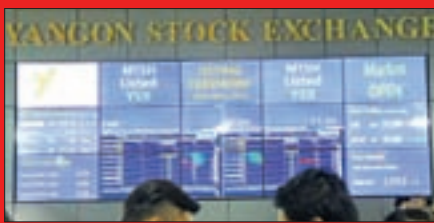


THILAWA SEZ SHARES SOAR ON ITS DEBUT TO A HIGH OF K50,000

PAGE 3



KASON FESTIVAL SHOWS BUDDHISM IS GREEN

PAGE 8-9

CHIN AND RAKHINE PREPARE



Cyclone Roanu as of 20 May at 6am.
SOURCE: WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANISATION.

Jaiden Coonan

MYANMAR'S Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) has issued an 'orange' alert for Cyclone Roanu as it moves through the Bay of Bengal. Roanu is set to make land-fall over Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh tomorrow evening, it will cross into Myanmar's Chin state as it recedes.

Disaster awareness is underway in Chin and Rakhine states.

Chief Editor of the Chinland Herald, Nhge Pi told *The Global New Light of Myanmar* that the government has been using the DMH warnings to warn the state.

"The DMH has also been alerting Pastors in the state to inform villages that the storm will be moving across the state," said Nhge Pi.

Adding, "The people don't seem to know how serious this storm may be."

Henri, a worker for the NGO Marie Stopes, told *The Global New Light of Myanmar* that it had been raining for three days in Chin and that he hadn't seen the sun for two days.

"Most people have been following the news on social media from DMH updates, they know that there is a storm coming," he said.

Northern Rakhine state is also preparing for Roanu, Maung Win

Thein of Maungdaw told *The Global New Light of Myanmar* that people have been stocking up on supplies and staying in doors.

"The local authorities have been driving around town with loud speakers on trucks alerting people about the storm," he said. He added that he hopes there are evacuation plans for when the cyclone hits.

The reasoning for upgrading the storm warning to 'orange' is due to how close it will be to the Myanmar border, Hla Tun, Deputy Director of DMH told *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.

See page 4 >>

Myanmar cannot produce adequate hepatitis B vaccines

MYANMAR cannot yet produce an adequate supply of hepatitis B vaccines for children, said Union Minister for Health Dr Myint Ht-way at a Pyithu Hluttaw session yesterday.

But, the ministry has adequately provided children with a combined vaccine set to be given at two, four and six months of age to protect them against five major childhood diseases, said the Union minister.

The ministry, if necessary, will purchase safe and effective hepatitis B vaccines to vaccinate the children with the use of its funds, he added.

According to the Union Minister, the Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory under the Ministry of Industry is manufacturing hepatitis B vaccines for adults.

The Union minister also elaborated on measures being taken in regard to imported medicine, saying that the ministry has proper scrutiny over medicines imported by companies.

In March of this year three newborns died and seven were taken to the Yankin Children's Hospital for intensive care after hepatitis B vaccinations in Bago. In that incident, a total of 28 infants were given hepatitis B vaccines bought from a pharmacy store in Bago that were later revealed to be defective.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Russian President Vladimir Putin shows way to Myanmar's President U Htin Kyaw during welcoming ceremony for heads of the delegations at the Russia-ASEAN summit in Sochi, Russia on 20 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia-ASEAN summit held in Sochi

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw delivered an address at Russia-ASEAN Summit in Sochi yesterday, expressing the summit as a landmark in ASEAN-Russia relations, saying that Russia is an important partner for ASEAN member nations.

"It is delightful Russia lays emphasis upon ASEAN's cen-

trality and Russian's participation in ASEAN-led processes contributes a lot to regional peace and development," said the president in his address.

President U Htin Kyaw went on to say that they have common views in economic cooperation that they would cooperate in overcoming the global economic

difficulty, that Myanmar is exerting all-out effort to establish regional economic community, that they will continue to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, that effort will be directed toward development of small and medium enterprises and that they would able to see Russia invest in energy and food sectors

in ASEAN region.

President U Htin Kyaw continued to say that a cultural and art cooperation agreement between Russia and Myanmar has been signed in 2015, that measures have been taken to promote cultural and art cooperation following the said agreement, and

See page 3 >>

MPs debate third revised bill on ward or village-tract administration law

REPRESENTATIVES began debating a bill to revise the ward or village-tract administration law for third time submitted by U Min Oo of Bago Region Constituency 6 during the Amyotha Hluttaw session yesterday.

Regarding the bill, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than allowed MPs to have an extra five minutes in their discussions.

In his view on the qualification of ward or village-tract administrator, U Kyaw Ni Naing of Shan State Constituency 11 suggested that the original provision that says ward or village-tract should be a person who has a qualification of fair education should be approved instead of the Bill Committee's amendment to the law that says administrators shall need only primary education.

U Kyaw Myint Oo of Mandalay Region Constituency 10 called for a point that read that an administrator can be removed



U Kyaw Myint Oo of Mandalay Region Constituency No (10).
PHOTO: MNA

following complaints by 30 per cent of households living in the ward or village-tract to be added to law.

In her discussion, Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Lat of Bago Region Constituency 3 expressed her support for the third revised bill in conformity with democratic



Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Lat of Bago Region Constituency No (3).
PHOTO: MNA

standards but suggested that an administrator be elected by the casting of a secret vote by household members over the age of 18.

Major Myo Aung, Defense Services personnel Amyotha Hluttaw representative, highlighted the importance of the sections related to guest registration,

expressing concerns over possible outbreaks of security breaches that can weaken legal protection for people.

In his discussion, U Htay Oo of Yangon Region Constituency 2 stressed the need to amend a provision that defines a household head, suggesting that it not be required to have a household registration form to be a household head as there are many people with no household registration and citizenship scrutiny cards in remote areas.

U Myo Win of Mon State Constituency 8 called for a platform to be created for ward or village-tract residents to point out improper any conduct by administrators and suggested that a five-member supervisory board be formed to supervise the election of the administrator. He further suggested that the board receive complaints and control administrators under close supervision.—*Myanmar News Agency*

King Thibaw Centenary Ceremonies to be held in Mandalay and Ratnaginri

KING Thibaw Centenary Ceremonies are to be held in a series of Buddhist ritual ceremonies to mark the 100th death anniversary of the departed king who died on 16 December 1816. King Thibaw, the last king of the Kongbaung dynasty of Burma (now Myanmar), was also the last king in the history of Burma who passed away during the time of his exile in the port town of Ratnagiri off the Arabian Sea in the State of Maharashtra in India.

In an exclusive interview with the Global New Light of Myanmar, Mr C.Ruthnaswamy, Secretary-General of the Buddhist Cultural Foundation (India) on a visit to Yangon said that King Thibaw was a religious man who studied Buddhist text as a Prince. Later, towards the end of his life, he built a Buddhist Temple in Ratnagiri, the place of his exile.

The Buddhist Cultural Foundation (India) and the Committee for Centenary Celebrations (Myanmar) headed by Mr Soe Win, a descendant of the king, will be holding a series of Buddhist religious ceremonies in Ratnagiri and in Mandalay for the king.

Mr Ruthnaswamy went on to say that the Buddhist Cultural Foundation (India) had earlier in November 2015 held an international conference in New Delhi on Acharya Bodhidharma, popularly known as Damo, who in Japan and China founded Zen Buddhism in the 6th century CE.—*GNLM*

Citizenship scrutiny issue put on record after long debate at Pyithu Hluttaw

THE motion concerning the issue of citizenship scrutiny was put on record at the Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday after the voting turned to be 154 votes for and 228 against, with 7 abstentions.

Daw Khin Saw Wai brought the motion before parliament stressing that her proposal was national, not regional.

"The issue of citizenship scrutiny is a national concern, and it is not specific to Rakhine State alone," she said.

Labour, Immigration and Population Union Minister U Thein Swe proposed putting the issue on record, saying that the scrutiny process is included in his

ministry's 100-day plan.

In his discussion about the motion, U Aung Kyaw Zan of the Pauktaw constituency described the issue as unconnected with racial and religious matters as other people might have thought, putting the blame on illegal immigrants. He also called for the exercise of the Myanmar Citizenship Law 1892 in the scrutiny process, stressing that the law is up to standard.

MPs from Hlegu, Myauk U and Myaybon constituencies spoke in support of the proposal, calling for a prompt action for citizenship scrutiny to ensure national security and rule of law in

the new democracy.

Failure to implement the citizenship scrutiny process would amount to the inability to reinforce the rule of law, U Pe Than of the Myaybon constituency said, citing the government's refusal to acknowledge the existence of the Rohingya race.

"They (the government) evicted their own citizens - squatting in huts on vacant lands in the name of the law, so their excuse for not carrying out the citizenship scrutiny at the refugee shelters for Bengalis is somewhat ridiculous to hear," he said.

Union Minister U Thein Swe responded that the undertaking

of citizenship scrutiny required security and stability. He pledged greater transparency in the scrutiny process to be conducted across the country on a national scale after the establishment of scrutiny committees at different levels in all states and regions. He called for collective cooperation in the process, which he said would present challenges.

In the time of the previous government, immigration officers and police officers were attacked during their mission to take a national census in 14 townships of Rakhine State. The process was put on hold for security reason.—*Myanmar News Agency*

India, Myanmar to boost bilateral trade

MYANMAR and India are anticipating an increased volume in trade over the coming years, said Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint.

Prospects for boosting bilateral trade were discussed at the India-Myanmar business summit in Yangon last Thursday in which a 25-member business delegation, led by Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry of India. Myanmar business groups attended.

The three-day meeting was hosted by the Indian Embassy in Yangon and ended yesterday.

A 25-member business delegation from India attended the

event under the theme: "Forging partnerships: How Myanmar — India business relations can contribute to the development of Myanmar."

The two neighbouring countries have pledged to promote the annual trade volume which reached 1.4 billion kyat last year.

During the meeting, all sectors were discussed but farm produce was the main topic. To be able to promote the trade sector the main road linking the two countries will be upgraded. The two countries will co-operate on exporting products and enhancing small and medium businesses, it was reported.—*Ko Moe*

Myanmar delegation to attend Int'l Labour Conference 2016

A MYANMAR delegation will attend the 105th session of the International Labour Conference scheduled to be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 30 May to 10 June, according to a press conference yesterday.

As each delegation is only allowed five minutes discussion time at the conference, prioritised points focusing on social protection will be presented at the session, said U Maung Maung, President of the Confederation of Trade Unions-Myanmar, highlighting the importance of social protection for workers and farmers as well.

The president of the CTUM,



U Maung Maung, President of the Confederation of Trade Unions-Myanmar (Centre) talks to media. PHOTO: SOE SOE YU

will be present at the conference as a worker delegate together with worker advisers U San Thein, U Soe Min Aung, Dr Ye Maung, Daw Khaing Zar Aung

and Daw Phyo Sandar Soe.

The conference is set to host discussions on global supply chains and to review the social justice declaration.—*Soe Soe Yu*

Thilawa SEZ shares soar on its debut to a high of K50,000

KO Moe

THE Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Limited that has become the second company to trade on the Yangon Stock Exchange began share sales with its stock reaching a price of K50,000 per share yesterday.

Despite the MTSH beginning sales with an opening price of K40,000 a share, its shares were traded on the exchange at the price of K50,000 following an increase in demand. The MTSH sold 5,340 shares in the morning.

The MTSH was established in March 2013 when the company sold K2.14 million in shares in total, setting the price at K10,000 per share, through bank branches across the country from 3 March and 9 April, 2014.

During yesterday's stock trading, 4,083 shares of the First Myanmar Investment Co Ltd. (FMI) were sold at the opening price of K31,500 per share.

According to sources, Myanmar Citizens Bank, First Private Bank Ltd, Great Horkham Public Co Ltd and the Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation Ltd (MAPCO) are on track to go public on the Yangon Stock Exchange in the future.—GNLM



Electronic board showing stock prices at the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in Yangon 20 May. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Floating dyke building and dredging in NyaungOo suspended

Aung Thant Khaing

WITH river waters rising, the floating dyke building and dredging operation in NyaungOo water way have been forced to suspend operations for a while, said U Aung Myo Khaing, deputy director from the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems (DWIR).

The department has been implementing Component-3 of the Ayeyawady Integrated River Basin Management Project with loans from the World Bank. To facilitate ship transportation in NyaungOo, dredging and floating dyke building activities was

launched on 1 April, 2016. These activities have been suspended for a while starting from 12 May because of the increased river water. Activity will resume as soon as the river water recedes, said U Aung Myo Khaing.

There are two floating dykes with a length of 550 metres and 420 metres each. The river water has risen by about six metres while implementing the project. Only 15 per cent of the project is completed. Dredging has also been put off.

Implementing the project is dependant on the weather. The Pakokku water way improvement is also included in the

project, provided by the World Bank. This task will be continued without delay, he added.

Downstream and upstream dredging in Pakokku water way is expected to take three months.

The total cost for the project on both the NyaungOo and Pakokku water ways stands at around US\$ 1.2 million, according to the figures of the department.

There are cruises for tourists along the Ayeyawady-NyaungOo water way. To ensure safety of the vessels in the river, a project under Component-3 which will give the water way markers in the river will be included.

The Ayeyawady River is being dredged in NaungOo. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING



Russia-ASEAN summit held in Sochi

>> From page 1

that future will see increased exchange of cultural troupes, greater cooperation in human resources development and increased numbers of cultural exhibitions and festivals.

In conclusion, the president said that he is delighted to see the establishment of ASEAN community, vowing to further strengthen ASEAN-Russia relations.

The summit also released the Sochi declaration which includes further promotion of friendship, cooperation in political and security sector, in economic sector, social and cultural sector, in making efforts for bridging gap of development and implementation of agreements.

Representatives from 16 nations including Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, China and Singapore met in Sochi on Thursday at the invitation of The Business Forum of the Russian Federation to discuss the potential for developing trade and economic relations, strengthening investment potential and intensifying business cooperation between Russia and ASEAN members. 400 delegates in total attended the summit with President U Htin Kyaw personally attending to represent the peoples and interests of Myanmar.

As part of the forum, sever-

al key international agreements were signed and Russian participants held bilateral meetings with the visiting representatives. The Forum participants noted that there is enormous potential to develop cooperation between Russia and the ASEAN nations. According to the Russian Export Centre (REC), "it can be said with a degree of certainty that within five years Russia could hold an up to 10% share of the export market of the ASEAN nations."

The Business Forum opened with two panel discussions. The panel "Towards New ASEAN — Russian Economic Partnership: Essential Tools, Mechanisms and Drivers of Growth" was moderated by Russian First Deputy Minister of Economic Development Alexey Likhachev and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Indonesia Rosan Perkasa Roeslani. The second panel session, "Russia's Export Potential: Implementing Strategic Priorities of ASEAN Member States" was devoted to searching for new opportunities for Russian companies to take part in the national industrial development programs of the ASEAN nations and to establish the financial tools required for Russian business to take part in different projects in the region.—GNLM

Myanmar film industry in need of reform

MEMBERS of the Myanmar film community have said they will seek to fulfil the requirements needed to reform motion picture production and censorship in Myanmar.

"Whether it is the rough or final cut editing processes, censorship in Myanmar needs to be carried out systematically," said Myanmar Academy director Wine during a gathering at the Myanmar Motion Picture Association on 15 May.

"How many final edits are actually submitted to the censorship board? It's evident that current producers are submitting rough cut productions in a bid to keep to deadlines and ensure their film goes through the censors as quickly as possible. There are cases whereby only audio files are first submitted for censorship approval. An order should be passed to levy heavy fines if the image and audio have not been synchronised by the time of screening in cinemas,"

said the director.

Wine also spoke about the importance of high quality film production.

Films are screened in Myanmar in order of release, but it is known this system causes delays in the release of films, with over 40 motion pictures currently waiting their turn to be screened.

"We need some fresh artistic talent. We need to be more contemporary. If this issue isn't handled properly, then we won't see the release of quality motion pictures. Just take the world of video as an example. A policy with regulations must be created," added the Myanmar Academy director.

Lu Min, chair of the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation, said international censorship bodies do not censor rough cut edits, unlike in Myanmar.

"The censorship board has to watch over 1,000 motion pictures a month. There are some instances whereby the censorship board allows some sensitive scenes to

pass through. Some instances seem to be related to social issues. Expenses are incurred when the censorship board instructs a movie to be released on DVD. There are times when heads of the censorship body will just preview a rough cut when producers express the financial costs they would incur in having to re-shoot a scene that has been cut by the censors. This kind of activity is unique to Myanmar. In other countries around the world, authentication of censorship is only issued once a final cut has been checked," explained Lu Min.

Lu Min also said efforts will be made to reform the film screening and censorship systems in the country.

Following a major decline in the industry, Myanmar saw a surge in motion film productions in 2015, but there are concerns that the emergence of low-quality productions could be the end of the motion picture industry.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Spokespersons for ministries announced

THE government has announced the names of the spokespersons for its ministries on the website of the Ministry of Information at www.moi.gov.mm and on the Facebook named MOI Webportal Myanmar.

The spokespersons will meet for the first time at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 May to discuss ways to handle media interviews, issue press releases and give press conferences.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Chin and Rakhine Prepare

>> From page 1

"I want the people of Rakhine and Chin States to know that there will be very heavy rains and strong winds, with landslides occurring in Chin State. I want them to know that this is a very serious storm," said Hla Tun.

Don Price, Emergency Operations Center Advisor from USAID told *The Global New Light of Myanmar* that the right wing of the cyclone as it moves forward holds most of the wind and rain, and that like Komen, Roanu will make landfall in Bangladesh but

Myanmar will receive most of the wind and rain.

As Roanu makes landfall wind speeds are set to climb as high as 95 km p/h (60 miles) in Rakhine and Chin States. The depression developed into a cyclone Wednesday afternoon, the eye of the storm has been moving north-east-west of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh as of yesterday afternoon.

Before forming the depression caused widespread flooding in Sri Lanka, killing 58 and displacing 130,000 people.

Police arrest man on suspicion of murdering his boss

POLICE have arrested a man who allegedly killed his boss on Thursday.

When interrogated, Win Kyaw alias Aung Than, 19, admitted that he had killed the victim during a brawl.

After killing him, the suspect left the corpse on Pynma Myiang road, Thuwunna, Thingangyun township, Yangon. We are still investigating who else might be involved in this case, said Police Major U Thein Aung from Minglar Taung Nyunt township.

A man from Pynma Myaing called the police when he discovered the victim's body. The police identified the victim as U Zaw Zaw, 36, from Minglar Taung Nyunt township. The victim was an imam when he lived in Thadwe. We suspected his aide was responsible as we found wounds on the suspect's hand (a common indicator of high intensity knife use), said police Major Thein Aung. Thuwunna police opened the case under section 302 of the Criminal Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Win Kyaw alias Aung Than.
PHOTO: MPF

Man stabbed to death in quarrel



A local showing place of incident. PHOTO: YE YE (PYINMANA)

A MAN has been charged with murder after allegedly killing his brother-in-law named U Tin Sein, 45, from Shwe Pyi Tha village on Monday, local police said.

According to an investigation, Myo Ko, 23, was playing cane ball when his brother-in-law asked him to herd cows. Myo Ko refused to herd cows at that

time and said he would do it later, causing an argument which quickly became heated. The suspect's brother-in-law began to beat him with a stick for his impertinence. Myo Ko retaliated by stabbing the victim with a knife. The police have filed charges against Myo Ko.—*Ye Ye (Pyinmana)*

Woman killed by landslide

A WOMAN was killed by a landslide following torrential rain in Thantaunggyi township, Kayin State on Wednesday.

According to rain records, it had been raining the whole night in Thantaunggyi town. Daw Naw Bwe Paw and her daughter were sleeping in their room when a landslide hit their home because of heavy rain. The landslide killed Daw Naw Bwe Paw.

Her daughter, called Snow White, 8, sustained minor injuries. Local officers and staff have donated K200,000 to the family.—*(Township IPRD)*

Crime NEWS

Vehicle collides with lamp post, bridge and house

A 22-wheel vehicle crashed into a lamp post, bridge and a house on Kwinkon-Phado road, Kyaukdaga township, Bago region yesterday, leaving two injured.

The vehicle was being driven by one Aung Lut Lat, 20, who crashed into the house of U Myint Oo when the driver lost

control near Hsay Yo Khin village. The accident badly damaged the lamp post, the bridge and the house.

The accident injured U Myint Oo and his wife while they were sleeping inside the house. The driver Aung Lut Lat has been charged by police.—*Khin Ko (Kyaukdaga)*

Yaba and heroin seized



Sai Hsaw. PHOTO: MPF

LOCAL police in Lashio seized heroin weighing 130 grams hidden inside 13 soap container boxes. One Haik Chan was caught with the heroin at the Nawngkhio entrance gate on Wednesday.

Similarly, police in Loilem discovered 2,000 yaba pills on motorcycle driver Sai Hsaw at milepost 10, Pinlon-Laikha road, Loilem township.

A combined team comprising officers and staff from Mawlamyine police searched the home of one Ye Htut on Sein Chai road, Myoma 4 ward, Mudon town and discovered 111 yaba pills.

Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business

Nearly 1,400 hotels, guest houses operating in Myanmar

THE number of hotels and guest houses up until the end of this April have reached 1,345 with 52,466 rooms across the country, according to official figures released by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Since 2011 the ministry has been relaxing restrictions relating to the issuance of operating licences to both local and foreign investors in the hospitality industry in order to provide better services for international visitors.

There are 338 hotels and guest houses with 16,218 rooms in Yangon, 176 hotels with 7,071 rooms in Mandalay, 63 hotels with 5,111 rooms in the capital Nay Pyi Taw, 32 hotels with 888 rooms in Taunggyi, 85 hotels with 2,621 rooms in Inlay and 81

hotels with 2,761 rooms in Bagan.

Tour operators say that tourist arrivals are likely to increase this year as a master plan, designed to promote the sector, is being implemented by the ministry.

The number of both local and international businesspeople wishing to operate service businesses in the country has also increased month by month.

Last year's tourist arrivals reached a total of 4.68 millions. That number is expected to be surpassed this year.

The ministry has permitted 2,091 licences to tour companies, 536 tourist transport licences, 3939 tour guide licences and 2369 local tour guide licences.—*ML/Union Daily*



Shangri-La Hotel seen in Yangon.
PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE



Singaporean Ambassador Mr Robert Chua formally opens the special 2016 Travel Fair of Singapore Airlines. PHOTO: EMC

Singapore Airlines organises special 2016 Travel Fair

SINGAPORE Airlines has organised a 2016 Travel Fair at the Park Royal Hotel that will today and tomorrow, offer customer special deals to Singapore and over 60 other destinations around the world.

Attractively priced Business Class, Premium Economy Class and Economy Class promotions fares, departing from both Yangon and Mandalay, will be sold during the event.

Organised in conjunction with trade partners Sabre, AYA Bank, Changi Airport Group, Gardens by the Bay as well

as eight key appointed travel agents, customers who visit the travel fair will receive Singapore Airlines branded giveaways and will stand a chance to win tickets to Bali in a lucky draw.

During the 2015 Travel Fair, the airline sold more than 2,000 tickets to Singapore and other destinations.

Currently, Singapore Airlines and Silk-Air flies 20 weekly services between Yangon and Singapore, and three weekly services between Mandalay and Singapore.—*GNLM*

Philippines invites Myanmar to carry out paddy joint venture

THE Philippines-based agriculture company SLAC has invited local Myanmar agribusiness operators to enter a joint venture in paddy growing.

Currently, trial plantings of two different strains of high yielding paddy are being carried out in Dagon in Yangon by the Filipino company.

The company attempted to form a strong business relationship by way of a joint venture with

Myanmar citizens through a contract system. The company plans to export their product to its native country which currently faces agriculture losses because of climate change. The new strains can better survive in bad weather and yield 30 per cent more than other strains. Myanmar enjoys fertile land that makes it suitable for growing paddy nation-wide. This is one of the given reasons for SLAC to make efforts to cooperate with local busi-

nesspeople. The amount of rice exported by Myanmar is also expected to rise in the future if the JV project is successful.

The demand for Myanmar rice in Europe has risen this year.

Myanmar exported about 1.8 million tonnes of rice, including 400,000 tonnes of broken rice, over the 2014-2015 fiscal year, up from 1.27 million over the 2013-2014 FY and 1.46 million over the FY 2012-2013.—*PPN/Union Daily*

Industrial Zones development co-operation committee formed

AN industrial zones development co-operation committee has been formed under the guidance of the Federation of Industrial Manufactures (FIM) with a view to co-ordinating and aiding co-operation between and among industrial supervisory committees to find solutions to common problems.

The industrial zones development cooperation committee includes a chairman and seven joint chairmen, four secretaries

and 52 members from 29 industrial zones of Yangon Region.

Small and medium sized enterprises are in the majority in Yangon industrial zones. The industrial zones are faced with difficulties relating to infrastructure. The committee has been formed to fulfill the needs of the industrial zones and to effectuate the economic development of the entrepreneurs of the zones, said U Aung Thein, the vice chairman of FIM.

The committee needs to

make efforts for the required laws and policies to be formulated. It will report on the difficulties of SMEs to responsible persons. It will conduct to build the new industrial zones. It will also have to upgrade the zones to meet international industrial zones standards. The industrial development committee will have to submit reports to the ministry concerned and the regional government in a timely manner.—*PTK/Union Daily*

Viet Nam rights record puts Obama in a fix as US seeks new Asian alliance

HANOI/WASHINGTON — With police watching his home around the clock, Vietnamese blogger Huynh Ngoc Chanh sneaked out through a back door and reappeared the next day in a public square to hold a one-man, anti-government protest.

But having been given the slip once, police wasted no time in nabbing him after only five minutes.

It was one of many free-speech experiments squashed by Viet Nam's communist government, underscoring the dilemma US President Barack Obama has ahead of a visit on Monday in which human rights will be central to decisions about how far Washington is willing to engage its former enemy.

Chanh got lucky. Unlike many dissidents, he was not arrested for Sunday's demonstration in Ho Chi

Minh City, which got him 12,000 Facebook "likes" for making a stand against what he calls an endemic problem of abusive police.

"There are six men watching my house right now," said Chanh, 64, who was escorted home and told to stay there.

"Sometimes, they stop me from leaving, other times they let me go out but they follow me everywhere."

His sit-in came as rights groups and activists accuse police of using heavy-handed measures to stop protests held in cities the past two Sundays to demand government answers over an unexplained environmental disaster that caused mass fish deaths last month. The timing of protests could not be worse for Viet Nam. The White House on Thursday said Obama was still grappling



A security personnel (R) films Huynh Ngoc Chanh (L) holding a sign which reads, "Protecting the environment is more important than economic development" during a demonstration demanding cleaner waters in the central regions after mass fish deaths in recent weeks, in Hanoi, Viet Nam, on 1 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

with a decision on whether to lift a lethal arms embargo on Hanoi, one of the last vestiges of the Viet Nam War.

The United States has been clear that its removal hinges on progress on rights.

Viet Nam wants closer military ties and access to US

defence technology as a deterrent against Beijing's assertiveness in the South China Sea, over which the neighbours are bitterly at odds.

Though that fits in with the US strategy of containing China, Viet Nam's jailing

and intimidation of dissidents remains an obstacle to Washington's push to turn its former enemy into its newest Asian ally. Obama's top Asia adviser Daniel Kritenbrink on Wednesday told reporters human rights would be a key factor in "whatever arms

sales decisions we may or may not make".

Obama will not try to duck the issue. He is expected to meet dissidents and will address human rights in Viet Nam "both publicly and in private", Kritenbrink said.—Reuters

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

Australian police raid opposition Labour in tight election campaign

SYDNEY — Australia's election campaign was hijacked on Friday by police raids on the Labour opposition, over a suspected leak of documents citing cost blow-outs in a multi-billion dollar broadband upgrade, sparking concerns about abuse of power.

Labour questioned the timing of the raids and whether the government had put pressure on police, while Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the head of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) rejected any suggestion of political interference.

The controversy capped the second week of campaigning ahead of a national election set for 2 July, in which polls indicate a tightly contested race between Labour and Turnbull's Liberal-National coalition government.

The unprecedented timing of the raids, which carried on until the early hours of Friday morning, also led to concerns it could have a negative impact on whistleblowers.

"This is about the right for the public to know the truth. Mr Turnbull is going to extraordinary lengths to stop Australians finding out the truth about

the cost of the NBN (National Broadband Network)," said Labour leader Bill Shorten.

"He is going after whistleblowers and he is smearing his political opponents. The public have a right to know the truth and whistleblowers have a right to protection."

Turnbull said that he had no prior notice of the raids and chastised Labour for questioning the integrity of police.

"The first I heard of the AFP investigation was yesterday when I was advised by the Justice Minister shortly after he'd been advised by the Commissioner," he told reporters.

Turnbull was communications minister for more than two years before deposing Tony Abbott in a party coup last year. He drew criticism for his decision to scale back the A\$38 billion broadband programme, stopping short of connecting homes directly to the network amid cost overruns.

NBN aims to connect 93 per cent of Australian homes and workplaces with optical fibre, providing broadband services in urban and regional areas. It was created in 2009 by the Aus-



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull (R) speaks alongside Labour leader Bill Shorten during their first televised debate in Sydney, Australia, on 13 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

tralian government and is expected to be ready by 2020.

The AFP said in a statement that it had informed both the government and opposition before conducting the raids, as is standard procedure.

"In regard to government and political influence that has been commented on this morning, there has been no influence, no influence on the AFP in the conduct of this investigation," AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin told reporters.

University of Sydney Emeritus Professor of Political Science and the Media, Rod Tiffen, said that the raids, coming as they have in the midst of a federal election campaign, were "unprecedented" and that it was unclear how it would play out.

"We, it's certainly extraordinary. I've never know anything at all like it in an election campaign," he told Reuters. "I think that's really the key question: whether it was politically motivated in some sense."—Reuters



Actors perform a play at the Choeung Ek memorial during the annual “Day of Anger”, where people gather to remember those who perished during the communist Khmer Rouge, regime in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 20 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Cambodians gather to pray, offer gifts for ‘killing fields’ dead

PHNOM PENH — Hundreds of people gathered on Friday at one of Cambodia’s infamous killing fields to remember the two million people who died under the communist Khmer Rouge regime.

Officials and relatives laid flowers and gave offerings on the “Day of Remembrance”, once known as the “Day of Hatred”, and students performed a re-enactment of Khmer Rouge soldiers taking prisoners.

The 1975-79 ultra-Maoist regime killed a fifth of the popula-

tion through execution, torture and starvation in a bid to turn Cambodia into a communist state. Dictator Pol Pot was toppled from power when Viet Nam invaded the country in 1979.

“During my prayers, I said to those who were killed that nowadays the government cooperates with the Khmer Rouge court to try to find justice for all the victims so they might rest in peace,” Khmer Rouge era survivor Yi Kim Seur said at Choeung Ek, about 15 km (9 miles) outside the capital,

Phnom Penh.

A hybrid UN-Cambodian tribunal has reached verdicts in three high-profile cases since it was set up almost a decade ago but new cases have faced resistance. Kaing Guek Eav, alias “Duch”, the head of the notorious Tuol Sleng prison where as many as 14,000 people were executed, received a life sentence in 2010.

Senior Khmer Rouge leaders Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan have also been handed life sentences.—*Reuters*

China demands end to US surveillance after aircraft intercept

WASHINGTON/BEIJING — Beijing demanded an end to US surveillance near China on Thursday after two of its fighter jets carried out what the Pentagon said was an “unsafe” intercept of a US military reconnaissance aircraft over the South China Sea.

The incident, likely to increase tension in and around the contested waterway, took place in international airspace on Tuesday as the plane carried out “a routine US patrol,” a Pentagon statement said.

A US Defence official said two Chinese J-11 fighter jets flew within 50 feet (15 metres) of the US EP-3 aircraft. The official said the incident took place east of Hainan island.

“Initial reports characterised the incident as unsafe,” the Pentagon statement said.

“It must be pointed out that US military planes frequently carry out reconnaissance in Chinese coastal waters, seriously endangering Chinese maritime security,” China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei Hong told reporters.

“We demand that the United States immediately cease this type of close reconnaissance activity to avoid having this sort of incident happening again,” Hong said.

Speaking at a regular press briefing, he described the Pentagon statement as “not true” and said the actions of the Chinese aircraft were “completely in keeping

with safety and professional standards.”

“They maintained safe behavior and did not engage in any dangerous action,” Hong said.

The encounter comes a week after China scrambled fighter jets as a US Navy ship sailed close to a disputed reef in the South China Sea.

Another Chinese intercept took place in 2014 when a Chinese fighter pilot flew acrobatic maneuvers around a US spy plane.

The intercept occurred days before President Barack Obama travels to parts of Asia from 21-28 May, including a Group of Seven summit in Japan and his first trip to Viet Nam.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. The Philippines, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims.

Washington has accused Beijing of militarizing the South China Sea after creating artificial islands, while Beijing, in turn, has criticised increased US naval patrols and exercises in Asia.

The Pentagon statement said the Department of Defence was addressing the issue through military and diplomatic channels.

China’s Defence Ministry said in a fax that it was looking into reports on the incident.—*Reuters*

Indonesia to build up military bases in border areas

JAKARTA — Indonesia has set plans to improve the development and reinforce its border areas by building up military bases in the areas, expected of ready to operate next year.

The plan to have military bases in key border areas originally came from President Joko Widodo who previously said that condition in border areas must be changed into maximum level within three years, Indonesia’s Home Minister Tjahjo Kumolo said.

“By 2017, border areas must be reinforced with military bases,” the minister said in his remarks to inaugurate the new office of National Agency of Border Management (BNPP) here on Thursday.

According to the minister, government had initially allocated funds to finance the plan in the last two years. However the allocation continued to decrease as it was used to finance government’s other priorities to develop infrastructure,

health sector and many others.

“The allocation was 16 trillion rupiah (about 1.1 billion US Dollars) last year. This year it deducted to 14 trillion rupiah (about 1 billion US Dollars). It could be further decreased next year as government is still focusing on other priorities,” Tjahjo added.

As the ultimate project, government would make Natuna island near South China Sea into a military base. The other military bases would also be built in the na-

tion’s border area between Bitung and Morotai islands in eastern region, he added.

Government also has plans to build a military base in Saumlaki, an Indonesia’s area close to Timor Leste, the minister said.

To make those would-be operated military bases effective, the minister said that a major military coordination would essentially be required. He added that the navy fleet should no longer be focused their operation from Jakarta and

Surabaya like what they do at present.

Tjahjo said that his ministry would coordinate with the military commander to immediately shift and enhance the military forces in the Natuna, Bitung and Morotai border areas so as to secure and effectively anticipate possible security threats from foreign elements.

“It takes swift moves to prevent security breaches in border areas,” the minister said.—*Xinhua*

Early parliamentary general election in Viet Nam kicks off for remote, border areas

HANOI — Residents in remote and border areas of Viet Nam cast their votes earlier than the nationwide election date to elect deputies to the 14th National Assembly (NA) and People’s Councils at all levels for 2016-2021 tenure.

In central Quang Nam Province (some 650 km south of capital Hanoi), the voting was conducted in 49 polling stations across the province on Thursday, reported Viet Nam’s state-run

news agency VNA.

Also on Thursday, early voting was held at Tho Chau island in southern Kien Giang Province (some 1,220 km south of capital Hanoi). Earlier, voters at border areas in northern Lai Chau Province (some 300 km northwest of capital Hanoi) also cast their votes.

Outcomes of the early voting will be reported to the relevant central agency together with re-

sults of the voting on Sunday.

On Sunday, the general election to elect lawmakers to the country’s parliament and members of all-level people’s councils will officially kick off nationwide.

Voters will cast votes to choose 500 deputies to the 14th NA of Viet Nam among 870 candidates. Meanwhile, Provincial People’s Councils across Viet Nam will have 3,918 deputies to be vied by 6,528 candidates. At the district

level, as many as 24,993 out of 41,777 candidates will be elected as council members. The respective figures for the communal level are 294,055 and 497,312.

The results of the election of deputies to the 14th NA will be announced within 20 days after the election, according to the National Election Council Office.

The first session of the 14th NA is scheduled to take place in July 2016 when state leaders of the

country will be re-elected.

During the final session of the 13th NA, Vietnamese parliament replaced top leadership positions of the country.

On 31 March, Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan became the country’s first NA chairwoman, while Tran Dai Quang was elected the new President on 2 April, and Nguyen Xuan Phuc was elected to become the country’s new Prime Minister on 7 April.—*Xinhua*

Opinion

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Diversity does not mean division

Kyaw Thura

THERE is a widespread assumption that fear is a hard-wired response when people experience close encounters with something fiendish. It is normal to fear the unknown and quiver with indignation. Even educated people are found to commit crime in fury at their own stupidity. This highlights that education is one thing and stupidity is another.

People are inclined to turn to religion when faced with difficulty beyond their control. There is ample evidence that religion effects morality. It is, therefore, absolutely imperative to develop moral instincts through religious faiths. No religion incites hatred against other faiths. All religions maintain their focus on the virtues of love, kindness and generosity. The primary principle of every religion is to bolster the courage to build self-esteem in the hearts of its followers.

From the Buddhist point of view, insanity exists at all levels of society. Therefore, the onus is on all of us to put the break on our lunacy in order to better understand the true essence of religious teachings and moral principles. Only then will we be able to avoid ill consequences of our own misbehaviour. It should be noted that unity in diversity is a matter of the utmost importance in a complex societal structure and cultural context.

The Buddha advised human beings to fear committing wrongdoings and uphold justice, freedom and equality so that societies of different religions can all live together in peace and harmony with each other. The point is that diversity does not necessarily mean division.

Trainees of the Basic and Advanced Aviation courses on study trip



Trainees of Aviation courses seen at an airbase. PHOTO: OFFICE OF COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES

BASIC and Advanced Aviation courses are currently open with the intention of improving the knowledge for students over summer holidays. Trainees of the Basic and Advanced Aviation courses for youths visited the Headquarters of Mingaladon Air Force Base

and Hmawbi Air Force Branch on Tuesday.

During the study trip, officials explained their aviation experiences and how to conduct a flight.

The course will run until Friday. —Office of Commander in Chief of Defence Services

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

THE second month in Myanmar lunar calendar which approximately corresponds to May is the warmest month of Myanmar summer. Right on the line of the Tropic of cancer the sun sheds its rays directly on Myanmar drying up water in all aquatic bodies – lakes, ponds streams and rivers, reducing the entire country to an almost parched land. More heat is generated by evaporation causing perspiration and loss of saline water in human body. Hence there are two Myanmar folk rhymes to describe this weather တန့်ဆူရေကုန်၊ တဆူနီရေခမ်း [In Tagu, water is diminished, in Kason water is dried up.] တဆူနီ၊ နယုန်ဆွေဆွေခန့် [In Kason and Nayon, the heat is unbearable]. But there is no total absence of rain in this month. Rain clouds would occasionally gather to let down some showers, or sometimes unexpected storms would arise introducing pre-monsoon downpours thus relieving all livings of intense heat.

The natural environment begins to turn green under showers. Among all flora that burst out into buds and blooms, in Kason, Saga [Champak Michelia], a yellow gold fragrant flower is traditionally designated the flower of this month. It is the flower of a kind of timber tree that grows wild in the Mt.Popa area in Dry zone in Upper Myanmar which is its habitat.

In the astrological cycle of seasons Kason is called Vrishabha [Taurus] and its zodiacal sign is a Bull. In the nocturnal firmament, appear astride with the moon Witha Kha asterism – a cluster of 14 stars in Libra resembling a Myanmar musical instrument of drum circle (ဒိုင်းခိုင်း).

According to philologists the word Kason is a combination of two words – Ka and Son. Ka means water and son means to pour. So Kason means to pour water. But Pali contend that Kason is derived from Pali word “Kachina” meaning water shortage. Kason is the month of water shortage due to extremely hot weather. Both interpretations are reasonably plausible, because the former implies the supply of water and the latter the demand for it.

In Buddhism, Kason is an auspicious month because of its fullmoon day, on which four major events in the life of Lord Gotama Buddha took place. Firstly, it was on the fullmoon day of Kason that Lord Dipankaya Buddha gave his divine prophesy to the hermit Thumeda that the hermit would become Lord Gotama Buddha. Secondly, it was on the fullmoon day of Kason in the Maha Sakarit year of 68 that baby boy Prince Siddhartha was born of Queen Maha Maya in the forest of Lumbini sal trees. Thirdly, it was on the fullmoon day of Kason in the Maha Sakarit year of 103 that Prince Siddhartha [Bodhisatta], after six

ardous years of practicing austerity as a recluse in the forest of uruvela became enlightened and thus became Lord Gotama Buddha. Fourthly, it was on the fullmoon day of Kason in the maha sakarit year of 148 that Lord Gotama Buddha entered Maha parinivirna [Demise] in the sal tree forest of Kusinagara. Because of these four land marks in the Buddha's life the fullmoon day of Kason is regarded by all Buddhists as most auspicious and fourfold blessed. In Myanmar the full-moon day of Kason is a public holiday as it is marked as Buddha Day. Religious functions are held on this day such as recitation of Parittas, administering of moral precepts by monks and visiting pagodas and shrines by devotees to pay homage and do charity work. In other Buddhist countries this day is called “Vesak Day” which is celebrated by Buddhists by doing religious work such as monks chanting Suttas [The Discourses] and devotees visiting shrines to pray.

There are many evidences in the history of Buddhism to show that Buddhism is green. Prince Siddhartha saw four omens not at his palace but in his royal Park – the Aged, the Infirmary, the Dead, and the Recluse. He renounced his mundane life in quest of truth [Dhamma] and practiced for six years austerities in the forest of Uruvela. Finally, he came under the shade of a Banyan Tree [Ficus Religiosa] seated cross-leggedly on a cushion of 8 bundles of freshly – cut green grass, enlightenment was obtained and Buddha-hood was reached.

The legend has it that at the moment of attaining enlightenment, Maya the Evil [Satan] riding a mighty tusker Elephant Yaung Mardin Mingala with his forces attempted to dislodge the Buddha from his seat. The Buddha did not react. He only called upon the Earth as witness to all his good deeds of merit he had performed in previous lives. Whereupon Earth god “wathonedarei” emerged from the Earth to say “Here are the libation water I have collected in my hair at the performances of good deeds by the Buddha in his all existences”. So saying wathonedarei squeezed his hair producing enormous amount of water that turned into stormy oceanic waves washing away Mara the Evil and all his warriors. Thus we have Buddha images and statues with Bumiphathu mudra [earth-touching style] is the symbol of the First Victory of the Buddha on the fullmoon day of Kason in the Maha Sakarit year of 103.

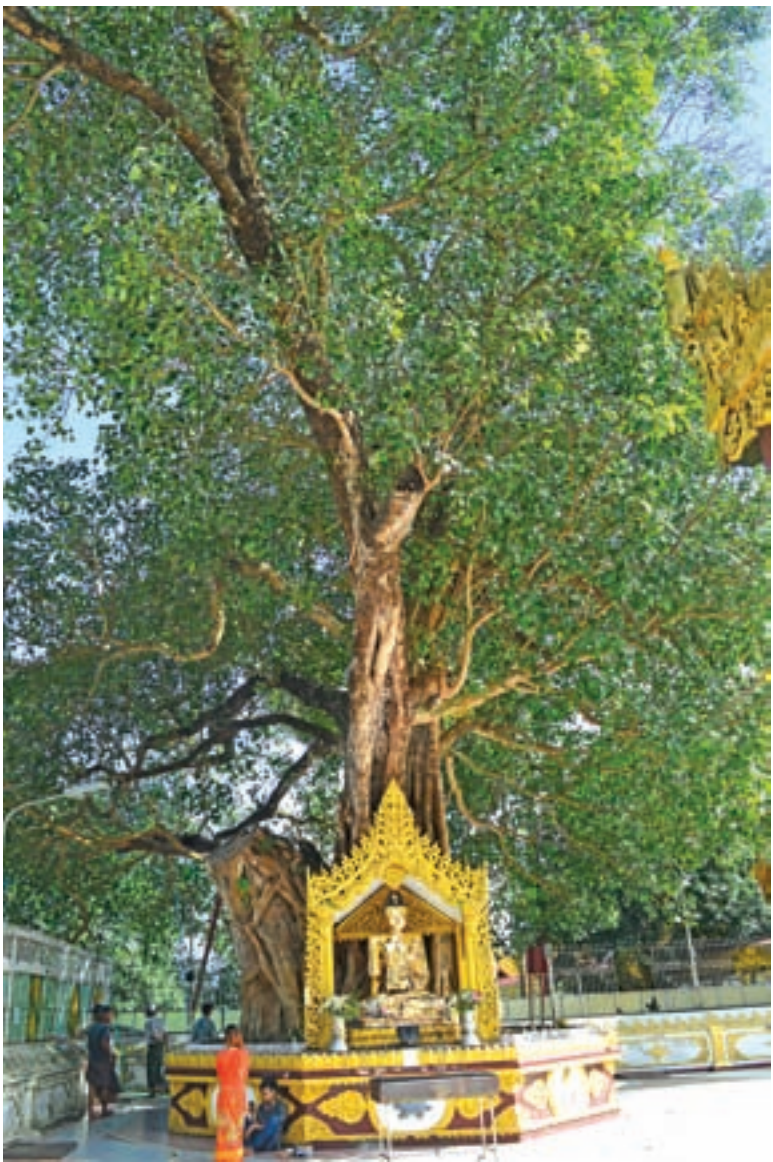
If we study our archaeology and pre-history, we will find that tree worship was one of pre-historic beliefs and it was quite prevalent in stone Ages. Later, it was passed down to early civilizations. Myanmar indigenous races have the custom of worshipping tree god [The guarding spirit of tree] called Yokha-soe

who is believed to be benevolent to humans. When Hindu Brahmanism arrived here, it brought many Hindu deities including tree god. Hindu Bramans revere the Bodhi Tree because they believe that it is one of the abodes of Vishnu, the Maha Deva. Yok kha soe appears quite often in Myanmar fables legends and folk tales. Even in the Jatakas [Buddha's birth stories] we find that tree god plays no small role. In the last life of Gotama Buddha there was one incident which proved the dominance of tree worship at that time. While Bodhisatta was seated in meditation under the shade of a Bodhi Tree, Sujata, the daughter of a rich man of Senani Village came to offer to the Bodhi Tree's Guardian god some boiled concentrated milk she had specially prepared, as a special thanks-giving because her request to have a son made to the tree god of that Bodhi [Banyan Tree] was fulfilled. When she found Bodhisatta sitting under it she thought that he was the tree god appearing. The Bodhisatta part took her offer and let the gold container down the River. In Myanmar, we see little shrines at some big shady trees, with little idols of tree gods and offerings made by believers. Myanmar people respect such trees with such shrines.

In spite of the tradition of tree worship the rite of pouring water on the Bodhi Tree is Buddhistic in origin. There are references in Buddhist literature pertaining to the worship of the Bodhi Tree in the life time of the Buddha. In the Kalinga Jataka of the 13th Nipada which forms a portion of Tipitaka there is mention of planting of a Bodhi tree by Shin Ananda, the disciple of Lord Buddha. How Shin Ananda induced King Kosala and his people to pay homage to the Bodhi Tree was described in it.

There was historic evidence of Bikkuni Sangha Mitta, the daughter of Emperor Asoka, together with her brother Bikkhu Maheindra, sent out as Buddhist missionaries. They cut the branch of Maha Bodhi Tree in Gaya which was shooting out south in previous lives. Ceylon [Lankadipa] lies to the south of India. They planted that branch in Lanka dipa [Sri Lanka]. It grew into a big Tree well known as Dhekhina Sakha Bodhi Tree in the south – now the only surviving original Bodhi Tree. The one at Bodhgaya to-day is the second generation tree as the original tree died of attack by four elements.

As all Buddhas attained enlightenment under shady trees and major events in the last life of Gotama Buddha took place in the forests, devotees regard such trees and forests sacred and they respect them. The 28 Buddhas, Gotama Buddha and 27 Buddhas his seniors all became enlightened under different trees. These trees were not all banyan trees. They belonged to different genus and species. But they all were Bodhi Tree i.e. Tree under which wisdom and enlightenment was attained. Weithabu Buddha became enlightened under the sal tree [Pentame siamensis],



Kakusanda Buddha became enlightened under the shade of Kokko tree [Albizia lebbek]. Konagamana Buddha became enlightened under the shade of Yeythapan tree [Ficus glomerata], Kassapa Buddha became enlightened under the shade of Lin Lun tree [Ficus Religiosa]. All trees under which the Buddhas attained omniscience are called Maha Bodhi Tree. Bodhi is a Pali word meaning “Knowledge” or “Perceiving”. Maha Bodi Tree is classified as a kind of Paribawga Ceti in which priestly utensils used by the Buddhas were enshrined. So the Maha Bodhi is sacred. The act of pouring water on Maha Bodhi Tree is the expression of piety and respect shown to the Buddhas.

Across the country, Maha Bodhi trees are found in the precincts of pagodas and monasteries. They are those grown out of seeds or saplings brought from Bodhgaya in India or Sri Lanka by Myanmar envoys, monks, or VIP personages in different periods of Myanmar history. Rajas of Lanka Dipa [Sri Lanka] used to send to their contemporary Myanmar kings religious objects, sacred Buddha's relics, and presents, including seeds or saplings of Maha Bodhi Trees. Myanmar Kings dispatched religious, trade and political missions to their counter-parts in India and Sri Lanka, Bodhgaya and Kandy for political and trade relations and to carry out their religious works such as repair, renovation, gilding of religious monuments and donation of votive objects like fans, sweeps and flags made of gold and studded with crown jewels. King Bayint sent to donate to the sacred Tooth Relic of Buddha kept at the Kandy Temple a sweep made of his and his chief queen's royal hair with a gold handle studded with crown rubies. Paddy lands were purchased to supply rice for Myanmar monks residing there. There were three sects of Myanmar monks residing in Sri Lanka namely Pauk-Kan or Bagan Nikaya founded in the time of Bagan Period by such scholarly monks sent in Anawrahta's reign later joined by Sapada and Panthaku, Mon or Ramanya Nikaya founded by Mon monks in the time of Queen Shin Saw Pu and her successor King Dhammazedi and Amarapura Nikaya founded by Myanmar monks in the time of Konbaung dynasty especially in the reign of Kings Bodawpaya, Bagyidaw and Mindon. Due to shortage of paddy land in Sri Lanka there was a rule that forbade novices of no land family to become ordained monk. Myanmar kings purchased paddy lands in Sri Lanka and also Myanmar Nikayas there admitted novices of no-land family for ordination. Their food supply was guaranteed by the purchased paddy lands there. Monks and envoys made copies of religious monuments and drawings of Maha Bodhi Trees and brought them home. Myanmar Kings built religious monuments and planted Maha Bodhi Trees at their capitals,

exactly on the designs of their origin in India and Sri Lanka. Sapada Cetis in Bagan, Kalayani Sima [Ordination Hall] in Pegu and many Bodhigons at old capitals still stand as historic evidences today.

The earliest historical evidence of planting Maha Bodhi Tree in Myanmar was found in the reign of King Narapatisithu [1173-1210 A.D.] of Bagan dynasty. It was in his time that one Myanmar monk named Ashin Kassapa Maha Thera went to Sri Lanka and on his return home, he brought back seeds of Maha Bodhi Tree, drawings of Maha Zedi, Lohapathada pythat, and many sacred relics which he gave to the king. Other planters of Maha Bodhi Tree were King Uzana of Pinya dynasty who planted it in 1340 A.D. King Narapati and King Maha Thiha Thura of Inwa dynasty both of whom sent their envoys to Sri Lanka in 1442 A.D. and 1468 A.D. respectively. Their envoys brought home saplings of Maha Bodhi Tree. King Dhammazedi of Mon dynasty planted in 1471 A.D. the seed of Maha Bodhi Tree of Sri Lanka on a hillock now called Bodhi-kone to the north-west of Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon. King Bodawpaya of early Konbaung dynasty sent in 1800 A.D. a party of scholars to Indiato study Maha Bodhi Tree at Bodhgaya. On their return they brought back description and drawings of the sacred Maha Bodhi Tree and two saplings of it presented by its caretakers. The saplings were ceremonially planted by the king himself in the precinct of gigantic

freshness. In Ayeyawady Region near Bogalay Township is another man-made forest called Gantgaw Tahtaung [One thousand Gantgaw trees] [Iron wood mesua Ferrea Linn] were planted.

Buddhist Sayadaw Monks led the organizations of shady trees [Bodhi] planting at various places, on hill range perched plains or islands. The public participated and donors and contributors arrive to give their share of merit.

In the precinct of Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon are the Maha Bodhi Trees – the one at the north-west corner was planted on the day of regaining Myanmar independence 4th January 1948. Next to it on the right is the Bodhi Tree planted in 1905, both were brought from Bodhgaya. There is another Bodhi Tree at the south-east corner [Tuesday Direction] with a brick platform around it. It was planted by head monk မိဇိဆရာတော် Meidi Sayadaw. It is at this tree that the ceremony of pouring water on Kason fullmoon day takes place annually.

The rite of pouring water on the Bodhi tree began on the date and day of the arrival of its seeds or saplings in Myanmar. Earliest mention of this rite was found in the Bagan stone inscription of Thingyi Nyaung OK dated 1201 A.D. Later, Saw Hla Win Phaya Stone Inscription of 1291 A.D. also mentions it. One Ka-chin song of Pinya Period has the mention of the pouring of water on the Banyan tree. Myanmar chronicles and literature have graphic accounts of royal performance of this rite on fullmoon day of Kason. Loka Byu Har [or Inyone Sardon] a famous Treatise on Court Ceremonies and Festivals compiled by Minister Thiri Uzana of Inwa Period described how the King and his court participated in the rite of water pouring at the Maha Bodhi Tree and the festivities that followed it.

One noted poet and minister of Konbaung Period named Letweithondara composed a ratu verse while he was in exile at the Meza hills near Katha. In the second stanza of that poem he described the Kason Nyaung Yey festival he saw in the local village. The first few lines run as follows:—

ပွဲခါညောင်ရေ	At the Nyaung Yey Festival
သွန်းမြဲလေတည်း	Meza people all devout
နို့သေသဖွဲ့	Duly fall in prayer and pour
ထုံးစံလာဖြင့်	Water to the banyan tree.
မဲခါရပ်သွ၊ တောင်းဆုပွဲသည်။	

The above ratu poem proves that Kason festival of watering Bodhi Tree is not confined to the court. It is a public festival in which people from all walks of life take part. In every Buddhist house there is the family shrine altar with a Buddha image and three floral pots called Nyaung Yey Os. Nyaung means Banyan Tree

or Bodhi Tree. Yey means water. O means pot or container. Sprigs of Thabyey [Eugenia] and flowers are placed in these 3 pots dedicated to Triple Gems & wemoHk;yg; -- the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Samgha. There is an old Myanmar greeting “I pray for four health and happiness by offering Thabyey sprigs to the Buddha and pouring water on the Banyan Tree [Bodhi Tree] (ပန်းသရေပြ၊ ညောင်ရေလောင်းလို့ ဘုရားမှာ ဆုတောင်း)။

To-day the best places to watch the ceremony of watering at the Bodhi Tree on fullmoon day of Kason are Shwedagon Pagoda Precinct, Sule Pagoda [where there is one and the only Bodhi tree at the northside with the oldest and still functioning natural fresh water well], Bodhi-gone Pagoda and Shwe Kyet Yet Pagodas at and near Mandalay and other famous pagodas with Bodhi Trees.

At the appointed time either in the morning or evening Monk Sayadaws begin their religious functions—chanting Paritta, administering moral precepts to the gathering and explaining the history and significance of water pouring on Bodhi Tree on full-moon day of Kason. Afterwards follow water pouring individually or group by group while Satuditha feast is served gratis for all Myanmar traditional soft drinks and snacks. Music, songs and dances performed by amateurs and merry-makers keep up the festive mood.

In the countryside Kason festival is held at the village pagoda or monastery where there is a Bodhi tree. Mirthful processions of village maidens in their best are seen skillfully balancing on their heads water pots [some could carry each as many as five to even ten pots arranged gradually] as they wend their way with measured steps to the sacred Bodhi Tree to perform the water pouring rite. Behind them follow a party of village swaines playing amid and percussion instruments and singing folk songs. It provides a social occasion for your people to meet freely.

On this occasion of Kason Festival, it is the customary practice of Myanmar Buddhists to remove fishes and turtles from dry ponds and lakes to where there is plenty of water. This merit is called life saving act of charity.

In ecological parlance, Kason festival of watering Bodhi tree and saving aquatic creatures may be taken as a sort of public activity in the preservation of natural environment.

As peace and solitude are two conducive factors for the successful meditation of Samatha [concentration of mind] and of Vipassana [Insight meditation] to discover truth and reality behind illusions, green natural environment is preferably recommended by Myanmar Buddhist monks.

(Concluded)

Clinton calls Trump too unsteady to be president



US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, US, on 16 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton pivoted to a general election match-up against Republican candidate Donald Trump on Thursday, saying he is dangerously unpredictable and not qualified to be president.

Confident that she is finally close to defeating US Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont for the Democratic nomination, Clinton turned heavy fire on Trump, who has been running about even with her in national polls of voters looking ahead to the 8 November presidential election.

On the Republican side, Trump promoted top aide Paul Manafort to serve as campaign manager and chief strategist, the Trump campaign said. Corey Lewandowski, the Trump aide who has been campaign manager, retains that title and will continue to oversee day-to-day operations, the campaign said.

In addition, Trump has hired veteran Republican lawyer A.B. Culvahouse to help vet potential vice presidential running mates, a

source close to the campaign said.

In a CNN interview, Clinton used the example of the apparent downing of an EgyptAir plane from Paris to Cairo to say that Trump would lack the skills to bring together US allies to respond to global threats.

"I know how hard this job is and I know we need steadiness, as well as strength and smarts in it, and I have concluded that he is not qualified to be president of the United States," Clinton said.

Trump, the Republicans' presumptive presidential nominee, has been intensifying his criticism of Clinton by lobbing personal attacks at her and her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

Clinton, a former US secretary of state, said she would resolutely refuse to respond to Trump's goading. "He can say whatever he wants," she said.

But she said the EgyptAir crash reinforces the need for American leadership and that Trump's proposed temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States has sent the wrong signal

to countries that Washington will need to work with in the fight against Islamic militants.

"He says a lot of things that are provocative, that actually make the important task of building this coalition, bringing everybody to the table and defeating terrorism more difficult," she said.

"It sends a message of disrespect and it sends a message that makes the situation inside those countries more difficult."

Clinton suggested the Democratic race was over because of her nearly insurmountable lead in delegates to the nominating convention, despite Sanders' insistence on staying in the race.

"I will be the nominee for my party," she said. "That is already done, in effect. There is no way that I won't be."

She said Sanders will have to eventually help her unify the Democratic Party after the prolonged nomination fight.

"I am absolutely committed to doing my part, more than my part. But Senator Sanders has to do his part," she said.—*Reuters*

Lacking new ideas, G7 to agree on 'go-your-own-way' approach

SENDAI (Japan) — A rift on fiscal policy and currencies is likely to set the stage for G7 advanced economies to agree on a "go-your-own-way" response to address risks hindering global economic growth at their finance leaders' gathering on Friday.

As years of aggressive money printing stretch the limits of monetary policy, the G7 policy response to anaemic inflation and subdued growth has become increasingly splintered.

Finance leaders gathering in

Sendai, northeast Japan, sought advice from prominent academics, including Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Shiller, on ways to boost growth in an informal symposium ahead of an official G7 meeting on Friday.

Participants of the symposium agreed that instead of relying on short-term fiscal stimulus or monetary policy, structural reforms combined with appropriate investment are solutions to achieving sustainable growth, a G7 source said. If so, that would

dash Japan's hopes to garner an agreement on the need for coordinated fiscal action to spur global demand. Germany showed no signs of responding to calls from Japan and the United States to boost fiscal stimulus, instead warning of the dangers of excessive monetary loosening. "There is high nervousness in financial markets" fostered by huge government debt and excess liquidity around the globe, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble said on Thursday.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tsai Ing-wen sworn in as Taiwan's 1st female president

TAIPEI — Tsai Ing-wen took the oath of office as the new president of Taiwan on Friday, marking the start of a new and potentially tricky chapter in the self-governing democratic island's relations with arch-rival China.

After the 9am swearing-in ceremony at the Presidential Office in Taipei, Tsai delivered a 30-minute inauguration speech from 11am to nearly 20,000 people gathered outside the building. The American Institute in Taiwan, Washington's de facto embassy on the island, congratulated Tsai on her inauguration, saying it "marks another milestone in the development of Taiwan's vibrant democracy."

Tsai, who won a landslide victory in January, is not only Taiwan's first female president but also just the second non-Nationalist Party (KMT) leader since the island's first democratic presidential election in 1996.—*Kyodo News*

Attacks suspect Abdeslam arrives at Paris court

PARIS — Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam arrived at the main Paris law court on Friday for his first hearing before French judges.

Abdeslam is believed by investigators to be the sole survivor among a group of Islamist militants who killed 130 people in a series of shootings and suicide bombings in Paris on 13 November.

Transferred to France from Belgium on 27 April, Abdeslam has been held in solitary confinement in a high-security prison in Fleury-Merogis in the Paris region, with his cell under CCTV surveillance.

The Belgian-born Frenchman was placed under formal investigation on terrorism and murder charges in France on 27 April after his extradition from Belgium, and he promised to talk to judges during his next hearing, his French lawyer said at the time. —*Reuters*

Another Nigerian school girl rescued from Boko Haram militants: military

LAGOS — The Nigerian Army on Thursday confirmed the rescue of another girl abducted by Boko Haram militants in the northeastern Borno state in April 2014.

The Army Colonel's spokesperson Usman Sani Kukasheka said in a statement reaching Xinhua in Lagos that another Chibok girl was rescued Thursday evening. The military spokesperson promised to provide more details later. This followed the rescue of Amina Ali-Nkeki, the first Chibok girl to be rescued by Nigerian authorities. Ali-Nkeki was among a group of people rescued by Nigerian troops at Baale community in Borno state.

A total of 276 girls were abducted from their secondary school dormitories in Chibok town in April 2014, for which Islamist group Boko Haram claimed responsibility.—*Xinhua*

Protocol on Montenegro's NATO accession signed

BRUSSELS/PODGORICA — In Montenegro, NATO will have a convinced promoter of its values in the neglected Western Balkans, Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic said in Brussels on Thursday as 28 NATO member states signed a protocol on Montenegro's accession to the alliance.

This day carries a special symbolism for Montenegro because it coincides with the celebrations of the decade of its independence, Djukanovic said before the signing.

By signing the protocol at the level of foreign ministers you have given great recognition to our efforts on the path to full membership, Djukanovic said. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that Montenegro's reforms have come a long way.—*Tanjug*

Migration to New Zealand continues record growth

WELLINGTON — New Zealand gained a record number of migrants in the year to the end of April, with Indians and Chinese making the biggest groups of non-New Zealand citizen arrivals, the government statistics agency said on Friday.

The annual net gain of migrants (more arrivals than departures) reached a new high 68,100 in the April year, according to Statistics New Zealand.

Migrant arrivals drove the new high, up 9 per cent to 124,700, although returning New Zealand citizens made up a quarter of these.

It was the 21st month in a row that the annual net gain in migrants had set a new record, said a commentary from the agency.—*Xinhua*

Japan to accept 150 Syrian university students over 5 years



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (far L) attends a meeting aimed at pushing the country's implementation of sustainable development goals in Tokyo on 20 May, 2016. Abe said up to 150 Syrians will be allowed to enter Japan over the next five academic years to study at universities, as part of the government's efforts to help refugees in the war-torn Middle East country. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced on Friday that up to 150 Syrians will be allowed to enter Japan over the next five academic years to study at universities, as part of the government's efforts to help refugees in the war-torn Middle

East country. The plan came to light ahead of the Group of Seven summit next week in central Japan, at which Abe will seek to

lead talks on the refugee crisis in the Middle East, among other economic and political issues. Japan is often criticised for its low acceptance of refugees.

Japan's previous assistance came in the form of financial contributions to countries that have accepted large numbers of Syrian refugees, namely Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon.

Under the new plan, Japan will offer education to young Syrians by using existing schemes such as government-sponsored scholarship programs and technical cooperation projects organised by the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Japan is known for its strictness in accepting refugees. In 2015, the Ministry of Justice received 7,586 asylum applications but accepted 27, far less than many other developed countries.

Abe also said at a newly established Cabinet meet-

ing on achieving UN development goals that Japan will offer around \$6 billion over the three years from 2016 to help stabilise the Middle East, including training assistance for about 20,000 people.

Other measures Abe unveiled at the meeting included an offer of \$1.1 billion to fund international health organisations' measures to tackle pandemics and a plan to provide training to around 5,000 women seeking to work as public officials.

The meeting was launched Friday to push Japan's implementation of sustainable development goals, a set of 17 goals adopted at a UN summit in September last year to improve development around the globe.

The G-7 summit will bring together the leaders of Britain, Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Japan, the United States as well as the European Union. —Kyodo News

Syrian army takes control of strategic areas in Eastern Ghouta

DAMASCUS — The Syrian army backed by the Lebanese Hezbollah group have taken control of the entire southern part, which groups over 10 towns, in the strategic region of Eastern Ghouta in east of Damascus, a monitor group reported Friday.

The huge advance, which has been achieved over the past 24 hours, was supported by airstrikes, and artillery shelling, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The army is now in control of the key towns of Zabda and Deir al-Asafir, as well as other towns, namely Nuleh, Bzyineh, Harasta al-Qantara, Hosh Homsi, Hosh Dweir, Bala, Rkabieyh and al-Bayad in the southern

sector of Eastern Ghouta region east of Damascus, according to the UK-based watchdog group.

The Observatory, which claims to rely on a network of activists on ground, said hundreds of families have fled the southern sector toward other areas in Eastern Ghouta, following the progress of the Syrian army.

It contributed the military progress in that area, which has been under the control of disparate jihadi groups, to the huge infighting that has recently erupted between the Saudi-backed Islam Army and the Qatari-backed Jaish al-Fustat, Falaq al-Rahman and the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front. —Xinhua

Man charged with trespassing into grounds of UK's Buckingham Palace

LONDON — A man was due in court on Friday charged with scaling a perimeter wall to get into the grounds of Buckingham Palace, the home of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, London police said.

Dennis Hennessy, 41, was due to appear before Westminster Magistrates' Court after being charged with trespass on a protected site and criminal damage.

Police said he had been arrested in the grounds of the palace on Wednesday night seven

minutes after an alarm was activated. "I am content that our security measures worked effectively on this occasion and at no time was any individual at risk," Commander Adrian Usher, head of London police's Royalty and Specialist Protection unit, said.

Neither the police nor Buckingham Palace would confirm whether members of the royal family were at the palace but it is believed the queen was at the residence at the time having carried out the State Opening of Parliament hours earlier. —Reuters

Afghan army must block Taliban gains to spur talks: Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — Afghanistan must limit military gains by the Taliban and offer incentives to the insurgents to revive a faltering peace effort, Pakistani's top foreign ministry official said, after the latest round of talks yielded little progress.

The Afghan Taliban control or contest more territory than at any time since they were ousted by a US-led intervention in 2001. The militants did not show up at talks on Wednesday in Islamabad, which also involved China and the United States.

Afghanistan declined to send a full delegation to Islamabad in protest against what it says is Pakistan's unwillingness to do more to pressure Taliban leadership, including those on Pakistani soil, to join talks.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary

Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry, the ministry's top bureaucrat, said efforts to persuade the Taliban to talk directly to the Kabul government could only bear fruit if the Afghan army stopped the Taliban from gaining the upper hand.

"We believe that there should be effective action by Afghan national security forces to ensure that there are no military gains by the Taliban," Chaudhry told Reuters in an interview late on Thursday.

The Taliban "need to realise they would have more to gain on the table than they can do on the battlefield", he said. Afghan security forces have struggled to contain the Taliban since NATO-led forces pulled out of combat operations in 2014. Fighting has been fierce and more than 6,600 Afghan soldiers and police were killed last year, according to the US Special

Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

However, despite the brief capture by the militants of the northern city of Kunduz last year, they have not been able to capture and hold on to any provincial capital. Chaudhry said officials at the Islamabad talks had told him Taliban gains in an offensive this year were not as big as the insurgents had hoped.

The first formal talks with the Taliban since their 2001 ouster collapsed in 2015 after it was announced that their founder, Mullah Mohammad Omar, had been dead for two years, throwing the militant group into disarray.

The movement has since split on whether to participate in talks.

Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of harboring militants seeking to topple the Afghan government, including the notorious Haqqani network, blamed for high-profile attacks in Kabul. Pakistan denies that but nevertheless, the United States has also urged Pakistani to do more against militants on its soil. The US Senate on Thursday passed a defense policy bill increasing restrictions on military aid for Pakistan over frustrations it has failed to crack down on the Haqqani network.

Chaudhry said the bulk of the Afghan Taliban leadership was in Afghanistan and Pakistan was using all "leverage and influence" at its disposal to get them to the table.

"We are doing whatever we can to persuade the Taliban and the Haqqani leadership, whoever we can contact," he said. "We believe the Afghan government should also make ... a similar kind of effort." —Reuters



An Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier mans his position at an outpost in Babaji area of Lashkar Gah Helmand Province, Afghanistan on 8 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

French PM calls for end to labour protests marred by violence

PARIS — France's prime minister urged union leaders on Thursday to call off protests against reforms to labour laws, saying turnout was waning but violence mounting as some people were hijacking legitimate protests to attack police.

"Union leaders need to live up to their responsibilities," Manuel Valls said in a radio interview as fresh demonstrations drew hundreds of thousands of people.

"If rioters turn up at each and every protest it's time to ask whether some of these protests are worth it."

He singled out an incident on Wednesday when two officers were forced to flee their patrol car when it was surrounded by a crowd and torched in central Paris, describing the attackers as "people who want to kill a cop".

The government says about 1,300 arrests have been made during weeks of protests which have been joined by a youth movement called Nuit Debout (Night Rising). More than 300 police have been hurt and protesters have complained of injuries sustained in seemingly isolated cases of police brutality.

President Francois Hollande has said he will not withdraw plans to reform labour laws to make



Protestors march during a demonstration against French labour law reform in Nantes, France, on 19 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

hiring and firing easier, which he says will encourage firms to recruit and combat an unemployment rate above 10 per cent. Truck drivers continued to blockade strategic parts of the road network on Thursday and train services were reduced by more than 50 per cent by a second straight day of strikes.

Asked whether some protests

could be broken up by police, Valls said attempts to cut off oil refineries and food supply depots could not be tolerated for much longer. Valls aimed his plea primarily at leaders of unions such as the hardline CGT, saying the number of legitimate protesters was waning after more than two months of demonstrations, some

marred by violence.

CGT chief Philippe Martinez said ahead of this week's protests it was time to "move up a gear" with rolling strikes and marches to force the government to climb down. Thursday's turnout appeared to have surged despite the prime minister's claim, with the police saying 129,000 people took

to the streets nationwide, about twice the number they reported at similar demonstrations on Tuesday and a week ago.

Police said they arrested 115 people, taking the total over weeks of skirmishes to almost 1,500. Thursday's arrests included 19 individuals seeking to tamper with the subway train network in Rennes and 66 in Nantes, both hotspots in Western France.

Riot police, who have repeatedly clashed with masked youths hurling petrol bombs and paving stones, staged a protest of their own on Wednesday to highlight what they described as a surge of "anti-cop hatred".

Police are already working overtime to ensure heightened security after Islamist attacks on Paris last November and face the task of keeping millions of soccer fans safe when the country hosts the Euro 2016 tournament next month.

The CGT union, whose estimates are systematically three or four times higher than those of police, said 400,000 people took part in Thursday's protest and more protests would be organised despite the prime minister's claims that protests were waning.—Reuters

Egypt finds belongings, debris from plane crash at sea

CAIRO — The Egyptian navy said on Friday it had found the personal belongings of passengers and other debris floating in the Mediterranean, confirmation that an EgyptAir jet had plunged into the sea with 66 people on board.

The military said it had found the debris about 290 km (180 miles) north of the port city of Alexandria and was searching for the plane's black box flight recorders.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi offered condolences for those on board, amounting to Cairo's official acknowledgement of their

deaths. The defence minister of Greece, which has also been scouring the Mediterranean, said Egyptian authorities had found a body part, luggage and a seat in the sea just south of where the signal from the plane was lost.

Although suspicion pointed to Islamist militants who blew up another airliner over Egypt just seven months ago, no group had claimed responsibility more than 24 hours after the disappearance of flight MS804, an Airbus A320 flying from Paris to Cairo.

Three French investigators and a technical expert from

Airbus arrived in Cairo early on Friday to help investigate the fate of the missing plane, airport sources said.

Egyptian Prime Minister Sherif Ismail said on Thursday that it was too early to rule out any explanation for the disaster. The country's aviation minister said a terrorist attack was more likely than a technical failure.

Friday's announcement that debris had been found followed earlier confusion about whether wreckage had been located. Greek searchers found some material on Thursday, but the airline later said this was not from its plane.

While there was no official explanation of the cause of the crash, suspicion fell on the militants who have been fighting against Egypt's government since Sisi toppled an elected Islamist leader in 2013.

In October, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for blowing up a Russian jetliner that exploded after taking off from an Egyptian tourist resort. Russian investigators blamed a bomb smuggled on board.

Last year's crash devastated Egypt's tourist industry, one of the main sources of for-

eign exchange for a country of 80 million people, and another similar attack would crush hopes of it recovering.

While most governments were cautious about jumping to conclusions, US Republican candidate for president, Donald Trump, tweeted swiftly after the plane's disappearance: "Looks like yet another terrorist attack. Airplane departed from Paris. When will we get tough, smart and vigilant?"

Later in the day, his likely Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton, also said it appeared to be an act of terrorism, although she said an investigation would have to determine the details.

Officials from a number of US agencies told Reuters that a US review of satellite imagery so far had not produced any signs of an explosion. They said the United States had not ruled out any possible causes for the crash, including mechanical failure, terrorism or a deliberate act by the pilot or crew.

Amid uncertainty about what brought down the plane, Los Angeles International Airport became the first major US air transportation hub to say it was stepping up security measures.—Reuters

54 rescued from human trafficking in Japan in 2015: gov't report

TOKYO — A total of 54 people were rescued from human trafficking operations in Japan last year, up 29 from the previous year, a government report showed on Friday.

Of the rescued victims, some who were forced into prostitution and slavery, Filipinos made up the largest share by nationality at 30, followed by Japanese at 13 and Thai nationals at 10. Women were most targeted with 50 freed, while four males escaped forced bondage.

The annual report was approved Friday at a meeting of Cabinet ministers called to discuss the prevention of human trafficking. The government said releasing the data will raise public awareness, helping to end the practice. "Human trafficking is not just a serious human rights violation, but also a significant international problem," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, who chaired the meeting held at the prime minister's office. The meeting was attended by relevant Cabinet ministers including Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and National Public Safety Commission Chairman Taro Kono. The government's annual report, the second of its kind, was issued following the adoption of an action plan to fight human trafficking in December 2014. The action plan called for the reinforcement of immigration controls and beefing up of support for trafficking victims.—Kyodo News



A man passes the Egyptair desk at Charles de Gaulle airport, after an Egyptair flight disappeared from radar during its flight from Paris to Cairo, in Paris, France, on 19 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



A bull runs among revellers during the "Toro de la Vega" festival in Tordesillas, near Valladolid, in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

Spain bans killing in controversial bull-lancing festival

MADRID — A bull-lancing festival known as "Toro de la Vega" (Bull of the Plain) which has spurred controversy in Spain will take place as usual in September but participants will no longer be allowed to kill the bull, Spanish authorities ruled on Thursday.

During the festival, which dates back to 1534 and is held yearly in Tordesillas, in central Spain, hunters on horseback with lances and on foot chase the bull through a pine forest before killing it.

The event had become a symbol for opponents to

bull-fighting, Spain's traditional spectacle, which has suffered from the economic crisis as well as reduced subsidies from new left-wing administrations in many towns.

Jose Antonio de Santiago-Juarez, a senior official in the Castilla y Leon region, where the Toro de

la Vega takes place, said that the decision was made in order to protect the event and avoid an outright ban.

"What we have done today is to protect 500 years of tradition. The other alternative was to entirely ban it," he told a news conference.—Reuters

Storage of Colombian peace deal in Switzerland welcomed by authorities

GENEVA — Swiss authorities saluted on Thursday the decision taken by the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to deposit in Switzerland the final peace treaty which aims to put an end to the 52-year conflict.

"The joint statement

stipulates that the final peace agreement on ending the conflict and building sustainable, long lasting peace in Colombia should immediately be transferred for storage to the Swiss Federal Council once it has been signed," the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) explained in a

statement.

"This is a sign that the parties recognise and want to emphasise the significance of the peace deal as a special humanitarian agreement under the Geneva Conventions," it added.

The FDFA has provided specialised assistance to the negotiation process seeking to broker

an end to the conflict pitching the Colombian government against FARC rebels.

Starting around 1964, protracted fighting has caused the deaths of some 220,000 people. An additional 45,000 individuals have gone missing while 7 million have been internally displaced.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV FSL SANTOS NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV FSL SANTOS NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.5.2016 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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DYNAMIC OCEAN-27 VOY NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNAMIC OCEAN-27 VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S BAY LINE SHIPPING CO
LTD.

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV UBC CHILE VOY NO (86)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV UBC CHILE VOY NO (86) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Plenty of pickles fill my diet: Selena Gomez

LONDON — Pop star Selena Gomez enjoys pickles whilst backstage on tour and also loves a “good plate of fried chicken”.

The 23-year-old “Good For You” hitmaker is currently in the midst of her Revival world tour and is ensuring she stays fit with a “pretty simple” backstage diet, reported Female First. “I keep things pretty simple backstage. Plenty of water and pickles. On the tour bus, hot Cheetos and chocolate are sta-

ples. I love a good plate of fried chicken,” Gomez said.

The singer recently revealed she is “obsessed” with pickles as it is a regular staple in Texan diets.

“I am obsessed with them. That is my thing and I drink the juice from the jar too. They sell them at gas stations and movie theatres in Texas. I go to the movies and have popcorn and pickles. It’s not weird. It is a thing back home that I do.—PTI

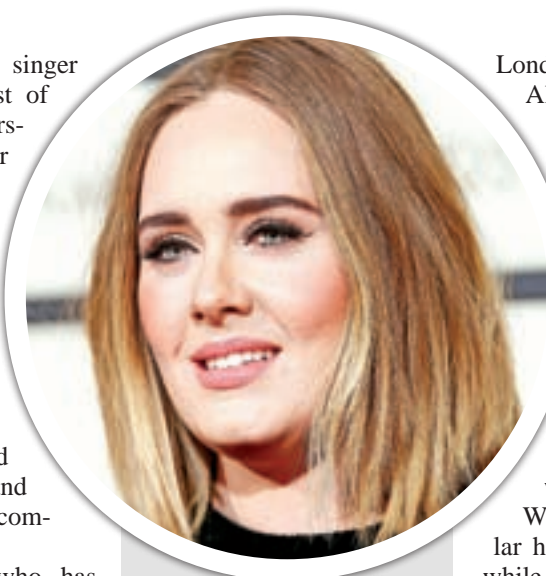
PHOTO: REUTERS

Adele named songwriter of the year at Britain’s Ivor Novellos

LONDON — British singer Adele added to her list of many accolades on Thursday, winning Songwriter of the Year at Britain’s Ivor Novello Awards.

The 28-year-old, whose latest album “25” shot up the charts around the world upon its release last year, received her third Ivor Novello — a music industry award recognising British and Irish song writing and composing.

However Adele, who has several Grammy and BRIT awards as well as an Oscar to her name, did not make it to the glitzy luncheon ceremony in



British singer Adele.
PHOTO: REUTERS

London, where Blur’s Damon Albarn picked up a Lifetime Achievement award.

Other winners included British singer Jamie Lawson who took the prize for Best Song Musically and Lyrically for “Wasn’t Expecting That”, beating Ed Sheeran, who signed him to his record label last year.

British James Bay won in the Most Performed Work category for his popular hit “Hold Back The River” while the Album Award went to “Darling Arithmetic” written by Conor O’Brien, who records his music under the name Villagers.—Reuters

‘Sherlock Holmes 3’ to start filming this year

LOS ANGELES — A month after Robert Downey Jr revealed that the third “Sherlock Holmes” movie is being planned, producer Joel Silver confirms that the film, to be directed by Guy Ritchie, could start its production later this year.

Silver, originally promoting “The Nice Guys” in an interview, supported Downey claim and also hinted that more “Sherlock Holmes” movies may arrive in the future, reported Ace Showbiz. “It looks like it could happen this fall. Downey said he wants to do it. He’s gotta launch into another ‘Avengers’ movie right after the new year. So we’re trying to get it done,” Silver said.

“We have a script that we like. Jude Law is available and Downey is available, and we’re hoping we can get it done. If it works, great. If not, we’ll do it another time. But it looks like it could happen now.”

Downey Jr, Law and Ritchie’s respective schedules have been one big problem that keeps “Sherlock Holmes 3” from happening.

Downey Jr has been busy with his role as Tony Stark a.K.A. “Iron Man” in Marvel’s movies while Law and director Ritchie are working on “Knights of the Roundtable: King Arthur”.—PTI

Mendoza spotlights Manila family’s poverty in Cannes film ‘Ma Rosa’

CANNES — Against the glamorous backdrop of the French Mediterranean resort of Cannes, prolific Filipino director Brillante Mendoza’s latest offering at the world’s biggest film festival is an exploration into the difficult living conditions of a poor family in Manila.

“Ma’ Rosa,” which premiered this week at the Cannes Film Festival, tells the story of Rosa Reyes (Jaclyn Jose), a woman who owns a convenience store in a poor neighbourhood of Philippines’ capital Manila, making ends meet with her husband Nestor (Julio Diaz) by selling drugs.

Both are detained at a police station after their home is raided, leaving their three children to find the money needed to pay off corrupt police officers in order to free their parents.

“This situation is really happening back in the Philippines and it’s quite alarming because it comes to a way of life,” Mendoza told Reuters on Thursday.

“The small-time drug sell-

ing and all that is happening and it’s quite alarming and something needs to be done. That’s why I decided to make a story out of this situation.”

Mendoza believes the story

has wider appeal as the Philippines is not the only country plagued by corruption.

“It’s a painful truth,” the filmmaker said. “There is a lot of bigger corruption that is happening all over the world maybe on a different scale.”

“Ma’ Rosa” is among 21 films competing for the festival’s coveted top Palme d’Or prize, which will be awarded on Sunday.

Mendoza, 55, who previously won the best director award at Cannes in 2009 for “Kinatay,” said that showcasing a film in the festival’s main film competition would help get the world to think about the topics of the film.

“This is where the whole world, you know, watch films from different walks of life and from different parts of the world,” he said.—Reuters



Cast members, director and screenwriter arrive on red carpet for the screening of the film “Ma’ Rosa” in competition at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, on 18 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kesha’s record label reinstates her Billboard awards performance

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Kesha will sing at the Billboard Music Awards after her record label on Thursday reversed a decision to stop her performance amid concerns she would address her failed legal bid against Sony Corp’s Sony Music and producer Dr. Luke.

Kemosabe Records, a unit of Sony Music and founded by Dr. Luke, said in a statement that had initially revoked approval for Kesha’s performance at Sunday’s awards show because it had “learned Kesha was to use the performance as a platform to discuss the litigation.”

Kesha, 29, unsuccessfully tried to scrap her six-album recording contract with Sony Music earlier this

year in court after filing a sexual assault lawsuit against Dr. Luke in 2014.

“Now that Kemosabe has obtained assurances, that it is relying upon, from Kesha, that her representatives and Dick Clark Productions that neither Kesha nor her supporters will use the performance as such a platform, the approval has been restored,” the label said.

Representatives for Kesha did not immediately respond to Reuters for comment on Thursday.

Billboard Music Awards organisers Dick Clark Productions said in a Thursday statement that it was pleased the singer and her label had come to agreement.

Dick Clark Productions said earlier this week that Kemosabe had rescinded approval for Kesha’s planned tribute to Bob Dylan at the live televised ceremony af-

ter a 11 May media report.

Celebrity news outlet TMZ.com, citing unnamed sources, reported on 11 May that Kesha was planning a “statement performance” at the awards show that would be focused on “her ongoing legal battle with Dr. Luke” and “might even include images of him.”

Kesha, 29, said in an Instagram post on Tuesday that she had been “very excited” to sing “It Ain’t Me, Babe” as a tribute Dylan and that her performance had no connection to her legal problems with her label or Dr. Luke, whom she has accused of sexual assault.

The singer’s legal case sparked the #FreeKesha campaign on social media and earned support from artists such as Taylor Swift, Adele and Lady Gaga.—Reuters

PHOTO: REUTERS

Romania calls on citizens to help buy Brancusi sculpture

ROMANIA — Romanians can collectively own a work of their greatest artist, the modernist giant Constantin Brancusi, by joining a government-led campaign to buy one of his sculptures.

After an epic 18 month walk from his tiny Romanian village, the 27-year old sculptor arrived in Paris in 1904 and eventually worked under French star Auguste Rodin.

In 1907, he left Rodin's studio saying "Nothing grows under big trees" and created "The Meekness of the Earth" — a vulnerable, crouching female nude of primitive simplicity — later selling it to Romanian engineer Gheorghe Romascu.

The communist regime seized it in 1957. Romascu's heirs got it back in 2012 after a protracted legal battle.

Bucharest launched a campaign on Thursday to raise 6 million euros to buy the piece, "Cumintenia Pamantului" in Romanian.

"I am calling on Romanians to take individual responsibility because I want Brancusi to unite us, not divide us," Prime Minister Dacian Ciolos said.



Visitors observe the sculpture 'Princess X' by Constantin Brancusi during a preview of 'Brancusi Serra' at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

The fundraising drive carries the slogan "Brancusi is mine." Donations come with tax exemptions.

The government will put up 5 million euros of the 11 million euros (\$12.32 million) price tag, hoping to raise the rest from Romanians by end-September.

"This sculpture — representative for his entire work — is the last one that the Romanian state

can recover and make accessible to the wider public and art lovers," the government said in a statement.

Brancusi was born in the small village of Hobita near the Carpathian Mountains, but lived in Paris for most of his life.

He bequeathed his studio and some of his art to the French state after his death in 1957. He had wanted to leave his art to Roma-

nia, but the then communist government declined the offer.

Little of Brancusi's art is in Romania, with the notable exception of an open air monumental ensemble that includes the "Endless Column" in the city of Targu Jiu, a 1937 tribute to fallen World War I soldiers.

In 2009, one of his sculptures sold for a record 29 million euros.—Reuters

Auschwitz mug reveals jewellery hidden for more than 70 years

WARSAW — Staff at the Auschwitz museum have uncovered jewellery secretly hidden in an enamel mug since the liberation of the wartime Nazi death camp in 1945.

The mug, one of thousands of kitchenware items seized by Nazi guards from those deported to the camp in southern Poland during World War II, was found to have an inside double bottom, under which a gold ring and necklace wrapped in a piece of canvas were hidden.

The objects, believed to have been made in Poland in between 1921 and 1931, were discovered during maintenance of the museum's enameled kitchenware exhibits.

"When I picked up this mug, it turned out that there were hidden objects inside," museum staffer Hanna Kubik said.

"With time, the fake bottom had detached from the cup, so it was clearly visible that inside there was a bundle and you could see a fragment of the chain and a ring".

Between 1940 and 1945, about 1.5 million people, most of them Jews, were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau in occupied Poland.

Those sent there had belongings taken away upon arrival, many of which are on display today.

Many hid valuables inside, items the museum says are still being discovered years later. However, their owners often remain anonymous because of the lack of traces on the objects to identify them.

The museum, which says it has more than 12,000-enameled kitchen items — like cups, pots, bowls, kettles, jugs — in its memorials collection, said the jewellery would now be stored in "in the form reflecting the manner in which it had been hidden by the owner."—Reuters

Dogs to dust: pets get send-off with a human touch

BRUSSELS — Chantal Detimmerman weeps at the funeral parlor as she spends a last few moments with her beloved Chico who has been prepared for cremation and laid out in a dog basket.

That is no disrespect for Chico.

Curled up as if asleep, with a garland of flowers around one paw, the Chihuahua is getting a high-class send-off at Animatrans, a funeral home that claims to be the first in Belgium to cater exclusively for pets.

"I loved him so much that I decided to keep his ashes, to always have Chico next to me," Detimmerman said. Other customers choose to turn their dead pets into an even more tangible reminder.

"Arthur was a special duck," said Myrian Waeles, who nuzzles her nose against the mallard's green head as she poses for photographs for a Reuters Wider Image

feature, at her home in nearby Lenik, a town west of Brussels.

Arthur stares ahead with the same expression he has had for the last eight years, since he died and Waeles took him to Animatrans to be stuffed. The company also makes death masks, casting an impression of an animal's face in long-lasting resin.

"He was always waiting for me at the door when I came home, walking next to me in the living room," Waeles said of her duck.

"Having Arthur, stuffed next to me, comforts me."

Patrick Pendville set up the funeral service after seeing first-hand what animal disposal often looks, and smells, like.

Dropping a dead dog off at an animal rendering plant, a guard instructed him to unpack the carcass, remove its collar, and throw the body into a two-metre-high (7-foot) container swarming with

flies, among other animal remains.

Pendville says his company — which charges between 35 and 350 euros for a cremation — provides a humane way for people to say goodbye to animals they feel were part of the family. But by law

it is classified as a processor of hazardous waste.

"I totally refuse (that) name," he said. "I eagerly wait for when a pet is considered to be sentient and not an expired common commodity when it dies."—Reuters



Cathy Vertongen, a taxidermist, works on a dead dog at her workshop in Aalst, Belgium on 29 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



Entertainment Channel

(21- 5-2016, Saturday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Culture Show: Abdication of King Thibaw

6:20 pm

- Myanmar Traditional Instruments (MYANMA OBOE)

6:50 pm

- Music Programme

7:10 pm

- Cassette Recordings

8:20 pm

- Music Programme

8:40 pm

- Hand Down Arts Heritage

9:10 pm

- International Movie Songs

9:20 pm

- Sayit-Wine Girls

9:40 pm

- Music Programme

10:10 pm

- Myanmar Movie

From 21-5-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 Pm
To 22-5-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(21-5-2016 07:00am ~ 22-5-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon- Charitable Associations
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Kason Full Moon Day of Buddha
08:39	Am	Shwe U Min Natural Cave In Kalaw
08:55	Am	Colonial Buildings and a New Yangon
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Products of Myanmar - Stone of The Heavens
09:50	Am	Thin Byu Mat
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	Sitagu International Buddhist Academy (Part-3)

10:44	Am	Safari World
10:54	Am	Serene and Scenic Magwe

(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	The Most Prominent Resort And Residence - Ngapali
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar: Earthquake Awareness
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Hanthawaddy U Win Tin "A Fearless Man" (Episode- 1)
08:48	Pm	Myanmar Master Class: Artist Tin Win (Beikthano)

(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)

Benteke seeks talks with Klopp to find out Liverpool future



Sevilla's Sergio Escudero and Steven N'Zonzi in action with Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho during UEFA Europa League Final at St. Jakob-Park, Basel, Switzerland on 18 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Striker Christian Benteke will talk to manager Juergen Klopp to find out if he has a future at Liverpool after enduring a difficult first season with the English Premier League side.

The Belgian played second fiddle to forwards Daniel Sturridge and Divock Origi for most of the campaign since his 32.5 million pounds (\$47.31 million) move from Aston Villa in the close season under former boss Brendan Rodgers.

Klopp has preferred starting attacking midfielder Roberto Firmino up front when Sturridge and Origi were out injured, pushing Benteke further down the pecking order at Anfield.

"I signed for five years, I didn't sign for one year, and now I have to speak with the manager and see his plans for next season. It has been a tough (first season)," Benteke told British media.

"I knew Liverpool is a massive club with a lot of pressure and a lot of good players, and it has not been easy (to settle in). But I keep going and never doubt myself. I'm now going to focus on the Euros and see what happens next season."

The 25-year-old made 15 out of his 29 league appearances from the bench and scored 10 goals, several of them crucial.

"It was not my best season, I know that, but the goals I scored (did not make it) 5-0 or 4-0," he said.—Reuters

FA Cup would be a big title for United — Louis Van Gaal



PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — A Manchester United FA Cup triumph at the "temple" of English soccer would bring a big title to the club and could act as a catalyst to help recapture the glory days, manager Louis van Gaal said on Thursday.

Eleven times FA Cup winners United face Crystal Palace in the final at Wembley stadium on Saturday looking to end their three-year trophy drought.

Despite increasing speculation about the future of the Dutchman, Van Gaal said a victory in the final is far more important for the Premier League club than himself.

"It is not good to speak about my interests. It is important for the club, the players, the manager and his staff," he told reporters on Thursday.

"I have read that the last FA Cup (we won) is 2004, so also for Manchester United it is a big title."

"We are playing in the most prestigious temple of England. It confirms how important it is."

The emergence of youngsters such as Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial and Jesse Lingard has been a shining light in a disappointing season for United, and the 64-year-old hoped the final would be a good education for them.

"You must win these games. In one match you can lose a lot. You have to cope with that pressure. It is a step in their development," he added. Van Gaal also confirmed that Matteo Darmian and Marcos Rojo have recovered from injury.

"There are many players (available). (Marouane) Fellaini is not suspended, Darmian and Rojo are not injured anymore," he said.

United play Palace in a repeat of the 1990 final won by Alex Ferguson's men in a replay. That success eased the pressure on the Scot who went on to build a dynasty that won 13 league titles and two Champions Leagues and a host of domestic cups.—Reuters

Kaka highest paid MLS player, Lampard also in top 10

NEW YORK — Brazilian veteran Kaka is the highest paid player in Major League Soccer, with a 2016 guaranteed salary of \$7.167 million (£5 million), according to figures released by the Players' Union on Thursday.

Orlando City's Kaka tops the list for the second successive year. Toronto's Italian striker Sebastian Giovinco is the second highest paid player on \$7.115 million.

Major League Soccer has a salary cap of \$3.66 million for each of the 20 teams in the league but are allowed three "designated players" who do not count towards the cap and can be paid whatever the club can afford.

Salaries in the league can be wildly lopsided, with many players earning the minimum of \$62,500. The maximum salary for any one player is \$457,500, according to the MLS website.—Reuters

Djokovic, Nadal on semi-final collision course in Paris

PARIS — World number one Novak Djokovic is on a French Open semi-final collision course with nine-times champion Rafael Nadal after the draw was made on Friday.

The Serb, who holds 11 grand slam titles but is still chasing his first win at Roland Garros, will start his campaign against

Taiwan's Lu Yen-hsun. Nadal has been paired with big-serving Australian Sam Groth.

The Spaniard, promoted to fourth seed after Roger Federer pulled out citing fitness concerns, could meet France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in the quarter-finals.

In the other half of the

draw, second-seeded Briton Andy Murray is on course to meet Japanese fifth seed Kei Nishikori in the last eight and defending champion and third seed Stan Wawrinka in the semi-finals.

French hopes of lifting the trophy for the first time since Yannick Noah won in 1983 took a hit when former semi-finalist Gael Monfils — a perennial crowd favorite in Paris — pulled out because of a virus.

In the women's draw, top seed, defending champion and strong favourite Serena Williams takes on Slovakian Magdalena Rybarikova in the first round.

She faces a potential quarter-final against former world number one Victoria Azarenka and last-four clash with German third seed Angelique Kerber, who beat her in this year's Australian Open final.

The French Open starts on Sunday and ends on 5 June with the men's final.—Reuters



The Musketiers' Trophy and the Suzanne Lenglen trophy are pictured during the drawing ceremony for the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France, on 20 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS