival administration in the east have rejected this.

Tripoli has been mostly calm since the new government's arrival, though a television station that supports the National Salvation government went off the air late on Wednesday and there were brief clashes close to the city centre.

On Thursday, members of the unity government's seven-member Presidential Council held meetings at the naval base with political supporters, local council leaders, businessmen

and central bank governor Sadiq al-Kabir.

Abdulrahman Taweel, a brigadier general in charge of organising protection for the new government, described the base as "completely secured".

"We are working to secure all other state institutions," he told Reuters without elaborating. "The Council is here to stay and to continue their work here in Tripoli."

They will not leave except for international meetings and will return."

The Presidential Council and the Government of National Accord (GNA) emerged from a deal mediated by the United Nations and signed in December to overcome an impasse that saw rival governments in Tripoli and Bayda competing for power.

The political confusion in Libya since the 2011 fall of Muammar Gaddafi has allowed Islamic State to take hold in and around Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace, and carry out attacks in several other towns and cities.

—Reuters

Abbas says curbing Palestinian attacks, offered to meet Netanyahu

JERUSALEM — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Thursday he was working to stop Palestinian knife attacks and other street violence against Israel and had offered to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to rekindle peace efforts.

The remarks appeared to be an effort by the Western-backed Abbas to turn the tables on Israel, which has cast him as responsible for the diplomatic deadlock and the surge of bloodshed.

Speaking to Israel's Channel 2 TV, Abbas gave rare details on his domestic security drives, a touchy matter as many Palestinians deem such moves collaboration with their enemy.

"Our security forces go into

Israel coordinate security in the occupied West Bank despite the stalling two years ago of US-sponsored negotiations on Palestinian statehood.

Netanyahu says he is open to renewing talks and that Abbas has been avoiding these while inciting violence with his rhetoric against Israel. But Abbas told Channel 2 that the onus was on Netanyahu.

"I will meet with him, at any time. And I suggested, by the way, for him to meet," the Palestinian leader said in English. Asked what became of that overture, Abbas said: "No, no - it's a secret. He can tell you about it."

Netanyahu's office had no immediate response. Since

"We took the knives and spoke to them and said: 'This is a mistake. We do not want you to kill and be killed. We want you to live, and for the other side to live as well.'"

Mahmoud Abbas
Palestinian President

the schools to search pupils' bags and see if they have knives. You don't know this," he said.

"In one school, we found 70 boys and girls who were carrying knives. We took the knives and spoke to them and said: 'This is a mistake. We do not want you to kill and be killed. We want you to live, and for the other side to live as well.'"

Abbas's administration and

October, Palestinian stabbings, car-rammings and gun ambushes have killed 28 Israelis and two US citizens. At least 190 Palestinians, 129 of whom Israel says were assailants, have been killed by its forces. Many others were shot in clashes.

Abbas' Palestinian Authority exercises limited self-rule in the West Bank under 1993 interim peace deals.—Reuters

Car bomb kills seven policemen in Turkey's Diyarbakir — officials

ANKARA/DIYARBAKIR (Turkey) — A car bomb killed seven police officers and wounded around two dozen people in Turkey's Diyarbakir on Thursday, security sources and officials said, a day before the prime minister is due to visit the biggest city in the largely Kurdish southeast.

A parked car laden with explosives was detonated by remote control as a minibus carrying the police officers turned a corner on a busy street, the sources said, adding that civilians were also among the wounded.

President Tayyip Erdogan, who is on a visit to Washington for a nuclear security summit, denounced the attack, saying it

showed the "ugly face" of militants "as they are cornered".

"This shows terrorism's ugly face again. The determination of our security forces will, God willing, put an end" to it, Erdogan said in a speech to the Brookings Institute. He said 27 people had also been wounded in the attack.

The southeast has been scorched by violence since a ceasefire between the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the government collapsed last July. The government has said it has killed thousands of militants since then, while more than 350 members of the security forces have been killed in the fighting.

Round-the-clock curfews

have been instituted in parts of the southeast, where the economy also been devastated by the fighting. One of the hardest hit areas has been Diyarbakir's historic Sur district, which is encircled by UNESCO-listed, Roman-era walls.

Development Minister Cevdet Yilmaz, in the area ahead of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's visit, said the government wanted to rebuild the region.

"We are here to rebuild Diyarbakir and make it beautiful, and they want to destroy it," he said in comments broadcast live. "We will not retreat in fear."

The government has announced an ambitious restoration plan for the southeast.—Reuters



Forensic experts inspect the area after a car bomb attack targeting a minibus carrying members of the police special forces, occurred in the Kurdish-dominated southeastern city of Diyarbakir, Turkey on 31 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

El Salvador seeks to block prison cell phones to beat crime crisis

SAN SALVADOR — El Salvador is proposing to order telephone companies to block cell phone signals inside prisons where a state of emergency has been declared, in order to prevent gang leaders from ordering murders or extortions while incarcerated.

The move is among a raft of measures the government proposed to Congress on Thursday as the small Central American state struggles to combat record-high murder rates that have made it one of the world's most violent countries. The government declared a state of emergency on Wednesday in the country's seven most dangerous prisons, where the proposed measures would be introduced first if legislators give their assent in a vote likely to be held on Friday.

While cell phones and other electronic devices are currently illegal inside prisons, visitors, guards and others still manage to sneak them in for the use of inmates.

Under the state of emergency, prison authorities have been or-

dered to limit gang leaders' movements inside jail, and prohibit visitors and outside communication for 15 days.

President Salvador Sanchez Ceren also announced plans to deploy more troops on the streets to battle a rising wave of gang violence. In prison inspections, authorities found cell phones with up to \$20,000 in call credits, Rodil Hernandez, the director of prisons, told Reuters. He said phone operators had not helped with the problem so far. A telephone trade group told a news conference on Thursday, however, that phone companies were willing to collaborate with any measures.

Of the 33,000 or so prisoners in the country, some 13,000 are gang members, who often conduct their criminal business unabated from behind bars.

During the first two months of the year there were an average 23.3 murders a day. That was 120 per cent up on the same period last year.—Reuters



One of 13 suspected members of the 18th street gang is presented to the media after being arrested by the police under the charges of homicide and terrorism, in Soyapango, El Salvador on 31 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Amnesty says Turkey illegally sending Syrians back to war zone

ANKARA — Turkey has illegally returned thousands of Syrians to their war-torn homeland in recent months, highlighting the dangers for migrants sent back from Europe under a deal due to come into effect next week, Amnesty International said on Friday. Turkey agreed with the EU this month to take back all migrants and refugees who cross illegally to Greece in exchange for financial aid, faster visa-free travel for Turks and slightly accelerated EU membership talks.

But the legality of the deal hinges on Turkey being a safe country of asylum, which Amnesty said in its report was clearly not the case. It said it was likely that several thousand refugees had been sent back to Syria in mass returns in the past seven to nine weeks, flouting

Turkish, EU and international law.

"In their desperation to seal their borders, EU leaders have wilfully ignored the simplest of facts: Turkey is not a safe country for Syrian refugees and is getting less safe by the day," said John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's Director for Europe and Central Asia.

Turkey's foreign ministry denied Syrians were being sent back against their will. Turkey had maintained an "open door" policy for Syrian migrants for five years and strictly abided by the "non-refoulement" principle of not returning someone to a country where they are liable to face persecution, it said. "None of the Syrians that have demanded protection from our country are being sent back to their country by force, in line with

international and national law," a foreign ministry official told Reuters. But Amnesty said testimonies it had gathered in Turkey's southern border provinces suggested the authorities have been rounding up and expelling groups of around 100 Syrian men, women and children almost daily since the middle of January. Many of those returned to Syria appear to be unregistered refugees, though the rights group said it had also documented cases of registered Syrians being returned when apprehended while not carrying their papers.

Amnesty also said its research showed the authorities had scaled back the registration of Syrian refugees in the southern border provinces. Those with no registration have no access to basic services

such as healthcare and education.

Under the deal with the EU, Turkey is supposed to be taking in migrants returned from Greece on 4 April, but uncertainty remains over how many will be sent back, how they will be processed, and where they will be housed.

The aim is to close the main route by which a million migrants and refugees poured across the Aegean Sea to Greece in the last year before heading north, mainly to Germany and Sweden. "The large-scale returns of Syrian refugees we have documented highlight the fatal flaws in the EU-Turkey deal. It is a deal that can only be implemented with the hardest of hearts and a blithe disregard for international law," Amnesty's Dalhuisen said.—Reuters

World Bank official says political crisis threatens Ukraine reform drive

KIEV — A political crisis in Ukraine threatens to derail a Western-backed reform drive and thwart attempts to pull its conflict-hit economy out of a two-year recession, the World Bank's country director for Ukraine said on Friday.

Lawmakers are under pressure to form a new coalition to end a deadlock that threatens snap parliamentary elections and has delayed disbursement of \$1.7 billion (£1.19 billion) from the International Monetary Fund and other foreign loans.

"The current political crisis poses a very serious threat to the still fragile recovery and exposes a serious enough threat to continued economic reforms," the World Bank's Qimiao Fan said at a briefing. "It's very important in our view that the political crisis is resolved as quickly as possible."

The World Bank kept its forecast for Ukraine's 2016 economic growth unchanged at 1 per cent and said it saw inflation slowing to 15 per cent this year, compared with a previous forecast of 23.4 per cent.

On Thursday, the results of a Reuters poll of 16 Ukrainian banks and brokerages forecast Ukraine's economy would grow 1.4 per cent in 2016 after contracting 9.9 per cent in 2015 and 6.6 per cent in 2014.—Reuters

Hundreds of thousands protest at French labour reforms

PARIS — Hundreds of thousands of workers and high-school students joined protest marches across France on Wednesday to challenge

plans to loosen the country's protective labour laws that unions say favour businesses.

The day of protest — which

led to scores of arrests as youths and police clashed in Paris, Lyon and Nantes — marked the fourth such test of strength in a month for President Francois Hollande.

He has been plagued by low popularity and a jobless rate that is stuck stubbornly above 10 per cent little more than a year before a presidential election.

Organisers said more than 1.2 million people took part. The interior ministry put the number at just under 400,000, higher numbers — despite persistent rain — than in some other recent protests.

The three protests to date had been relatively low-key, but with rail, air traffic and utility staff among those to stop work, there was significant disruption across the country.

On Thursday, Reuters TV footage showed hooded youths

in Paris jumping on cars, taunting police and throwing projectiles, prompting riot police to charge some groups. Reuters reporters also witnessed clashes in France's second city Lyon and in Nantes.

Police arrested more than 100 people and at least 13 officers were injured, the interior ministry said.

Unions said they planned further rallies on 5 and 9 April with the hardline CGT union saying the protests would not end until the draft labour bill was withdrawn entirely.

"Small employees are treated like dirt, we've had enough, (and) it's Hollande who pretends to represent the left," said Jean-Luc Gutel, a CGT representative who works in the delivery service in Paris. "The youth are told to study for years, but what for?"—Reuters



French gendarmes use tear gas during clashes with youths during a demonstration by employees, high school and university students against the French labour law proposal in Lille, France, as part of nationwide labor reform protests and strikes, on 31 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Rescued sea turtle undergoes experimental treatment in Seattle

SEATTLE — Seattle veterinarians will test a rescued sea turtle on Friday to see whether treatment in a hyperbaric chamber, typically used for decompression sickness in human divers, has cured a buoyancy disorder preventing the marine reptile from being released back to the ocean.

Tucker, a 70-pound (32-kg), 20-year-old endangered olive ridley sea turtle, was found in December clinging to life along the Oregon Coast, far from his species' usual warm-water habitat off Southern California and Mexico, Seattle

Aquarium officials said. Tucker has recovered from pneumonia and other complications from hypothermia but still has a buoyancy issue caused by internal gas bubbles in his body that prevent the reptile from diving or remaining underwater.

"It's almost like the turtle is wearing a life preserver," Seattle Aquarium spokesman Tim Kuniholm said on Thursday.

Aquarium vets brought Tucker to Virginia Mason Hospital on Monday for a session in the hyperbaric oxygen chamber there, making him the first

non-human patient to visit the pressurized facility and the first sea turtle in the United States to undergo such a treatment for buoyancy problems.

Tucker will undergo testing on Friday to determine if the treatment is working and whether further sessions in the chamber are needed, Kuniholm said.

Kuniholm said Tucker must be able to regulate his buoyancy in order to survive in the wild, where he needs to dive beneath the surface for food and avoid predators as well as hazards such as boats. "He could re-

main in human care, but that's not our goal," he added.

The hyperbaric treatment involves the turtle breathing 100 percent oxygen for more than two hours, hospital officials said. Tucker was sedated and observed closely while hooked up to a heart monitor and breathing tube.

"We have treated many scuba divers over the years for a gas bubble disease known as decompression sickness, which is also called 'the bends.' This is the first time we have been asked to assist in the care of

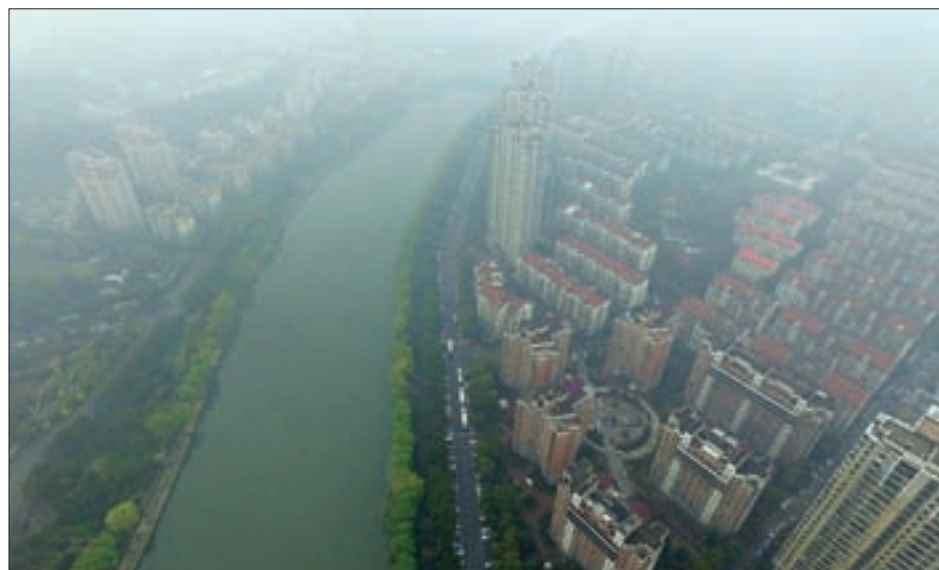


One of two rescued endangered olive ridley turtles is lifted into a waiting pool as it arrives at Sea World's animal rescue centre after being flown from the Oregon coast by the US Coast Guard to San Diego, California on 30 March.

PHOTO: REUTERS

a sea turtle, which are excellent divers themselves," James Holm, medical director at the Centre for Hyperbaric Medicine, said in a written statement.—Reuters

United States, China to sign Paris climate accord on 22 April



Residential buildings are seen in smog during a polluted day in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, on 19 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The United States and China confirmed Thursday that they will sign the Paris climate change agreement in New York on 22 April, a move that officials hope will help the accord enter into force this year.

The world's two biggest greenhouse gas emitters issued a joint presidential statement in which they called on other countries to sign the accord next month

"with a view to bringing the Paris Agreement into force as early as possible."

Leaders from nearly 200 countries forged the landmark agreement to transform the world's fossil fuel-driven economy on December after four years of fraught negotiations.

But the Paris climate agreement needs at least 55 countries representing at least 55 per cent of global emissions to formally accede

to it before it can enter into force.

Todd Stern, the US climate envoy who helped broker the deal in Paris, said hitting that threshold as soon as possible will benefit countries that are vulnerable to climate change.

"The best thing that can happen for them is to get this agreement going and get it into force," he said.

Stern has stepped down from his role as the chief US

climate negotiator. He will be replaced by his former deputy, Jonathan Pershing, on 1 April.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said earlier this month that he expects 120 or more countries will sign the accord at the 22 April ceremony at its New York headquarters.

US Secretary of State John Kerry is expected to sign on behalf of the United States.

India's Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar will also attend the signing of the agreement at the United Nations headquarters, the Times of India reported last week.

The US-China statement also confirms that the countries will continue to cooperate on efforts to combat climate change. Both countries said they would work jointly to ensure that a global agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions in aviation at the International Civil Aviation Organization and a pact to curb HFCs, a potent greenhouse gas, are reached this year.—Reuters

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department Developing Scalable Smallholder Livestock Models in Myanmar

Assignment Title:

Project National Consultant (1 position)

Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) is implementing the project "Developing Scalable Smallholder Livestock Models in Myanmar" by the financial assistance of IFAD.

LBVD intends to apply part of the proceeds for the hiring of **National Consultant (NC)**. The tasks for NC in shortlisting are:

- In consultation with the Project Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), provide support and advice to the Project Coordination Office (PCO) and Project Implementation Unit (PIU) for the preparation of the baseline survey by a national NGO to ensure that it meets the requirements of the project and takes into account lessons and best practices from surveys carried out by other development partners;
- In consultation with the CTA, provide support and advice to the national project coordinators for the preparation of training manuals for project training activities at the national, township and village levels;
- Help to build capacity in LBVD through on-the-job advice on carrying out its functions, especially Financial Management and Procurement;
- Assist to prepare the periodic project reports for the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and IFAD.

LBVD now invites expression of interest from qualified and experienced NC to indicate their interest in providing the tasks. Interested individual consultants should provide personal information indicating that they have qualifications and experiences to perform the tasks (CV with academic background, experiences in similar assignment, knowledge of local conditions (if any) etc.). Personal interview may be invited if necessary.

The assignment period will be for one month and extension will be based on the consultant's performances and project needs.

Further information and a copy of detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) can be available at the address below during office hours (from 09:30 to 16:00) Monday through Friday except public holidays.

Expressions of Interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail), **no later than April 8, 2016.**

Attention

Dr. Than Naing Tun (Director) (or) Dr. Khin Ohnmar Lwin (Deputy Director)

Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department
Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development
Office Building No. (36), Yaza Thingaha Road, Ottaya Thiri Township,

Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, PO Box: 15011

Fax: +95 67 408342; Tel: +95 67 418356/408262; Hotline: +95 95177918

Email address: lbvd@mptmail.net.mm; tntlbbvd@gmail.com; irplanninglbvd@gmail.com; ohmar06@gmail.com

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV YAMATO VOY NO (024)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YAMATO VOY NO (024) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.4.2016 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 NYK BULK & PROJECTS
CARRIERS LTD. TOKYO**

Phone No: 2301191/2301178

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HASIL VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HASIL VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T/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 ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Beyonce jumps into athleisure market with Ivy Park clothing line

NEW YORK — Recording star Beyonce launched a women's fitness clothing line on Thursday featuring bodysuits, leggings and headbands, named in part for her 4-year-old daughter, Blue Ivy.

Called Ivy Park, the 200-piece active wear collection is a joint venture with British businessman Sir Philip Green, who owns the Topshop fashion chain.

The collection will feature leggings, T-shirts, crop-tops and jackets all designed for fitness and leisure wear. It will go on sale at selected Topshop and high-end department stores around the world on 14 April.

Beyonce, one of the most influential celebrities in the world, announced the line by posting photos on her Instagram account, which has more than 65 million followers.

She also released a video in which she dances, swims and works out in some of the clothes, and she is featured on the cover of the April issue of *Elle* magazine promoting the brand.

In the video which features images from the singer's childhood and her daughter, Beyonce said the brand's name also pays homage to a park in Houston, where she grew up, that has inspired her.

"When I have to conquer those things, I still go back to that park. Before I hit the stage, I go back to that park. When it was time for me to give birth, I went back to that park. The park became a state of mind. The park became my strength," she said.

Beyonce's clothing line taps into the current trend for "athleisure," which fuses sportswear with streetwear, where clothes usually worn at the gym or on sports fields are also worn socially.

R&B singer Rihanna joined forces with sportswear brand Puma in 2015 to design sneakers that sold out and helped reconnect the brand to female consumers. Rihanna expanded the collection to include athleisure clothing this year.

Actress Kate Hudson co-founded her Fabletics collection of stylish workout clothes online in 2013 and expanded it into brick-and-mortar stores recently.

Country singer Carrie Underwood also launched a collection of athleisure wear last year, Calia by Carrie Underwood, in collaboration with Dick's Sporting Goods retail stores.

Topshop and Beyonce announced their joint partnership in October 2014.—Reuters



Singer Beyonce
PHOTO: REUTERS

Justin Timberlake sued by Cirque du Soleil over hit song

NEW YORK — Cirque du Soleil is not doing flips over Justin Timberlake's hit song "Don't Hold the Wall."

The Canadian theatrical performance company on Thursday

sued the superstar singer with allegations that the song copied part of one of Cirque du Soleil's original compositions without permission.

Timberlake's song ap-

peared on his 2013 double album "20/20," which has sold more than two million copies.

The lawsuit filed in federal court in New York claimed Timberlake borrowed from the song "Steel Dream," which was originally on Cirque du Soleil's 1997 album, "QUIDAM."

The suit seeks a minimum of \$800,000 in damages for copyright infringement.

In addition to Timberlake, the lawsuit also named among the defendants the producer Timbaland — real name Timothy Mosley — who helped write the song, and Sony Music Entertainment, which released the album.

Representatives for the defendants did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Thursday.

Copyright infringement lawsuits are relatively common in the music world. In one high-profile case last year, the estate of soul singer Marvin Gaye won a \$7.4 million jury verdict against Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams over their hit single "Blurred Lines."—Reuters



Justin Timberlake and Chris Stapleton (not pictured) perform a medley of songs at the 49th Annual Country Music Association Awards in Nashville, Tennessee in November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Miley Cyrus is awesome: Nick Jonas

LOS ANGELES — Nick Jonas says his former girlfriend Miley Cyrus is "awesome" despite he is no more in talking terms with the pop star.

The "Jealous" singer was asked in an event about Cyrus and his opinion about her current image, which is probably much more controversial than when they dated in 2006.

"It's been a while since I spoke to Miley, but I think that the persona is awesome and I think that she is living proof that you can continue to evolve as an artist and a creator," he said.

He also said that he would definitely watch Woody Allen's upcoming film in which Cyrus would appear.

"And I'm a huge Woody Allen fan, so I'm looking forward to seeing the show that she's doing with him," he added.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

World's largest floral chandelier held ahead of Singapore Garden Festival

SINGAPORE — A giant floral chandelier, which is believed to be the world's largest of its kind, was put up ahead of the upcoming Singapore Garden Festival (SGF) on Friday.

The floral chandelier, hanging from a height of 13 metres, measures about 17 meters by 10 meters. It is made from over 60,000 flowers, and will be displayed at Marina Square Atrium until 3 April 2016.

It was put together by Lawrence Wong, minister for National Development and 260 students, community gardeners, corporate volunteers and NParks staff over five days.

This year's Singapore Gar-

den Festival, which is set to be the largest edition, will return for its sixth edition from 23 to 31 July, marking 10 years since it started in 2006. SGF on Friday also launched the "Adopt-A-Plant" initiative to encourage a love for gardening among Singaporeans, and inspire the community to co-create the city in a garden.

Between 1 April to 28 May, more than 8,000 plants will be put up for adoption at various spots including Marina Square, Raffles Place Park, Singapore Botanic Gardens. A variety of plant species will be distributed, including the peace lily, painted net-leaf and variegated peperomia. During the festival, visitors can look

forward to taking in the best of tropical horticulture and floral artistry spread across 9.7 hectares at Gardens by the Bay — almost double the size of the 5-hectare showground in 2014.

Popular highlights such as the landscape and fantasy gardens, balcony gardens, floral windows to the world and gardeners' cup will also return this year, according to the organiser.

"Hope that this year's SGF will continue to inspire more people to develop a passion for gardening and all things green. Then we will not only flourish as a city in a garden, but also a city of gardeners and garden lovers," said Wong.—Xinhua



Workers prepare a large floral chandelier during a promotional event for the Singapore Garden Festival (SGF) at Singapore's Marina Square, on 1 April. PHOTO: XINHUA

Historic Texas Alamo to undergo first renovation in a century

SAN ANTONIO — The Alamo, the highly recognizable monument to Texas independence, will have its first major renovation in a century in a project overseen by a Philadelphia firm, officials said on Thursday. The San Antonio landmark, which began life as a Spanish colonial mission in the 1700s, was the site of the 1836 battle in

which the Alamo's vastly outnumbered defenders, including such notables as Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie, were routed by Mexican forces after a 13-day siege.

But the battle became a rallying point for the Texas forces, who inspired by the cry "Remember the Alamo!" defeated the Mexican army a few weeks later at the Bat-

tle of San Jacinto near modern-day Houston to secure Texas independence.

The white stone-walled structure, with its distinctive curved facade, was named a World Heritage Site by the United Nations last year along with four other Spanish colonial missions that line the San Antonio River.—Reuters

British TV comedian Ronnie Corbett dies at 85



File photo of Ronnie Corbett posing for photographs after being presented with his Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) medal by Queen Elizabeth during an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace in London in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Ronnie Corbett, the bespectacled British comedian best known as the small half of the hit television double act "The Two Ronnies", has died surrounded by his family, his publicist said on Thursday. He was 85.

As tributes flowed in from fellow entertainers, Prime Minister David Cameron said Corbett had the rare talent of making all generations laugh.

"He'll be remembered as one of the all time great comedians," he said on Twitter.

Born in Edinburgh in 1930, the baker's son decided early on that he wanted to be an actor, and moved to London to begin a career on stage and small screen in the early 1950s.

At just over 5 feet 1 inch tall, Corbett initially played characters younger than his real age, and he joked about his size throughout his career with self-deprecating humor. During the 1960s he appeared in cabarets at Winston's, Danny La Rue's nightclub in the exclusive Mayfair district of London, and it was there that he was spotted by TV host David Frost who asked him to appear in The Frost Report.

The satirical sketch show was

Corbett's big breakthrough, introducing him to Ronnie Barker, with whom he formed the legendary comedy double act The Two Ronnies which firmly established Corbett as a household name.

Broadcast on the BBC from 1971 to 1987, it drew audiences of up to 17 million viewers at its peak. The comedians performed sketches and musical numbers, and Corbett would present a lengthy monologue in the middle of each show in which he took several minutes to tell a simple joke. After The Two Ronnies ended, Corbett returned to the TV screens in "Sorry!", a sitcom in which he played a downtrodden librarian in his 40s who lived at home with a domineering mother.

In 2005 Corbett briefly reunited on screen with Barker for a series called The Two Ronnies Sketchbook, comprising comedy sketches from their old series with original linking material. Barker died later that year at the age of 76. Both Ronnies were awarded the OBE in 1978, and Corbett was awarded the CBE in the Queen's New Year Honours List at the start of 2012 to reward his services to entertainment and charity.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(2-4-2016 07:00am ~ 3-4-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon- The Religious Insignias of pagodas In Myanmar
07:44	Am	Impressionist Myanmar Master Artist - U Lun Gywe
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Kyaik Hmaw Wun Yele Pagoda Festival
08:36	Am	Tour of national heritages and archeological sites
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Myanmar Game Changers (Episode - V)
09:51	Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	Attractions around Hopong Hill Station
10:32	Am	My Life & My Art

10:39 Am Yatana Theinga City and Shwe Bon Yatanamingalar Palace

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:25	Pm	Mrauk U, Treasure Trove of Rakhine Culture
07:43	Pm	Goldsmith
07:48	Pm	Today Myanmar: Community Policing
08:03	Pm	News
08:25	Pm	Hanthawaddy U Win Tin "A Fearless Man" (Episode - 1)
08:48	Pm	Thingyan Songs & Dances

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(2-4-2016, Saturday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Cassette Recording

7:10 pm

- Special Movie "Pirate of Caribbean"

* 08:30 pm

Live: English Premier League "ARSENAL Vs WATFORD"

(The Curse of the Black Pearl)"

9:30 pm

- Myanmar Movie
- Midnight
- Close Down.

From 2-4-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 Pm
To 3-4-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

Ferguson calls on United fans to rally behind Van Gaal

ALEX Ferguson has urged Manchester United supporters to get behind under-fire manager Louis van Gaal despite the side struggling to avoid a third hugely disappointing campaign since the all-conquering Scot retired.

United are sixth in the Premier League and face strong competition from West Ham United and bitter rivals Manchester City to clinch fourth place, the final Champions League spot, with eight games remaining.

The Red Devils are 16 points behind leaders Leicester City and the FA Cup appears to be their only hope of silverware this season despite heavy off-season investment, but they face a daunting quarter-final replay at West Ham on 13 April.

Ferguson pointed out the host of injuries Van Gaal has had to deal with throughout the season, while also trying to integrate their summer additions into the squad.

"It is dead easy to be critical. You have to be realistic about some things. The number of injuries he has had... if you have

players missing of that calibre it has to have an impact on the team," the club's most successful manager told British media.

"The other aspect which is always easy to forget, there are five new players in their first season at United and two are young players in (Anthony) Martial and Memphis (Depay), and their promise is good.

"You have to have some patience being a Manchester United fan and they have shown that over the years; in Matt Busby's time, in my time."

Van Gaal has brought through a number of academy players this term, such as striker Marcus Rashford, who has netted five times in eight appearances, and Ferguson has tipped the 18-year-old for greater things.

"He's given nine young players their debut -- I think the future is good. Rashford is an example of what I think is Manchester United... Rashford is a sensation and one of the best in years," Ferguson said.

Van Gaal's side host 12th-placed Everton at Old Trafford in the league on Sunday.—Reuters



Sir Alex Ferguson. PHOTO: REUTERS

Nishikori fends off Monfils, Kyrgios stuns Raonic

MIAMI — Kei Nishikori withstood a blistering early assault and saved five match points before battling past Frenchman Gael Monfils 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(3) in a bruising quarter-final at the Miami Open on Thursday. The Japanese number one will face

24th seed Nick Kyrgios in the semi-finals after the Australian upset 12th seeded Canadian Milos Raonic 6-4, 7-6(4).

Sixth seed Nishikori appeared to have his match in control when leading 4-2 in the final set but his usually reliable fore-

hand repeatedly let him down as he fell behind 4-5 0-40 on serve before mounting a gutsy fightback.

He saved four match points in that 10th game, and a fifth in the 12th, before racing into a 6-3 lead in the tiebreak as Monfils made a string of unforced errors, Nishikori finally sealing the win with a forehand crosscourt winner.

"When I was down 4-5 and 0-40, I thought I almost gave up the match," Nishikori, 26, told ESPN in a court-side interview after an epic encounter between two of the most athletic players on the ATP World Tour that lasted two-and-a-half hours.

"But I tried to play one point at a time and tried to focus on what I had to do, especially my serve. In the tiebreak, I just tried to focus again and fight harder."

Nishikori, who also reached the last four in Miami two years ago, was left reeling in the opening set as the 16th-seeded Monfils played high-risk, aggressive tennis right from the start, highlighted by an explosive service game.

"I was a little bit surprised

how he played, especially the first couple of games," said Nishikori.

"I was waiting for a little bit more long rallies and I wasn't expecting to play that fast so I had to make some adjustment."

Kyrgios took down his more fancied opponent in two sets to reach the last four for the first time in a ATP Masters 1000 event, riding a break in the first game of the match all the way to victory.

"I knew it would be a tough match. Milos has played great the last couple of weeks and the only person he's lost to is Djokovic so I knew it would be a tough task," Kyrgios said.

"I played really well out here, the crowd was a lot of fun, the atmosphere was really good and I thought the level of tennis was really good as well.

"To be honest I didn't think I was going to break during the match but I broke him in the first game. I came out really energetic and I got pretty lucky and that definitely made me more relaxed and made me play my game a little bit easier."—Reuters



Japan's Kei Nishikori celebrates during his match against Great Britain's Andy Murray during Davis Cup World Group First Round at Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham on 6 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Messi draws 40 million followers on Instagram

BUENOS AIRES — Argentinian soccer star Lionel Messi now has 40 million followers on the Instagram social network.

"We've reached 40 million fans here on Instagram. Thanks everyone!" wrote the Argentine national team on his account, leomessi, on Thursday.

On Instagram, Messi mainly posts family pictures, of his wife Antonella and his two children, while shying away from showing off his lifestyle.

On Facebook, the Barcelona star already has 84 million followers.

One of his most recent Instagram posts was made a couple of weeks ago to announce the launch of his new website, Messi.com. However, Messi is still far from being the most followed Instagrammer since singer Selena Gomez is followed by 71.8 million.—Xinhua