

Union Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets US Senator

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing confers Zeya Kyaw Htin title on senior military officials

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MoU on Improvement of Rule of Law Centres Project inked

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THE USDP STRIKES BACK

Former cabinet members to retaliate against embezzlement accusations



Former Union Minister for Mines Dr Myint Aung talks to media during a press conference.

PHOTO: AUNG SHINE OO

DR MYINT AUNG, former Union Minister of Mines, said in a press briefing yesterday that he would begin legal action against those who accused several former Union ministers under the previous government of embezzling funds from the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association.

A group of former Union

ministers led by Dr Myint Aung gave a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw to address accusations of their involvement in the alleged fund fraud.

The US\$87 million fraud case has been brought to the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, with the former Union minister of mines describing the move as an attempt

to bring disgrace to his party and its reputation.

U Ye Htut, the former Union minister for information, said the accusation of embezzlement was targeted at former president U Thein Sein as a personal attack.

As a former spokesperson to U Thein Sein, U Ye Htut added that many plots have been

hatched to defame the former president, who is now the chairman of Union Solidarity and Development Party.

He also pointed out the need for greater transparency in the business transactions of the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association.

"A lack of transparency in the association's business oper-

ations is the major cause of the misunderstanding," he said.

In a press conference on 30 May, U Zaw Myint Pe, a member of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission suggested that an independent body be assigned to investigate the misappropriation of the association's funds.—*Thein Ko Lwin / Myanmar News Agency*

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133 Myanmar fishermen brought home from India

Zaw Min Latt

133 Myanmar fishermen, the second batch of fishermen who were being detained at Open Distress Camps in India, returned home yesterday.

Authorities welcomed them at the Yangon International Airport and provided aid to them before sending them home.

The first batch of 129 Myanmar arrived home by air on Tuesday.

The return of the fishermen comes after several rounds of negotiation with Indian authorities.

Myanmar diplomats in India are making efforts to bring the remaining 10 Myanmar fishermen at the camp home as soon as possible.

So far, a total of 262, in two batches, have been brought home as they finished serving their prison terms in India for illegally entering the country's territorial waters.



Fishermen are seen on the chartered flight on their way back home.

PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

Pyithu Hluttaw

Union government urged to adopt political prisoner definition



Union Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Soe. PHOTO: MNA



U Pe Than, Representative for Myebon Township. PHOTO: MNA

PYITHU Hluttaw representative U Pe Than called on the Union government to define exactly what the term ‘political prisoner’ means yesterday, stressing the need to make those imprisoned for their political activities separate from inmates held for committing crimes.

It is required that we define the term ‘political prisoner’ and publicise charges relating to political activity since we are a democratic government, U Pe Than of Myebon Township Constituency told Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

“I would like to urge the new government, in moving towards democracy, to establish a definition of political prisoner and define the charges against poli-

ticians,” said the lawmaker, expressing his view that a politician is a person working for the good of the country.

In his reply, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe said that the MP’s call for adopting a political prisoner definition will be presented to the Union Minister for Home Affairs for seeking the Union government’s view on the term.

“I will reply to the MP’s question in accordance with the present government’s view on it after reporting to the Union Minister for Home Affairs.”

Although the 2008 Constitution states that all citizens shall receive equal rights and protection under the law, there was no defi-

nition for the term ‘political prisoner’ through successive governments, added the deputy minister.

If the term “political prisoner” is defined exactly, there will be a decrease in the number of political prisoners behind bars and those being held for illegal political activities.

The government should give rights to make them separate from other inmates held on criminal offences, said U Pe Than.

According to the Political Prisoners Scrutinising Committee, works are underway to scrutinise charges against individuals for political reasons and its findings will be presented to Parliament through a parliamentarian. — *Thein Ko Lwin*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Myanmar to stop logging completely this fiscal year: Union Minister



Union Minister U Ohn Win. PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister U Win Khaing. PHOTO: MNA

ARRANGEMENTS are being made to stop logging completely across the country during this fiscal year, the Amyotha Hluttaw was told during its 35th day session yesterday.

Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win said that Myanma Timber Enterprise is tasked with protecting remaining forests.

As part of the measures against deforestation and forest degradation, teak extraction is set to end in the areas with no plan to replace the removed trees (generational wood harvesting), said the

Union minister, adding that a list of forest resources will be made prior to timber extraction.

According to the Union minister, works are underway to extract timber in a systematic way following a framework of annual timber extraction.

The export of raw timber logs was banned as of 1 April 2014, he said.

In his response to a question about timber extraction in Chin State’s Kanpetlat Township, the Union minister said that 50 acres of teak plantation will be established in the township this rainy season and the establishment of a

273-acre community forest plantation has been allowed.

During yesterday’s Amyotha Hluttaw session, Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing responded to a question regarding the upgrading of a section of the Myataung-Shweku and the construction of reinforced concrete bridges on the road, set to be implemented through JICA’s ODA loans and annual budget allocations.

The Union minister added that the Shweku-Sinkham road section will also be upgraded and four concrete bridges will be built on it. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Storm shelters to be built in Cocogyun Township (Coco Island)

THE Yangon Region government will spend K1 billion on the construction of two storm-resistant shelters in the region’s Cocogyun Township, a regional minister told the Yangon Region Hluttaw yesterday.

In order to save lives and protect citizens against the impacts of disasters like Tsunamis, two storm-proof shelters will be built in Cocogyun Township during this fiscal year, said Yangon Region Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transport Daw Nilar Kyaw.

According to the regional minister, a budget of K1 billion from the region’s fund for towns and villages outside the municipal area will be used for the construction of two storm shelters and each shelter can

provide a safe place of refuge for 300 people during a disaster.

A feasibility study on shelter construction made last May has been submitted to the regional government, added the regional minister.

U Tin Win of Cocogyun Township Constituency 1 said that there is no place of refuge for the people of Cocogyun (Coco Island) in the face of natural disaster, adding that the region is helpless to respond to a disaster as it is very difficult to land a plane or to dock a ship in wild weather.

Cocogyun Township, made up of two urban wards with 1,000 residents, is difficult to reach due to its distance from the mainland.— *KoMoe*

BFM unveils building for primary school in Meiktila, funds electrification project



A primary school building built by BFM funding being seen. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

THE KBZ Brighter Future Myanmar foundation (BFM) handed over a new school building and water tank to a primary school in Meiktila Township on Wednesday.

On behalf of the foundation, a manager of Kanbawza Bank presented documents related to the two facilities which were built at a cost of K 36.5 million. The documents were presented to Headmis-

tress Daw Aye Aye Pyu of No 181 Basic Education Primary School in Zayatkon Village-tract, Meiktila Township. The one storey school building is 90 ft long and 23 ft wide, attached with two toilets. The water tank is 23ft in length and 10 ft in height with a storage capacity of 15,000 gallons.

Similarly, the BFM has funded K1 million to a electrification project in order to supply power

to seven villages in Meiktila and Kyaukpadaung townships.

On 21 May, a manager of a Kanbawza Bank branch in Taunggyi handed over cash to Buddhist monks in various villages who will lead local area improvement projects with a focus on electricity availability. More than 2,000 houses in seven villages will gain access to electricity under the project.— *GNLM*

Lt-Gen Ye Aung tours Kyaukpyu, Rakhine State

VICE Chairman of the Central Committee on the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development of Rakhine State Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung visited Kyaukpyu and Thandwe Townships yesterday.

On his tour of Kyaukpyu Township, the Vice-Chairman, accompanied by Union ministers, the Rakhine State chief minister and officials, met with regional officials and local people at Yamarwady Hall in the township.

Rakhine State development is key to peace and stability and development of the entire nation, said the Vice-Chairman, stressing the need to beware of outside instigation and disturbances in the region.

Calling for adherence to the law to ensure the rule of law, he vowed that people living in the state will be given equal treatment and equality will be brought into force.

The onus is on each and every countrymen to safeguard their national interest, security and sovereignty. Besides every nation is needed to be obliged to respect and follow international laws, norms and standards, said the Union minister, adding that Myanmar is serious about this point.

He emphasised the importance of participation of all in the government's drive to develop and achieve peace and stability in the region as, he said, the government cannot do it all alone.

If responsible persons and townsenders join hands with the government then trust, peace, stability and development can be achieved in Rakhine State within a short period of time, said the Vice Chairman, adding that the country will stand tall as a democracy based on federalism inspired by all citizens.

Next, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Union Ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe, U Thein Swe, Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Dr Myint Htway and Dr Win Myat Aye elaborated on the undertakings to be implemented in the region by respective ministries.

Then, Union ministers and the party visited IDP camps in Kanyintaw and Kyauktalon, housing for fire victims in Pyinpyumaw village in the township.

During their tour of Thandwe, Union ministers held talks with officials concerned and local people, clarifying matters to be undertaken by the subcommittees concerned to ensure peace, stability and development in Rakhine State.— *Myanmar News Agency*



Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung speaks at the meeting with local authorities in Thandwe. PHOTO: MNA

Government to promote SMEs online

THE promotion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will be carried out online through the website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MALI), according to the Central Department of Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

The promotion of registered enterprises will be performed as a priority of the aforementioned department, while SMEs that have not registered will be encouraged to do so.

"Networking and connecting between entrepreneurs can improve and broaden the market," said U Kyaw Zin Lat, the department's deputy director.

The Central Department of

Small and Medium Enterprises Development regularly supplies Myanmar SMEs with the technologies they need to succeed.

"Delays are experienced in exporting directly to foreign markets as the process of registering export licences is time-consuming. The ministry needs to make sure to process licences as quickly as possible," said U Htay Lwin, managing director of Nway Oo, a seashell enterprise. It has been reported that despite there being over 100,000 SMEs around Myanmar, only 16,000 of them are registered with the Central Department of Small and Medium Enterprises Development.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Union Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets US Senator



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives US Senator Mr. Daniel Sullivan. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with US Senator Mr. Daniel Sullivan on matters related to US Congress's develop-

ment assistance to Myanmar and bilateral cooperation between the two parliaments at her office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present were Minister

of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Scot Alan Marciel and other officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Electronic import-export licences available online in June

WITH an aim to developing Myanmar's trade sector, the Department of Trade has stated that import-export businesses will be able to apply for licenses electronically online starting from 7 June.

It was announced, during an educational awareness event titled 'Fully Online Licensing System' at the headquarters of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UM-FCCI) on 30 May, that licenses would be able to be applied for a total of fifty types of products during the initial launching phases of the online system.

"One must open a bank account to be eligible for an import-export license. Business owners must also submit a complete set of required documenta-

tion. Given a good internet connection at the time of application, a license can be processed and issued within ten minutes," said U Min Min, deputy director general of the Department of Trade.

A license fee of K2,500 must be paid upon application for import-export businesses under the Ministry of Commerce. The Myanmar Citizens Bank has been partnered with for online license application, while those wishing to apply must have a remaining balance of at least K50,000 in their bank account at the time of application.

"We've started this system in a bid to provide a rapid service for import/export licenses applications. It will also reduce time and other expenses," said U Myo Khaing Win, an official from the

Department of Trade.

Those importers and exporters of farming equipment, construction and textiles will be able to apply for licenses online as soon as the system goes live, whereas those involved in the business which could bring diseases into the country, such as the trade of food and beverages, medicines and live animals, are not yet eligible for the online system.

The Minister of Commerce stated application processes within Yangon's import-export offices will be amended to those of the Naypyidaw office, while efforts will also be made to reduce some of the twelve types of restricted export products during the new government's hundred day project initiatives.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Thai-based NGO to submit report on Ranong murder to Ministry of Labour

A SUBMISSION will be made to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population on 15 July regarding the Myanmar migrant workers involved in the Ranong murder case which took place in neighbouring Thailand, according to the Thailand-based Education and Development Foundation.

"(The submission) will include the Ranong issue. Before making our submission to the ministry, we'll hold discussion (within our organisation) on the need to protect the human rights, (employ-

ment) opportunities, education and health of other Myanmar migrant workers living in Thailand," said U Htoo Chit, executive director of the organisation.

Four Myanmar migrant workers were arrested, and are still under investigation, for the murder of a sixteen-year-old girl to a Thai father and Myanmar mother in the southern Thailand – Myanmar border town of Ranong in September of last year.

U Htoo Chit also mentioned that a report about the Ranong

murder has been published and that Thai employers of Myanmar migrant workers will testify in person.

The Ranong murder report was released on 1 May. The four accused Myanmar migrant workers, identified as Kyaw Soe Win, Moe Zin Aung, Sein Ka Tone and Wai Lin are scheduled to stand trial on 29 July. It is known the defence team has complied evidence from twenty individuals including Thai employers and the Thai Human Rights Commission.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Myanma Insurance plans to sell crop insurance to farmers

MYANMA Insurance (MI) is planning to expand crop insurance, said director general U Aye Min Thein.

He said crop insurance is necessary for Myanmar.

"The implementation of the new insurance is totally based on the weather situation. The project needs to standardise necessary criteria before selling the new insurance policy," he said. MI has put more effort to develop crop insurance rapidly in cooperation with relevant government departments, including the Meteorology and Hydrology Department and private enterprises.

The objectives of the scheme are to provide insurance coverage to growers in the event of natural calamities and to help stabilise farm incomes, particularly in disaster years. The scheme also aims to protect farmers against the losses of their crops due to natural disasters.—200



A farmer works in cabbage farm. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

One-way traffic reinstituted in Theingyizay area

"SHWEDAGON Pagoda Road between Anawratha and Mahabandoola roads in Yangon Region will become a one-way road again," said Traffic Police Captain U Aung Ko Oo.

"That place is very crowded as there is also Theingyizay. So, we made it one-way again for the convenience of people. We think it will be successful. We will report difficulties to the regional government as we find them," said U Aung Ko Oo.

In fact, this section of Shwedagon Pagoda Road was prescribed as one-way in 2012, and this is the second time it has been made one-way again, he said. "There will be four traffic policemen assigned to the area for two weeks to one month during the education period. The assignment of the traffic policemen will end when the public knows this section of Shwedagon Pagoda Road is one-way. More roads will be made one-way after proposals are made to the regional government as and where necessary," added U Aung Ko Oo. —YPT/Unity Daily

Crime NEWS

Yaba and ammunition seized

A LOCAL police squad from Nawngkhio township seized 50,000 yaba pills, 3 firearms and 30 rounds of ammunition from the home of one San Phay from

Baw Mon village, Nawngkhio township yesterday. Hsar Aung, Mon Khay, Hsar Tin and War Li Nanda were found together with the host.



Yaba and ammunition seized seen together with the suspects. Photo: MPF

Similarly, police from Lashio police station searched motorcycle driver Aik Lu at milepost 80/4, on the Muse – Mandalay highway in Nawngkhio township yesterday. The police seized 12,000 yaba pills.

On the same day, police from Moehnyin police station discovered 7,500 yaba pills from a cabin owned by one Wah Lay and Gon Zek Aung in Namah Mhaw village, Phakant township.

Police in Yangon East seized 130 yaba pills from the home of one Ko Ko within the Maha Myine Housing Complex. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— Myanmar Police Force

Yaba and marijuana seized



Criminals seen together with the drugs seized. PHOTO: MPF

A COMBINED investigation team comprising officers and staff from Maung Taw police station seized yaba from a home in Letthar village, Maung Taw township on Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, the police searched the home of one Mawn Tet Hu Hsaung and discovered 19,500 yaba pills. Yar Mahn was found together with the host.

Similarly, a local police squad from Shwe Nyaung town searched a vehicle being driven by one Myat Thu with Ma Han Thi San on board in Minglar Shwe Baho ward, Shwe Nyaung town on Monday. The police seized 16,600 yaba pills.

Police from Naung Mon police station searched the home of one Kyauk Tay in Nang Maw UK 2 ward, Naung Mon village, Lashio township and found 7,215 yaba pills. Ma May Yin, Chong Shin, Chong Chan, Kan Myint and Laut Chi were found

together with Kyauk Tay.

Likewise, a combined investigation team comprising officers and staff from Yangon South district police seized 1,150 yaba pills and marijuana weighing 2.4 grams from the home of one Khin Maung Win on Aye Myittar road in Thingangyun township. Police found Sithu Aung, Hla Myo Naing and Chit Thein together with the host.

Police from Myeik police station seized 1,075 yaba pills from a home owned by one Aung Aung Oo in Myit Nge ward, Myeik town. According to a connected investigation, the police arrested Ah La Phat who was discovered selling the drug on Mya Nanda road, Kan Khaung ward, Myeik town. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— Myanmar Police Force

Vehicle accident kills two women, injures 18 passengers

A PASSENGER vehicle en route to Sitwe from Yangon being driven by one Kyaw Thura with 22 passengers on board overturned due to brake failure near Kyauk Zagune villager, Ann township, Rakhine State on 30 May, leaving two dead and 18 passengers injured.

The car turned over between mileposts 8/4 and 8/5. The accident killed two women on the spot while 18 out of 22 total passengers were seriously injured. The injured were rushed to Ann Township General Hospital. The driver and conductor have been charged by police.— Township IPRD



The passenger bus being seen overturned. PHOTO: TOWNSHIP (IPRD)

LOCAL Business

Myanmar Citizens Bank shares to be sold in July

THE Myanmar Citizens Bank plans to start selling its shares at the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) next month.

"The Myanmar Citizens Bank is the third listed company at the YSX. The bank had to carry out many requirements in preparation for share trading because it has little experience in selling shares," said a representative of the Myanmar Citizens Bank.

The Myanmar Citizens Bank was founded in 1991 and started to sell its shares in 1996. There are a total of 19 branches of the Myanmar Citizens Bank, and it has a capital investment of K53 billion (US\$44,725,738). The bank is slated to open 31 branches over the next five years. Ten per cent of its shares are known to be owned by the Ministry of Commerce.

The shares currently being sold at the YSX have attracted the attention of more investors than expected. Thus, other companies that have been approved to be listed on the YSX have begun preparing for share trading.—*NG/Union Daily*



Visitors are seen outside Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in Yangon. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Action taken against unlicensed construction

THE Yangon City Development Committee has taken legal action against the construction of buildings without permits, said Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe.

"Altogether over 2,000 buildings have had legal action taken against them, and 76 buildings have been dismantled," he said.

This action is believed to be a response to a representative from the Yangon Region Hluttaw who questioned the low quality of buildings constructed by developers and asked what kind

of action will be taken against developers by the YCDC.

Currently, in the event of a dispute between licenced contractors and landlords, YCDC intervenes to settle the dispute.

"There are some unlicensed construction contractors who are cheating unassuming landlords, giving them false incentives," said Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, adding that 61 buildings in Dawbon Township have already had legal action taken against them.—*ACM/Union Daily*

Price of scrapped cars rises

UNLICENCED cars are being levied starting from this month in accordance with the income tax law. As a result of this, scrapped old cars are in high demand, and their price is rising, according to car traders.

According to the new income tax policy, owners of cars without permits will have to pay a 15 per cent of tax if they cannot submit proof of how the cars were acquired, thus

giving cars with receipts an advantage in the market.

"Cars with slips are easier to import, depending on the substituted cars' conditions. This is why the prices of scrapped cars are rising. The Wish and Klugar are selling well," said Zaw Zaw, a car dealer.

The tax rate on cars with slips is not very high under the new policy.—*MLT/Union Daily*

Myanmar to renew rice export deal with Indonesia

THE Ministry of Commerce is planning to sign a government-to-government rice export contract with Indonesia that will last until the 2018-2019 fiscal year, said U Yan Naing Tun, the Director of the Department of Trade under the ministry.

Myanmar signed a contract with Indonesia to export 500,000 tonnes of rice to the island nation from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. A proposal to extend a contract has been approved by the government.

"We might enter into a contract with Indonesia in July," U Yan Naing Tun added.

Myanmar has already signed an MoU to export around 300,000 tonnes of rice to Indonesia. Only 13,750 tonnes of rice was

exported to Indonesia in the first consignment, though it should have contained 20,000 tonnes under the MoU, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation.

China is the main buyer of Myanmar rice, followed by Indonesia, the EU, Japan and South Korea. Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation (MAPCO) has been cooperating with the Indonesian Bureau of Logistics to export Myanmar rice.

The volume of rice exported to Indonesia was 8,481 tonnes in 2013-2014, 33,730 tonnes in 2014-2015 and 15,500 tonnes in 2015-2016, according to the Ministry of Commerce.—*MPPS/Union Daily*

Kansai Paint factory opened in Myanmar

KANSAI Paint Myanmar opened a factory on 30 May that will produce 10 million kilotonns of paint annually. The factory is located at No 121 Bayintnaung Road, Shwepyitha Industrial Zone 4, Insein Township.

"The factory was jointly opened by the Kansai Paint Group and the Myanmar-based Hnin Myitzu

Oo Company. Kansai Paint Myanmar will manufacture products with the use of the same technology used by the Kansai Paint Group. Engineers from the Kansai Paint Group have come to Myanmar to share their expertise, while there are also scholarships for Kansai Paint Myanmar's staff to study abroad. The products of Kansai

Paint Myanmar will be manufactured with the same quality standards as those of Kansai Paint Group," said U Thaung Nyunt Thaung, the managing director of Kansai Paint Myanmar.

Kansai Paint manufactures mosquito repellent paints, insecticide paints, paints for reducing temperature, anti-sticker paints and

waterproof paints and also plans to research ways to create more paint varieties.

Kansai Paint holds 10 per cent of the local market share with its imported products. It is expected to gain a larger share of market after establishing a factory in Myanmar, U Thaung Nyunt Thaung added.—*PTK/Union Daily*

Chinese companies continue to dominate investment in Myanmar

OUT of 98 companies that have applied to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) to make investments in Myanmar, Chinese companies make up the largest proportion, followed by companies from Hong Kong and Singapore, said U San Myint, assistant director of DICA.

There are 48 foreign companies and 50 local companies among the companies that have applied to invest. Most are garment businesses, followed by fishing businesses. One company based in Singapore has applied to invest in solar power businesses.

Myanmar received US\$9.5 billion in foreign

direct investment last fiscal year, and it is expected to earn \$8 billion this fiscal year. FDI from 1988 to March of this year has reached US\$63.7 billion, according to data from the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

China tops the list of countries with investments in Myanmar with a total

investment value of \$18 billion, followed by Singapore with an investment value of \$13 billion. The MIC has planned to reorganise during the term of the incumbent government. Investment proposals will be approved or rejected only after the reformation of the MIC.—*PPN/Union Daily*

China tells US, don't let allies set South China Sea policy

BEIJING — The United States should not decide its policy on the South China Sea based on what its allies think, and should stick to its promises not to take sides in the dispute, a senior Chinese diplomat said on Thursday ahead of Sino-US security talks.

China has been angered by what it views as provocative US military patrols close to islands China controls in the South China Sea. The United States says the patrols are to protect freedom of navigation.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion (3.47 trillion pounds) in ship-borne trade passes every year. The Philippines, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims, as well as close military ties with Washington.

Speaking at a forum ahead of next week's high-level meetings with US officials in Beijing,

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zheng Zeguang said his country had every right to protect its sovereignty and maritime rights in the South China Sea.

"In fact the United States is not a claimant in the South China Sea dispute, and its said it takes no position on territorial disputes," Zheng said.

"So we hope the US can stick to its promises and not choose sides, but can set its position based on the rights and wrongs of the case rather than whether somebody is an ally," he added.

"I think if they can do this, and if they can stop provocative acts targeted at China's sovereignty and security interests, then the US can play a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea and promote a lowering of the temperature on this issue."

China's top diplomat, State Councillor Yang Jiechi, will take this up



A Chinese Coast Guard vessel is pictured on the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, part of the Spratly Islands, in the South China Sea, on 29 March 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

with US Secretary of State John Kerry at their talks, Zheng added.

The South China Sea is also expected to loom large at Asia's biggest security summit starting in Singapore on Friday, attended by a senior Chinese

admiral.

Last month, Beijing demanded an end to US surveillance near China after two Chinese fighter jets carried out what the Pentagon said was an "unsafe" intercept of a US military reconnaissance aircraft

over the South China Sea.

Denouncing people in the United States who viewed China as a threat, which he believed was not a mainstream US view, Zheng said the two countries had proved they can cooperate well on joint is-

ssues of global concern, like North Korea and Syria.

"China's development won't threaten any country," Zheng said. "I hope certain people in the United States set themselves straight and spurn Cold War thinking."—Reuters

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India, Westinghouse in 'advanced' talks to close nuclear deal — ambassador



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends a meeting with Saudi King Salman in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 3 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Toshiba Corp's Westinghouse Electric and India are in "advanced discussions" for the company to build six nuclear reactors there, the country's ambassador to the United States said on Wednesday, ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned visit to Washington next week.

A deal with Westinghouse would be the first such contract reached under the 2008 US-India civil nuclear accord.

"There is a very de-

tailed and advanced negotiation between Westinghouse and India," Ambassador Arun Singh told reporters. "The issues that remain to be worked out are related to cost and financing."

Progress on the deal to build six AP-1000 nuclear reactors is one of the key developments anticipated during the 7-8 June visit by Modi to Washington, where he will be hosted by President Barack Obama for a final summit before the US presidential election in November. Modi

will address both houses of Congress.

The United States and India agreed in 2008 to cooperate in the civil nuclear arena, but there have been no agreements yet to build any plants.

Reuters reported Tuesday that Westinghouse and India reached a breakthrough after officials said it will relocate the planned project in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. The original site proposed for the multi-billion-dollar project, in Modi's home state of Gu-

jarat, faced local opposition.

Another obstacle had been to bring India's liability rules into line with international norms, which require the costs of an accident to be channelled to the operator rather than the maker of a nuclear power station.

That issue had been largely resolved to the satisfaction of the US government in January 2015 after the United States and India reached a "breakthrough understanding" on nuclear cooperation.

Singh told reporters "to the best of my knowledge" insurance was no longer an issue in the discussions.

Westinghouse had hoped to clinch a deal to build six nuclear reactors in India by the end of March, during Modi's last Washington trip to attend a global nuclear summit.

US lawmakers ratified the civil nuclear accord three years after it was struck in 2005, as part of an attempt to deepen the strategic relationship with India, but have expressed growing dismay over its failure to yield follow-on deals for US-based reactor makers.—Reuters

After five decades, Australian soldiers killed in Viet Nam War come home

SYDNEY — The remains of 33 Australian soldiers killed during the Viet Nam War and buried in Malaysia and Singapore returned to rest in Australia on Thursday, in one of the country's largest single repatriation operations.

The soldiers, who were buried overseas under an interment policy that was scrapped in 1966, were flown into a military airfield around 40 kms (24.85 miles) west of Sydney onboard two military transport jets.

They were met by around 100 family members, veterans and dignitaries, including Defence Minister Marise Payne and Governor-General Peter Cosgrove, a Viet Nam veteran who now represents Australia's head of state, Britain's Queen Elizabeth.

A priest, accompanied by a Scottish piper, led the flag-draped coffins in a sombre procession from the lowered tail-section of

the two C-17 transport planes and into a nearby hanger, where family members held a private ceremony.

The Australian government last year announced that it would fund a repatriation programme for the fallen soldiers following pressure from families and a public petition that drew more than 40,000 signatures.

For family members and veterans in attendance, it was a bittersweet moment more than 50 years in the making.

"When I saw the smoke of the nose wheel of the second aircraft I thought, they're at home," Viet Nam veteran Lieutenant Colonel Ian Henderson told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "The Army went to great lengths to discover those who had been missing in action, at great lengths to find their bodies a couple of years ago. This is right that this ought to happen and bring



Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel carry coffins from a plane that contain the remains of 33 Australian service personnel and dependents, many of whom were casualties of the Viet Nam War, during a repatriation ceremony at the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base located in Richmond, west of Sydney, Australia, on 2 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

them back as they have."

More than 60,000 Australians served in Viet Nam between 1962 and 1972. Over 500 Australians were killed during the deeply unpopular war between the Soviet-backed Communist

government of North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam's US-backed regime, which ceased to exist after the fall of Saigon in 1975.

After the private ceremony the coffins were loaded onto 10 hearses, which drove slowly un-

der police escort down roads lined with men and women, some wearing service medals, who had come out to pay their respects.

The individual remains will be buried privately by their families.—Reuters

US expects announcement 'soon' on deployment of Korea anti-missile system

SINGAPORE — Plans for the deployment of the US THAAD anti-missile system in South Korea are moving forward and an announcement can be expected soon, senior US officials said on Thursday.

US Defence Secretary Ash Carter told reporters en route to a regional security meeting in Singapore, at which he will meet his South Korean counterpart, that recent North Korean missile tests showed the need for improved missile defences, even though the test had been failures. "There have been five consecutive failures there, but... most of the world continues to be concerned about North Korean missile activity," Carter said after what US and South Korean officials say was the latest failed test of a North Korean intermediate range Musudan missile on Tuesday.

"Whatever the outcome of

the test, the fact remains that they are trying to make those missiles fly — that's the critical fact," Carter said.

Carter said deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system would come up in his meeting on Saturday with the South Korean defence minister on the sidelines of the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, but added: "It's not something we need to discuss much because the plans are moving forward." He waved aside concerns expressed by China that deployment of the THAAD system's radars on the Korean peninsula could upset the balance of power by reducing the strategic deterrence of the Chinese ballistic missile system.

"This is an alliance decision; a decision of the United States and the Republic of Korea, which is about protecting us both from a North Korean mis-

sile attack...The implementation will be a series of decisions that we take together and it's for our own protection against North Korea. Everybody should understand that." Another senior US defence official said they were still "a lot of technical issues to get through," but "we will have a public announcement soon." "We are in the process of continuing our discussions on deployment and we will have an announcement when we're ready," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The United States and South Korea began formal discussions on deploying the THAAD system in South Korea after North Korea conducted a fifth nuclear test in January and launched a rocket into space the following month as part of a programme seen as a cover for intercontinental ballistic missile development.—Reuters

One killed, 14 injured after strong quake strikes off western Indonesia

JAKARTA — A 6.5-magnitude quake striking off western Indonesia earlier Thursday has left one dead, 14 injured and scores of houses damaged, an official at the local disaster agency said.

The casualties and damages occurred at Persisir Selatan District, the nearest area to the epicenter, said Zulfiatno, head of the provincial disaster agency.

"We got report that a 80-year old person died after the quake," he told Xinhua by phone from the province.

"The 14 injured people have been rushed to a hospital, some of them suffering from serious injuries," he said.

"One school building and some houses collapsed, but the precise number is being calculated as our staff are assessing the impact of the quake," he added.

The shallow quake jolted West Sumatra Province earlier

Thursday but there was no tsunami threat, an official at the Indonesian meteorology and geophysics agency told Xinhua by phone.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) had earlier measured the earthquake at 6.2 magnitude.

The quake struck at 05:56am Jakarta Time Thursday (2256 GMT Wednesday) with the epicenter at 79 km southwest Pesisir Selatan of the province and the depth at 72 km under the sea bed, he said.

The shakes of the quake were also felt in nearby Bengkulu Province, the official said.

Over 1,000 people were killed when a 7.6-magnitude quake hit West Sumatra Province in 2009.

Indonesia lies on a quake-prone zone so called "the Pacific Ring of Fire." —Xinhua

Philippines tightens security for incoming Philippine president's thanksgiving party: senior official

MANILA — The Philippine security forces will tighten security measures in southern city of Davao to make sure incoming president Rodrigo Duterte's thanksgiving party could be carried out smoothly, a senior official said on Thursday. Earlier reports said members of Islamic extremists group Khalifa Islamiyah were spotted in Davao. Herminio Coloma, Com-

munications Secretary, said the Philippine National Police (PNP) headquarters maintained that it had no specific information about the group's presence in Davao but police and military forces are closely monitoring the situation.

"The AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and PNP are constantly monitoring all security threats and stand ready to repulse

these to ensure the safety of citizenry," said Coloma.

The PNP-Davao City office made public the photographs of 22 alleged Khalifa Islamiyah members following reports that some members of the group were seen in Davao City.

The Khalifa Islamiyah, reportedly the local allies of the Islamic State, is allegedly involved

in some of the bombing incidents in parts of Mindanao like Cotabato and Cagayan and kidnappings including the Samal abduction last year. A joint session of the Philippine Congress on Monday proclaimed Duterte as the new Philippine president, over 20 days after the 9 May elections.

Duterte, also the incumbent Davao city mayor, will take over

from President Benigno Aquino on June 30 as the country's 16th president.

He will hold a 12-hour thanksgiving party on Saturday at the sprawling Crocodile Park in Davao. The party, dubbed as "Du31: One Love, One Nation Thanksgiving Party," expects participation of more than 100,000 people.—Xinhua

Opinion

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It pays to have unity of purpose

Kyaw Thura

OUR country has learned bitter lessons from past disunity that led to the disintegration of the union and ended up in foreign occupation twice. It was for the restoration of independence that all the ethnic groups came together at the Panglong Conference in Panglong, southern Shan State, on 12 February 1947.

The agreement underpinned the ethnic aspirations of unconditional freedom from colonial rule, self-administration and equality. Thus, this impressive conference was hailed as a display of unity by all the ethnic groups under the leadership of the then national leader General Aung San. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the restoration of his beloved country's independence. Our country reclaimed independence from the British on 4

January 1948.

With another Panglong conference in the offing as hinted by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of General Aung San, in a meeting with the representatives of the army and the eight ethnic armed organisations last month, one important step the government is to take first is to ensure that the army and political parties back its peace

initiative.

It is absolutely imperative that the conference this time must be all-inclusive and put national development and human security before anything else. Now is not the time for the stakeholders to talk about it but the time to do something beneficial for all. It is hoped that this conference will offer a paradigm shift from a Catch-22 to a win-win situation.

Communal Ordination Ceremony Organized by NRDC Family

Dr. Nyan Tun

IN Myanmar Buddhist community, during summer vacation what we can see as common scene in every corner of the country is nothing but novitiation ceremony and ordination ceremony organized by respective families or organization with the intention of promotion and propagation of Buddhism. Every Buddhist parents who have a son or sons feel so happy for the boys are lucky gift to the parents and only the boys can fulfill the wishes of their parents. Every Myanmar Buddhist parents want their sons to join the Order of the *Sangha* either as novices or monks. This is the greatest wish for the parents. They wanted to support Buddhism as religious inheritance and only religious inheritance can give them the great benefits in this life and the life after. Whether the parents are rich or poor, they are trying to manage to ordain their sons when the boys are old enough to. They wanted to occupy the virtue of the noblest religious inheritance. So boys are superior to girls in our parents' thought in our Myanmar society. Some parents have no sons and to fulfill their wishes, they ordained the sons of their relatives or the family of others.

This noblest gift can be traced to the source that was derived from the time of the Emperor Asoka himself. We learned as recorded in Buddhist literature that the Empire Asoka generously donated eighty four thousand *stupas* (pagodas), monasteries, ponds and well but he could not be termed as inheritance in Buddhism. He could be called only a supporter to Buddhism for he did not make his son to ordain. He was a great pious Buddhist so he wanted to be an inheritance of Buddhism and approached to

Venerable *Moggaliputta Tissa*, the head of the *Sangha* and learned it from him. As soon as learning the reason, he made his son, *Mahinda* to join into the Order of Monks and then he could receive the inheritance of Buddhism. We have to thank the Empire Asoka and his son, Ven. *Mahinda* due to their gratitude and great effort and sacrificing their lives to Buddhism, we are enjoying the taste of the Truth. Otherwise, we can't even think if Buddhism would exist today on the earth as one of the greatest religions.

The 15th time communal ordination ceremony was held at Alodawpyae Dhammacariya University, Dagon (Seikkan) Township, Yangon Region, organized by Nationalities Youth Resources Development Degree College (NRDC) (Yangon) family in 23rd and 24th May, 2016. This ordination ceremony was held annually in summer vacation from the time the college was set up. Any final students who wanted to join into the Order of monk are given chances and allowed them and it was managed and sponsored by the principal, teaching, administration staff and specific donors as their benefactors. I think only this institution organizes this noble tradition and we honor the pioneers who created this noble job. 341 students enrolled to join into the Order and the procession ceremony was led by Dr. Min Thant, the principal of the college under the drops of the rain. The procession was so simple that you will never see in Myanmar because the students themselves have to take their requisites such as bowl, robes and so on and followed by teaching and administration staff as their benefactors.

When the procession event reached to the monastery, students took their seats roll by roll and U Mya Thein, chairman of

the organizing committee and acting head of Nationalities Affairs explained the novice hood students the procedure what to do and then Dr. Min Thant, the principal exhorted the students to stay beneficially within four days and told them does and doesn't. Finally, the in-charge of the monastery suggested them and them shaving ceremony was going on.

The novice-hood students are nationalities youth students whose native places are far away and their parents can't attend this ceremony so teaching and administration staff as well as specific donors are their benefactors. At shaving ceremony, respective staffs who are foster mothers accept their hair with the shawl for the hair not to fall down on the ground. Myanmar Buddhist community adopts this valuable tradition through the renunciation of Prince Siddhatha who left the palace at midnight to renounce the world to search for the truth. On the next morning, Prince Siddhatha cut off his hair with his sword and then threw up in the air to be remained if he would really become a Buddha. Buddhist community in Myanmar followed it so parents or relatives or benefactors accept hair shawl while shaving.

Novitiation ceremony started at 4:30pm at the Dhamma Hall and the in-charge Sayadaw explained the procedure such as asking for robes and giving robes to be novices and followed the instruction as given by the Sayadaw. After putting on the robes, the figures of those students (now novices) turn to calm and peace. They know themselves that we are not ordinary boys but members of Sangha, noble ones. Everyone knows that the power of the clothes makes one to be calm, tranquil or sexy, vulnerable. The clothes, robes known as in Myanmar is termed as '*Arahattadhaja*' in Pali which means the banner of

the Arahant that the one who puts on this robes can destroy defilement and then ordination procedure went on that evening at Sima Hall.

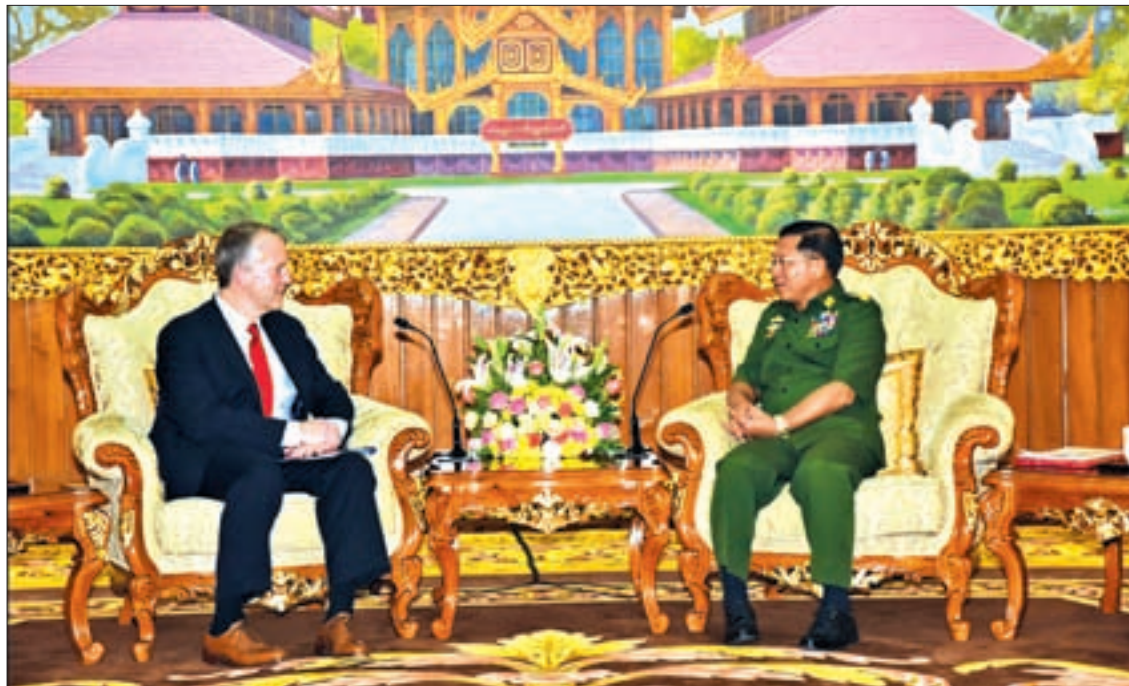
In early morning of 24th, benefactors and donors who are teaching and administrating staff and specific donors were preparing to offertories in the stairway in the compound of the monastery to offer suitable items to newly ordained monks led by their preceptors and other member of the Sangha. Generous donors brought and lay down items on the tables what they wanted to offer to the Sangha individually or commonly as arranged departmentally in line. Everyone in the scene performs actively with the intention of gaining meritorious deeds. Media channels such as Sky Net, Myawaddy and MRTV came to the place and reported the function and interviewed responsible persons. As schedule time, the newly ordained monks led by senior monks came to the arranged place and accepted the offertories and the donors offered in person to the monks. I think this offering tradition to newly ordained monks can be seen only in Myanmar among Theravada Buddhist countries. The benefactors and donors offered suitable items to the monks.

After offering that, liberation ceremony was proceeded on at the Dhamma hall and it was attended by deputy-Director General, the principal, invited guests and well-wishers. Ven Aggadhamma (Dvipitakadhara), vice-chairman of Township Sangha Nayaka committee, delivered Dhamma Talk and what he said was to enforce one's good deed and pointed out the five principles of the Buddha to apply in daily life: charity (dana), morality (sila), meditation (bhavana), reflecting on the virtue of the Triple Gems (anussati) and cultivating lov-

ing-kindness (metta).

Then, the deputy in-charge of the monastery told the audience that the abbot Sayadaw was on his mission in the United States of America. Although he was away, he gave a call to us several times to support everything to this function even financial if needed so I believe our abbot will remember this day because whenever this ceremony is conducted, it was held in our monastery. He kept on saying that the principal of the college told his students yesterday that he wanted them to stay beneficially within four days under the guidance of the Sayadaw. For me I would like these student monks to stay with me for life to do missionary work for the welfare of the world. Our monastery is also united monastery like your degree college and we are accepting all national races novices and monks who wanted to come and stay for their education in our temple. We have been producing hundreds of learned missionary monks and doing their mission around the country. Further, he went on that there are two happiest days in the life of our abbot in a year: one is the day when the results of Dhammacariya exam was released and the other day was when NRDC students join into the Order of monks. Our abbot always says that NRDC is producing human resources for the nation and we are also producing missionary monks for Buddha Sasana so we are on the same boat serving the welfare of the nation both secular and spiritual. Then, the ceremony was concluded after sharing merits by liberation water. The faces of the donors were so happy thinking that we have great chance being the inheritance of Buddhism. As soon as the function concluded, the king of deva blessed the ceremony by pouring having rain.

C-in-C of Defence Services holds talks with US delegation



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receiving Senator Mr. Daniel Sullivan in Nay Pyi Taw. Photo: Myawady

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing received a US delegation led by a Senator and member of the Armed Services Committee Mr. Daniel

Sullivan in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the Senior General clarified matters related to the peace process and efforts being put

toward the cessation of armed conflicts.

The two representatives also discussed promotion of cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries.— *Myawady*

Three officers honoured for winning D.Sc

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday honoured three officers who were conferred doctorate degrees in science by Russian universities.

A Doctorate in Chemical Science was conferred on Major Ye Zaw Htway by the Mem-

deleyev University of Chemical Technology of Russia. He is the first to win such a degree in five years.

A Doctorate of Technical Science was conferred on Major Tin Phone Kyaw by the Moscow Aviation Institute for the first time in 14 years.

Meanwhile, A Doctorate of Design, Construction and Manufacturing of Aircraft was conferred on Major Hein Win Zaw by the Russian State University of Aviation Technology. He becomes the first to achieve the degree in four years.— *Myawady*

MoU on Improvement of Rule of Law Centres Project inked



MoU on Improvement of Rule of Law Centres Project being exchanged. PHOTO: MNA

JAPANESE Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi and Mr. Toily Kurbanov, UNDP Country Director in Myanmar, inked a memorandum of understanding on the Improvement of

Rule of Law Centres Project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The signing ceremony was also attended by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin,

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Finance U Tun Tun Naing and officials.

According to the MoU the Japanese government is set to provide US\$1 million for the improvement of the Rule of Law Centres in Myanmar through UNDP during the period from April 2016 to March 2017.

This Programme will train lawyers, local representatives and local residents in “Rule of Law Centres” in Myanmar. This aims to enhance understanding of rights and obligations under the rule of law, contributing to building the capacity of the human resources who form the basis of Myanmar economy and society and to improving the trust towards the social system, fostering democratization.

In Myanmar, four Rule of Law Centers have been launched in both Yangon and Mandalay Regions as well as in Kachin and Shan State. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing confers Zeya Kyaw Htin title on senior military officials

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing conferred the title of ‘Zeya Kyaw Htin’ on senior military officials at an honorary title presentation ceremony in Zeyar Thiri Beikman, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Admiral Tin Aung San, Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Lt-Gen Min Naung, Lt-Gen Mya Tun Oo, Lt-Gen Nyo Saw, Lt-Gen Lu Aye and senior military officers received excellent performance awards along with the title of ‘Zeya Kyaw Htin’ at the ceremony.

In his address, the Senior

General said that the presentation of honorary titles to senior military officials was held for the purposes of producing more role models concerning efforts to safeguard the country and its people and to develop the nation.

The title of Zeya Kyaw Htin is a title denoting outstanding performance in the military. The government announced a list of the title recipients with the release of Notification No (24/2016) on 1 March, 2016. The Commander-in-Chief also presented honorary titles and medals to Tatmadawmen on 4 January. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing conferred the title of ‘Zeya Kyaw Htin’ on a senior military official at the honorary title presentation ceremony. PHOTO: MYAWADY

18 former students exhibit art works to mark 30th anniversary graduation

ALUMNI who graduated from the State School of Fine Arts in Yangon in 1986 are exhibiting their works at the Lokanat Galleries on Pansodan Street in Yangon until 7 June.

The 1st group art show of the 18 alumni is being held to mark the 30th anniversary of their graduation.

uation.

“Thirty-three artists graduated from the school in 1986. But, we could contact only 18,” said U Tin Aung Myint, one of the artists participating in the show.

Works of different medium like water colour, oil and acrylic are being displayed. — *Htay Aung*



Paintings by Fine Arts School alumni. PHOTO: HTAY AUNG

Clinton to blast Trump on North Korea, NATO in foreign policy speech



A combination photo shows US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton (L) and Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump (R) in Los Angeles, California on 5 May, 2016 and in Eugene, Oregon, US on 6 May, 2016 respectively. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton will slam Republican Donald Trump for being too friendly with North Korea and too harsh on European allies during a foreign policy speech in California on Thursday, designed to paint the billionaire businessman as unfit for the White House.

The speech in San Diego comes as the former secretary of state seeks to shift her attention to the 8 November presidential election against likely rival Trump, and away from Bernie Sanders, the US senator from Vermont who is continuing his long-shot bid for the Democratic nomination.

Trump has said he would sit down with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to try to stop Pyongyang's nuclear programme and has criticised the decades-old NATO alliance with mainly European nations as obsolete and too costly for the United States.

"It's important that people

understand this is not just about Republican versus Democrat, that Trump is unlike any presidential candidate we have seen and he is fundamentally unfit to be our commander in chief," Clinton aide Jake Sullivan said in an interview ahead of Clinton's speech.

California, the most populous US state, is among six states that are to hold Democratic nominating contests next Tuesday.

Clinton already has a nearly insurmountable lead over Sanders in the delegate count, but is hoping a decisive win in California can help her clinch the party nomination early and quell concerns about divisions in the party ahead of the general election against Trump.

Clinton has already delivered several speeches on foreign policy and national security. Her address in San Diego will not break new policy ground, but will mainly respond to Trump's recent comments, her campaign said.

Clinton will argue that Trump's statement that he was prepared to talk to Kim Jong Un, made in a Reuters interview last month, has only emboldened him and invited him to be more provocative, Sullivan said.

A column this week in DPRK Today, one of North Korea's state mouthpieces, described Trump as a "wise politician" and Clinton as "thick-headed Hillary."

"Donald Trump's statements about North Korea show that he has more interest in making Kim Jong Un like him than backing up our friends and allies in the region," Sullivan said, noting that South Korea has worked with the United States on missile defence. Trump's remarks on the decades-old NATO alliance of 28 nations will also elicit a response from Clinton, Sullivan said. The New York businessman has said that member nations should pay for their own defence to ease the US burden and that the alliance itself needs reconfiguring.—Reuters

UN chief recommends adding 2,500 peacekeepers to Mali mission

UNITED NATIONS — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has asked the Security Council to add just over 2,500 peacekeepers to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, which has been hit by a series of deadly attacks, according to a new UN report.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility on Wednesday for an attack a day earlier on two UN sites in northern Mali where a peacekeeper from China and three civilians were killed and over a dozen others wounded.

Ban's report to the 15-na-

tion Security Council, issued on Tuesday and seen by Reuters on Wednesday, calls for increasing the maximum number of UN soldiers in Mali by 2,049 personnel, which would raise the force's authorised strength to 13,289.

The report said the additional troops should bring capabilities such as intelligence gathering and surveillance, explosive disposal and protecting supply convoys.

Ban also called for adding 480 UN police, which would raise the ceiling for police in the UN mission, known as MINUSMA, to 1,920 personnel.

This would enable MINUSMA police to boost training and advisory capacities while "supporting the establishment of transnational organised crime and counterterrorism units in Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu," Ban's report said.

"It remains critical that MINUSMA urgently address outstanding gaps in force requirements, enhance its capabilities, including intelligence and use of technologies and continue to adjust its posture to be responsive to the deteriorating security situation," Ban said.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

EgyptAir black box search zone narrowed after signal detected: source

CAIRO — THE search zone for the crashed EgyptAir jet has been narrowed to 2 km (1.24 miles) from 5 km after a vessel picked up a signal from one of the black boxes, an Egyptian source on the investigation committee said on Thursday.

Locating the black boxes is crucial to understanding why the Airbus A320 plummeted into the Mediterranean en route from Paris to Cairo on 19 May, killing all 66 people on board.

The source denied French media reports the aircraft had sent a series of warnings during earlier flights in the 24 hours before it disappeared off radar screens and crashed.—Reuters

Lebanese army kills IS militant, arrests three during raid

BEIRUT — The Lebanese army shot and killed an Islamic State militant and detained three more during a raid on Thursday in the Akkar region of northern Lebanon, security sources said.

The cell was accused of participating in the killing of Lebanese soldiers and of wounding an officer in the Interior Ministry's intelligence branch. The raid took place at a house in the village of Khirbet Daoud, near the northern border with Syria. The man who died was shot in a clash between soldiers and the militants, the sources said.

Sunni militants, including members of Islamic State and the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front, have mounted a number of attacks in Lebanon since the war in neighbouring Syria began in 2011.

These include an incursion into the border town of Aarsal in 2014 and suicide bomb attacks that have targeted the army and areas dominated by the Shi'ite Lebanese group Hezbollah, which is fighting in Syria in support of President Bashar al-Assad.—Reuters

Croatia consents to opening of chapter in Serbia's EU talks

BRUSSELS — Croatia has officially consented to the opening of Chapter 23 in Serbia's EU accession talks, ensuring a consensus within the EU on the matter.

Ambassadors of EU member states reached on Wednesday afternoon a consensus on the fulfilment of criteria for opening Chapter 23 in the talks with Serbia.

Croatia coordinated its position with that of 27 EU member states, removing an obstacle to a continuation of the process of Serbia's EU accession.

Serbia is now expected to be called to submit its negotiating position for chapters 23 and 24, after which the EU member states should once again coordinate a common EU position for the talks with Serbia on the chapters, which relate to the rule of law and human rights.—Tanjung

13 killed, over 100 injured in Pakistan thunderstorm

ISLAMABAD — At least 13 people were killed and over 100 others injured when thunderstorm and heavy rains hit Pakistani capital of Islamabad and northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, local media reported on Thursday.

Samaa news reported that the thunderstorm, which hit the country on Wednesday night, also damaged many vehicles, uprooted dozens of trees and signboards in the capital. Islamabad and its sister city Rawalpindi were the worst hit in the calamity which left eight people killed and 105 others injured.—Xinhua

Sri Lanka to gradually ban house maids abroad amid abuses, social cost

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka will gradually stop sending house maids abroad, mainly to the Middle East, due to rights abuses, social costs and a local labour shortage, government spokesman Rajitha Senaratne said on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka's expatriate workers, mainly house maids and unskilled labourers, send back remittances — the island nation's main foreign exchange earner — that help earn around \$7 billion a year for the \$82.2 billion economy.

Senaratne said President Maithripala Sirisena had appointed a committee to study strategies to reduce the numbers gradually and finally stop sending maids abroad.—Reuters

US-backed forces open major front in Syria war

WASHINGTON/BEIRUT — Thousands of US-backed fighters opened a major new front in Syria's war, launching an offensive to drive Islamic State out of a swathe of northern Syria it uses as a logistics base and appearing to make swift initial battlefield advances.

The operation, which began on Tuesday after weeks of quiet preparations, aims to choke off the group's access to Syrian land along the Turkish border that the militants have long used to move foreign fighters back and forth to Europe.

"It's significant in that it's their last remaining funnel" to Europe, a US military official told Reuters, which was first to report the offensive.

A small number of US special operations forces will support the push on the ground to capture the "Manbij pocket" of territory, acting as advisers and staying back from the front lines, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss military planning.

"They'll be as close as they need to be for the (Syrian fighters) to complete the operation. But they will not engage in direct combat," the official said.

The operation will also count on air power from the US-led coalition, which pounded Islamic State positions near Manbij with 18 strikes on Tuesday, including six militant tactical units, two headquarters facilities and a



A woman runs holding a walkie-talkie towards a damaged site after an airstrike on the rebel-controlled area of Maaret al-Numan town in Idlib Province, Syria, on 31 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

training base.

A Kurdish source, speaking on condition of anonymity, predicted the Syrian militias would reach Islamic State-held Manbij within days, after advancing to within 10 km (6 miles) of the town.

It was too early to say how the battle for Manbij would go, the source said, but added that Islamic State defences stationed on the west bank of the Euphrates River had collapsed at the start of the campaign.

Driving Islamic State from its last remaining foothold at the Turkish border has been a top priority of the US-led campaign against the group. The group controls about 80 km (50 miles) of the frontier stretching west from Jarablus.

Still, some US military and intelligence officers caution that Islamic State has proved adaptable, willing to change tactics.

In Iraq, for example, the Sunni extremist group has countered some territorial and other

losses by staging attacks in Baghdad, the seat of the country's Shiite-led government.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said US-led air strikes in support of the ground operation killed 15 civilians including three children near Manbij in the past 24 hours. The Observatory's reporting is based on an activist network in Syria.

It said the Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) alliance, which is conducting the assault to capture the Manbij pocket, had taken 16

villages and was 15 km (9 miles) from Manbij town itself.

The US officials said earlier the operation would be overwhelmingly comprised of Syrian Arabs instead of forces with the Kurdish YPG militia, who will only represent about a fifth or a sixth of the overall force.

That is seen as important to NATO member Turkey, which has opposed any further expansion of Syrian Kurdish sway at the frontier.

Ankara sees the Syrian Kurdish YPG fighters, who already control an uninterrupted 400-km (250-mile) stretch of the border, as terrorists and has been enraged by US backing for the militia in its battle with Islamic State in Syria.

But the Observatory said the Kurdish YPG militia made up the majority of the fighters taking part in the SDF assault.

SDF and YPG officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

The US officials told Reuters the YPG would only fight to help clear Islamic State from the area around Manbij. Syrian Arab fighters would be the ones to stabilise and secure it once Islamic State is gone, according to the operational plans.

"After they take Manbij, the agreement is the YPG will not be staying. ... So you'll have Syrian Arabs occupying traditional Syrian Arab land," the official said.—*Reuters*

Somalia says ends operation to secure hotel bombed by al Shabaab

MOGADISHU — Somali security forces have brought to an end a bomb and gun attack by militants on a central Mogadishu hotel that killed at least 16 people and wounded 55, authorities said on Thursday.

Islamist militant group al Shabaab, affiliated with al Qaeda, claimed responsibility for Wednesday's

attack on Hotel Ambassador. Two lawmakers were among the dead in the attack which ended with police shooting the assailants.

"So far we have confirmed 16 people, mostly civilians, died and 55 others were injured," Major Nur Mohamed, a police officer, told Reuters on Thursday.

Another police officer, Major

Farah Ali, told Reuters the hotel was now secure after the entire building was cleared of militants.

"National security forces are in every floor, the last fighter on the top roof (was) shot," Ali said.

A Reuters witness saw the last fighter shot dead, his body falling to the ground from the building's fifth floor. Eight dead people lay in front of the hotel.

Al Shabaab was pushed out of Mogadishu by the African Union peacekeeping force AMISOM in 2011. But it has remained a potent threat in Somalia, launching frequent attacks aimed at overthrowing the Western-backed government. The group has also been behind deadly attacks in Kenya and Uganda. Both contribute troops to an African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia.

Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, al Shabaab's military operations spokesman, told Reuters they had lost three fighters during the hotel attack and killed 30 people.

One of the three dead fighters drove the car that rammed the hotel while the others stormed the hotel, al Shabaab said.—*Reuters*



A general view shows the scene of a suicide car bombing outside Hotel Ambassador on Maka Al Mukaram Road in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, on 1 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Libyan forces lose 10 men in clashes with Islamic State near Sirte

TRIPOLI — Libyan brigades aligned with a new UN-backed government in Tripoli lost 10 men and had another 40 wounded in fighting close to the Islamic State stronghold of Sirte on Wednesday, a hospital spokesman said.

The brigades, mostly composed of fighters from the western city of Misrata, have advanced to the outskirts of Sirte over the past week and say they intend to recapture the city.

On Wednesday they had gained ground south of the city, and at a power station west of Sirte, according to statements posted on their social media accounts. They said they had faced four suicide car bombings, two of which had exploded before reaching their targets.

Western states are hoping the United Nations-backed government, which arrived in Tripoli in March, can bring together Libya's competing factions to

defeat Islamic State.

The extremist group established a foothold in Libya amid political chaos and conflict in the North African state, gaining control over Sirte last year.

Earlier this week a separate force that guards key oil terminals east of Sirte also advanced towards the city, taking control of two small towns previously controlled by Islamic State.

In Sirte itself, a resident told Reuters that a senior cleric had toured the streets on Tuesday urging people to stay in the city and fight.

Most of Sirte's population of about 80,000 is thought to have fled, and the government-backed brigades have said they want to give those residents who remain a chance to escape before advancing into residential areas. The brigades had already seen 75 of their fighters killed and more than 350 wounded before the latest casualties.—*Reuters*

At least four people killed in flooding in south Germany

BERLIN — At least four people have been killed in floods in the southern German state of Bavaria and thousands of households were cut off from electricity, officials said on Thursday.

Firemen found three women in the basement of a flooded house in the town of Simbach am Inn some 120 km (75 miles) east from Munich, police said.

In the nearby village of Julbach, emergency services found a drowned woman hanging over a tree trunk in a stream, police said, adding that her house had apparently collapsed.

At least two people were missing in the district of Rottal-Inn. "We're expecting the worst," police spokesman Michael Emmer said, adding divers were searching for those missing.

Police arrested two looters who tried to steal car radios. Several thousand households were cut off from electricity in the flooded region close to the Austrian border, an official said.

Weather forecasters said more rain was expected in the region on Thursday, further complicating the rescue works.

Earlier this week, three people were killed in floods in the southwestern German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg and a young girl was killed by a train as she took shelter from the rain under a railway bridge.—*Reuters*



People take part in a protest 'Croatia can do better', against what the demonstrators say is political influence on education reform, on Zagreb's main square, Croatia, on 1 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thousands of Croatians protest for education free of politics

ZAGREB (Croatia) — At least 25,000 Croatians demonstrated in the main square of the capital Zagreb on Wednesday accusing the government of political meddling in an education reform meant to help improve the country's weak economy.

Smaller protests by civic groups and teachers unions took place in 12 other Croatian cities, organisers said.

The protests, held under the

slogan "Croatia can do better", came after an expert group organising the reform withdrew from the project, complaining that the new centre-right government was interfering too much in the planning.

The experts were appointed 16 months ago by the previous centre-left government and wanted to modernise schools to give pupils more marketable skills. Local businesses complain that

graduates are unprepared for the labour market.

The experts did not detail the alleged interference, but it appeared a staunchly conservative group in the government wanted its views reflected in teaching materials about controversial social issues.

The protest is a blow to an already fragile government that might collapse after fewer than five months due to a row within

the coalition over an alleged conflict of interest involving Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Karamarko.

A no-confidence vote on Karamarko, who is head of the conservative HDZ, the biggest party in the ruling coalition, must take place before 18 June. Croatia has a jobless rate of almost 16 per cent and has just started to recover after six recession years from 2009 to 2014.—*Reuters*

Norway bans all use of Airbus Super Puma helicopter

OSLO — Norway's Civil Aviation Authority has extended its ban on the use of Airbus H225 Super Puma Helicopters in Norway to include search and rescue missions, the agency said in a statement on Thursday.

The ban, which also includes an older version of the aircraft, follows the discovery of metal fatigue in the gear box of a Super Puma helicopter that crashed in Norway on 29 April, killing all 13 people on board. The Super Pumas, a workhorse of the oil industry, were banned from commercial traffic in Norway and Britain following the accident, but search and rescue missions had still been allowed.

The findings were published in a preliminary report by Accident Investigation Board Norway (AIBN) on Wednesday, in which the board urged the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to take immediate action to ensure the safety of the helicopter's main gearbox.

EASA said it was planning to issue another safety directive on



A helicopter has crashed west of the Norwegian city of Bergen with 13 people on board. A rescue vessel lifts up parts of the helicopter. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thursday, but did not elaborate.

Norwegian oil major Statoil said in a separate statement it would find other ways of operating its emergency services for the Oseberg Field Centre and Statfjord B platforms in the North Sea, as well as at the airport at Sola.

"Statoil is currently mobilising the necessary resources to safeguard preparedness requirements,"

the company said. The helicopter that crashed in April was working for the Norwegian firm and operated by Canada-based CHC Helicopter.

CHC said it welcomed the latest report from the AIBN and that it had suspended all flights with the H225 model as a result, even before the Norwegian ban was announced.—*Reuters*

French strikes disrupt rail but air controllers' stoppage averted

PARIS — Strikes halved French train services on Thursday but attempts by the militant CGT union to broaden protests against labour reforms to air traffic control and the Paris underground ahead of a European soccer tournament appeared to have failed.

Transport Minister Alain Vidalies said traffic was normal on the Paris Metro, unions other than the CGT had called off an air controllers' strike and the government hoped to avert disruption of the Euro 2016 soccer championship.

CGT-led stoppages were also disrupting refineries and nuclear power plants but the union looked increasingly isolated in its efforts to force the Socialist government to withdraw a labour law reform that would make hiring and firing easier.

"There'll be no disruption of the airways this weekend," said Vidalies, who said four of the five unions who had given notice of a 3-5 June strike had

agreed to call it off. Six out of 10 high-speed TGV train connections were operating and other inter-city links were cut to a third of normal, said the state-owned SNCF railway company, a stronghold of the CGT union, which is one of France's two largest unions.

But a smaller union was expected to call off its participation in the strike after securing government assurances of help with the SNCF's 50 billion euro (\$56.04 billion) debt.

President Francois Hollande has rejected CGT demands that he scrap a bill that the union says will undermine labour protection by giving companies more scope to negotiate in-house deals on pay and conditions.

His government, which insists the reform is needed to help combat a jobless rate of 10 per cent, has been working flat out to defuse sectoral tensions and prevent various grievances coalescing into one big national protest.—*Reuters*

City of London's 'Brexiteers' regroup for battle

LONDON — Almost two decades ago, property investor Richard Tice was among a group of financiers engaged in a campaign to stop Britain from joining the euro single currency. Now he is fighting another battle - to bring Britain out of the European Union.

Tice says history has vindicated his stance on the euro. London has thrived as Europe's leading financial center despite being outside the single currency. That is good reason, Tice says, to listen to him when he says British business will prosper if Britons vote to leave the European Union this month. Tice's views on Brexit put him in a minority in the financial services industry with most believing this very significant part of the economy — it accounts for about 10 per cent of GDP — has the most to lose from a leave vote.

He is also at odds with Prime Minister David Cameron, the finance minister George Osborne and Bank of England head Mark Carney, all of whom argue Britain is better off inside the EU. "Let's give due weight



Peter Hargreaves, the co-founder of stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown, poses at his home near Bristol, Britain, on 19 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

to those who said we shouldn't join the euro in the first place, we were right then and we are right now," said Tice, interviewed at a hotel bar near his office in London's wealthy Mayfair district.

Tice is joined in his campaign by other business leaders who campaigned against the euro.

The 'Brexiteers' include the founders of some of the biggest stockbroking

and fund management companies — Stuart Wheeler, owner of spread-betting firm IG Index, Peter Hargreaves founder of stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown, asset manager Fundsmith's Terry Smith and Oliver Hemsley of broker Numis.

They see parallels with when then Prime Minister Tony Blair, the country's main business lobby group and international compa-

nies based in Britain wanted to join the single currency. The same institutions are now against an exit from Europe.

Wall Street banks Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Citi and JPMorgan have donated six-figure sums to the campaign for the country to stay in the EU and the City of London Corporation, which runs the financial district, also backs remaining.—Reuters

Bad debts in South Korean banks hit 15-year high on corporate restructuring

SEOUL — Bad debts among South Korean banks hit the highest in 15 years due to the government-led corporate restructuring in shipping and shipbuilding industries, financial watchdog data showed on Thursday.

Non-performing loans extended by local banks amounted to 31.3 trillion won (26.3 billion US dollars) as of the end of March, up 1.3 trillion won from three months earlier,

according to the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS).

It was up 6.6 trillion won from a year ago, marking the largest since the end of March in 2001 when the bad debts recorded 38.1 trillion won.

The sub-standard rate, which gauges the percentage of loans overdue more than three months to the total, stood at 1.87 per cent as of end-March, the highest in five years. It was

higher than comparable data from the United States at 1.54 per cent and from Japan at 1.53 per cent.

The higher rate of bad debts came mainly from the government-led corporate restructuring in shipping and shipbuilding industries that had struggled with massive losses and falling orders amid the global economic slowdown.

The sub-standard ra-

tio among shipbuilders and shipping firms reached 12.03 per cent and 11.43 per cent each at the end of March. The rate for construction companies was 4.27 per cent.

The bad debt ratio among big corporations increased 0.31 percentage points from three months earlier to 4.07 per cent as of end-March, while the figure for small firms fell 0.03 percentage points to 1.61 per cent.—Xinhua

Family will not sue Cincinnati zoo over child-gorilla incident

CINCINNATI — The family of a 3-year-old boy who fell into an animal enclosure, prompting the killing of an endangered gorilla, said on Wednesday that it would not sue the Cincinnati Zoo over the incident.

The family, whose name has been withheld by police, said through a spokeswoman, Gail Myers, that the boy was doing well. They had said earlier on social media that he had a concussion and scrapes. They asked well-wishers not to send them financial gifts, but to make any donations to the zoo.

A 17-year-old western lowland silverback gorilla named Harambe was shot and killed by zoo staff on Saturday after the boy fell into its enclosure.

Witnesses have said the boy expressed a desire to get into the enclosure and climbed over a 3-foot (1-metre) barrier, then fell 15 feet (4.6 m) into a moat.

Cincinnati police are

investigating whether to bring charges against the child's parents. Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters said in a statement that police would confer with his office after they had looked into the matter.

The family declined to comment on the investigation.

Mounting outrage over the killing of Harambe has sparked criticism of the zoo and the child's parents. Online petitions at change.org have more than 676,000 signatures demanding "Justice for Harambe."

The Cincinnati Police Department released on Wednesday recordings of emergency calls made by the child's mother and witnesses.

"My son fell in with the gorillas. There's a male gorilla standing over him. I need someone to contact the zoo, please," the mother told an operator. "He's dragging my son ..."

—Reuters



Harambe, a 17-year-old gorilla at the Cincinnati Zoo is pictured in this undated handout photo provided by Cincinnati Zoo. PHOTO: REUTERS

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (115N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (115N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.6.2016 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

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (148W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (148W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV YANGON STAR VOY NO (057 7JR)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANGON STAR VOY NO (057 7JR) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.6.2016 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 CMA CGM LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Straight from the studio: 'Star Wars' prop replicas go on sale

LONDON — From Darth Vader's melted helmet to Rey's lightsaber hilt, "Star Wars" fans can now get their hands on replicas of the props used in the sci-fi franchise's last movie.

Disney and Lucasfilm have launched the line of made-to-order precisely detailed items seen in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens", created by the Propshop team that helped design and make the props for the film at Britain's Pinewood Studios.

"We're based in Pinewood Studios where 'Star Wars' is actually filmed and we've created for the first time a pipeline to be able to manufacture these products and make them available to the consumer," Propshop director James Enright told Reuters.

"They're unique because

they actually come from the studio itself...They're made by artists and film technicians who do this every day, who are very passionate about what they do."

To ensure the items accurately match the props seen in the film, Propshop uses digital data collected during the making of the movie and combines it with 3D printing technology.

Once the item is built, the final bits of paint are added and rubbing down is done to complete the replica.

"Star Wars Collectibles: Ultimate Studio Edition" features eight prop replicas, also including Finn's bloodied Stormtrooper helmet and Chewbacca's bowcaster, with prices ranging from \$1,250 to \$3,500.—*Reuters*

Adele shells out 2 million pounds on friend's hen party

LOS ANGELES — Singer Adele has reportedly spent 2 million pounds on a hen party.

The 28-year-old "Hello" hitmaker spared no expense for her friends and has even paid off a mortgage for one of her friends, reported Femalefirst.

"Adele will pay for holidays. She treated (childhood friend) Laura Dockrill and her

boyfriend to a private yacht charter when they were in Santorini recently," a source said.

"She also paid for 20 friends on a week-long hen do in Ibiza last year — renting out a 2 million pounds villa. She's even paid off one mate's mortgage and bought another of her oldest friends a 60,000 pounds car when hers got written off.—*PTI*



Oscar winner Brie Larson.
PHOTO: REUTERS

Brie Larson frontrunner for Captain Marvel

LOS ANGELES — Oscar winner Brie Larson is reportedly in early talks to star as Captain Marvel in an upcoming superhero film.

The 26-year-old actress has emerged as the top choice to portray the character, who is one of Marvel's most popular female superheroes. According to Variety, studio bosses are still in early negotiations with Larson, but she is leaning towards taking on the role, which is Marvel's first female-led superhero film.

Emily Blunt and Olivia Wilde were previously linked to play the titular heroine.

While no director is currently attached to the project, "Inside Out" writers Meg LeFauve and Nicole Perlman are currently penning the script.

Captain Marvel is the superhero alter ego of air force pilot Carol Danvers, whose DNA is fused with an alien's during a freak accident. The long-gestating project is currently slated for release in March, 2019.—*PTI*

Schwarzenegger charged by elephant



Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger arrives for the funeral of Nancy Reagan at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, United States, on 11 March 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

JOHANNESBURG — Action movie star and former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger had a real-life adventure in Africa when he was on a safari vehicle that was charged by an elephant.

"Some of us had to change our pants," he said on his Twitter feed after he posted a 30-second video of the brief encounter.

The elephant appeared in front of the vehicle and then walked off the road, circled the truck and then charged it from behind, ears flapping, as the vehicle picked up speed and pulled away.

The driver can be heard saying: "I think he's ok now, he's

going to avoid us", seconds before the charge. Schwarzenegger did not identify the reserve where the charge took place.

Game drives and safaris are a major tourist attraction in several African countries, including South Africa, where Schwarzenegger had been for a sports festival at the weekend.

In some parts of the continent, elephants are being relentlessly poached for their ivory to meet Asian demand for the commodity.

Schwarzenegger tweeted: "I'm absolutely in awe of these beautiful animals, and I wish people would stop killing them for their ivory."—*Reuters*

'Friday the 13th' reboot will be origin story: Producer

LONDON — Producer Bryan Fuller has revealed that "Friday the 13th" reboot will delve into Jason Voorhees's back story and motivations.

The screenplay of the film has been written by Prisoners scribe Aaron Guzikowski, reported Digital Spy.

"Aaron's story has great characters...You kind of have to understand Jason Voorhees, so we go back and we kind of started over and work our way forward," said Fuller.

Although he admitted it's an "Origin-ish" story, he added, "It's an origin that no-one has seen before. Obviously Pamela's there, but it's a little bit different from what you've seen before."

This project has been in development since 2013.

"Friday the 13th" is slated for 2017.—*PTI*

X-Men show 'Legion' starring Dan Stevens happening

LOS ANGELES — X-Men show titled "Legion" is officially in works starring Dan Stevens as Charles Xavier's son.

The series also stars Aubrey Plaza and Jean Smart, reported Entertainment Weekly.

The story revolves around David Haller, who was diagnosed as schizophrenic, and struggled with perceived mental illness for years.

The drama is from " Fargo" creator Noah Hawley.

"Marvel Television is thrilled to not only have our first partnership with FX go to series, but working with the enormously talented Noah Hawley makes it even better. "From the first time we heard Noah's vision to his ex-

ceptional script and cast through the extraordinary filming of the pilot, we knew the series would be incredible," executive producer Jeph Loeb. "Legion" begins shooting this summer and will air in early 2017.—*PTI*



Ten tables, accommodating a total of 220 guests, are suspended from cranes at a height of 40 metres in front of the Atomium, a 102-metre (335 feet) high structure and its nine spheres, built for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, as part of the 10th anniversary of the event known as “Dinner in the Sky”, in Brussels, Belgium, on 1 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Dinner in the sky in Brussels

BRUSSELS — Gourmet food lovers get the chance this week to have “Dinner in the Sky” served by star chefs on platforms hoisted 50 metres (165 feet) into the air by construction cranes in the Belgian capital Brussels.

Some 4,500 guests are expected for the 10th anniversary Dinner in the Sky at Brussels’ Atomium, a complex of steel spheres and walkways in the form of a crystal that has become the city symbol since being built for the 1958 World’s Fair.

Each year, 10 chefs cook on the platforms suspended in the air around the Atomium and serve guests seated at adjacent long tables.

The Dinner in the Sky runs from 1-5 June. Organiser David Ghyssel, who conceived the idea in 2006, said selected partners had already staged it in 56 other countries including the United States, India, with more to take part in coming months.—*Reuters*

Pele to donate auction money to Santos, charity

LONDON — Brazilian great Pele said he was putting more than 2,000 items up for auction, including his three World Cup medals and a one-of-a-kind Jules Rimet trophy, in order to raise funds for charity and his former club Santos.

The three-day auction, which opens on Tuesday in London, will feature memorabilia from the 75-year-old’s illustrious career with Brazil, Santos and the New York Cosmos and could fetch up to \$1 million, auctioneers said.

“That was the decision to do this, to help the charity and the children,” the Brazilian, widely regarded as the greatest soccer player ever, told Reuters TV.

“The idea is that half of the money goes to the children’s hospital and the other charities and the rest of the memorabilia will go to Santos, for an exhibition. Santos, the team that made me be here.” —*Reuters*

A day in the life of Picasso: artist’s same-day works up for sale

LONDON — Two still life works by Pablo Picasso painted on the same day are among offerings at an upcoming London auction that also features works by Amedeo Modigliani, Claude Monet, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee.

Picasso’s “Nature morte” and “Nature morte aux volets verts”, from 29 December, 1946, are each estimated at 2 million pounds-3 million pounds (\$2.89 million-\$4.33 million) and will go under the hammer at Christie’s auction on 22 June.

“It gives such an amazing insight into how Picasso was working,” Jay Vincze, head of the Impressionist and Modern Art department at Christie’s London, told Reuters. “Rarely do we see a pair of paintings painted on the same day.” Estimated at 5 million to 7 million pounds, Modigliani’s “Madame Hanka Zborowska” portrait is leading the sale along with Monet’s “L’Ancienne rue de la Chaussée, Argenteuil”, estimated at 4.5 million to 6.5 million pounds.—*Reuters*

The fastest toddler in Lithuania lured across finish line by jangling keys

VILNIUS — It took 11 seconds for 10-month-old Kamilis Dambrauskas to crawl five metres of plush carpet towards victory on Wednesday in an annual competition to crown Lithuania’s fastest toddler.

Dambrauskas was the fastest among 25 toddlers, whose mothers lured them towards the finish line by flashing items ranging from television remote controls and mobile phones to milk bottles, red balloons, plush animal toys and a cat’s feeding bowl full of cat food pellets. “We trained a lot at home. We looked for what he reacts to best, and decided to use jangling keys to lure him”, Irena, mother of the winner, said.

Several toddlers lost ground following early leads after sitting down near the finish line to look around. Some babies, startled by the crowd commotion around them, did not crawl across the starting line.—*Reuters*



Entertainment Channel

(3- 6-2016, Friday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:30 pm

- Cartoon Programme “The Lion of Judah “ (Part-3)
- Music Programme

7:00 pm

- International Drama Series

7:10 pm

- Music Programme

8:40 pm

- Hanthawaddy U Win Tin
- “A Fearless Man” (Episode - 2)

9:10 pm

- International Movie Songs

9:20 pm

- Myanmar Childhood Games (Episode-1)

9:50 pm

- Archery Session (from Ramayana Play)

10:10 pm

- Sightseeing in Yangon: Inya Lake

10:30 pm

- Myanmar Movie

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



Myanmar International

(3-6-2016 07:00am ~ 4-6-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am

News

07:26 Am

Welcome To Naga Land

08:03 Am

News

08:26 Am

Trend of Kachin Dress

08:52 Am

Next Generation: Nyan Kyal Say

09:03 Am

News

09:26 Am

An Ardent Aficionado of Traditional Design

10:03 Am

News

10:26 Am

Tour of The National Heritages and Archeological Site

10:50 Am

Porcelain and Glass

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Thursday 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

Travel To The Southern Part of Shan State (Kalaw)

07:44 Pm

Living Myanmar Glazed Ceramics

08:03 Pm

News

08:26 Pm

The Stories Of The Great Souls (Daw Saw Mone Nyin- A Living Literary Legend Of Myanmar)

08:52 Pm

Art Students: Theatrical Art

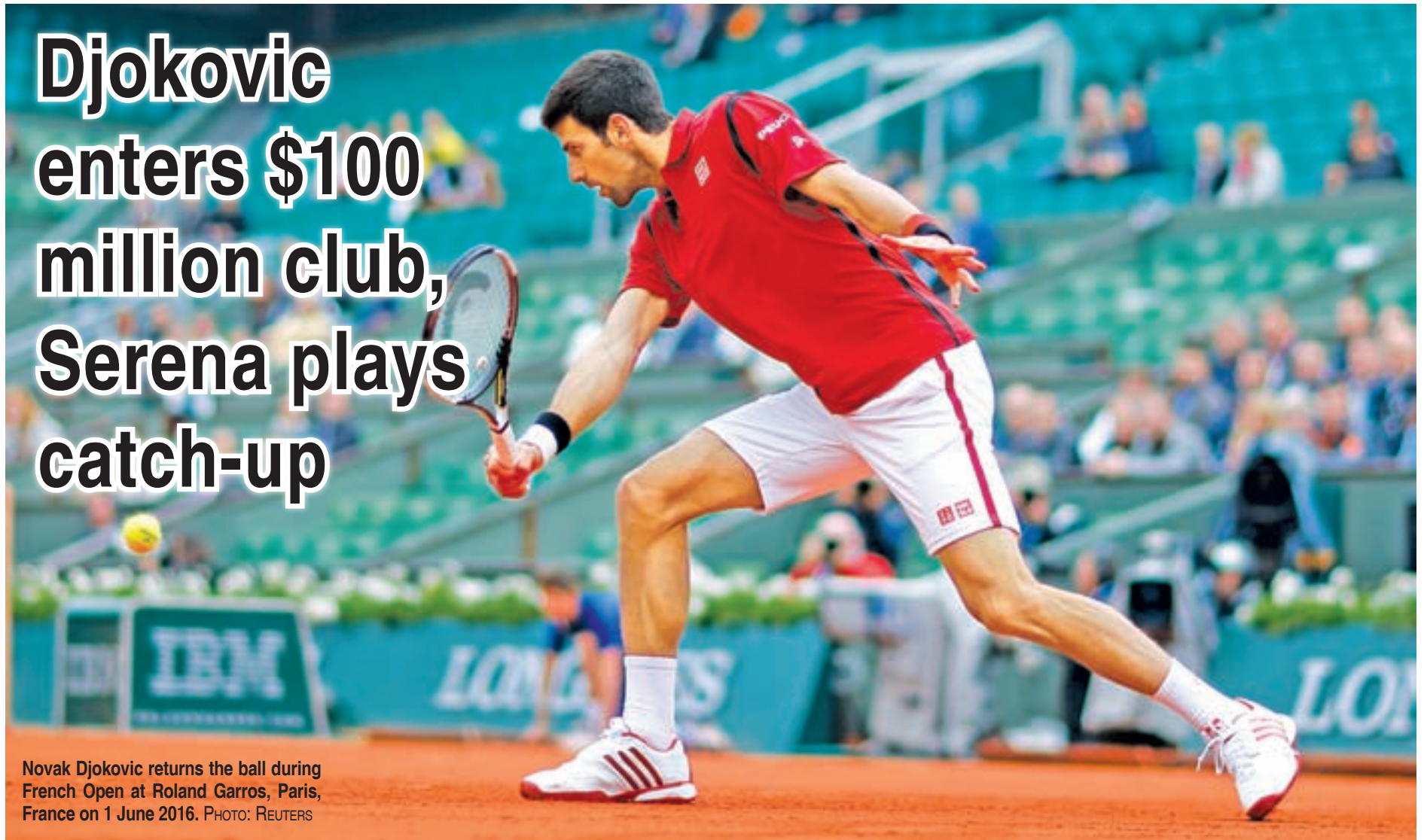
(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Thursday 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)

Djokovic enters \$100 million club, Serena plays catch-up



Novak Djokovic returns the ball during French Open at Roland Garros, Paris, France on 1 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS — Novak Djokovic had 100 million reasons to celebrate reaching the French Open quarter-finals on Wednesday — albeit two days later than expected — as players finally cleared the fourth-round backlog created by the fickle Parisian weather.

After relentless rain washed out all but two hours of play over the previous two days, under-fire Roland Garros organisers said such conditions had not been seen since 1873 as they frantically tried to play catch-up by staging

12 singles matches — instead of just four quarter-finals as is the norm -- on day 11 of the sodden championships.

That allowed world number one Djokovic to become the first tennis player to bank \$100 million (£69.3 million) in prize money after his 3-6, 6-4, 6-1, 7-5 win over Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut tipped him over the magic number.

Having won a match that was originally scheduled for Monday, begun on Tuesday and

completed on Wednesday, the 29-year-old Serb will have to play four days in succession if he is to reach Sunday's title showdown.

"I have the feeling I played three matches against him," a grinning Djokovic told the crowd after donning a yellow rain hat during his victory speech.

"Yesterday the match was interrupted three times and it wasn't easy coming here at 9 am and leaving at 7.30 or 8:00 pm."

"So that's the reason why we

should have the roof here," added the Serb, who joined the likes of golfer Tiger Woods and boxer Lennox Lewis in the \$100 million club.

However, rather than getting worked up about the French Open not having any court cover like the other three majors, it was the organisers' decision to make the players compete in misty rain on Tuesday that overshadowed Wednesday's on-court action.

Serena Williams, who like Djokovic was bogged down in

the fourth round for more than 48 hours, booked her place in the quarter-finals by walloping Ukrainian 18th seed Elina Svitolina 6-1, 6-1. She will next face Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva.

In the bottom half of the men's draw, Andy Murray doused some early fireworks from Frenchman Richard Gasquet to win 5-7, 7-6(3), 6-0, 6-2 to set up a blockbuster semi-final against holder Stan Wawrinka. The Swiss beat Albert Ramos (Spain) 6-2, 6-1, 7-6(7).—Reuters

Lionel Messi testifies in tax fraud trial

BARCELONA — Soccer's five-times World Player of the Year Lionel Messi arrived at a court in Barcelona on Thursday to testify against charges of tax evasion.

A few bystanders applauded the arrival of the Argentina and

FC Barcelona player while several people shouted at him, but in contrast to when he appeared at a local court in 2013 to give evidence, there were no Barcelona supporters present.

Messi and his father, Jorge

Horacio Messi, entered the court immediately without speaking to reporters.

The trial began on Tuesday although Messi missed the first and second day, which he was not obliged to attend, citing a back injury sustained in Argentina's international friendly with Honduras last Friday.

Lionel and Jorge Horacio Messi are accused by the Spanish tax office of defrauding the government of 4.2 million euros (\$4.7 million) between 2007 and 2009.

They could face jail terms of up to 22 months if found guilty, although it is customary in Spain that offenders of non-violent crime with a sentence of under two years do not serve time in jail.

The case centres on the player's image rights and a web of shell companies allegedly used to

evade taxes on income from those rights. Tuesday's hearing showed that Spain's tax office made 20 inspections of Messi during its three-year investigation.

According to the prosecutors' office, revenue was hidden using shell companies in Uruguay, Belize, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Messi and his father paid five million euros to the tax authorities as a "corrective" measure after being formally investigated in June 2013.

Spain's tax office has also begun investigating the finances of Messi's Barcelona team-mates Neymar Jr, Javier Mascherano and Adriano.

Mascherano accepted a one-year prison sentence for tax evasion as part of a plea bargain in January, although is not expected to serve time in jail.

Messi moved to Barcelona from his birth place of Rosario, Argentina in 2000, becoming a Spanish citizen in 2005.

He is 10th on Forbes Magazine's list of the world's highest-earning athletes over the past decade, with an estimated income of \$350 million.

Messi has scored 453 goals in 531 appearances for Barca in all competitions.

He has also won eight La Liga titles, four King's Cups and four Champions League crowns with Barca, leading them to a league and cup double last season.

Messi is also captain of Argentina and will rejoin the team immediately after his court appearance to prepare for the Copa America in the USA, playing their first game against holders Chile on 7 June.—Reuters



Barcelona's Argentine soccer player Lionel Messi sits in court with his father Jorge Horacio Messi during their trial for tax fraud in Barcelona, Spain, on 2 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS