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Ministerial Spokespersons Meeting Held

Jaiden Coonan

TWENTY-ONE of twenty-two Myanmar ministries have put forward 67 spokespersons that will play a representative role for ministries in the future it was revealed yesterday, some ministries will have up to five representatives.

U Tint Swe, Permanent-Secretary of the Ministry of Information (MoI) told *The Global New Light of Myanmar* that a meeting was held in Naypyitaw with representatives from the media community and future ministerial reps to discuss how the MoI will carry out this plan.

"We plan to hold short training courses in the middle of June for the selected spokespeople, it will be led by UNESCO and the Ministry of Information," said U Tint Swe.

Mikel Aguirre Idiaquez, UNESCO's Media Development Specialist confirmed the collaboration but said that the organisation isn't set to discuss the details just yet, but that the initiative is funded by the EU and is a UNESCO initiative to help develop the media "in the context of democratic reforms."

The previous government set up an outlet for the media to have access to ministerial information where permanent-secretaries or director generals acted the part of spokesperson.

There are complications as this creates extra roles for that particular person. Past and current spokespeople from ministries have issues balancing the duty as they are busy or in meetings where they can't answer calls.

Yesterday was the first round of talks which look to be held monthly, in order to develop a plan for the training program and to move from "basic to advanced" courses, says U Tint Swe.

U Thiha Saw, Executive Director of the Myanmar Journalism Institute, who attended the talks, said that not all 67 future spokespeople were present, but that representatives were present in exchange.

"Four people from the media

community were involved. We were there to discuss with them how to effectively communicate with the media. They have their own issues and problems and we have our own issues too. It was an open discussion about what possibilities we have for future cooperation," said U Thiha Saw.

He pressed the need for training but also for a media team within each ministry to be able to properly communicate with the press and to also feed correct in-

formation to the public.

Yesterday's talks are not a part of the MoI's Right to Information Law that *The Global New Light of Myanmar* reported on 4 May to be discussed as early as next month. U Tint Swe says that the law is still being drafted and isn't a priority because it isn't part of the government's "100-day plan."

"I think it will be 3-4 months, so maybe September or October – the draft [Right to Information

Law] discussions will be held," he said.

Even then these discussions will be held with CSOs, private-media and relevant organisations before it is submitted to parliament.

U Thiha Saw said that before the Right to Information Law is introduced, ministries need to properly set up media departments in order to deal with information requested by the public and the media.



In his address at the first coordination meeting of ministry spokespersons in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint said qualified spokespersons will enhance the image of the ministries and the government, stressing the role of media in connecting people to the government by serving as a public voice. PHOTO: MNA

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Lawyers appeal death sentences for Koh Tao convicts

LAWYERS filed an appeal on Monday against the conviction of two Myanmar migrant workers sentenced to death in Thailand for the 2014 murder of two British backpackers on a holiday island, another twist in a case mired in controversy and dispute.

The bodies of backpackers Hannah Witheridge and David Miller were found on a beach on Koh Tao island in September 2014. Police said Witheridge, 23, had been raped and bludgeoned to

death and Miller, 24, had suffered blows to his head.

A court sentenced Myanmar migrant workers Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun to death after convicting them of the crime on Dec. 24 last year.

The 198-page appeal says that DNA evidence used in the case was inadmissible and had not been collected, tested, analysed or reported in accordance with internationally accepted standards, representatives of the two men said in a statement

on Monday.

The appeal also states that the questioning and charging of the migrant workers was unlawful because it was done without lawyers or trusted persons present, according to the statement. Confessions, which the two later retracted, were extracted through torture or abuse, it said.

The Thai police have denied mishandling the evidence or that confessions were extracted under duress.

The mothers of the two Myanmar men accompanied the lawyers to court on Monday after visiting their sons on death row in a prison near Bangkok at the weekend, the statement said.

"We have submitted this to the appeal court so they can understand more, so they can see the importance on how death sentence decision needs to be perfectly clear," Nakhon Chompuchat, the defence team's head lawyer, told Reuters.

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Pyithu Hluttaw



U Kyaw Win. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Aung Thu. PHOTO: MNA

Two ministries renamed, K500 billion agricultural loan approved

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session entered its 24th day, approving the renaming of the Ministry of Health as the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs as the Ministry of Ethnic Nationalities Affairs, and a K500 billion loan from the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) to the government yesterday.

Following discussions on renaming of the two ministries, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, on behalf of Union Minister for Health Dr Myint

Htway and Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin commented on the parliamentary discussions.

In his comment, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint said he will inform the Health Ministry of the representative's discussion, which called for appointment of a deputy minister for the ministry.

Next, discussions on a K500 billion loan to the government from the Central Bank of Myanmar to provide agricultural loans to farmers for 2016-2017 fiscal

year followed.

During the discussions, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives expressed support for the loan, and Union Ministers for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu and Union Minister for Finance U Kyaw Win elaborated on how the loan would be used.

A plan to borrow an agricultural loan of K500 billion from the CBM to the government for farmers was approved in the parliament without objection. —Myanmar News Agency

Public notice to comment on changing political party's name

THE Kachin National Democracy Congress Party headquartered at Du Ka Htaung Ward-69 in Myitkyina, Kachin State, registered by the Union Election Commission as a political party under Article 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law, submitted an application to change its name to the Kachin National Congress (KNC) and to have its flag and emblem to

feature "UEC".

It is hereby announced in line with Section 14(d) of the Political Parties Registration Law if anyone who wants to remonstrate with the party's name, flag and emblem, they may submit a complaint along with firm evidence within seven days starting from the date of this announcement.—Union Election Commission

Union Attorney General meets UNDP rule of law specialist, IDLO resident rep

UNION Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo received UNDP Rule of Law Specialist Ms Mascha Johanna Matthews and IDLO Resident Representative Mr Kartik Sharma at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the talks, they held discussions on further cooperation

with the Attorney General's Office in efforts to ensure the rule of law in Myanmar.

Also present were Deputy Attorney General U Win Myint, directors-general Daw Nu Nu Yin and Daw Khin Cho Ohn, deputy directors-general and directors.—Myanmar News Agency

Asia Clean Energy Forum to be held in Manila

THE Asia Clean Energy Forum 2016 will take place from 6 to 10 June in Manila, Philippines, according to sources yesterday.

Pre-forum events are scheduled to be held on 6 and 7 June, and the main forum is set to run for three days from 8 to 10 June, sources added.

The five-day ACEF 2016 aimed at best practices in policy, technology and finance to meet the region's climate and energy security challenges and will fea-

ture plenary sessions and panel discussions on innovations in energy efficiency and renewable energy, increasing energy access and charting the future of clean energy in Asia.

The forum is expected to be attended by representatives from governments in the region, environmental regulators, civil society organisations, development partners and international organizations.—Thant Sin/Honey

Mandalay bus terminal to be upgraded within 5 years

TRANSFORMATION of the current Chanmyashwepyi highway bus terminal into a high-quality facility will be implemented within the Mandalay Region township of Pyigyidagun, according to the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC).

The M.D.C.M company won the rights to carry out construction with a winning tender bid of K2,000 million back on 18 August 2014.

"It's problematic to construct high rise buildings at this bus terminal since it's located close by the Chanmyathazi air-

field. Stipulations have already been made which only allow buildings to be constructed as high as four floor," said U Thet Naing Htun, joint secretary of the MCDC.

The high-quality bus terminal will include a shopping mall, City Mart supermarket and residential condominiums. The first phase of the project will be implemented within the next three years with the entire project to be completed within five, it is known.

"We've been hearing about the supposed upgrading of this bus terminal for two years now.

Until this day though, we've yet to receive any kind of official documentation informing us of the plans," said owner Myat Mandalar Htun bus depot located within the Chanmyashwepyi terminal.

A total of six companies competed for a tender put out by the MCDC for construction of the high-quality bus terminal facility, which was one by the Myanmar owned M.D.C.M company. It is known the MCDC have had ownership over the current bus terminal, which covers an area of 14.2 acres, since 1997.—Myitmakha News Agency



Fishing boats are anchored at Kyaukphyu, Rakhine State.
PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

Rakhine fishing vessels docked by Cyclone Roanu

KYAUKPHYU — Fishing vessels which plough the coastline of Rakhine State have had to halt their fishing expeditions with the arrival to the region of Cyclone Roanu, it is known from respective district and township departments of fisheries.

Public announcements by department of meteorology were made via portable loud speakers on May 20 within some of the State's townships, such as Sittwe and Kyaukphyu, forewarning residents of Cyclone Roanu's position off the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal.

"[Fishing] boats have been tied together in docks along the coastline ever since warnings were received on May 20 of the cyclone's position. The speed of the storm has caused huge swells and terrifyingly large waves on the ocean," said U Ye Htun, owner of an off shore fishing vessel from Ayeyawady Region currently docked in the Kyaukphyu boat yard. It is known that local residents are currently preparing food provisions to guard against any storm induced food storages.

Ever since storm warnings were issued by relevant township

departments of meteorology on May 20, all kinds of boat vessels, be it tourist, government or private, have halted their services, according to the department of water transport. Records from departments of fisheries indicate the extent of destruction storms can have upon the region, with Cyclone Giri, which hit the Rakhine coastline on 22 October 2010, not only causing causing many fatalities to human life and livestock, but completely decimating the fishing industries of Myebon, Kyaukphyu and Minbya townships.—Myitmakha News Agency

Military chief meets maritime, aviation courses's trainees



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife greet trainees in maritime and aviation courses. PHOTO: MYAWADY

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing lectured trainees in basic and advanced maritime and aviation courses yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting with the students attending basic and advanced maritime and aviation

courses conducted at navy and aviation headquarters, the Senior General said the country's future depends on the young generation of people between 10 and 24, which makes up about 30 per cent of the country's population.

He also urged older genera-

tions to assist in shaping the future of the country.

Maritime and aviation courses for young people started in 2014, and courses this year started on 25 April and ended on 20 May.

So far, 2,002 youths have completed these maritime and aviation courses.—Myawady

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets outgoing foreign ambassadors

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing held separate talks with the Indian and South Korean ambassadors to Myanmar, who have completed their tours of duty in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his meeting with Indian ambassador to Myanmar Mr Gautam Mukhopadhyaya, the Senior General discussed matters related to further business cooperation, strengthening bilateral relations between the two armed forces and exchanging of goodwill visits.

While holding discussions with the ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar, Mr Lee Baek-soon, the Senior General stressed the need to develop democratic practices in the country as political stability cannot be



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing shakes hands Indian ambassador to Myanmar Mr Gautam Mukhopadhyaya. PHOTO: MYAWADY

achieved without an understanding of democratic practices.

Efforts are being made to bring an end to armed conflicts to ensure lasting peace,

said the Senior General, adding that bilateral cooperation will be broadened in multiple areas once there prevail peace and stability.—Myawady

Mandalay hosts first regional monsoon forum

Aung Thant Khaing

THE Mandalay Region Monsoon Forum, which was held to provide information about the upcoming monsoon by offering monsoon forecasts, was held at the Dingar Hotel in Mandalay yesterday.

The forum, the first of its kind in Mandalay, was organised by the Department of Meteor-

ology and Hydrology and Thailand-based UN-Habitat.

Mr Shashank Mishra, programme manager for UN-Habitat, said necessary preparations for the monsoon can be made by departments and civil society organisations through the pre-monsoon forum. The forum featured discussions on challenges that could be faced during upcoming monsoon and works to be done for

ensuring effective management in various sectors based on monsoon forecasts, said Director U Kyaw Lwin Oo of the DMH (Upper Myanmar).

According to monsoon forecasts, drought, excess heat and flooding are likely to become frequent in Mandalay Region, which recorded its highest ever temperatures and experienced strong wind and this May and April.

State Counsellor thanks public for disaster relief efforts

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi thanked the public for its active providing of assistance to people in water-scarce areas and honoured the Noble Heart Survival Assistance Association for its effective and systematic provision of assistance, wide coverage of water supply and technical assistance for reduction of water scarcity for the long term and measures enabling the youth to be aware of extended information concerning the people facing a scarcity of drinking water and to participate on a wider scale.

Public service personnel from Union ministries, region and state governments, the Myanmar Police Force and Fire Bri-

gade have laid special emphasis on providing assistance to people in water-scarce areas. Citizens, private individual donors, paraita associations, business organisations and members of the public are also visiting water-scarce areas to provide assistance in cash and gifts voluntarily.

The letter of appreciation released by the Office of the State Counsellor yesterday states that it is heartening to see people providing assistance and that citizens are thanked for cooperating with the government in disaster relief.

The letter of appreciation was signed by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.—GNLM

Over K170 million injected into rural infrastructure in Taninthayi

A BUDGET of K170.5 million has been allocated for repair and maintenance to improving the quality of rural roads and bridges in Myanmar's southern Taninthayi Region as part of the new government's one hundred day project initiative, according to the regional Department of Rural Development.

"We'll carry out completion of paving roads and repairing bridges, to those which require it, in rural areas as part of the new government's hundred day initiative. A list has been compiled of road and bridges in villages of respective townships that are to be given first priority. Efforts will also be made as part of the same initiative to build township level offices for the department," explained U Thet Paing, head of the Department of Rural Development for Taninthayi Region.

The aforementioned budget has been divided throughout the

region via districts: K113.4 million will be used for four townships of Dawei district; K43.7 million for four townships of Myeik district; and K13.3 million for two townships of the region's southern Kawthaung district.

"The press will have free reign during project implementation to enter work sites and conduct reporting. Respective township departments have already been informed of such," added U Thet Paing. It is known that further to activities for which implementation must be completed within the designated hundred day period, other activities of rural development will be conducted within the region during the current fiscal year.

A total budget of K3,211.9 million has been permitted for use throughout districts of Taninthayi Region during this 2016-17 fiscal year for road, bridge and water availability initiatives.—Myit-makha News Agency

Lawyers appeal death sentences for Koh Tao convicts

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"We don't have new evidence, we are basing this on evidence that was presented earlier," he said.

The court would likely rule on the appeal in 2017, he said.

Thai police drew widespread

domestic and international criticism for their handling of the case and the evidence. Protests erupted in neighbouring Myanmar after the verdict, with many people there believing the two workers were scapegoats.—Reuters



Lawyers filed an appeal on Monday against the conviction of two Myanmar migrant workers sentenced to death in Thailand. PHOTO: REUTERS

2,200 flats to sell in Yuzana, Kanaung and Shwe Lin Pan

OVER 2,200 low-cost flats will be sold in Dagon Seikkan Township and Hlaingthaya Township at the end of May, according to the department of human settlement and housing development under the Ministry of Construction. The apartments were built under a low-cost housing project to house people in Dagon Seikkan and Hlaingthaya townships.

The low-cost housing projects are the ones initiated by the pre-

vious government, and they will be sold depending on the building costs ranging from KS 100 to 150 lakh per unit. If there are many people who want to buy, the department will use a lottery system to be supervised by the Yangon Region government. The Construction and Housing Development Bank (CHDB) will grant long-term loans to the people who want to buy apartments in an instalment system. A pilot project

is being launched in Nay Pyi Taw under a test-run basis to build low-cost flats worth less than KS 100 lakh for those who do not have flats of their own. If the pilot project is successful, similar low-cost apartments will be built throughout the country. The department of human settlement and housing development is building over 400-square-foot flats in Shwe Nathar Ward in Nay Pyi Taw to sell them for under K100 million.—200

CSOs to send revised version of local administrator law to Hluttaw

A CIVIL society organisation called Rain Maker has made it known they will draw up a new Ward and Village Administration Law, based on information collected from a public opinion survey on amendments to the law in question, which will then be forwarded to Hluttaw.

“We have the surveys which we conducted together with other organizations and are currently in the process of drawing up a new Ward and Village Administrator Law. We’re going to call in legal affairs experts for assistance. Our version of a draft legislation will then be submitted to the Amyotha Hluttaw Draft Legislative Committee.

We’re also planning on submitting it to Hluttaw as well,” said U Min Thu Naung, project manager for Rain Maker.

Rain Maker, together with the other CSOs of Peace and Justice Myanmar and the Hornbill Organization, carried out a

nationwide public opinion survey between December 2015 and March 2016 relating to the current Ward and Village Administration Law, with a report on the findings of the survey submitted to the Amyotha Hluttaw Draft Legislative Committee on Wednesday.

“The drawing up of legislation is the role of the Hluttaw. Our organisations are offering a collection of information from our surveys which we conducted to aid in the amending of the administration law.

We now have to monitor the situation as to how it unfolds,” said Daw Shwe Yi Win, director of Peace and Justice Myanmar.

It is known from Rain Maker that their version of a new local administration law will include the registering of over night guest on a gratis basis, together with wording that exactly specifies the powers invested in local administrators.—Myitmakha News Agency

KBZ sends water bowzers to Chin State



Water bowzers seen before departure.

KBZ’s Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation sent a fleet of water bowzers to Chin State yesterday to supply drinking water to residents. The fleet of three 3,000-gallon bowzers and volunteers from Kanbawza Bank will supply water to people in Kalay, Sagaing Region and Falam and Haka in Chin State. As part of its water supply project, the foundation has also provided a 3,000-gallon bowser to the Myittamon Parahita Association, which is carrying out social welfare services in Natogyi. Since early April 2016, the foundation has supplied more than 600,000 gallons of drinking water to a population of more than 50,000 in arid areas nationwide. The foundation plans to build its fleet up to 42 bowzers.—GNLM

Cotton prices double in Sagaing Region

A REDUCTION in the amount of cotton cultivated within some townships of Sagaing Region has meant good prices for cotton sellers, local cotton farmers have made it known.

The price for a viss (a viss is approximately 1.6 kilograms) of cotton in 2015 fetched K500 while this year has seen prices for the same quantity shoot up to K1,100.

“The cotton market is unpredictable, with prices jumping up and down. Prices were low last year, but this year has seen good

prices as some cotton farmers have creased their operations because of loses or focus on other investments,” said Ko Htun Htun Soe, a cotton trader from Monywa.

A bad market for cotton last year saw some cotton farmers incur many loses, having the knock-on effect of a decline in those cultivating the crop.

“One shouldn’t grow cotton any more. The cotton market is stupid. If the cotton market was good, then maybe things would be okay for cotton growers. The

price of cotton has increased this year with a reduction in the numbers of cotton farmers.

What I’m pretty sure about though is that cotton farmers have been facing losses for many years now,” said Ko Hsay Htun, a cotton farmer from Yinmabin township.

Sagaing Region boasts over a thousand acres of cotton fields, located throughout the townships of Monywa, ChaungU, Yinmabin, Pale, Budalin and Ayadaw, it is known from cotton farmers.—Myitmakha News Agency



PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

Crime NEWS

Eight injured in overturned vehicle



Eight people were injured when a bus overturned outside Mawlamyine yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

A CAR accident occurred on the road between Mawlamyine and Ye on Saturday, leaving eight people injured.

A passenger bus driven by Min Min, 34, with 18 passengers on board skidded and overturned at mile post No 47/2 after the driver lost control of the car near Wethongyaung Village.

During the accident, eight people, including the driver, sustained injuries. They have been sent to the nearest hospitals in Thanbuzayat and Mawlamyine townships.

The driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by local police.—Kyaw Win

Illegal hardwood timber seized in Magwe

NEARLY two tonnes of illegal hardwood were seized on Saturday between mile posts 31/3 and 31/4 on the Seikphyu-Sawkanpatlet road in Seikphyu Township, Magwe Region, police reported yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, a combined team comprising local police and members of the forestry

department searched a car driven by Zaw Min Htwe, 27, en route from Saw to Seikphyu. They discovered over 150 illegal hardwood logs worth nearly K230,000 in the vehicle. Police have charged the driver and two others on board under the Forestry Law.—Soe Lin Naing

Man killed by train

A MAN died after being hit by a train 1.5 miles far from Shwebo Station in Shwebo Township, Sagaing Region, on Sunday.

According to investigators, the unidentified man, about 45 years of age, was found dead

near a Buddhist monastery located between Ward-10 and Ward-3. The man’s belongings, including K35,000 in cash, were found along the track.

Police are still investigating the case.—Kyaw Zaw

LOCAL Business

Myanma Railways to put Yangon-Mandalay rail upgrade out to tender

Thein Ko Lwin

THE Ministry of Transport and Communication plans will put a US\$2.2 billion Yangon-Mandalay railroad upgrade project out to tender, said an official from Myanma Railways at a workshop on reforming and modernising the public transport sector in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The upgrade of the Yan-

gon-Mandalay railway line will be put out to tender as of the end of this year, said general manager U Ba Myint of Myanma Railways, adding that the railway upgrade project is set to last for 10 years, until the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

The first phase of the upgrading project will kick off on the Yangon-Taungoo railroad section next year following the

tender process, added the general manager. Myanma Railways said it is working together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency on the rail upgrades. Upon completion, entire journey from Yangon and Mandalay will take only eight hours, said the company.

The tenders will be put out transparently, said the general manager.



Passengers waiting to take a local train on the Yangon-Mandalay route. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Rubber farmers replace old rubber trees with high-yield variety

WITH rubber prices declining, some rubber plantation owners have begun felling their rubber trees and selling them as firewood, while some are replacing them with new rubber varieties that have higher yields.

"The price of rubber is on a gradual decline. Some rubber farmers sell their rubber trees as firewood because selling rubber latex can't earn them enough for their workers' wages. They cut down the rubber trees with a view to cultivate other season-

al vegetables," said U Tun Tin, a rubber plantation owner from Thanbyuzayat.

On 19 May, the price of rubber was K600 per pound, down from K700 in third week of April, according to the Muddon rubber purchase depot.

Some plantation owners who can afford the investment have turned to a new rubber variety, which produces higher yields, after felling their old trees. This kind of cultivation can be expensive to rubber farm-

ers.

"Our family has farmed rubber since the days of our forefathers. So we replaced the old rubber tree with the high-yield variety rather than wasting time on this," said U Aung Min, a rubber plantation owner.

The old rubber trees can produce 700 pounds of latex per acre per year, while the new rubber variety can produce 2,000 pounds of rubber latex per acre per year after seven years of cultivation.—200

Watermelon exports amount to US\$17 million in April

OVER 160,000 tonnes of watermelon were exported through border trade camps of Myanmar-China and Myanmar-India in April, earning an income of up to US\$17 million, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

A total of 82,802 tonnes of watermelons were exported from the Muse trade zone and 80,070

tonnes from the Lwejai trade zone from 1 to 30 April, earning a total of \$17.462million. An additional 2,286 tonnes of watermelons were exported via the Kan Pike Tee trade zone, valued at \$244,000.

Three tonnes of watermelons (\$3,000) were exported via the Tamu border trade camp, while of 28 tonnes of watermelons (\$8,000) were exported through

the Reed trade camp. The export volume of watermelons reached over 160,000 tonnes, valued at \$17.717 million.

The watermelons at the Tamu and Reed trade camps were sent from and around the Kalay area in Sagaing Region. Watermelons from Mandalay were exported to China starting from December 2015.—200

Yangon Bus Line Public Co to resume selling of shares

FOLLOWING the suspension of the selling of shares in the Yangon Bus Line Public Co in February, entrepreneurs will be given priority when the selling resumes, according to the company.

The share trading came to a halt to avoid possible disputes among the shareholders because the BRT line has been running at a loss. Selling may resume following negotiations with the appropriate government departments.

The company will sell shares only to entrepreneurs who can bear the brunt of the company's losses because the BRT line is

losing, said Dr Maung Aung, the chairman of the Yangon Bus Line Public Co.

The company was founded with a capital investment of K25 billion, including K10 billion from the government's budget and K15 billion from private entrepreneurs, K5 billion of which was sold out to the public at a rate of K100,000 per share.

A total of K1.8 billion worth shares sold out between October 2015 and February 2016. The BRT line runs from Htaukkyant to downtown Yangon, with the bus fare set at K300 per passenger to travel the whole route.—200

Myanmar Kyaw Investment Group to lend money to entrepreneurs

MYANMAR Kyaw Investment Group will lend money to selected entrepreneurs who need capital investment to run their businesses, according to a representative of the group.

The company will choose one entrepreneur from each of 100 districts in the country. Those who are engaged in administration and management, technology, engineering, finance

and accounting, economics and organisational development will be given priority in selection. The selected entrepreneurs will be provided capital and management techniques in order to enable them to implement regional development activities.

Applicants will need to submit recommendations from two respectful businessmen from their respective districts.—200

YCDC, JICA to install modern water distribution network

THE Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is drawing a plan together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to set up a modern water distribution network in Yangon, said Mayor U Maung Maung Soe.

The plan is being developed to cope with the rising population of Yangon and to ensure a sufficient water supply for city residents. Under the new water supply plan, there will be 10 different water supply zones. The plan includes a water wastage control project for the 10 zones

and the installation of water distribution pipes.

Around 205 million gallons of water are distributed to 60 per cent of Yangon's population by the current system. Some townships have tube wells, but some underground water is not of usable quality.

YCDC is trying to extend water distribution projects in the city with the assistance of international partners. During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, water distribution reached 310,862 households directly, up from 237,537 households in 2010-2011.—200

Ministry to regulate edible oil production

THE Department of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will draw up a plan to ensure that the manufacturing of the edible oil meets quality standards and is harmless to the consumers, said an official from the Ministry of Health.

This project includes the checking of the cultivation process from farm to table, including the application method of harvesting technologies, the milling process, refining, storing and dis-

tribution.

To manufacture the edible oil that meets the appropriate quality standards, many producers are expected to use new technologies. Manufacturers will be required to make sure not to include contaminants, such as Aflatoxin. Trademarks also need to be in accordance with international standards. The Ministry of Health is conducting laboratory tests on the edible oil and is upgrading all laboratories.—200

Japan to press Obama to get strict on crime from US bases

TOKYO — Japan will ask US President Barack Obama to take strict measures to prevent crime by people from US military bases after the arrest last week of a US worker in connection with the murder of a Japanese woman.

Obama will visit Japan this week for a Group of Seven nations summit and he will also make a historic visit to the city of Hiroshima, which the US military attacked with an atomic bomb in 1945.

US troops have been stationed in Japan since its World War II defeat and about 50,000 remain in various bases. Occasional crime by US personnel or civilian base workers infuriates Japanese people and often fuels call for the bases to go.

"I expect him to ask President Obama to deal with the matter strictly,

taking into account the Japanese people's feelings," Japan's top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga told a regular news conference, referring to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe was expected to ask Obama to ensure that strict discipline is enforced at bases and other measures are taken to prevent crime, Suga said.

A 32-year-old US civilian working at the Kadena air base on Japan's southern island of Okinawa was arrested last Thursday on suspicion of dumping the body of a 20-year-old woman.

Police are investigating. Okinawa, the site of a bloody World War II battles, hosts the bulk of US military forces in Japan and many residents resent what they see as an unfair burden.—Reuters

After 'sons of whores' comment, Philippines' Duterte says he will defy Church with three-child policy

MANILA — Philippine President-elect Rodrigo Duterte said he will defy the Roman Catholic Church and seek to impose a three-child policy, putting him on a new collision course with the bishops a day after he called them "sons of whores".

The southern mayor has yet to be declared the 9 May poll winner, but an unofficial vote count by an election commission-accredited watchdog showed him ahead over his four rivals, three of whom conceded defeat. Duterte assumes office on 30 June.

Duterte's often outrageous comments have won him huge support and his tirades about killing criminals and a joke about a murdered rape victim do not appear to have dented his popularity in the largely Catholic country. "I only want three children for every family," Duterte said on Sunday in Davao City. "I'm a Christian, but I'm a realist so we

have to do something with our overpopulation. I will defy the opinion or the belief of the Church."

About 80 per cent of the Philippines' 100 million population are Catholics, the largest concentration of any Asian country, who oppose abortion and contraception. On Saturday, he criticised the Church as the "most hypocritical institution", meddling in government policies and said some bishops were enriching themselves at the expense of the poor.

"You sons of whores, aren't you ashamed? You ask so many favours, even from me," Duterte said in an interview broadcast by TV station GMA. Monsignor Oliver Mendoza, spokesman for the Archdiocese of Lingayen, whose head is the president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said the Church respected Duterte's opinion but that it would continue to speak against government



President-elect Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte speaks during a news conference in his hometown Davao City in southern Philippines, on 16 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

policies that are contrary to Church teaching. "Because if we fail to do that, if we close our eyes, if we close our lips, we close our ears, what will be the role of the Church?" he said.

Political analysts said they were not surprised at Duterte's statements because some bishops spoke out against him during the election campaign.

"Like most liberal, secular politicians, Duterte is a deist," said Joselito Zulueta

of the University of Santo Tomas. "This in itself is a self-serving position conceived out of human conceit. He will do as he pleases except when he's stopped by public criticism."

He said Duterte's government was expected to clash more with the Catholic Church not only on population issues, but on the restoration of death penalty, legalisation of divorce and planned distribution of contraceptives.—Reuters

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South Korea rejects North Korea talks proposal as 'bogus'

SEOUL — South Korea dismissed on Monday a North Korean proposal for military talks as "a bogus peace offensive" and said it was formally rejecting the overture because it lacked a plan to end the North's nuclear programme.

North Korea's proposal on the weekend for talks between the two Koreas, a repeat of a call by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a congress of his ruling party this month, came after a period of heightened tension on the peninsula.

North Korea conducted

its fourth nuclear test in January and launched a long-range rocket in February, triggering tougher international sanctions and the adoption of a more hardline position by South Korean President Park Geun-hye.

North Korea said dialogue between military officials from the two sides was urgently needed to reduce tension, and suggested they be held in late May or early June. South Korea said the offer was insincere.

"The dialogue proposed by the North does not mention its nuclear programme,

which is the fundamental issue for peace on the Korean peninsula and South-North ties," South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman Moon Sang-gyun told a briefing.

"Proposing dialogue without an expression of its position on denuclearisation is a bogus peace offensive for bogus peace that lacks sincerity."

Moon said the South had sent a message over a military hotline on Monday expressing regret over the North's proposal and asking it to state its position on denuclearisation.

This month, at the first congress of North Korea's Workers' Party in 36 years, Kim declared his country a nuclear weapons state and vowed to press on with nuclear development, which he said was defensive.

In the run-up to the congress, North Korea test-fired a series of missiles including a submarine-based ballistic missile. It also attempted a launch of an intermediate-range ballistic missile.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles political ties with the North, said Pyongyang's intention may be to sow discord among the public in the South and create a rift in the international commitment to sanctions. "Let me repeat: Now is not the time for dialogue," said ministry spokesman Cheong Joon-hee.

North Korea came under tougher international pressure with the March adoption of a UN Security Council resolution that was even backed by its lone major ally China, which disapproves of its nuclear arms programme. South Korea has also cut off all commercial contacts with the North. The two Koreas have remained in a technical state of war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.—Reuters



Soldiers walk under pictures of former North Korean leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il at the capital's main ceremonial square after a mass rally and parade, a day after the ruling party wrapped up its first congress in 36 years by elevating him to party chairman, in Pyongyang, North Korea, on 10 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

US lifts arms embargo on old foe Viet Nam as regional tensions simmer

HANOI — US President Barack Obama announced on Monday that Washington will fully lift an embargo on sales of lethal arms to Viet Nam, underlining warming relations between the former foes amid rising tensions with Beijing over the South China Sea.

At a lavish state luncheon in Hanoi, Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang toasted Obama's first visit to the country as the arrival of a warm spring after a cold winter.

Obama, the third US president to visit Viet Nam since ties were restored in 1995, has made a strategic 'rebalance' towards Asia-Pacific a centrepiece of his foreign policy.

Viet Nam, where the United States was at war until 1975, has become a critical part of that strategy amid concerns about China's growing military might and its sovereignty claims in the South China Sea.

The decision to lift the arms trade ban, which followed intense

debate within the Obama administration, suggested that US concerns about China's assertiveness outweighed arguments that Vietnam had not done enough to improve its human rights record and that Washington would lose leverage for reforms.

Obama told a joint news conference with Quang that disputes in the South China Sea should be resolved peacefully and not by whoever "throws their weight around", but insisted that the arms embargo move was not linked to China.

"The decision to lift the ban was not based on China or any other considerations, it's based on our desire to complete what has been a lengthy process of moving towards normalisation with Viet Nam," he said, adding later that his visit to a former foe showed "hearts can change and peace is possible". He said the sale of arms would depend on Viet Nam's human rights commitments, and would be made on a case-by-case basis.—Reuters



US President Barack Obama shakes hands with Viet Nam's President Tran Dai Quang after an arrival ceremony at the presidential palace in Hanoi, Viet Nam on 23 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

With India's Gandhis at rock bottom, opposition comeback a daunting task

NEW DELHI — Prashant Kishor, the election campaign manager brought in by India's opposition Congress party to reverse its declining fortunes, knew his real work would begin when the party hit rock bottom. It looks like that moment has come.

The party run by the fabled Gandhi dynasty, which has led the world's largest democracy for most of its existence, suffered humiliation last week when it lost Assam to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in a state election.

Congress had controlled Assam, in India's northeast, since 2001, and for the nationalist BJP it was a first. The race was not even close, underlining the crisis facing the mother-and-son team of Sonia and Rahul Gandhi.

Two years ago they were eclipsed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a landslide national ballot won on promises of economic growth and a strong, modern India.

While the euphoria of that time has faded and Modi's agenda has been slowed by stalled reforms, other state election setbacks and devastating droughts hitting rural India, he remains comfortably the most popular politician.

The challenge for Rahul Gandhi, the public face of Congress' comeback, is to make up lost ground in time for the biggest test before a 2019 general election - the state vote next year in Uttar Pradesh, home to around 200 million people.

That, and the state of Punjab, will go a long way to defining who is the next prime minister; in



Congress party president Sonia Gandhi (R) and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (blue turban) cross a police barricade during what the party calls as a 'Save Democracy' march to parliament in New Delhi, on 6 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

2014, the BJP won 71 of 80 parliamentary seats in Uttar Pradesh and only Sonia and Rahul Gandhi held theirs for Congress.

Rahul Gandhi declined to be interviewed for this article, but, in a series of public appearances that have become more frequent in recent months, he sought to target Modi directly.

"Modi talked about good days to come but today the country is reeling under drought and farmers are committing suicide," he told a recent "Save Democracy March" of a few thousand people in New Delhi. "Modi has nothing to say."

In an intriguing twist in the race for Uttar Pradesh, Gandhi has invited Kishor to help coordinate Congress' strategy, the same man who aided Modi's march to New Delhi with a campaign that embraced modern electioneering

techniques and wowed voters.

Kishor now plans to bring those, and an intimate knowledge of the way Modi and the BJP operate, to a party that is widely seen as old-fashioned and overly reliant on the Gandhis.

The 38-year-old, who largely avoids the public eye but engages the press and senior party figures with increasing confidence, has a backroom team of researchers analysing census data to more effectively translate votes into seats. That may mean targeting a particular caste or religion, for example. Sources close to Kishor, who worked in health activism before being taken on as policy adviser to Modi when he was chief minister of Gujarat state, said Kishor had "24/7" access to Gandhi, although he did not decide his day-to-day movements.—Reuters

China says it hopes Viet Nam-US ties conducive to peace, stability

BEIJING — China said on Monday it hopes developing ties between the United States and Viet Nam will be conducive to regional peace and stability, after the United States ended its embargo on trade in lethal arms with Viet Nam.

The United States had completely lifted the embargo on trade in arms with Viet Nam, President Barack Obama said in Hanoi earlier on Monday, an overture that should enable an old foe to boost its defences at a time of rising South

China Sea tension.

Obama said the sale of arms would depend on Vietnam's human rights commitments.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying made the remarks on China's hopes for US-Vietnamese ties when asked about the lifting of the arms embargo. China resents US efforts to forge stronger military bonds with its neighbours amid rising tension in the disputed South China Sea.—Reuters

17 schoolgirls perish in fire at Thai school dormitory

BANGKOK — At least 17 schoolgirls aged 5 to 12 died and five others were injured in a fire at an elementary school dormitory in northern Thailand's Chiang Rai province Sunday night, police said on Monday.

The fire broke out around 11pm Sunday at the two-story dormitory of Pitakkiat Wittaya School in Wiang Pa Pao District and spread rapidly, the police said.

The joint efforts of fire-

fighters, rescue workers, and police eventually led to the flames being extinguished around 1am Monday.

Pitakkiat Wittaya School is a private school established for local underprivileged children. A total of 38 girls were staying at the dormitory. Local reports said two of the girls are listed as missing.

An investigation is underway to determine the cause of the fire.—Kyodo News

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

Advancing cooperation in regional and global fora

Khin Maung Aye

ASEAN and the Russian Federation have reaffirmed in their Sochi Declaration this week their commitment to the principles and norms of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), including mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in internal affairs and the non-use of force or the threat to use force, as well as respect for

ASEAN processes, principles and norms. Their commitments adhere not only to the UN charter but also with TAC and the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence laid down at the Bandung Conference.

Through the Sochi declaration, ASEAN will join hands with the Russian Federation to foster greater cooperation to address traditional and non-traditional security challenges, like international terrorism, transnational organ-

ised crime and threats to information security under global and regional frameworks.

Concerning maritime security and safety, it is essential to promote self-restraint, to not use force, to not threaten to use force and to settle disputes through peaceful means according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the SEA (UNCLOS). In this regard, too, ASEAN and the Russian Federation reaffirmed their commitment to support

full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the conduct of parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the development of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) on the basis of consensus.

It is expected that Myanmar, in cooperation with members of ASEAN, will further promote, where appropriate, cooperation in various regional and global fora, including the UN, APEC, ASEAN and the G-20.

Non-Persuasion, But Broad-mindedness towards Peaceful Planet

Ashin Suriya (Gemini)
MA, ITBMU

THERE have broken out many conflicts, violent riots and mass-of-people-killing wars in the different places of the world, such as crusade wars, World War I, World War II, etc. These are still happening these days as well. Some cases were on the basis of politics, and some on the basis of religion and some on the basis of race.

I, being just a very novice and a very beginner in the field of writing, am indeed incapable of pointing out and commenting and examining the controversial points of outbreaks of those violent events mentioned. And the political affair of which wars broke out is also beyond my scope of knowledge. But I have unforgettable experiences with regard to religious belief. This article is just about one of my own experiences, which is humbly hoped to be able to convey the reader something beneficial about the notion of religions. The ensuing story is taken and enlarged from my diary then written.

It was in the hot summer of 2003. My friend and I took respective seats in the middle class of the daytime train from Yangon to Mandalay. I was by the right window and he was beside me. I thought then we were lucky because we had two girls of our age in the face-to-face seats.

The train started leaving the Yangon railway station. Until that of the Bago town we spoke no words, but investigating one another through eye-contacts. My friend was almost silent in front of the girls of opposite sex throughout the way although he is talkative enough with friends of the same sex. Naturally, I also speak few words but am quite loquacious about knowledgeable things such as literature, religion,

education, view of life, and so on with the familiar people. Beside I am such a too shy person in front of unfamiliar people when with no interesting conversation that my shyness affects my facial expressions and behaviors.

That self-awareness made me try to ask some greeting questions that paved the way to engaging conversation with the stranger girls. My hesitant questions let me know that the thin girl right in front me was a pious Buddhist secular teacher while the beautiful one with gold complexion right in front of my friend was a devout Christian secular teacher. The Buddhist girl was almost all the time telling beads, with her eyes closed and leaning back in the seat. The Christian girl, however, pulled out the pocket Holy Bible and was reading in the manner of enthusiasm.

Here let me tell you about the then strongly interested subject of me. Those days I had been rather familiar with the books that reveal weak points of other religions, had heard of the bad news of other religionists. Moreover, I have an inborn nature of worshipping nationalism. Because I do not believe that the loving of one's own nation is the hating of other nations. Similarly, that one has great devotion to one's religion does not mean that one has the sense of hatred towards other religions. But then with the extremely narrow mind, I wanted to debate with other religionists on the teachings in their sacred books. It seems worse to me that I went to a centre of one other religion along with a friend of mine when I was in Mandalay, with the intention of oppressing that religion. It was lucky of me not to have chance to do so there.

To see the Christian girl reading her sacred book aroused my insincere thought of oppressing other religion to arise. So with

such a bad attitude kept in mind, I started raising some questions to the girl. She gave some replies to my teasing questions calmly. She did not seem angry at my bullying behaviours. The rain of such questions fell onto her so much, which she could not answer. To my shamefulness then and to my great thankfulness now, I heard the hard unique voice abruptly, saying, "**You are a Buddhist monk; you should be broad-minded.**" The voice was not from the distant place but right in front of me. The Buddhist secular teacher. She prevented me from constantly oppressing the other girl by saying that word. I think she could no longer bear my purposeful verbal attacks. After that, she (the Buddhist secular teacher) kept silent for few minutes. I was also then ashamed of my rudeness and bad attitude towards other religionist. But the Christian girl said no word, and I think she was amazed, looking at us: the Buddhist girl and me.

Admittedly, the word spoken to me by the Buddhist girl did change my way of thinking, to understand other religions and to be broad-minded towards other religionists and to accept the differences. It opened my narrow-mindedness and gave me what is unbuyable by money—a great memorable experience in my life. As a matter of fact, existing of different religion and races in a country or in a region or in the world means beauty that can be compared to the park with colourful, various kinds of flowers, plants and trees. On the other hand, different kinds of flowers around make a kind of flower more obvious to be noticed. Beside due to the black colour around, the white colour is clearer in sight vice versa.

I honestly confessed my fault of attacking other religion in front of them. The confession made our conversation tenderer and smooth-

er. And it created more intimate relationship between us on the train journey. Getting closer, I enquired about them, who have different beliefs. My curiosity was why they had been very close although they are different in religion as well as race.

According to them, I learned that they came back from a training course for teachers conducted by the government in Yangon. They told us that they live in Naungcho, Northern Shan State of Myanmar. In spite of difference mainly in religion, they had not ever made persuasion of each other for conversion into one's religion. They went to the Buddhist temples and pagodas together where they performed good merits. And also they paid frequent visits to the churches for praying and singing songs to the guitar. They respect each other and avoid talking about differences between the religions they believe in.

From this story and my other experiences, I would like to present four principal facts as the conclusion of my article. I humbly hope, from religious point of view, that these facts will help make the world we live peace to some extent. These are what each individual of all religionists as well as non-religionists all over the world must start to put into real practice from now on.

1. No persuasion; no dishonest way of promoting one's religion

Back to the history of world religions, some religions had grown powerful by invading, fighting, forcing and persuading other religions. With violent, dishonest, persuasive methods, people will never and ever be in the state of peace but in worse and worse situations, with the world being burned in the inextinguishable flames of fire of wars. Governments should therefore try to prevent some religionists from forcing other religionists to convert into another one.

2. No religious attacks or as-

saults towards other religions but broad-mindedness

These days there have appeared some extremely disgusting assaults. It is the assaults that attack other religions: printing religious icons of other religions on the clothes for women, tattooing those images on lower parts of the human body and so on, destroying religious images, buildings and the like, abusing and blaming other religions on Medias like Facebook, etc. The more these happen, the more violent the world will be, then the further the world will be from the peace. It is thus believed that the governments should wisely and vigorously handle those issues.

3. No bribe-taking by the officials or administrators

When the religious tensions between two particular religions occur, some religionists were found giving bribes to some officials or administrators concerned. That is as if fueling the tension to lead to more violent and uncontrollable situations. Therefore, the governments should inspect and bar its officials so strictly that they would not commit such bribery and corruption.

4. No bias or injustice by the officials or the government

I think this fact is a subtle and controversial issue. Also I feel it is concerned with the dignity of religionists and governments of a country. Anyway justice is the universally accepted virtue. Those that neglect that are those that cannot be called 'good people', irrespective of the popular religions they believe in.

May the world people be at peace with no persuasions, no attacks, and no bias towards other religions. May the people do not want to torture and kill each other. May the people of the world be able to avoid conflicts and fighting wars. Instead, may the people turn the world to the peaceful planet.

Resort to be established in Myeik



Cruise ships in the Myeik Archipelago.

AS part of its effort to promote the tourism industry, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will establish a new resort in Myeik, Taninthayi Region.

In the first phase of the environmental impact assessment for the project, the ministry will organise a meeting with residents to explain the project and ask their views, planning to provide construction opportunities to local entrepreneurs if the meeting produces positive outcomes. “We need to explore new destinations as there are many beautiful untouched islands in the region,” U Hlwan Moe, assistant director of the directorate of hotels and tourism in Kawthaung Region. Located in the southern part of Myanmar, the Myeik Archipelago consists of over 800 islands, all lying in the Andaman Sea. It is the natural habitat of 42 species of fish, 518 kinds of coral and 228 varieties of birds.—200

Over 50 million fingerlings to be bred this fiscal year

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation plans to produce over 50 million fingerlings at 22 fish breeding camps this fiscal year.

The ministry will boost fish production this fiscal year with the use of K149.72 million provided by the government and plans to put 30 per cent of the fingerlings into rivers and dams, and the rest will go to local fish breeding camps.

With the aim of preserving native species, catfish and other native fish varieties will be bred at three breeding camps owned by the government in order to distribute them to local fishery business operators at a comfortable price, according to the Yangon Region Fisheries Department.

Moreover, the ministry will put fingerlings of barbus and carp into rice plantations, dams, creeks and rivers free of charge during the monsoon season and plans to establish a 250-acre farm in Kawthmu Township during the 100-day project.—Zarni

Campaign aims to eliminate glue sniffing among street children

REGIONAL authorities, in cooperation with civil society organisations, will carry out an awareness campaign for young adults, especially street children, who sniff glue across Mandalay Region.

The project is scheduled to start in June this year with a wide range of educational programmes, one organiser said.

Glue sniffing is a serious health threat to children who do it.

Street children who sniff glue can generally be found under overpasses in Chanayethazan, Mahaangmye and Chanmyathazi townships.

Myanmar has no law relating to glue sniffing, and the number of children doing it is rising across the region, one local said.—200

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Regular readers of Global New Light of Myanmar will note that in recent months, there have been many positive changes in the newspaper. They will also be delighted by the increase in the number of contributors and the variety of articles featured in the daily. Hopefully, the GNLM will also serve as useful reading material for Myanmar young people trying to improve their English and their general knowledge and some are likely to take up writing emulating the style of eminent contributors.

Rote learning is the main mode of learning in our country and some young people like to learn by heart sentences and phrases they like and reproduce it in their essays, assignments and even theses without giving acknowledgment to the authors. Most do not know that in academic institutions such transgressions are considered as plagiarism. According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary plagiarize is “to copy another person’s ideas, words or work and pretend that they are your own”. It is considered as a very serious matter in academic circles. In this age of ICT, people should be aware that it is very easy to discover plagiarism using the many plagiarism detection tools and checkers on the Internet. Even if a person does not use software, plagiarism can be detected by simply typing out the suspicious phrase, clause or sentence in a search engine like Google which will easily identify the source for the searcher.

Some commit plagiarism unintentionally, but those with advanced degrees probably do so out of sheer laziness or because they do not think highly of the intelligence of their readers. Just something to ponder on for those who are unaware of the seriousness of plagiarism, or who do not regard it as important. —Pho Thit

Skills Development of Workers POEM:

The Union Constitution has provisions for the Union to assist in reducing unemployment among the people to the possible extent hence it is imperative to promote all forms of skills development for workers to enable them to obtain and retain employment and enhance labour productivity and economic development.

In Myanmar the Employment and Skills Development Law clearly states, skills training of workers are the employer’s responsibility. Laws relating to Investment and the Special Economic Zones require the investors to provide training for the workers’ skills to acquire. Regarding skills to be trained for any particular type of occupation in some countries referred to as Specific Vocational Preparation, it needs to be related to the level of industry specific technology hence can be undertaken effectively by the concerned industry. However, in more common occupations training of required quality can also be undertaken by training providers with the needed facility.

A significant achievement of the Government has been enacting the “Employment and Skills Development Law” of twenty three replacing the “Employment and Training Act “ of nineteen fifty placing responsibility on employers, of both public and private industry to undertake skills development, upgrading and updating training for their workers either individually or collectively conducting, training courses or sending their workers to attend training centres organized by both public and private training service providers.

A feature of the same law is the certification of skilled workers whether they acquired their skills through attending organized training or through experiential learning on-the-job as has mostly been the practice over the years in most Enterprises and Industry seen. The Skills Development Body formed under the ESD Law above-mentioned sets Competency Standards at semi-skilled, skilled, advanced skilled and supervisory levels in line with international standards for specific occupations for quality assured assessment and certification at the workers option by an independent committee under the Skills Development Body and awarding by the Body of National Level Certificates of Competency

Under the ESD law employers, whether in the public or private sector and service providers can establish skills development programs for workers and individually or jointly set up Training and /or Assessment Centres to undertake Skills Training and / or Assessment for workers of both sectors.

In Myanmar many of the Ministries and Enterprises under them have established training institutions and centres for skills development.

Regarding need for skilled workers in the various States and Regions establishing training centres by employers may not, be a viable option as yet in some States and Regions, due to their level of industrialization.

Perhaps the existing training institutions and centres under the Ministries could also undertake training of needed workers in the region/state industries in the Private Public Partnership modality with cooperation of both the parties and in line with the Competency Standards developed under law of ESD conduct suitable courses for the more common occupations needed by industry and for apprentices and existing skilled workers, to enable them to undertake the appropriate level of assessments leading to a competency certificate.

Lokethar

UN chief Ban calls for halving of numbers of displaced by 2030

ISTANBUL — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday called on governments, businesses and aid groups at the UN's first world humanitarian summit to commit to halving the number of displaced civilians by 2030.

The two-day conference in Istanbul seeks to develop a better response to what the UN has called the worst global humanitarian situation since World War II, with an estimated 130 million people now in need of aid.

"We are here to shape a different future," Ban said in a speech at the start of the summit.

"I urge you to commit to cutting (by) half (the number of) internally displaced people by 2030 and to find better long-term solutions for refugees and displaced people based on more equal sharing of responsibilities," he said.

The summit aims to mobilise funds and get world leaders to agree on issues ranging from how to manage displaced civil-



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks during the opening ceremony of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ians to renewing commitments to international humanitarian law.

But it risks falling short of ambitions. Aid agency Medecins sans Frontieres pulled out in May, saying it lost hope the con-

ference could address weaknesses in emergency response. Host country Turkey has called the international humanitarian aid system "broken".

Ahead of the opening, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan reiterated his criticism of the West for not doing enough to help the people of war-torn Syria.

"The extent to which the international humanitarian system lies broken is alarming," he wrote in an opinion piece published in the *Guardian* newspaper.

"The international community in particular has largely ignored its responsibilities toward the Syrian people by turning a blind eye to Bashar al-Assad's crimes against his own citizens."

Erdogan has been one of President Bashar al-Assad's most vocal critics and sees his removal as essential to ending Syria's war. Turkey is sheltering nearly 3 million Syrian refugees at a cost of around \$10 billion since the start of the Syrian civil war.—*Reuters*

Lockerbie lawyer seeks \$330 million from Putin, Russia for MH17 disaster

SYDNEY — The US aviation lawyer who won compensation for victims of the 1988 Lockerbie aircraft bombing and is now seeking \$330 million from Russia for the downing of Malaysian Airlines MH17 in 2014, says Russian President Vladimir Putin must be held responsible.

Jerry Skinner, who is leading Australian law firm LHD's compensation claim against Russia and Putin in the European Court of Human Rights, says he is confident of success but admits the case, like that of Lockerbie, may take years.

The Malaysian Airlines' Boeing 777 crashed in eastern Ukraine in pro-Russian rebel-held territory on 17 July, 2014, killing all 298 people on board, including 28 Australians.

The aircraft, which was en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot down by a Russian-made surface-to-air missile, the Dutch Safety Board concluded in its final report.

Skinner said he had no personal issue with Putin, but that the Russian president had opened himself to liability through his extensive control over the Russian state.

"Nothing happens in Russia that he doesn't approve of, therefore vicariously he's responsible," Skinner told Reuters in an interview on Monday in Sydney.

Skinner said evidence from witnesses, videos, photographs, radar, air traffic control tapes sup-



Jerry Skinner, the lawyer asking the European Court of Human Rights to order Russia and President Vladimir Putin to pay \$330 million to the families who died onboard of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, is interviewed by Reuters in Sydney, Australia, on 23 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ported his compensation case.

"All of that stuff is available and even without the Russian's contribution I am confident in saying that it was the Russians who caused this event to occur," he said.

The LHD lawsuit is on behalf of 16 victims from Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia, and 33 next of kin. Each claimant is seeking \$10 million in damages.

Skinner won similar compensation for the victims of Pan Am Flight 103 which was destroyed by a bomb over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people.

Skinner said international political pressure was needed

to uncover the truth behind the downing of MH17.

"I'm hopeful that the Australian government gets involved. We need the leverage of one of the governments whose hands are clean," he said.

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop on Monday echoed the sentiment for an independent investigation.

"However painful and how-ever difficult and traumatic it is for them to deal with the loss of their loved ones aboard MH17... we will work very hard to ensure that a system is set up, a mechanism is set up, to hold those responsible for this atrocity to account," she said.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

South African state prosecutor to appeal court order to reinstate Zuma corruption charges

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's state prosecutor said on Monday he would appeal a High Court ruling to review a decision to drop 783 corruption charges against President Jacob Zuma, citing independence of the prosecuting authority.

The decision by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in April 2009 to set aside the charges allowed Zuma to run for president in elections the same month.

"I have decided to apply for leave to appeal against the judgement," said the National Director of Public Prosecutions Shaun Abraham.—*Reuters*

Spanish journalist feared kidnapped by Colombian rebels

MADRID — A Spanish journalist working in Colombia for almost two decades has disappeared while reporting a story on the illegal drugs industry and is feared kidnapped by Marxist rebels operating in the area, military sources said on Sunday.

Salud Hernandez, a journalist with Spain's *El Mundo* and local newspapers, disappeared close to the town of El Tarra in the northern province of Norte de Santander on Saturday. It is thought that Hernandez has been kidnapped by the National Liberation Army (ELN), the second biggest rebel group in Colombia, which has continued taking people hostage even while it seeks a peace accord with the government.

"I order priority and dedication from the armed forces in establishing where the journalist Salud Hernandez is," President Juan Manuel Santos said from his Twitter account. The armed forces have activated a search operation for her in the area, according to a Tweet by the military.—*Reuters*

Flash floods, landslides hit West Indonesia, five killed, one missing

JAKARTA — Five people were killed, one went missing and five others sustained serious injury after flash floods and landslides hit West Java province in western Indonesia on Sunday night, Haryadi W, head of provincial disaster agency, told Xinhua by phone on Monday.—*Xinhua*

Wildfires continue to rage in Russia's Far East

VLADIVOSTOK, (Russia) — A large tract of area was destroyed in Russia's Far East region over the past 24 hours as wildfires continued to rage, the local forestry department reported on Monday.

"Amur region registered the most fires in the Far East Federal District... 60 wildfires swallowed 15,800 hectares over the past 24 hours in Russia's Far East region," it said.

By Monday morning, 19 fires had been extinguished and 41 fires are burning, including 27 fires in the Amur region and 13 in Khabarovsk.

Russia has reported 810 wildfires in its Far East regions so far this year, far more than the 626 wildfires reported in the same period of last year. A state of emergency was declared in the Amur region earlier this month due to the spreading of wildfires.—*Xinhua*

India successfully test-launches indigenous space shuttle

NEW DELHI — India on Monday successfully test-launched its first-ever indigenous space shuttle from its southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

The Indian Space Research Organisation described the launch of the Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD) as "successful" after it landed on a stretch of water in the Bay of Bengal, some 500 kilometres from Sriharikota, the launch site.

It is hoped that the reusable technology will allow the cost of launching objects into space to be reduced substantially. Currently, it costs about \$20,000 to send 1 kilogram into space. According to local media reports, the organisation plans to test two more such prototypes before launching the final version, which will be about six times larger, by the year 2030.—*Kyodo News*

Blasts kill more than 100 in Syrian government stronghold

BEIRUT — Bomb blasts killed more than 100 people in the Syrian coastal cities of Jableh and Tartous on Monday, monitors said, in a government-controlled area that hosts Russian forces.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks in the Mediterranean cites that have up to now escaped the worst of the conflict, saying it was targeting supporters of President Bashar al-Assad.

Scores were wounded in at least five suicide attacks and two car bombs, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, the first assaults of their kind in Tartous, where government ally Russia maintains a naval facility, and Jableh.

State media confirmed the attacks but gave a lower toll.

Fighting has increased in other parts of Syria in recent weeks as world powers struggle to revive a threadbare ceasefire in western

Syria and after peace talks in Geneva this year broke down.

State media reported that a car bomb and two suicide bombers attacked a petrol station in Tartous. In Jableh, one of the four blasts hit near a hospital, state media and the Observatory reported.

Footage broadcast by the state-run Ikhbariya news channel of what it said were scenes of the blasts in Jableh showed several twisted and incinerated cars and minivans.

Pictures circulated by pro-Damascus social media users showed dead bodies in the back of pick-up vans and charred body parts on the ground.

The Syrian Observatory said at least 53 people were killed in Jableh, and 48 in Tartous.

The interior ministry said in a statement more than 20 people had been killed, and one state media outlet put the death toll at 45 peo-



A Syrian army soldier and civilians inspect the damage after explosions hit the Syrian city of Tartous, on 23 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

ple. Bombings in the capital Damascus and western city Homs earlier this year killed scores and were claimed by Islamic State, which is fighting against government forces and their allies in some areas, and separately against its jihadist

rival al Qaeda and other insurgent groups.

Russia, which intervened in the Syrian war in support of President Bashar al-Assad last September, operates an air base at Hmeymim in Latakia and a naval

facility at Tartous. Latakia city, which is north of Jableh and capital of the province that is President Assad's heartland, has been targeted on a number of occasions by bombings and insurgent rocket attacks.—Reuters

Iraqi forces clash with Islamic State south of Falluja, bomb city centre

BAGHDAD — Iraqi forces clashed with Islamic State militants near Falluja on Monday while bombing central districts in the initial hours of an offensive to retake the militant stronghold just west of Baghdad that could take several weeks.

Some of the first direct engagement occurred in al-Hayakil area on the city's southern outskirts, a resident said. Air strikes and mortars overnight targeted neighborhoods inside the city proper where Islamic State is thought to maintain its headquarters. But the bombardment had eased by daylight.

Residents living in the center said they had fled to relative safety in outlying northern areas but roadside bombs planted by Islamic State prevented them from leaving the city.

Falluja, a longtime bastion of Sunni Muslim jihadists, 50 km (30 miles) from Baghdad, was the

first city to fall to Islamic State, in January 2014. Six months later, the group declared a caliphate spanning large parts of Iraq and neighbouring Syria.

Iraqi forces have surrounded the city since last year but focused most combat operations on IS-held territories further west and north. The authorities have pledged to retake Mosul this year in keeping with a US plan to dislodge Islamic State from their de facto capitals in Iraq and Syria.

But the Falluja operation, which is not considered a military prerequisite for advancing on Mosul, could push back that timeline. Two offensives by US forces against al Qaeda insurgents in Falluja in 2004, which left the city badly damaged, each lasted about a month.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who also faces political and economic crises in the major

OPEC producer, visited a command center set up nearby to oversee operations, state television said on Monday.

Abadi, announcing the offensive in a late-night speech, said it would be conducted by the army, police, counter-terrorism forces, local tribal fighters and a coalition of mostly Shi'ite Muslim officials.

Iraqi officials say the militias, including ones backed by Iran, may be restricted to operating outside the city limits, as they were largely in the battle for nearby Ramadi six months ago, to avoid aggravating sectarian tensions with Sunni residents.

State television showed footage of armored vehicles sitting among palm groves on the city's outskirts, a green tracer glow emanating from shells and machine gun fire.

Video showed a family standing in the daylight outside a simple one-storey home, cheering and waving a white flag as a military convoy passed by.

Iraqi and US officials estimate there are as many as 100,000 civilians still living in Falluja, a city on the Euphrates river whose population was three times that size before the war. Besieging the city has created acute shortages of food and medicine.

The government has called on civilians to flee and said it would open safe corridors to areas south of the city, but bombs planted by Islamic State along the roads are complicating evacuation.—Reuters

Islamic State suicide bombing kills 40 army recruits in Yemen's Aden

ADEN — A suicide car bombing claimed by Islamic State killed at least 40 army recruits and injured 60 others in the Yemeni city of Aden on Monday, medics said, in one of the deadliest attacks yet on the beleaguered government.

The attack occurred as the recruits lined up to enlist for military service at the home of a senior general in the Khor Maksar district of Aden, officials said.

The port city serves as the temporary capital of Yemen's Saudi-backed administration while it seeks to seize back the capital Sanaa from the armed Houthis group.

Local news website Aden al-Ghad showed pictures of soldiers picking up bloodied comrades in uniform from the ground and witnesses reported seeing ambulances with blaring sirens collecting the wounded. In a written statement posted to its social media accounts, Islamic state said the attack targeted "the apostate Yemeni army" and named the attacker as Abu Ali al-Adeni.

A bomb planted at the gate of a nearby army base detonated afterwards but caused no casualties, local officials said.

The attacks follow gains by Yemeni government forces backed by the United Arab Emirates, who mounted an offensive on al Qaeda militants in southern towns beginning last month.

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has taken advantage of chaos in Yemen since its civil war began last year to win control over swathes of southern and eastern Yemen.

Their militant rivals in Yemen's branch of Islamic State have carried out a series of suicide attacks on all parties to Yemen's tangled conflict, killing 25 police recruits outside the southeastern port city of Mukalla this month.

Yemeni forces pushed al Qaeda out of its base in that city and have stepped up a crackdown on militants, killing sixteen in a raid outside the city backed up by Gulf Arab helicopters on Sunday.—Reuters

Kenyan police disperse protesters in port city of Mombasa

NAIROBI — Kenyan police in the port city of Mombasa fired teargas to disperse hundreds of protesters demanding the removal of an electoral oversight body which opposition parties want scrapped, a Reuters witness said.

The witness said police had earlier been seen patrolling the

streets in riot gear, while businesses remained closed for fear of looting.

The Reuters witness saw about three hundred protesters waving placards reading "IEBC must go home now", a reference to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission.—Reuters



Iraqi soldiers fire a mortar toward Islamic State militants on the outskirts of Fallujah, west of Baghdad, on 20 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

Slow response to past crashes could hinder EgyptAir search — experts

PARIS/CAIRO — Teams searching for the black box flight recorders of a missing EgyptAir jet that crashed with 66 people aboard face technical constraints that aviation experts increasingly blame on a slow regulatory response to earlier disasters.

As a three-year deep-sea search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 draws towards a close in the Indian Ocean without finding the airplane, another is starting in the Mediterranean Sea where the lessons of previous crashes have yet to be applied.

Rescuers have barely 30 days until the batteries die on two underwater beacons designed to guide them to the black box flight recorders as they scour 17,000 square kilometres of sea north of the Egyptian port city of Alexandria.

After previous crashes at sea, regulators agreed to increase the transmission time and range of such beacons to increase the chances of finding evidence and preventing future accidents.

The changes, trebling the life of the 'pingers' to 90 days, were first recommended by French investigators in late 2009, six months after the crash of an Air France plane in the Atlantic.

But they were only adopted in response to the disappearance over four years later of Malaysia's missing MH370 and do not come into effect until 2018: too late to help find EgyptAir 804.

French investigators say the Egyptian jet sent warnings indicating that smoke was detected on board. The signals did not indicate what caused the smoke, and aviation experts have not ruled out deliberate sabotage or a technical fault. Egypt has sent a robot submarine to join the hunt.

It is the second time in little more than a year that sea search operations



The French Navy's EV Jacoubet prepares to leave the Mediterranean port of Toulon, France, on 20 May 2016 in this picture taken and released on Friday by the French Navy SIRPA Marine, to take part in a search operation of the EgyptAir passenger plane. PHOTO: REUTERS

have been forced to rely on decades-old black-box technology after an AirAsia plane crashed into the Java Sea.

Delays in implementing the changes to the beacons to extend their battery life and improve the chances of finding the black boxes have been criticised by a number of experts includ-

ing the former head of the French BEA agency, which is helping the search for Egyptair.

"The battery situation is pretty scandalous," Jean-Paul Troadec, who headed the French government BEA air accident investigative agency during much of the Air France probe, told Reuters.

"It hardly costs anything to install new batteries. There was no reason to wait until 2018."

In the first days after a crash at sea, the priority is to use passive devices capable of listening for the pinger's clicking pulse. Once these die, searchers must use sonar devices and robots, which are cost-

ly and time-consuming. It took two years to find Air France 447 in the Atlantic this way.

"You can imagine the pressure this 30-day deadline creates," Troadec said.

Manufacturers say that implementing the recommendations to extend the life of a beacon is not just a simple switch.—Reuters

Peru's Fujimori widens lead over Kuczynski despite scandal

LIMA — Peruvian presidential contender Keiko Fujimori widened her lead over rival Pedro Pablo Kuczynski in an Ipsos poll on Sunday, despite a scandal involving Fujimori's top aide.

Fujimori was seen winning 52.6 per cent of valid votes in the June 5 run-off election compared to Kuczynski's 47.4 per cent, according to the results of a mock voting exercise by Ipsos broadcast on local television show Cuarto Poder.

The poll was conducted 19 and 20 May, a few days after Univision and Cuarto Poder reported that the secretary general of Fujimori's centre-right party, Joaquin Ramirez, was under investigation by the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

A man identified as a DEA informant in the report said he had recorded audio of Ramirez affirming that Ramirez laundered \$15 million for Fujimori in 2011.—Reuters

Eight shuttered work camps reopening in Canada's scorched oil lands

TORONTO — Authorities in Canada have announced the reopening of eight shuttered work camps south of the wildfire-ravaged oil town of Fort McMurray, paving the way for energy firms to restart production.

Municipal authorities announced Sunday evening a "phased re-entry" for camps near Nexen's Long Lake and ConocoPhillips's Surmont facilities, both of which have stopped production due to the fire.

"Assessment work to return ... camps to operations may begin immediately," the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, which oversees Fort McMurray, said in a statement.

The municipality is also reopening camps near Enbridge Inc's Cheecham terminal, which the company has said was returning to full service.

It is not immediately clear when any of the oil facilities themselves will be

fully operational. A ConocoPhillips spokesman said the company does not yet have a timeline. Nexen and Enbridge did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The inferno in northern Alberta, which by Sunday evening was more than 500,000 hectares, has caused the evacuation of Fort McMurray's entire population of nearly 90,000 since it began early this month.

It also caused the evacuation of oil facilities and work camps around the city and triggered a prolonged shutdown that has cut Canadian oil output by a million barrels a day.

Producers have since signalled a gradual increase in operations as rain and cold weather helped firefighters beat back the flames.

The announced re-opening of the work camps came two days after

the municipality lifted the evacuation orders on Suncor Energy Inc and Syncrude oil sites and some nearby work camps north of Fort McMurray.

It is unclear when either will resume full production, though Suncor has said a limited number of staff will be back at some of its sites on Monday at the earliest and that all will return "in a phased manner over the next few weeks".—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV METHI BHUM VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV METHI BHUM VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.5.2016 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER

LINES

Phone No: 2301185

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY

MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE

(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)

(7 / 2016)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-008(16-17)	Piston Rubbers for F-1600 Rig Pump Ex ZJ 70 L Drilling Rigs (3) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-009(16-17)	4" ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5 L, Grade A 10,000 MTR	US\$
(3)	DMP/L-007(16-17)	Server Computer (DAQ) and UPS (2 KW) (2) Items	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 16-6-2016, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 23TH May, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise

Ph . +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Austrian presidential run-off including far-right on knife-edge

VIENNA — Austria's presidential election was too close to call on Sunday, meaning postal ballots were set to determine whether a eurosceptic anti-immigration candidate would become the European Union's first far-right head of state.

A victory for Freedom Party candidate Norbert Hofer would be a landmark triumph for resurgent populist parties across Europe that have capitalized on Europe's migration crisis and widespread dissatisfaction with traditional parties of power. It would be all the more remarkable for being in a prosperous country with low unemployment, where two centrist parties have dominated since it emerged shattered from World War II after its annexation by Nazi Germany in 1938.

"The sovereign has spoken," Hofer's opponent, former Greens leader Alexander van der Bellen, told broadcaster ORF. "What exactly it has said — Hofer or van der Bellen — we will



Presidential candidates Norbert Hofer of the Freedom Party (FPÖ) and Alexander Van der Bellen (L) who is supported by the Greens party, take part in a TV debate after the Austrian presidential election in Vienna, Austria, on 22 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

know tomorrow afternoon."

A projection by the SORA institute for broadcaster ORF, based on 100 per cent of votes cast in polling stations and an estimate of the outcome of postal voting, showed a statistical dead heat on 50.0 per cent each. The margin of error was 0.7 percentage point. The provi-

sional result from the Interior Ministry, which did not include postal ballots, showed Hofer ahead with 51.9 per cent to van der Bellen's 48.1 per cent.

Postal votes will not be counted until Monday and their exact number is not known. They tend to be used by the more highly educated,

a spokesman for SORA said, a group among which 72-year-old van der Bellen has greater support.

Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka said he expected there would be about 750,000 postal ballots, roughly 12 per cent of Austria's 6.4 million eligible voters.—Reuters

South Korea posts biopharma surplus in 6 years on demand for arthritis biosimilar

SEOUL — South Korea posted a surplus in biopharmaceutical products trade for the first time in six years due to strong demand for a rheumatoid arthritis biosimilar made by the country's copycat drugmaker Celltrion, a government report showed on Monday.

Exports of biopharmaceutical products jumped 34 per cent from a year earlier to 789.15 million US dollars in 2015, according to the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety.

Biopharmaceutical imports declined 15.8 per cent to 738.22 million dollars last year, sending the trade surplus in the segment to 50.93 million dollars in 2015. It marked the country's first trade surplus in the biopharma sector since it recorded a surplus of 36.53 million dollars in 2009.

South Korea's biopharma exports continued to grow in the past five years from 260 million dollars in 2011 to 400 million dollars

in 2013 to 789.15 million dollars in 2015. Imports in the segment kept a roughly downward trend in the same period.

The surge in exports was mainly attributable to robust overseas demand for Celltrion's biosimilar Remsima, a copycat of Johnson & Johnson's blockbuster rheumatoid arthritis medicine Remicade.

Biosimilars indicate generics for biologic drugs that lost patent protection.

Remsima exports reached 439.32 million dollars in 2015, more than doubling 204.77 million dollars tallied in the previous year. It accounted for 55.7 per cent of the total biopharma exports last year.

The Celltrion biomedicine was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in April, raising a possibility for the drug's solid overseas sales this year. The South Korean company has insisted on a 30 percent market share in Europe.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PIONEER B VOY NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PIONEER B VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-5 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 TAN BINH 134 VOY NO (05-2016)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TAN BINH 134 VOY NO (05-2016) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-7 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 G-LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV VEGA FYNEN VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV VEGA FYNEN VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2016 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.

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2016 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.

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV JIAN FA VOY NO (CAM 113)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV JIAN FA VOY NO (CAM 113) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2016 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CAM SHIPPING PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (114N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (114N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Madonna, Kesha, Dion rule the stage at emotional Billboard Awards

LOS ANGELES — Madonna paid tribute to Prince, Kesha earned a standing ovation for her stirring rendition of “It Ain’t Me, Babe” honoring Bob Dylan, and Celine Dion dedicated her Icon award to her late husband at Sunday night’s emotion-packed Billboard Music Awards.

The three-hour live telecast from Las Vegas stuck to its tradition of a performance-heavy annual show featuring top recording stars in spectacular production numbers.

Britney Spears kicked things off, dazzling in a daring red outfit for a medley of her hits.

Canadian singer The Weeknd dedicated the first award to Prince, the Grammy-winning pop superstar best known for such hits as “Purple Rain” and “Let’s Go Crazy,” who died at his Minnesota home in April aged 57.

“I want to dedicate this award to the late great Prince,” The Weeknd (real name Abel Tesfaye), said in accepting the Top Hot 100 Artist award.

Madonna ended the show with a Prince tribute that included “Nothing Compares 2 U,” before she was joined by Stevie Wonder for “Purple Rain” as the audience rose to its feet, arms gently swaying above their heads and singing along.

Earlier, Kesha delivered an emotional rendition of Dylan’s classic in a much-anticipated performance that was nearly canceled by her label in a legal dispute.

Kemosabe Records relented, saying Kesha had assured them she would not use her time as a platform to address her failed legal bid against Sony Corp’s Sony Music and producer Dr. Luke. Kemosabe, founded by Dr. Luke, is a unit of Sony Music. The singer stood by her word.

While several awards were handed out during the show, including to British singer Adele who won the big prize, top artist and accepted via a video segment, it was performances by the likes of Ariana Grande, Dion,



Stevie Wonder and Madonna perform ‘Purple Rain’ during the tribute to Prince at the 2016 Billboard Awards in Las Vegas, Nevada, US, on 22 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

and Rihanna that ruled.

Dion, making her first televised singing performance since the death of her husband, Rene Angelil, tearfully accepted the Icon Award for lifetime achievement, which in a surprise was presented by her son, Rene-Charles.

“I’m so sorry, I don’t want to cry in front of you,” Dion told the audience. She ended by holding her award aloft and declaring, “Rene, this one’s for you, the show must go on,” echoing the title of the Queen song she had just performed.

Other top prizes went to Rihanna in the fan-voted chart achievement award, Justin Bieber for top male artist, Adele for both top female artist and Billboard 200 album, and The Weeknd for R & B song “The Hills.” —Reuters

Michael Jackson used to prank call Russell Crowe

LONDON — Actor Russell Crowe says he was relentlessly pranked by King Of Pop Michael Jackson.

The 52-year-old “Gladiator” star, who was on “The Graham Norton Show,” revealed that he received prank calls from the “Thriller” hitmaker, reported Digital Spy.

“He just got into the habit of

wherever I was staying, (Michael) would just call into the hotel, ask for my room and put on funny voices.

“I’d never met him! The first couple people I said it to – I didn’t want to sound like I was insane... When I actually started talking to people who really knew him well, they’d go, ‘Man, he does it all the time’,” Crowe said.

The legendary musician

used to reveal his identity, after actor got irritated.

“I used to do that — when I was like 11 and 12 (Michael) would always start off being kind of gruff, like he was the hotel management and there was some kind of problem. If I got kind of irritated, he’d just (chuckle and say), ‘Don’t worry Russell, it’s only Michael!’,” he recalled.

However, the two never met.—PTI



Rapper Jay Z and Mary J Blige surprised the audience at Sean Diddy Combs Bad Boy Family Reunion concert. PHOTO: PTI

Jay Z’s surprise performance at Diddy’s concert

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Jay Z and Mary J Blige surprised the audience at Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs Bad Boy Family Reunion concert. The two performed their 1996 effort “Can’t Knock This Hustle”, while Jay Z also performed his hit “Public Service Announcement (Interlude)”, reported Entertainment Tonight.

It marked the rapper’s first stage performance in months and most public appearance since the release of Beyonce’s “Lemonade”. The show also saw Diddy team up with Faith Evans to perform their Biggie tribute track “I’ll Be Missing You”.

Other surprise guests at the 20th anniversary concert to celebrate Diddy’s Bad Boy Records included Lil’ Kim, Nas, Usher and Busta Rhymes.—PTI

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Lady Gaga’s piano fails to sell

LONDON — Pop star Lady Gaga’s childhood piano has failed to sell at auction.

The “Poker Face” hitmaker’s old instrument, which she used to write her first song on at the age of just five, was expected to sell for USD

100,000-200,000= when it went under the hammer at the Hard Rock Cafe New York on May 21, as part of Los Angeles-based auctioneers Julien’s Auction’s Music Icons memorabilia sale, reported Female First.

It, however, failed to meet the reserve price, the lowest amount a seller will accept for their lot, and didn’t sell, though a spokesperson for the auction house wouldn’t reveal the minimum it could have changed hands for. It is not yet clear whether the instrument will sell.—PTI

Lady Gaga’s.
PHOTO: PTI

Foreign tourists to South Korea spend 1,700 USD on average in 2015

SEOUL — Foreign tourists to South Korea spent an average of about 2.03 million won (1,712.5 US dollars) when they visited the country last year, a government report showed on Monday.

The result was based on a survey of 12,900 foreign tourists aged above 15, who visited South Korea in 2015, according to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. The 2015 figure was up 107 dollars from a year ago.

The daily spending by tourists while they stayed here averaged about 388,000 won (328.1 U.S. dollars) last year, up from 315.8 dollars the previous year. Myeong-dong special tourist zone in central Seoul was picked by 35.7 percent of respondents as the best tourist destination, followed by Dongdaemun Market in Seoul selected by 18.6 percent. The results indicated that shopping was one of the main goals of touring South Korea amid growing popularity of the so-called "Korean Wave" that boosted preference for South Korea-made cosmetics and clothing worn by K-pop and K-drama stars.—Xinhua

Everest safety under scrutiny as Indian climber dies, third death in as many days

KATHMANDU/SYDNEY — A 43-year-old Indian mountaineer has died while descending from the summit of Mount Everest, in the third fatality on the world's tallest mountain in as many days since climbing resumed after last year's avalanche tragedy at Base Camp.

Subash Paul, who climbed the 8,850 metre (29,035 feet) on Saturday, perished the next day due to exhaustion, Wangchu Sherpa of the Trekking Camp Nepal company said on Monday.

An Australian woman and a Dutch national have also died since Friday due to altitude sickness in the notorious 'death zone' where the air is so thin that only the fittest can survive without supplementary oxygen.

Hiking officials and climbing veterans say the deaths raise questions about the preparations and safety standards of some climbing operators, with cut-price local companies competing for business as international outfits scale back operations.

This year's Everest campaign has been hit by high winds on some days when climbers had been counting on the weather

'window' to open to make their summit bids before the monsoon sweeps in next month.

Queues have formed on the final stretch to the summit, which is often secured by a single rope line, leading veterans to complain that slow and inexperienced climbers were holding up others and putting them at undue risk.

"Many climbers without any experience crowd Everest every year, and companies often use poor quality equipment... offering cheap packages to clients who are exposed to security risks," Nepal Mountaineering Association Chief Ang Tshering Sherpa said.

"Climbers with well-managed companies employing experienced guides are safe."

Hiking officials blame the government, which charges \$11,000 for each Everest permit, for failing to spend any money on safety measures. The government collected \$3.1 million from 289 climbers as permit fees so far this year. But officials blame inadequate preparation on the part of climbers.

"The deaths were not due to accident or the crowd," Tourism

Department official Sudarshan Dhakal said. "Energy loss and altitude sickness mean that they were not well prepared."

Expedition organisers were assembling a rescue team on Monday to retrieve the bodies of Australian university lecturer Maria Strydom and Dutch climber Eric Ary Arnold. Strydom died before reaching the summit on Saturday, one day after Arnold perished after attaining the peak.

Apart from the three deaths, two other Indian climbers have been missing on Everest since Saturday, and hiking officials said chances of finding them alive were slim. Another Indian woman who fell sick was being escorted to lower camps and will be evacuated by a helicopter, an agency official said.

While fatalities are not unusual, there are fears the latest casualties could again hit mountaineering in Nepal.

At least 18 people died a year ago when an earthquake sent a massive snow slide careening into Base Camp, while an avalanche in the treacherous Khumbu Icefall killed 16 guides in 2014. The back-to-back tragedies

had halted climbing on Everest.

"It is a difficult and challenging climb and many people have died," Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told reporters in Brisbane, adding that the government was assisting with the repatriation of Strydom's body.

Arnold Coster, the owner of Arnold Coster Expeditions which led the group containing both Strydom and Eric Ary Arnold, said both climbers became ill very quickly on the descent.

The Dutch climber was assisted down to the South Col camp, the final camp before the summit, where he was given oxygen and medicine but "unexpectedly passed away that evening in his tent," Coster said in a Facebook post.

Strydom decided to turn back from her attempt to reach the summit and was assisted down to the South Col by her husband, veterinarian Robert Gropel. After spending the night there, she walked out of her tent to continue the descent, only to collapse on the Geneva Spur, two hours from Camp 3 where helicopter evacuations are possible.—Reuters

Wanda's Wang aims barbs at Disney ahead of Shanghai park opening

SHANGHAI — The billionaire head of China's Wanda Group said rival Walt Disney faces high costs and other hurdles at its first mainland theme park opening in June, a rare public criticism that underlines rising tension as firms vie for the fast-growing entertainment market.

The comments by Wang Jianlin, made in an interview with state television aired late on Sunday, pits him against both the iconic US firm and its local government-linked partner, which owns a majority stake in the park.

Disney's \$5.5 billion resort in Shanghai, a joint venture between the US entertainment giant and Chinese state-backed consortium

Shanghai Shendi Group, is slated to open on 16 June.

Wanda has been positioning itself as a direct rival to Disney, breaking ground on a 16 billion yuan (\$2.44 billion) tourism "city" in southwest China last week and preparing to open another park in southeastern Nanchang city this week.

"As far as the opening of the Disney Shanghai park goes, I'm sure that we will win out," Wang said in an almost hour-long interview on state-run China Central Television (CCTV).

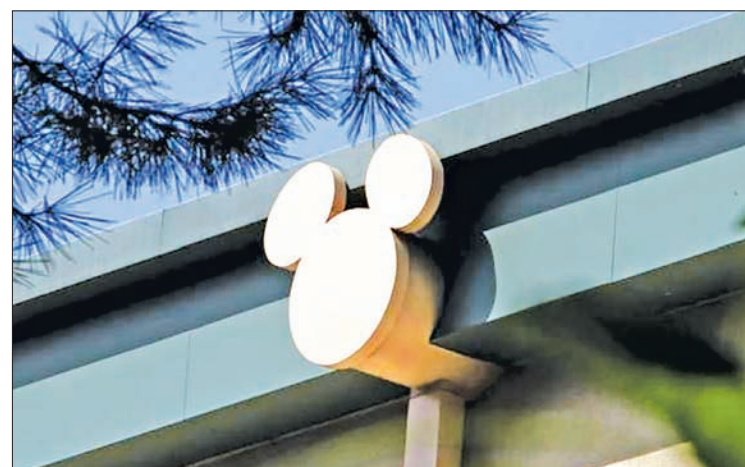
"At Wanda I always say we want to ensure Disney is not profitable for 10-20 years in this business segment in China."

A Shanghai-based Disney official declined to comment.

In the wide-ranging interview that also touched upon Wanda's investment strategy overseas and interest in global soccer, Wang added Disney faced hurdles to win over consumers to its key animation characters.

"We still haven't seen a real craze here or a generation blindly following Mickey Mouse of Donald Duck," Wang said.

Wanda itself does not have any hugely well-known characters, but several newer Chinese animations such as "Boonie Bears" and "Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf", developed by domestic companies, are very popu-



A rain spout stylized with the outline of Disney character Mickey Mouse is seen on a building at The Walt Disney Co. studios in Burbank, California in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

lar on the mainland. Wang added the Disney park would have to face challenges with Shanghai's weather due to cold winters and a rainy season in summer, while the US firm's costs were also higher than Wanda's, creating a

"serious challenge". "To balance the books, (Disney) has to charge high prices, which will put some customers off," Wang said. "On top of this China already has Wanda — they really ought not to have come to China at all." —Reuters



Entertainment Channel

(24- 5-2016, Tuesday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:30 pm

- Cartoon Programme "The Prince of Egypt" (Part- 1)

7:00 pm

- International Drama Series

7:40 pm

- International Drama Series

8:30 pm

- Music Programme

9:00 pm

- "Myanmar Music Icon" Ko Nay Win, Creator of Myanmar Own Tune Songs (Episode-1)

9:20 pm

- International Movie Songs

9:40 pm

- Music Programme

10:20 pm

- Myanmar Video

From 24-5-2016 (Tuesday) 6:00 Pm
To 25-5-2016 (Wednesday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(24-5-2016 07:00am ~ 25-5-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (EP-3) (Part-1)
07:50	Am	Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (EP-3) (Part-2)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon; Prolific Writer of Poems & Prose - Min Thu Wun (Ep-2) Student Life & Early Literary Career
08:51	Am	Delicacies From Magwe
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Culture Show: Abdication of King Thibaw

09:43	Am	Inspiration
09:50	Am	Today Myanmar "An impact of El Niño weather event: Water Storage"
10:03	Am	News
10:27	Am	Crab Business (Part-II) Soft Shell Crab
10:40	Am	Family of Toys

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Day Out With Sarah (EP-7)
07:52	Pm	Myanmar Harpist
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	A Day Life Of Kayan Padaung Tribe
08:55	Pm	Fortune Teller: "Yan Moe Aung"

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Monday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Ten-man Barca claim double with King's Cup win over Sevilla

MADRID — Ten-man Barcelona retained the King's Cup with a 2-0 victory over Sevilla to complete a domestic double thanks to extra-time goals by Jordi Alba and Neymar at the Vicente Calderon stadium on Sunday.

Luis Enrique's La Liga champions had Javier Mascherano sent off in the 36th minute but kept the score at 0-0 before Sevilla had Ever Banega dismissed in added time at the end of 90 minutes.

With both teams down to 10 men, Barcelona began to take control in the extra period and left back Alba burst down the wing to score in the 97th after a superb chip from Lionel Messi.

Sevilla were then reduced to nine players when defender Daniel Carrico was sent off for dissent late on and Neymar doubled Barcelona's lead after also being set up by Messi.

It was the 28th time Barca had won the trophy but they had to battle as Unai Emery's side, who won the Europa League for the third time in a row last week,

piled on the pressure.

"It was difficult, especially playing for so long with 10 men against a side like Sevilla," Alba told Spanish television. "I'm happy to have scored and done the double."

"We couldn't play the game we wanted but the side showed guts and we did what was needed."

Barca captain and man of the match Andres Iniesta said the triumph sealed a great season for the club despite some suggesting their Champions League elimination, and thus failure to repeat the treble of 2015-16, spoiled the campaign.

"It was a nice final, intense and exciting," he said. "It was a last push for the club to complete a magnificent season. All finals are hard, but this was great, both we and Sevilla played well."

The game's dynamic changed drastically when Kevin Gameiro, whose pace troubled Barca all night, was brought down when Mascherano grabbed his shirt on the edge of the box.



Jordi Alba celebrates with team mates after scoring the first goal for Barcelona during Copa del Rey Final at Vicente Calderon, Madrid, Spain on 22 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

Referee Carlos del Cerro Grande sent the Argentine off and Sevilla began to take control. Barca keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen tipped Banega's free kick over the bar and then watched the midfielder's next effort hit the inside of the post.

Barca top scorer Luis Suarez limped off injured just before the hour mark, with the Uruguayan crying on the bench.

Sevilla wanted a penalty when Barca right back Dani Alves tangled with Vicente Iborra but their appeal was waved away, while Sergio Rico saved Messi's free-kick.

Argentine Banega tripped Neymar just before the game went to extra time and was sent off, handing Barcelona the momentum.

Seven minutes into the extra

period, Messi lofted a perfectly weighted ball over the defence for Alba who ran through and fired a shot across Rico into the bottom corner.

Then Carrico was shown two yellow cards, the first for a foul on Messi and the second for arguing about it, before Messi played in Neymar, who rolled the ball home to end the contest.—Reuters

Kyrgios lights up damp opening day at French Open

PARIS — Australian Nick Kyrgios did his best to enliven a damp and dismal Parisian day with some eye-catching play and colourful language as the French Open began without part of the usual furniture on Sunday.

The volatile 17th seed mainly let his racket do the talking during an impressive 7-6(6), 7-6(6), 6-4 defeat of Italian debutant Marco Cecchinato, although he did receive a code violation for his language in the first set.

Women's 10th seed Petra Kvitova was another early starter and was nearly sent packing in the opening skirmish on Philippe Chatrier Court, the twice Wimbledon champion coming within a game of defeat by Montenegro's Danka Kovinic.

She eventually won 6-2, 4-6, 7-5 in two hours 16 minutes watched by ticket holders wrapped up under colourful anoraks and with umbrellas at the ready.

Huge lines of fans formed outside Roland Garros as security was visibly beefed up in light of last year's terror attacks in the city, and once inside the historic grounds were hardly the idyllic



Petra Kvitova returns a shot to Montenegro's Danka Kovinic at French Open championships in Paris on 22 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

setting for such a sporting highlight.

Three courts, numbers seven, nine and 11, which used to flank Chatrier, have been replaced by an enormous hole in the ground — the start of a controversial re-development that will include a new stadium court by 2020.

Leafing through their programmes they will also have noticed Roger Federer absent from the men's draw for the first time since 1998 after the

Swiss 17-times grand slam champion withdrew because of a nagging back injury.

There was still plenty to admire, though, in a scheduled 32-match aperitif to the arrival of the top seeds on Monday.

Kyrgios, enjoying a consistent year which hints at a more level-headed approach to his tennis, was given a useful workout by Cecchinato but faced only one break point as he fired down 17 aces on the damp Court One.—Reuters

South Korea waits on vault champ Yang to prove fitness

SEOUL — South Korea has given Olympic vault champion Yang Hak-seon some breathing room in his race to regain fitness after injury left his chances of making the team for the Rio Games hanging by a thread.

Yang ruptured his right Achilles in March during practice but was included in a preliminary list for the Rio Olympics announced on Sunday by the Korea Gymnastic Association (KGA).

The 23-year-old, who became South Korea's first gold medal winner in gymnastics at the 2012 London Games, would be the country's best hope of a medal in Rio if he was fit, KGA official Han Chung-sik told Reuters on Monday.

"Under normal circumstances, Yang Hak-seon would be our strongest athlete at the Olympics," Han said by telephone, adding that he had until the final trials in July to prove his fitness.

"We have a regulation that allows us to recommend athletes with a high possibility of winning a medal in various competitions so we've put him in according to the regulation."

The KGA said that if Yang made the team they would try to send another gymnast as cover in case the injury flared up.

Yang Bu-kwon, the head of the gymnast's management agency, told Reuters that since undergoing surgery in late March, Yang has shown an unexpectedly quick recovery.

"Even the doctor is very positive and Hak-seon is showing a very strong will to make this possible," he said.

"He's been training for this moment for four years and his condition before the unfortunate injury is better than it was in 2012. "He still needs to be very careful so he will continue his rehab and remain positive about competing."—Reuters