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President U Htin Kyaw meets with Kofi Annan

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw received the Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting the President said that the issues in Rakhine State are important matters for Myanmar, expressing his belief that the problem could be resolved through Mr. Kofi Annan's skillful handling.

Mr. Kofi Annan expressed his view that the Myanmar commission was formed with the inclusion of three foreigners in order to help the country seek solutions to the issues of Rakhine State with the help of their international experience.

The former UN Chief added that he understands the situation in which he faced protests which were staged democratically during his Rakhine State visit.

He stressed the need for ensuring a clear understanding of the requirements for any resolutions while taking account of public opinion by the Commission so that there can be effective problem solving, adding that the commission will coordinate with Myanmar officials concerned.

Next, the two representatives exchanged views on the 21st Century Panglong Union Peace Conference, the sharing of agricultural methods by the Kofi Annan Foundation and preventive measures against narcotic drug sale and use.

Also present were Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, U Thein Swe and Dr Win Myat Aye and officials.—Myanmar News Agency



President U Htin Kyaw holds talks with former Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan, Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AUNG SHINE OO

EASING RAKHINE TENSION

Kofi Annan calls for cooperation among neighbouring countries to address Rakhine issue

KOFI Annan, the former United Nations Secretary-General, has pledged to address tensions between two communities in Rakhine State, saying that his government-appointed commission is not meant to probe into human rights

in the state, but to give recommendations to ease the stress and anxiety in Rakhine State.

Mr Annan also expressed the nine-member commission's commitment to "impartiality" to advise the government in order to solve

complicated issues in accordance with international norms.

He made the remarks at a press conference held yesterday in Yangon following his first visit to the western state. He also acknowledged the significance of the com-

mission because among its members are international experts.

The former UN chief has also called for cooperation among neighbouring countries to address the issue in Rakhine State, urging the countries to consider how they

can improve the cross-border issues by border management.

He also pledged that the commission would observe cross-border issues and advise the countries to cooperate out of necessity.

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

Bill to protect citizens' privacy and security put forward to Pyithu Hluttaw



U Soe Nyunt.



U Thant Sin Maung.

THE Pyithu Hluttaw session continued for the 29th day with a question and answer session and the submission of a bill yesterday.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee put forward a bill to protect citizens' privacy and security to the parliament.

During the Q & A session, Supreme Court Judge U Soe Nyunt replied that the Supreme Court of the Union, the highest judicial body located in Nay Pyi Taw, has no plans to open separate courts in Mandalay and

Yangon to hear cases of appeal as Nay Pyi Taw is in the central area of Myanmar and is easily accessible from all parts of the country.

Next, Union Minister for Transportation and Communication U Thant Sin Maung responded to a question regarding railway services, saying that 55 up-train and 56 down-train will get a new carriage each.

Following the arrival of 36 new carriages under the purchase agreement for 100 carriages with the use of an EDCF loan of

US\$45million from the Republic of Korea, they will be put into service on the Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad, the Union minister said.

Works are underway to upgrade 40 used carriages from the RoK, he added.

Regarding capacity building programmes for railway staff, the ministry organised 12 training courses conducted by Japanese trainers from the Overseas Human Resources and Industry Development Association. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw discusses proposal on education promotion for ethnic people

THE Amyotha Hluttaw session continued yesterday with 10 parliamentarians discussing a proposal calling for special plans to eradicate illiteracy in ethnic regions, enable ethnic people to pursue further studies and promote ethnic literature.

Lt-Col Ye Naing Oo, Defence Services personnel Amyotha Hluttaw representative, stressed the need to ensure equitable development for all ethnic minorities by enabling them to pursue further studies.

He called for the implemen-

tation of a non-formal primary education (NFPE) programme, pointing out that about three million aged 15 and above living in rural areas are illiterate and about 4.8 million aged above five have no access to education. He added that the country has about 9.3million migrant workers and IDPs.

He went to say that there can be no democracy without internal peace as well as there can be no peace without democracy. Peace can be achieved under the rule of law and internal peace can be brought about by collaborative ef-



Lt-Col Ye Naing Oo.

orts of all stakeholders involved in the peace process. Works to eradicate illiteracy, enable ethnic people to pursue higher education and promote ethnic literature will be carried out following a lasting peace in the country.

In his discussion, U Han Win Thein of Thaninthayi Region Constituency 4 stressed the need for ensuring equal rights in education as most of those living in



U Kyaw Ni Naing.

remote areas are illiterate.

He suggested that there be a focus on reform in education, calling for critical investments in education to ensure sustainable development.

The lawmaker called on Amyotha Hluttaw to put record on the proposal.

Likewise, U Naing Thiha of Mon State Constituency 7 highlighted the importance of ethnic



U Han Win Thein.

literature, language and culture for ensuring sustainability of ethnic identity, calling for the right to learn ethnic language and enjoy ethnic literature.

U Kyaw Ni Naing of Shan State Constituency 10 also emphasised the need for unity in diversity, calling for the ensuring of equal rights in the education and health sectors.— *Myanmar News Agency*

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Emerald Green Project exploited by those it sought to empower

THE re-loaning of credit with interest by villagers, that originally received the credit from the Emerald Green Project, to residents in nearby villages has only heightened poverty in those areas, U Aung Naing Htun, Hluttaw MP for Danuphyu Township, stated during a session of Ayeyarwady Region Hluttaw.

“Upon observation of those villages where the project was implemented, the discrepancy between poverty and wealth has been rather augmented. Residents of villages that received loans from the Emerald Green Project have used the money to offer as loans, with enormous rates of interest attached, to residents of other villages within their village tract that did not fall under the project's scope. It's been quite beneficial for those opportunist money lenders, but it's only sought to exacerbate the poverty of those in other villages,” stated U Aung Naing Htun.

He added that the project was only implemented to one in every ten village tracts in the region, highlighting how the project has failed to have much of a positive impact on reducing poverty levels because of the slipshod attitude of those implementing it. For him, the project will only be successful in fulfilling its intended objective if the public are involved in the project.

U Ba Hein, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation for Ayeyarwady Region, explained that the process of scrutiny of which villages were selected for the project was carried out by Hluttaw MPs, village elders, local administrative authorities, together with members of the project's implementation committee.

“Impoverished villages

needed to meet all the criteria of the project: to have the ability to implement agriculture and livestock programs; possess the rule of law; show an eagerness to be involved; to have good road infrastructure; and to be a safe and peaceful region. The revolving funds of the village project are solely for those villages named under the project. All of the remaining villages will become project villages [at some point in the future],” the minister clarified.

The Emerald Green Project is an initiative which emerged from a National Rural Development Strategy Framework Workshop that was held on 18 November 2014, while some Ayeyarwady Region Hluttaw MPs are quick to point out that oversight over the frameworks of the project will not result in a reduction of poverty in the region.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's presence at ASEAN Summits in Laos



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, US President Barack Obama and Asian leaders stand together for an ASEAN-US Summit (EAS) family photo in Vientiane, Laos 8 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held bilateral talks with prime ministers from Viet Nam, Japan, New Zealand and India on the sidelines of the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits in Vientiane, Laos, in addition to multiple meetings and numerous ceremonial appearances.

On 6 September, the State Counsellor took part in the opening of the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits, the 28th ASEAN Summit Retreat, the signing ceremony of ASEAN Declaration on Disaster Response, Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work

Plan III and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, ASEAN Leaders' Interface meetings with Representatives of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, ASEAN Youth and ASEAN Business Advisory Council.

The next day, the State Counsellor was present together with ASEAN heads of state/government at the 29th ASEAN Summit Retreat, 19th ASEAN-China Summit to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations, the 19th ASEAN-Japan Summit, the 18th

ASEAN-ROK Summit, the 19th ASEAN Plus Three Summit, the 2nd ASEAN-Australia Summit, the 8th ASEAN-United Nations Summit and the 8th Mekong-Japan Summit.

The State Counsellor also attended the 14th ASEAN-India Summit, the 4th ASEAN-United States Summit and the 11th East Asia Summit yesterday.

Moreover, the State Counsellor held bilateral talks with Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe, New Zealand Prime Minister

Mr. John Key and Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi separately on the sidelines of the Summits.

During the ASEAN Summits and related summits, including the first ASEAN-Australia Summit where Myanmar acted as coordinator, the State Counsellor participated in the deliberation of issues relating to ASEAN's dialogue relations and its future direction, regional and international issues and co-operation and external relations of ASEAN.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Finland takes steps to closer economic ties with Myanmar

ACCORDING to the Finnish government's Department of Trade and Commerce, bilateral trade and investment between Finland and Myanmar should be increased, Myitmakha News Agency has been told.

During a workshop held at the headquarters of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon on September 7, it was reported that business activities between entrepreneurs from Myanmar and Finland will be facilitated through the Finnish Department of Trade Commerce.

"Prior to any investment, we must first start with trade. Only by doing so will businessmen know which sector would be good to invest in," said Siv Ahlberg, programme director at Finnpartnership c/o Finnfund, which sits under the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Whether it's the importation of goods to Myanmar directly from Finland, or through neighboring Southeast-Asian countries, a dearth of bilateral trade and investment between Myanmar and Finland is particularly evident when compared with that of other countries.

"Our records don't show the extent of bilateral trade with Finland; it's extremely negligible. That's the impetus behind the Finnish government delegation's trip to Myanmar to hold this workshop. We need to establish better connections with the Fins as the technology they employ in the fields of timber and agricultural is very advanced," said Dr Myo Thet, deputy chair of the UMFCCI.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Kofi Annan calls for cooperation among neighbouring countries to address Rakhine issue

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During the first visit, he said they learned of issues related to development, job opportunities, education, health care, freedom of movement within Rakhine State and the history of Rakhine State.

Members of the commission visited camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) from both communities in the state.

At yesterday's press conference, the chairman of the Advisory Committee for Rakhine State said his commission's primary mission was to provide recommendations and suggestions about how best to meet the international criteria in tackling the sensitive issue of Rakhine State, while pledging to act righteously and impartially.

The recommendations will mainly focus on ways of solving the communal tension, providing humanitarian aid, reconciliation and development.

The commission listened to both communities, with the former UN chief pledging a submission of a comprehensive report of its findings to the government in a one-year timeframe, as agreed.

Kofi Annan also met members of Sangha, the Rakhine State Hluttaw's Speaker, the Rakhine State Chief Minister and governmental officials.

The former UN Secretary General assured more visits to the region would occur in a bid to ensure closer interactions.—*GNLM with Myanmar News Agency*



Former Secretary-General of the UN Mr. Kofi Annan, speaks during the press conference. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives back to Yangon

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived back in Yangon yesterday evening after attending the ASEAN Summits and related Summits in Laos.

The State Counsellor was welcomed back by Union Minister for the State Counsellor's Office U Kyaw Tint Swe, Yangon Region ministers, the Charge d' Affaires of the Lao-tian Embassy in Myanmar and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The State Counsellor attended the 14th ASEAN-India

Summit, the 4th ASEAN-United States Summit and the 11th East Asia Summit at the National Convention Centre in Vientiane, Laos, yesterday morning.

The State Counsellor left Laos for Myanmar in the evening. She was seen off at Wattay International Airport by Lao-tian Minister for Science and Technology Mr. Boviengkham Vongdara, Myanmar Ambassador to Laos U Kyaw Soe Win and embassy staff families.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is welcomed back by officials and diplomats at the Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor to visit United States

AT the invitation of the Honourable Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will pay an official visit to the United

States of America in the near future. The State Counsellor will also attend the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly to be held in New York. En route to the United States, the State Counsellor will visit

the United Kingdom for a meeting with Myanmar Ambassadors accredited to the countries in Europe and Middle East as well as for meetings with high-level dignitaries of the United Kingdom.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds bilateral talks with Indian PM

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi at the National Convention Centre in Vientiane, Laos yesterday.

During the bilateral talks the two leaders held discussions on cooperation in the agriculture and livestock breeding sectors, the exchange of technologies in those sectors and the export of Myanmar beans and pulses to India.

At the meeting the Indian PM invited the State Counsellor to attend the BIMSTEC Summit 2016 and the BRICS Summit 2016 in Goa this October, India, saying that he wanted to hold bilateral



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shaking hands with Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra in Vientiane, Laos. PHOTO: MNA

meetings on the sidelines of the Summits.

The PM said that the Indian government will continue to support the new government's reform processes and activities in political

and economic sectors.

The Indian PM proposed Myanmar host a Buddhist Summit, a programme initiated and co-organised by India and Japan at the meeting. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Crime NEWS

Police prisoner vehicle overturns in Padaung

A POLICE prisoner vehicle carrying 25 prisoners and 12 policemen overturned on Pyay-Kanma road, near Ywarthitgone village, Padaung township, Bago region on Wednesday, leaving one dead and nine injured.

The vehicle, en route to Kanma from Pyay, was being driven by police officer Pho Zaw

Tun, 23. The vehicle overturned when the driver lost control.

A prisoner identified as one Daw Nan Mya Aung, 42, was killed while six policemen and three other prisoners were seriously injured in the accident. The injured are undergoing medical treatment at Pyay general hospital. — *Aung Myint (Pantaung)*

Man shot and killed by police during traffic stop

A MAN was killed after he assaulted an officer at a police checkpoint near Laukkyay village, Mantong township, Shan State on Wednesday, according to police.

The police reported that they stopped and approached a suspicious motorcycle when the vehicle passenger suddenly attempted to take the approaching officer's firearm. Other officers at the scene opened fire on the suspect who was hit and succumbed to his injuries at the

scene.

The police found three explosive devices, 1000 Yuan, K193,000 and two mobile phones on him.

When interrogated, the motorcycle driver Aik San alias Kalar from Nar Awa Lay village claimed that his passenger was a member of the TNLA and that he had been hired to take the suspect to Mantong.

Police will file charges over the incident soon.— *Myawady*

Hpakant police officer charged with inappropriately brandishing firearm at town meeting

THE Police Information Department said yesterday that action has been taken against a police officer who acted inappropriately, brandishing and threatening people with his firearm at a meeting of townelders in Hmawpon village, Lone Khin village-tract in Hpakant

Township on Tuesday.

The police officer was identified as Sub-Inspector Soe Zaw Zaw of (16) Hsan Khar station who has been suspended pending disciplinary action after images of him threatening a meeting attendees with his firearm were circulat-

ed online, stirring up controversy, public complaint and a number of 'meme' jokes at the expense of the Myanmar Police Force.

According to an investigation, it has been found that the officer acted inappropriately. — *GNLM/Police Information*

Three dead, three missing after cargo vessel sinks near Taungup

A CARGO vessel carrying nineteen passengers sank on the Nat Kan river between Khaunglaungto and Ounkyaung villages on Wednesday morning, leaving three women dead.

"We have recovered the corpses of the three women and are looking for another three people," said U Hla Moe Oo from Taungup township.

The motor cargo vessel was



Local recovering the corpses from the river. PHOTO:MYAT WAI

being driven by its owner U Shwe Oho. The local township administration is planning to provide funds to the families of the three deceased.

A similar accident occurred in July in Ponnakyaung township and another occurred in August in Yathit Taung township.— *Myat Wai*

LOCAL Business

Merchants eye oil crops for export

MERCHANTS are preparing to deal in oil crops after the export ban on oil crops is relaxed. The merchants who are interested are those businessmen who are engaged in depot purchases and who store the oil crops, it is learnt from the depot owners in Bayintnaung.

The merchants are purchasing such items as mustard seeds, mustard oil, sunflower seeds, sunflower oil and sesame oil.

The various pulses play a vital role in export market but the price is on the decline in September, it is learnt. The decline in pea prices in July and August was attributed to the low demand from India's market. Currently, the prices are Ks1,460,000 per tonne of mung bean, Ks900,000 per tonne of green grams and Ks1.1million per tonne of pigeon peas, it is learnt from Bayintnaung depot.—*Mon Mon*

Jovago makes contact with hotels in central Myanmar

THE Jovago network, a hotel booking website, has linked with 30 hotels in central Myanmar to help facilitate the accommodations for pilgrims and travelers in Magwe, it is learnt from Jovago.net.

Jovago made contact with the hotels in central Myanmar in order to offer cheaper prices to travelers. The price per night ranges from Ks3,000 to Ks500,000. Jovago has linked with budget guesthouses as well as five-star hotels to offer a wide range of accommodations for its clients so that they can choose the accommodations as they wish.

Magwe, situated in central Myanmar, has

become one of the more popular destinations for tourists. Travellers can explore the traditional culture and customs of Myanmar in Magwe and then proceed to other popular sites in Pakkoku, Bagan and Mount Popa.

Jovago aims at providing facilities that make it easier to find accommodation for tourists as well as local travellers, said Mr.Matthieu Bauduin, the Business Development Manager for Jovago.

Jovago is making an effort to expand its network nationwide. The company regularly negotiates with hotels to be able to offer the cheapest rates.—*Mon Mon*

IFC to invest US\$10billion in Myanmar Awba Group

INTERNATIONAL Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, entered into an agreement to make an investment of US\$10billion in Myanmar Awba Group, it is learnt from a signing ceremony held on 6th September at Hotel Novotel, Yangon.

The investment provided by IFC will be spent on the Hmawbi Agricultural Input Complex, which will manufacture crop protection chemicals. The investment will ensure that the manufacturing processes will be eco-friendly with

good sanitary practices observed and in accordance with the environmental criteria set by the World Bank Group.

Among the crop protection products manufactured by the plant will be Suspension Concentrate-SC, a formulation that will be effective in protection from pests and insects, it is learnt.

This plant will create 500 jobs and the production by the plant is expected to be able to provide crop protection products for 3 million farming families.—*Ko Htet*



A boy walks outside the Yangon Stock Exchange. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Profit and loss statements of YSX listed companies to be released at end of fiscal year

THE companies approved to trade shares at the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) will have to release statements of profit and loss so that those who want to purchase their stocks can make intellectual investments, according to an announcement released by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar.

Currently, the three approved companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings and Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) are trading their stocks at YSX. Seven companies are listed to make trades at YSX.

The rise in stock trad-

ing is expected to reduce the country's inflation rate. Private companies are also making a concerted effort to enter YSX, said a businessman.

The prices of shares were Ks20,000 per unit of FMI and Ks43,000 per unit of MTSH at the end of August. The price of FMI shares

was Ks19,000 per unit whereas MTSH is Ks43,000 per unit on 8th September. On the same day, MCB shares fetched Ks9,400 per unit. MTSH shares are stable but the shares of FMI and MCB have had changes of Ks500-600, according to Yangon Stock Exchange website.—200

Money Order Service of Myanmar Post office to use electronic technology

MONEY Order Service of Myanmar Post office under the Ministry of transport and communications will turn to electronic technology.

The Myanmar postal service aims to offer its

Money Order Service Electronic system to 18 townships in 74 divisions and states. There are 1,385 post offices in Myanmar and among them, 780 post offices have money transferring

services, it is learnt from U Thaung Naing Soe, the manager of the Myanmar post office.

There are three types of money transferrals - manual, by fax (phone) and now

electronically (online). In 390 post offices, fax and mobile phones are available to the public for the Express Money Order Service (EMOS) system, added U Thaung Naing Soe.—200



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Asia leaders tiptoe around South China Sea tensions

VIENTIANE — Asian leaders played down tensions over the South China Sea in a carefully worded summit statement on Thursday, but even before it was issued Beijing voiced frustration with countries outside the region “interfering” in tussles over the strategic waterway.

The heads of 10 South-east Asian nations, as well as US President Barack Obama and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang among six other leaders, “reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, stability, security and freedom of navigation in and over-flight in the South China Sea”.

But the draft of a statement to be issued in Vientiane, Laos, tiptoed around the regional strains caused by competing claims to areas of the strategically important sea.

“Several leaders remained seriously concerned over recent developments in the South China Sea,” said the draft.

The statement, seen by Reuters, made no reference to a July ruling by a court in The Hague that declared illegal some of China’s artificial islands in the sea and invalidated its claims



(L to R) Thailand’s Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Brunei’s Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, US President Barack Obama, Viet Nam’s Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Laos Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and China’s Premier Li Keqiang pose for a photo before the East Asia Summit in Vientiane, Laos, on 8 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

to almost the entire waterway.

Obama said on Thursday the ruling had helped clarify maritime rights. “I recognise this raises tensions but I also look forward to discussing how we can constructively move forward together to lower

tensions,” he said at a summit meeting.

Officials said that talks on Wednesday between leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China’s Li had gone smoothly.

But in a statement later from China’s Foreign Min-

istry, Li was paraphrased as saying China was willing to work with Southeast Asian countries in “dispelling interference ... and properly handling the South China Sea issue”.

He did not elaborate, but such wording is typically used by Chinese lead-

ers to refer to not allowing countries from outside the region with no direct involvement in the dispute, like the United States, from getting involved.

China claims much of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of trade moves

annually. Taiwan and four ASEAN members — Viet Nam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei — also have claims, making it a hot spot of regional tension.

The other ASEAN nations are Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand. Leaders from Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the United States also attended the summit.

China has over the past year alarmed other claimants, and outside powers such as the United States and Japan, by re-claiming land on several disputed reefs through dredging, and building air fields and port facilities.

Shattering an illusion of cordiality at the summit in Laos on Wednesday, US ally the Philippines released photographs and a map showing what it said was an increased number of Chinese vessels near the disputed Scarborough Shoal, which China seized after a standoff in 2012.

Its defence ministry expressed “grave concern” that Chinese boats were preparing to build structures at the shoal.—*Reuters*

Japan PM urges ‘strict’ implementation of sanctions on North Korea

VIENTIANE — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Thursday that strong pressure from the international community was the only way to halt North Korea’s rocket and nuclear tests and that economic sanctions needed to be implemented “strictly”.

“We need to make them understand North Korea will be further isolated from the international community if they continue with nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches,” Abe told reporters in Vientiane, where he is attending several regional conferences.—*Reuters*



Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attends a news conference during the G20 Summit in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China, on 5 September, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan, US, South Korea hold video conference on North Korean missiles

SEOUL — Senior defence officials from Japan, the United States and South Korea held a video conference on Thursday to share information on North Korea’s launch of three ballistic missiles on Monday, South Korea’s Defence Ministry said in a statement.

“The three countries agreed to continue to closely cooperate and share information in order to respond to North Korea’s missile threats,” the

statement said.

They also “strongly condemned the missile launches as “a provocative act that had clearly violated UN Security Council resolutions,” it said.

The three officials stressed North Korea’s missile programme is “an element of serious threats to stability on the Korean Peninsula and the entire region.”

Koji Kano, director of the Defence Policy Bureau of the Japanese Defense

Ministry, took part in the conference, along with Park Chul Kyun, deputy head for international policy at the South Korean Defence Ministry and Christopher Johnston, director for Northeast Asia at US’ Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The missiles landed in the Sea of Japan after flying around 1,000 kilometres. They are believed to have been medium-range Rodong or short-range Scud types,

according to South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff.

According to the Japanese Defence Ministry, the missiles fell inside Japan’s exclusive economic zone, as did a ballistic missile launched by North Korea on 3 August.

North Korea’s launches of various types of missiles and artillery shells in recent months have drawn a flurry of condemnation from Japan, South Korea and the United States.—*Kyodo News*

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Duterte, Obama shake hands and chat after rift over insult

VIENTIANE — US President Barack Obama and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte shook hands and had a brief chat on Wednesday, officials said, easing a standoff after Duterte called Obama a “son of a bitch” ahead of a summit of Asian leaders in Laos.

The presidents of the two longtime allies were due to hold talks on Tuesday but the White House cancelled the meeting after Duterte’s insult.

“I’m very happy that it happened,” Philippines’ foreign minister, Perfecto Yasay, said of their short meeting.

“It all springs from the fact that the relationship between the Philippines and the United States is firm, very strong.”

Duterte had his outburst on Monday when he was defending his war on drugs that has killed at least 2,400 Filipinos.

Notorious for his tirades and for cursing during interviews and speeches, he later expressed regret for offending Obama.

The two men shook hands and chatted for about two minutes as they waited to take their seats at a gala dinner ahead of Thursday’s East Asia Summit, according to Yasay and several of Duterte’s aides.

Alan Cayetano, who was Duterte’s vice-presidential running mate in this year’s election, described the atmosphere



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte arrives at the ASEAN Summit family photo while US President Barack Obama chats with the Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah in Vientiane, Laos on 7 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

as “warm and cordial”, while a White House official said “the exchange consisted of pleasantries between the two”.

Tensions between the United States and the Philippines, its former colony, are unusual at high-level meetings.

The two countries are treaty allies and Washington has strongly backed Manila’s calls for Chi-

na to abide by a recent ruling over the South China Sea, which the Philippines won.

China is among the countries taking part in Thursday’s summit, which includes the 10 Association of South East Asian Nations member states and Japan, South Korea, Australia, India, Russia and the United States.

Philippines ambassador to Laos, Marciano Paynor, said the tiff with Obama was part of a learning curve for Duterte, who needed a chance to make the transition from being a city mayor to a head of state.

“He has to experience it,” he said. “If you don’t experience it, you don’t know how it’s done, you’ll be grappling.”—*Reuters*

Kansai airport workers get measles vaccination after outbreak

OSAKA — A measles vaccination drive began on Thursday for workers at Kansai International Airport in Osaka Prefecture after an outbreak there last month, the prefectural government said.

Subject to the shots at the airport are about 900 workers, including those in their 30s or younger who have yet to contract the disease and others who were never immunized against it.

About 300 of them will be immunized immediately during the first two days through Friday.

The rest will be vaccinated as soon as the prefectural government secures the necessary doses.

A number of people below 40 were never vaccinated against measles in their childhood and therefore lack antibodies for the virus.

At the airport, the main international gateway to Osaka and other western Japan areas, a total of 33 employees mainly in their 20s and 30s have been confirmed infected since last month.

Infections among doctors and paramedics earlier this month raised concerns over the spread of the virus.

A senior official at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases said last Friday that the virus is believed to have come from a traveller from abroad who passed through the airport, as measles has been eliminated from Japan.

—*Kyodo News*

Aust’n PM extends invitation for ASEAN leaders to attend summit in Canberra

CANBERRA — Australia’s Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has extended an invitation for the leaders of ASEAN nations to attend a leaders’ summit in Canberra in 2018, as Australia aims to strengthen ties with its regional neighbours.

Turnbull announced the summit in a statement on his website overnight, inviting leaders to Canberra to discuss a number of regional issues, such as the threat

of terrorism and future of trade between Australia and nations in Southeast Asia.

The Prime Minister said the summit would be the first opportunity for all ASEAN leaders to come together in Australia.

“A special ASEAN-Australia Leaders’ Summit in 2018 — bringing leaders of all South-East Asian nations to Australia together for the first time,” Turnbull said.

The PM had previously

talked about the need to form strong counter-terror links with neighbouring nations such as Indonesia, and he said the summit would serve to “bolster (Australia’s) strategic partnership” with ASEAN nations.

“In keeping with the two themes of today’s ASEAN-Australia Summit, a special summit in Australia would deepen our economic partnership through closer links between ASEAN and Aus-

tralian businesses and the private sector, and bolster our strategic partnership,” Turnbull said.

“We are proud to be ASEAN’s Strategic Partner; a substantial economic partner; an advocate of a peaceful, rules-based neighborhood; and a highly engaged participant in ASEAN-led regional architecture.” Turnbull said the summit would take place in Australia’s capital city Canberra in 2018.—*Xinhua*



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi hold talks in Vientiane, on 7 September 2016, on the sidelines of regional summit meetings. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Abe, Modi explore economic, counterterrorism cooperation

VIENTIANE — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi discussed on Wednesday potential avenues for economic cooperation, coordination in counterterrorism efforts and regional issues in their meeting on the sidelines of multilateral gatherings in Laos.

In their roughly 45-minute talks, Abe said he wants to “join hands with (Modi) in boldly pushing forward a ‘new Japan-India era,’” according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

The leaders exchanged viewpoints on economic cooperation and the promotion of personnel exchange, recognising the potential for cooperation between Jap-

anese technological capability and India’s young workforce and markets, the ministry said.

Abe expressed a wish to further enhance bilateral coordination on counterterrorism, and both leaders touched on the attack on a cafe in the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka in July, in which seven Japanese and one Indian national were among the hostages killed.

Abe explained Japan’s diplomatic strategy for promoting freedom and openness in the Indian and Pacific oceans, and Modi responded that he wants to cooperate with Japan in realising that vision, the ministry said.

Abe and Modi also discussed the importance of the rule

of law regarding the situation in the South China Sea, in an apparent reference to China’s expansionary activities in the waterway.

They affirmed their resolve to strengthen their cooperation toward peaceful dispute resolution based on international law.

Abe and Modi agreed on the importance of frank debate on regional issues at the East Asia Summit to be held in Laotian capital Vientiane on Thursday.

The EAS brings India and Japan together with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Australia, China, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the United States. —*Kyodo News*

Opinion

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Young but able

Kyaw Thura

FORMER UN chief Kofi Annan once expressed his stronger recognition for the importance of youth empowerment for development, saying that "any society that does not succeed in tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth will be left behind." True to his words, unemployment and underemployment, especially among young people, spell the twin problems of fighting poverty

and enhancing shared prosperity.

It is understandable that the fight against poverty is the toughest match for all policy makers and decision makers to play in transforming the country into a dynamic and vibrant economy. And that move can safely be interpreted as a history-changing initiative to bring the dynamics of youth employment through empowerment.

With social media penetrating into our everyday life, young people from different religious and social backgrounds have bigger dreams and aspirations to follow. They all need secure jobs to put their dreams into reality. In addition, they are willing to move to action by putting their skills and resources to the career of their choice. We have witnessed an awful nuisance longing for genuine

super heroes with the capacity to steer the country back on track in terms of development. To avoid the recurrence of such a similar fate in the future, the government should heighten the economic aspirations and resources of the younger generation by addressing the mismatches between education and expertise, which are leading causes that drive even educated young people out of work.

WITH efficient accessibility to the Internet and reasonably-priced mobile devices available on the market today, more and more Myanmar are using the social media. The ministries, government departments, businesses and people of all ages, genders and walks of life—politicians, law makers, service personnels, businesspersons, company employees, students, street vendors, taxi drivers, trishaw peddlers, and even the monks and clergies—are using the social media. Many are addicted to it and are using it incessantly. However, are they using it properly and beneficially?

According to the Wikipedia, the social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people, companies and other organizations to create, share or exchange informations, career interests, ideas and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. At present there are 209 social media websites, catering for a wide range of usages, available on the Internet. The most popular social media in the world, today, are the Facebook (Facebook messenger), Whats App, Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram, Baidu Tieba and Snapchat. Most of the Myanmar use the Facebook, though there are some who use other social media, but only a few.

As the social media afford interactions between individuals or as a group network, where informations, views, ideas, interests, pictures and videos can be shared and exchanged, it is becoming the most used on the Internet. By the look of things, the social media craze is here to stay, but it's regretful that most of our younger generations are not using it beneficially or properly, and the bad news is some are even abusing it.

Although I have had some basic training in the use of computer while in the service, I was out of touch for some years. When I came across terms like the Facebook, the Twitter and the Instagram and the likes, while watching

Are We Using the Social Media Beneficially?

Khin Maung Myint



TV or reading magazines or journals, I was intrigued to learn more about them so as to avoid becoming a technology dinosaur. Thus, I bought a cheap computer tablet and start honing my computer skills. At first I was overwhelmed by the advance in technology and the vast difference from the bulky outmoded desktop PCs I am somewhat familiar with. I encountered difficulty in getting myself accustomed to the latest computer technologies and the cyber language, as they had advanced in leaps and bounds.

The cyber slangs, such as: **LOL**, **Bae**, and many more were Greek to me. It took sometime for me to get familiar with them. However, after mastering those

I would like to humbly request my fellow netizens to abstain from abusing the social media and avoid hate comments and offensive languages.

slangs, I never used them because I think they seem childish or senseless and above all spoiled the English language. For example "**LOL**" stands for "**laugh out loud**" or "**lots of love**". Very confusing, and "**Bae**" is short for "**before anyone else**", but in Danish bae means **poo**; which is ridiculous.

My views may be wrong. However, I would like to state my opinion concerning the Myanmar cyber slangs used on the social media. Abbreviating the Myanmar words are unlike doing it with the English words, as they sound even more senseless than the English abbreviations. I deem it an abuse of the language.

However, this abuse of language is nothing compared to the foul and obscene languages seen on the Facebook. Now-a-days I rarely read the comments on the Facebook written in Myanmar, because of the dirty, foul, filthy, obscene, rude and abusive languages, imaginable, used by some. The preceding lines may sound redundant, but if there are some more

similar words I can think of, I wouldn't hesitate to use them. What these persons don't realize is, they are degrading themselves and revealing their up-brings and moral standards. Such shameful activities are causing disgrace to the people as a whole and hence to the country, too.

The worst of all are the hate comments, directed at particular race, religion, individual or political party posted on the Facebook webpage. Such activities could bring social unrests, affecting the unity, peace and tranquility. These could thrust the country into undesirable situations and even into chaos.

There are also some pornographic materials posted on the social media, though very rare. Thanks to some decent users who were quick to report them to the social media service providers, so that they were taken down before they went viral. I, myself, had reported a few times and the responses from the server were very prompt.

I would like to urge the authorities concerned to crack down on such users. Cyber Laws or Acts shouldn't only target the political activists, but should also be applicable to such scoundrels and social misfits on the Internet. Also, the users should report undesirable posts and comments to the service provider concerned, by describing clearly, in English, the nature and the meaning of the posts written in Myanmar language, so that they can understand and take immediate actions.

In conclusion, I would like to humbly request my fellow netizens to abstain from abusing the social media and avoid hate comments and offensive languages to redeem our prestige as a civilized and polite nation. If used properly the social media would prove to be very useful, informative, educative and provide wide range of knowledge, which are beneficial and assist in the progress of the individuals and the community.



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with former Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan, Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Commander-in-Chief meets former UN chief, urges caution on Rakhine issue

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met former United Nations Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan, who chairs the Advisory Committee for Rakhine State, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing urged the commission to take into consideration the history of the issue in their review and proceed with caution, pledging the army's help with the commission's mission. The tension over the Rakhine issue

is due to religious provocation rather than religion itself, the commander-in-chief said, stressing that the Rakhine people are very sensitive to the issue.

He attached importance to the inclusion of Rakhine nationals in finding a solution, calling for the need to take heed of citizenship, national solidarity and democratic rights. Kofi Annan expressed his gratitude for the insight into the history of the issue, reaffirming that his panel would only provide suggestions

after meetings with stakeholders and the two communities in the region.

The former UN chief promised his commission would undertake a comprehensive review of regional development apart from the issue of citizenship eligibility. He called for the continued citizenship scrutiny process as the law stands. He heard respective concerns from both communities during his tour of Rakhine State a few days ago. — Myanmar News Agency

MHT to upgrade licenses for tour guides with over three years experience

THE Ministry of Hotel and Tourism (MHT) is upgrading its tour guide license, which now can be used nationwide for those with over three years of experience in the tourism industry, it is learnt from U Tint Thwin, deputy director of MHT.

The tourist guides who have over three years experience in tourism and who pass an exam will be listed by the ministry of hotel and tourism and be issued

licenses which can be used across the country, it is learnt.

In addition, the ministry will support expert teachers who can provide guidance to those who will sit the exam. There will be two examination centers, one each in Yangon and Mandalay.

There are presently about 4,000 nationwide tourist guide licenses, and over 2,700 local licenses. Among the 2,700 tourist guides, those who have more

than three years experience can sit the exam and, if they pass the test satisfactorily, they will receive a tourist guide license that can be used across the country.

According to U Aung Tun, the chairman of the Myanmar tourist guides' association, arranging to upgrade tourist guide licenses in the tourism industry, aims to garner cooperation among tourist guide societies. — Kay Kay

Myanmar climbers to try to reach peak of Mt Phoneyinrazi in late November

MEMBERS of the University Hiking and Mountaineering Team plan to climb Mount Phoneyinrazi in Kachin State before the end of the year, according to the team's spokesperson.

Those mountaineers are now making preparations for scaling the ice-capped mountain, with plans to commence the new climbing programme in late November.

Located in Putao, the northernmost town in Kachin State, where Myanmar connects with India and China, Mt. Phoneyinrazi is 11,500 feet high. It is one of the more popular tourist attractions in Myanmar.

The famous Mt Hkakabo Razi and other snow-capped mountains are visible from Putao. The 5,900-meter high Mt Hkakaborazi is the highest in Southeast

Asia. The summit of the mountain was first reached by Japanese climber Takeshi Ozaki and Namar Johnson of Myanmar in 1996.

International visitors as well as climbers show great interest in observing the traditions and lifestyles of ethnic minorities and enjoy the landscapes, wildlife and plants in Kachin State, the birthplace of the Ayeyawady River. — 200

Myanmar's external trade reached \$11b over past five months

THE external trade value over the past five months reached over US\$11 billion but it has decreased by \$229.838 million compared with the same period last year, according to figures issued by the Ministry of Commerce.

The total value of external trade between 1 April and 2 September this fiscal year amounts to US\$11.268 billion, including \$4.8 billion from the export sector and \$6.4 billion from the import sector.

Myanmar has a trade deficit of nearly \$1.6 billion so far this year.

The country mainly imports industrial raw materials, personal goods, construction equipment, automobiles and capital goods from China, Thailand, Japan, India, Indonesia,

Germany, France and Hong Kong.

Resource-based products including natural gas, fish products, forest products and agricultural products have been sent by the country mainly to neighbouring countries.

Efforts are being made to promote the country's export sector by shipping new valued-added products from the manufacturing sector over the next five years, according to the second five-year National Development Plan between 2016-2017 and 2020-2021 fiscal years.

The trade department expects that the trade value of Myanmar with partner countries is likely to reach around US\$31 billion over the 2016-2017 fiscal year. — Kyu Kyu



Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo is welcomed by HE Mr Jong Ho Bom, Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Myanmar on his arrival at a reception to mark the 68th founding anniversary of the DPRK on 8th September, 2016, in Yangon.. PHOTO: MNA

Accommodation facilities for tourists grow to 1,371 nationwide

THE NUMBER of hotels and guest houses nationwide as of the end of August this year reached 1,371, with 53,716 rooms, according to official figures released by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

The ministry erased some restrictions on issuing licenses to investors in order to establish hotels and other development facilities across the nation with a goal of providing better services for both local and foreign visitors.

Licenses have been issued to tour operators, tour guides and related applicants by the ministry. By the end of last month, the ministry had granted a total of 2,263 licenses to tour operators, over 1,500 transport licenses and over 6,000 tour

guide licenses.

The country's tourism industry has a bright future, experts said. The sector receives increasingly greater interest from both local and international investors.

Since 2011, the country has seen a massive influx of tourists year on year. It hosted over 4.6 million foreign visitors last fiscal year. That figure increased by 52 per cent compared with 2014.

Tourist arrivals between April and at the end of July this year reached 2.45 million. The number is 4 per cent more than the same period last year.

The ministry estimates that international tourist arrivals in the country are likely to reach over 7 millions by 2020. — Ki Ki

TPP fate, Obama's aversion to force make Asia 'pivot' half-measured

VIENTIANE — With US President Barack Obama set to leave office in January after serving two four-year terms, security experts have generally appreciated his policy of a strategic “rebalance” to Asia as a way of countering the rise of China.

Citing Obama's decision to join the East Asia Summit in 2011 and regular participation by his secretaries of state, Hillary Clinton in his first term and John Kerry in the second term, in the ASEAN Regional Forum, an annual regional security meeting, they agree that his most significant legacy for Asia will be deeper and sustained engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

“In historical perspective, this is probably the most deliberate and sustained engagement of Southeast Asia since the Viet Nam War,” said Michael Green, senior vice president for Asia at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. This year alone, Obama hosted all 10 ASEAN leaders in California in February, visited Viet Nam in May and hosted Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the White House in August before traveling to Laos this week as the first sitting US president to visit the country. Next week, Obama will host Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's de-facto leader and democracy icon, in Washington.

“I think the Obama administration will deserve some rightful credit for reconnecting with Southeast Asia and opening up in a sustained way an engagement strategy,” Green said, while noting that ASEAN needed the United States and Japan, its principal Asian ally, as a counterbalance to an increasingly assertive China. However some argue the US rebalance, also dubbed “pivot,” to the world's fastest growing re-

gion is “half-measured,” given Obama's reluctance to use military leverage as part of diplomacy and uncertainties about the fate of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a pending Pacific free trade deal and a major pillar of the rebalance policy, amid rising populist forces in the US election cycle.

“I say ‘half-measured’ in a sense that it has articulated a primary interest in Asia, which I think is correct, but it has not been backed up with a lot of muscle,” said Henry Nau, a professor of international affairs at the George Washington University in Washington.

how far it could go by, for example, unilaterally declaring an air defense identification zone over the South China Sea and reclaiming Scarborough Shoal, which Manila claims as its territory.

“Mr. Obama has, more than any other president in recent history, taken the position that you can conduct diplomacy without much military leverage,” Nau said. “He keeps saying that we cannot address every problem as if it is a military problem, but he addresses every problem as if it isn't a military problem.”

Nau suggested that, whoever succeeds Obama

“I think the Obama administration will deserve some rightful credit for reconnecting with Southeast Asia and opening up in a sustained way an engagement strategy.”

Michael Green

Senior vice president for Asia at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies

“If China doesn't see us backing up a policy of rebalancing with real power, they are not going to pay any attention to us,” Nau said. “And to some extent, that seems to be happening in these island issues.”

He was referring to China's island construction and militarization of outposts in the South China Sea, parts or all of which are claimed by Beijing and its smaller neighbours such as the Philippines and Viet Nam, as well as its act of repeatedly sending official ships around a group of East China Sea islets in an attempt to undermine Japan's administration over them.

Obama's repeated warnings have done little to halt China's attempts to alter the status quo in the South and East China seas.

Beijing may further test Washington's will to see

after the 8 November presidential election, the next commander-in-chief needs to immediately reexamine the defence budget so the United States can project a stronger sea power in Asia to curb China's muscle-flexing in the South and East China seas.

Michael Auslin, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, also calls on White House hopefuls — Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee, and her Republican rival Donald Trump — to employ a tougher policy toward China.

“If the next president is unable to moderate China's behaviour and unwilling to risk upsetting relations with Beijing to send a stronger message, then Mr. Obama's legacy will be an ironic one as the president who made Asia a priority, only to have

squandered his country's position,” Auslin wrote in the Sept. 1 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*.

While Obama vows to push Congress to ratify the US-led TPP, a trade pact signed by 12 member nations, including Japan but not China, during the so-called lame duck session between the presidential election and his departure from office, his failure to ensure its passage would be a “huge blow” to US credibility and leadership, as White House officials acknowledge.

Apparently wary of a backlash among voters who appear to be riding a wave of protectionism, Clinton and Trump both oppose the TPP.

Calling the pact “a litmus test for US leadership” and “a demonstration of America's commitment to be a Pacific power,” Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser, said: “We would be stepping back from that leadership role, we would be ceding the region to countries like China, who do not set the same types of high standards for trade agreements, were we to not follow through the TPP.”

Brad Glosserman, executive director of the Pacific Forum CSIS, a Honolulu-based think tank, agreed and said that Asian governments actually consider the TPP as important as military action — if not more so — when they assess US commitment to the region.

“The opposition of both Clinton and Trump to TPP makes Chinese happy because they know the failure of that trade deal would be a huge blow to the US' reputation in the region and the prospects for the US playing a lead role in setting international and regional trade rules,” Glosserman said. “Any policy that would unravel or unsettle US alliances in Asia is good for China.”—*Kyodo News*

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU-Canada deal to share air travellers' data cannot enter into force — EU court adviser

BRUSSELS — An agreement between the European Union and Canada to share airline passenger data that they say is key to fighting terrorism cannot enter into force as currently drafted, an adviser to the top EU court said on Thursday.

“Certain provisions of the agreement envisaged, as currently drafted, are contrary to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,” Advocate General Mengozzi said in a non-binding opinion.—*Reuters*

Argentina detains terrorism suspect wanted in US

BUENOS AIRES — A Lebanese citizen wanted in the United States for suspected ties to terrorism was detained at Argentina's international airport on Wednesday, state news agency Telam said.

Khalil Mohamed El Sayed tried to enter Argentina with false Paraguayan documents and was flagged on an Interpol list, Telam said. It was not clear why El Sayed is a suspect. The US has an arrest order and wants to question him, according to Telam. The agency said El Sayed is also wanted in Brazil for suspected drug trafficking and arms sales.—*Reuters*

Israel strikes Syrian positions after shell lands in Golan — army

JERUSALEM — Israeli aircraft attacked targets in Syria on Thursday, for the second time in five days, after an errant mortar shell from fighting among factions in Syria struck the Golan Heights, the Israeli military said.

No casualties from the shellfire were reported and a statement by the military spokesman's office said “the Israeli air force targeted Syrian armed forces mortar launchers in the northern Syrian Golan Heights.” The area is close to where fighting in the Syrian civil war is taking place. Israel has responded similarly in the past when there has been an overspill of fire into the territory. The previous retaliation for errant fire took place on Sunday when Israeli aircraft struck Syrian positions after a number of shells landed on the Israeli-controlled Golan. Israel captured the Golan, a strategic plateau, from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed it in 1981 in a move that has not won international recognition.—*Reuters*

Small blast in Afghan capital during commemoration march

KABUL — An explosion went off in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Thursday as crowds gathered to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the death of Ahmad Shah Masoud, a leader of the fight against Soviet forces in the 1980s and an enemy of the Taliban in the 1990s.

The blast, which came at a time of heightened concern over tensions between ethnic groups in Afghanistan, was attributed to a small bomb attached to a bicycle, Kabul police chief Abdul Rahman Rahimi said.

He said there were no casualties, but some media reported two people were wounded.—*Reuters*



An armed French soldier patrols in front of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Second couple arrested after car with gas cylinders found in Paris: judicial source

PARIS — French police have arrested a second couple in connection with a car found carrying seven gas cylinders near Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris, a judicial official said on Thursday.

The couple were arrested on Wednesday evening and taken into cus-

tody. Further details were not immediately available.

A first couple, aged 34 and 29, were arrested on a motorway on Tuesday in southern France also in connection with the incident on Saturday and remain in custody.

There was no detonating device present in

the car, found on a Seine riverside stretch called the Quai de Montebello, metres from Notre-Dame, one of Paris's most popular attractions. Documents with writing in Arabic were also found in the car.

More than 200 people have been killed in at-

tacks by militant Islamists in France over the past 18 months.

France remains on maximum alert after calls by the Islamic State group for followers to attack the country, which is taking part in bombing the militant group's bases in Iraq and Syria.—*Reuters*

US, Russia 'not there yet' on Syria deal — State Department

WASHINGTON — The United States and Russia have not reached a ceasefire deal for Syria, the US State Department said on Wednesday, saying it could not confirm Moscow's announcement that the US and Russian foreign ministers would meet in Geneva on Thursday.

"We're not there yet," State Department spokesman Mark Toner told a briefing after US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke by phone for 45 minutes.

"The secretary remains committed to continuing efforts to try and resolve the outstanding issues in order to reach an arrangement on Syria ... but we won't agree to an arrangement that does not meet our core objectives," Toner said.

"We have not been able to reach a clear understanding on a way forward," Toner said, adding: "I can't say there is a big hope for success, we're just continuing to work at it." Kerry and Lavrov have met twice in two weeks but failed to reach an understanding on how to proceed. After talks on the sidelines of the G20 leaders' summit in Hangzhou, China last week, the United States accused Russia of pulling back on issues that Washington thought had been resolved.

Kerry has long expressed frustration with the lack of progress on



US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov attend a news conference after a meeting on Syria in Geneva, Switzerland, on 26 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Syria and faced criticism for trying to make a deal with Russia, an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, whom US President Barack Obama has said "must go". But Kerry sees the talks as an opportunity to end the five-year Syrian war, which has claimed an estimated 400,000 lives and driven tens of thousands of refugees into Europe.

Speaking in Hangzhou, Obama said the talks had been complicated by "gaps of trust" between Washington and Moscow, which

back opposite sides in the war.

Russian and American experts have worked since July on details to halt the violence in areas where moderate opposition groups, supported by the United States and Gulf allies, and Russian-backed Syrian government forces have been battling.

Those efforts were complicated by a significant offensive in the southern part of the divided city of Aleppo where al-Qaeda-linked groups had become more intermin-

gled with opposition fighters. Russia is insisting that opposition forces be separated from the militants.

"A lot of the sticking points focus around Aleppo, around Nusra, around delineating between where Nusra is and the opposition is, and around ... the next steps and how we get to a nationwide cessation of hostilities," a senior State Department official told reporters.

Washington wants Syria's air force grounded, leaving air strikes to US and Russian jets that would

focus on targeting Islamic State and other groups that were part of any ceasefire. An agreement hinges on Russia using its influence over Assad, and for Gulf states to convince opposition groups to take part.

Kerry's proposal for military cooperation with Russia in Syria faces strong pushback from US defence and intelligence officials who argued that Moscow cannot be trusted.

Speaking in Oxford, England, on Wednesday, US Defence Secretary Ash Carter accused Moscow of aggressive behaviour aimed at eroding the international order.

While Carter's remarks followed hacking attacks on Democratic Party organisations in the lead-up to the 8 November US election, his comments appeared to also reflect diverging policies in Syria. But Syria's main opposition group, the High Negotiations Committee, said on Wednesday it would reject any deal struck by Russia and the United States that was very different from its own proposed transition group.

Riyad Hijab, the group's general coordinator, presented a political transition plan at a meeting in London. The US-Russia proposal being discussed would make way for a political transition but does not elaborate on Assad's future. —Reuters

Iraq militia fighters join battle for Syria's Aleppo

BEIRUT/BAGHDAD — An Iraqi Shi'ite militia said on Wednesday it had dispatched more than 1,000 fighters to the frontline in neighbouring Syria, escalating foreign involvement in the battle for Aleppo, the biggest prize in five years of relentless civil war.

New footage emerged of civilians choking in the aftermath of an apparent attack with poison chlorine gas on an opposition-held district as the battle for Syria's biggest city approaches what could be a decisive phase.

Aleppo has been divided for years into government and rebel sectors, but President Bashar al-Assad's army has put the opposition areas under siege and now hopes to capture the whole city in what would be a devastating blow to his enemies.

Government forces are backed by Russian air power and battle-hardened Lebanese and Iraqi Shi'ite militia fighters under the apparent oversight of an Iranian general.

The arrival of reinforcements from Iraq, where Shi'ite militia are fighting their own war against the Islamic State group, shows how the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts have leapt borders, to become a broad sectarian war across the Middle

East.

Hashim al-Moussawi, a spokesman for the Iraqi Shi'ite militia Harakat al-Nujab, said its fighters would reinforce areas captured from the rebels in southern Aleppo.

The militia's Twitter account showed pictures of its fighters at the Syrian front with Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of foreign operations for the elite Revolutionary Guards, who has led operations by Tehran's allies in both Syria and Iraq. Rebel commanders said they are preparing to launch their own counter-offensive aimed at breaking the siege of the city, which was reimposed in recent days following weeks of intense fighting around a military complex. Rebels lost the complex of military colleges to pro-government forces on Sunday near the Ramousah area of southwestern Aleppo, where they had opened a way into the city.

Five years after the multi-sided war began, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and 11 million — half of Syria's pre-war population — displaced. But there is little sign that any party is poised for victory or can restore stability, and foreign powers are becoming more involved. —Reuters

Turkey jails businessmen, orders military officers detained — media report

ISTANBUL — Turkey jailed 16 businessmen pending trial on Thursday and issued arrest warrants for dozens of military officers over alleged links to the US-based cleric blamed by Ankara for July's attempted coup, Turkish media said.

Authorities have already detained tens of thousands of people over links to the cleric, Fethullah Gulen, who denies any involvement in the failed putsch. The crackdown has alarmed Western allies and rights groups who fear a witch hunt.

Turkish officials have rejected concern that their actions are too heavy-handed, pointing to the gravity of the coup plot. Rogue soldiers commandeered fighter jets and tanks and attacked parliament in the failed putsch, killing more than 240 people. Among those in custody was Faruk Gullu, owner of a chain of shops selling baklava, a traditional Turkish pastry. He is accused of belonging to what Ankara terms the "Gülenist Terrorist Organisation" (FETO), state-run Anadolu Agency said.

The Istanbul court was continuing to question 21 more businessmen, including Gullu's brother Nejat, who runs a rival chain of baklava shops, and leading clothing maker Omer Faruk Kavurmaci, the agency said. They were among 80 suspects detained by police three weeks ago as part of the investigation. Of that number, 43 have been released subject to judicial monitor-



A flag with the picture of Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan is seen during the Democracy and Martyrs Rally. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing, meaning they could still face prosecution.

Separately, Istanbul prosecutors issued detention orders for six generals, 43 other officers and some civilians in a police operation extending across 15 provinces, Anadolu reported.

Four suspects have been detained so far, the agency said. A day earlier, police detained three journalists, a politician and a pollster and issued arrest warrants for another 105 people over suspected links to Gulen.

Opposition politicians said the latest wave of arrests may target government critics with no clear links to the religious movement led by Gulen, whom Turkey wants extradited.

Several thousand soldiers have been expelled from the army

and more than 100,000 people, including civil servants, bureaucrats, teachers, soldiers and journalists, have lost their jobs for alleged links with Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the US state of Pennsylvania since 1999.

President Tayyip Erdogan addressed concern about the handling of the purge in comments published on Wednesday, acknowledging the wrong people may sometimes be targeted and that media speculation about those involved may be misleading.

"They make comments (on TV) accusing people who have nothing to do with this business. But that person is stuck with that label. Such things are not right," he told reporters, according to *Hurriyet* newspaper. —Reuters

Venezuela's Capriles says blocked at airport by armed gang

CARACAS — Venezuelan opposition leader and two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles said hooded and armed pro-government gang had surrounded the airport of Margarita island after he landed on Wednesday evening to prevent him and others on the flight leaving.

Using social media, Capriles posted videos of chaotic scenes, in which people appeared to be banging on the doors and windows of the airport, adding he was stuck in the baggage area.

Capriles pinned the

blame on President Nicolas Maduro, whom he is pushing to remove in through a referendum this year.

"You coward, Maduro. You sent an armed gang to Margarita airport for me!" he wrote on Twitter, saying he had been blocked at the airport for three hours.

On his weekly TV show, the Venezuelan government's second most powerful figure Diosdado Cabello laughed off Capriles' suggestion that Maduro was to blame.

"If he carries on like this, he'll end up hearing voices," said Cabello.

Reuters was unable to verify the videos, and the government did not immediately respond to a request for a comment. Capriles began publishing tweets about the incident at 8.30 pm (0030 GMT). Just after 11 pm (0300 GMT), he said that other people at the airport had been allowed to leave.

Tensions are running high in crisis-struck Venezuela after a huge opposition march earlier this month seeking Maduro's removal and detentions of opposition supporters. Maduro, whose popularity has sunk, himself was embarrassed on the is-

land on Friday when scores of people jeered him and chased him down the street banging pots and pans.

More than 30 people were briefly detained, according to activists. One prominent journalist, who helped publicize the events, was charged on Monday with money laundering and remains behind bars.

Margarita, once a major tourist draw, but now crumbling as Venezuela suffers a major economic crisis, will host foreign dignitaries at a summit for the Non-Aligned Movement next week. Last Thursday, hundreds of thou-



Venezuelan opposition leader Henrique Capriles speaks during a news conference in Lima, Peru, on 11 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

sands of people took to the streets of Caracas to protest against Maduro, hoping to speed up a referendum to oust the president.

Protests organised for Wednesday were far smaller, but opposition leaders reported isolated incidents of

government intimidation.

Earlier on Wednesday, national assembly head Henry Ramos said on Twitter he and the head of the opposition coalition were followed by intelligence agents after a joint press conference.—*Reuters*

ACT partners with test-prep firms despite signs of cheating in Asia

LONDON/SHANGHAI/SEOUL — Standardized testing giant ACT Inc continues to partner with Asian test-preparation operators, despite widespread cheating at overseas education centres it licenses.

The maker of America's most popular college entrance exam approved South Korea's Seoul Scholars International school to administer the ACT test this year, Reuters found, even though the school is owned by a company that offers test-preparation services. That company's test-prep centre says on one of its websites that its students achieve "astonishing" increases in their ACT scores.

In the past year, ACT Inc has also licensed a Chinese company to operate an "ACT Club" to promote the test in China. Reuters found that the club offers ACT test-prep classes. And the website of the company that licensed the club



A teacher looks back at family members waiting outside a high school during the national college entrance exam in Wuhan, Hubei province, on 7 June 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

makes this pledge to clients: "100% admission to famous overseas universities, or your money back."

According to its website, ACT Club has an exclusive arrangement with the University of Macau to begin offering students the ACT exam next month. The

club and the university declined to answer questions about their relationship.

ACT officials said in June that centres where the exam is given are not allowed to offer commercial test-preparation services. Doing so could give the operators of cram schools an

unparalleled ability to help their clients by showing them the test ahead of time.

The next administration of the ACT is scheduled this Saturday.

ACT Inc spokesman Ed Colby declined to explain why the Iowa-based not-for-profit is allowing

the South Korean school to offer the ACT, given the school's corporate ties to a test-prep centre.

Colby said ACT Club and its parent company, Beijing EduGlobal Development Co Ltd, "are forbidden to be involved in administration of the ACT test." Colby did not respond to questions about the club's connection to the University of Macau and plans to offer the ACT there next month.

In recent years, the ACT has grown in popularity overseas as its rival, the College Board, has struggled to protect its own test, the SAT. Both of the American testing organisations say they face international fraud rings, based in East Asia, that are intent on compromising their respective exams. The ACT and SAT are used by thousands of US colleges to help select from among millions of student applicants.

In June, a leaked test forced ACT Inc to cancel sittings for its exam in Hong Kong and South Korea. Reuters reported in July that

ACT's security unit repeatedly recommended tighter safeguards overseas before the breach but that ACT executives rejected the recommendations.

That unit, composed of about a dozen people based at ACT's Iowa City, Iowa, headquarters, handles security for thousands of test centres in 177 countries. This month, it is laying off its head of security.

Reuters also detailed cheating in the ACT-owned Global Assessment Certificate programme.

The programme offers college preparation classes, has about 5,000 students and operates in about 200 ACT-licensed education centres, mostly in China and other parts of Asia.—*Reuters*

INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER (4/2016) [TENDER NO. MPPE/HSD/T/2 (2016-2017)]

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise, Ministry of Electricity and Energy for the supply of High Speed Diesel (423,000 ± 10% Barrels)
2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 26-9-2016, 12:00 Hrs
3. Tender Opening Date & Time - 26-9-2016, 13:00 Hrs
4. Delivery Time - November 2016 to January 2017
5. Tender documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during our office hours commencing 8-9-2016 on payment of Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyats 100,000.) per set.
6. Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director
Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
No (6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

Contact Phone No.
067-411487/411486/411280

Mountaineer, 68, to lead young climbers to challenge Himalayas again

KOBE — Japanese mountaineer Tsuneo Shigehiro will depart Japan on Friday to climb the Himalayas, 21 years after he last climbed the mountain range, this time leading a team of nine people with an aim to inherit the spirit of mountaineering to the next generation.

The 68-year-old Shigehiro plans to start trekking from the 6,209-metre Nangamari II, an unclimbed peak in northeastern Nepal, to the 6,547-metre Nangamari I, which are situated

on the world's third-highest mountain Kanchenjunga.

If his team, including three people in their 20s, accomplishes the goal, they would set a world-first in traversing the route.

"I hope to transfer my know-how and tactics to them," he said, referring particularly to young members of his team.

Shigehiro, a resident of Kobe, western Japan, became in 1980 the first person ever to successfully climb 8,848-metre Mt. Ev-

erest by passing through the North Face.

He climbed the world's second-highest 8,611-metre K2 in 1977, which made him the first Japanese to reach the K2 summit by trekking through the route of the Abruzzi Spur.

It was in 1995 that Shigehiro last climbed a Himalayan mountain when he scaled the world's fifth-highest 8,463-metre Makalu. The team was selected from people with various backgrounds such as a

student, doctor and former company employee. "I want it (the climbing) to become a trigger cause for the crew members to have a dream of reaching to a higher goal. If they work hard and get a result, it will make them challenge multiple times, and will also upgrade the techniques," he said. "The mountains show immensely different appearance. I want to see the Himalayas again with these eyes, after a period of 21 years," he said.—*Kyodo News*

North Dakota pipeline fight gives spark to Native American activism

NON BALL (N.D.)/ WASHINGTON — A Native American tribe’s efforts to halt construction of a crude oil pipeline in North Dakota have swelled into a movement, drawing international attention and the support of movie stars and social media, and making a major oil company blink.

While the tribe’s lawyers work to persuade a federal judge to withdraw permits for the pipeline in a ruling expected on Friday, thousands of protesters gathered at campgrounds near Standing Rock Sioux Tribe lands.

“This is a new beginning, not just for our tribe, but for all tribes in this country,” said Standing Rock Sioux spokesman Ron His Horse is Thunder, one of the leaders hoping for a rebirth of Native American activism beyond the pipeline battle.

Representatives of 200 tribes and environmentalists have set up camp in the rolling hills near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannon Ball rivers in sight of the proposed pipeline route.

They say the planned pipeline, near but not on tribal land, runs through a

sacred burial ground and could leak, polluting nearby rivers and poisoning the tribe’s water source.

The 1,100 mile (1,770 km), \$3.7 billion Dakota Access pipeline would carry oil from just north of the tribe’s land in North Dakota to Illinois, where it would hook up to an existing pipeline and route crude directly to refineries in the US Gulf Coast.

Protesters have included actress Shailene Woodley and Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein, who authorities say is part of a group under investigation for illegally spray-painting construction equipment at the site.

“Our indigenous people have been warning for 500 years that the destruction of Mother Earth is going to come back and it’s going to harm us,” said David Archambault, tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux. “Now our voices are getting louder.”

On Tuesday, US Judge James Boasberg granted in part the tribe’s request for a temporary restraining order to stop the project, and said he would decide by Friday whether to grant the larger challenge to the pipeline, which would re-



Vandee Khalsa (L),Tatanka Skawin SwiftBird (C) and Winona Kasto prepare a traditional buffalo soup for protesters. PHOTO: REUTERS

quire the US Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw permits.

Protesters were disappointed that the judge did not shut down construction altogether, but savored a small win when the group of companies building the pipeline, led by Dal-

las-based Energy Transfer Partners through its Dakota Access subsidiary, agreed to stop some work until the final ruling.

The pipeline was fast-tracked by the US Army Corps of Engineers earlier this year, but the project has been dogged by pro-

tests since April.

It was envisioned as a safer way to transport highly flammable oil extracted from the Bakken Shale formation in North Dakota, Montana and parts of Canada than on trains.

In June, a Union Pacific train carrying crude

oil derailed and burst into flames in Oregon, forcing the evacuation of a school and the closure of a highway. In 2013, a runaway train in Canada crashed, killing 47 people and destroying buildings in the Quebec town of Lac-Mégantic.—Reuters

Australia awards funding for solar plants, set to triple capacity

MELBOURNE — The Australian government will help fund a dozen large-scale solar projects worth A\$1 billion (\$770 million), as it looks to boost the use of clean power in a coal-rich country, which is one of the world’s biggest carbon emitters per head.

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) said on Thursday the projects would triple Australia’s large-scale solar capacity to 720 megawatts, and deliver a tenth of the new capacity needed to meet its 2020 renewable energy target.

The government will provide A\$92 million for 12 projects, which includes three proposals from private French firm Neoen SA, and one each from Thailand’s Ratchaburi Electricity Generating Holding and Infigen Energy.

Australia wants to double its large-scale renewable energy generation to 33,000 gigawatt hours by 2020, which means by then solar, wind and hydroelectricity would have to make up nearly a quarter of the coun-

try’s power generation.

The government’s tenders to back solar projects have helped build momentum in the industry and forced companies to become more competitive, which will help push the sector closer to being commercially viable, ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said.

“We aren’t quite there yet, but the commercial viability of large-scale solar in Australia is tantalisingly close and the question is now ‘how soon’ rather than ‘if’ or ‘how long’,” he said in a speech, announcing the winning bids.

As evidence of the improving competitiveness, ARENA said early large-scale solar plants needed A\$1.60 per watt in government funding, but funding for the 12 new projects has dropped to just 19 cents per watt in just three years.

The biggest plant to be offered funding was a 105 MW project, set to be Australia’s largest solar farm, which Origin Energy Ltd plans to start building near its gas-fired Darling Downs

power station in the state of Queensland in 2017.

“Origin’s substantial gas-fired generation portfolio will help to balance out the intermittent nature of renewable generation,” Origin’s Energy Markets chief executive Frank Calabria said in a statement.

Australia has the highest uptake of rooftop solar photovoltaics (solar PV) but lags behind other countries in the construction of large-scale solar farms, with 240 megawatts of capacity built so far, due to higher costs.

The country is on track to cut carbon emissions by 13 per cent by 2020 from 2005 levels, however, the industry and green groups say it will have to step up the pace of solar and wind power growth to meet the government’s renewable energy target.

ARENA, which faces a A\$1.3 billion funding cut under the conservative government’s latest budget plan, is helping fund trials of battery storage, which will be key to making solar and wind power more reliable.—Reuters

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (11 / 2016)

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-039(16-17)	Sucker Rods and Pony Rods (17) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-040(16-17)	Pipe Fittings (13) Items	US\$
(3)	IFB-041(16-17)	Working Barrels, Working Valves and Standing valves (9) Items	US\$
(4)	IFB-042(16-17)	Spares for Progressing Cavity Pump (4)Items	US\$
(5)	IFB-043(16-17)	Insert Pumps (26) Items	US\$
(6)	IFB-044(16-17)	“SP” Sand Pump (2) Items	US\$
(7)	IFB-045(16-17)	Electrical Spares for ZJ 70L Rigs (19) Items	US\$
(8)	IFB-046(16-17)	Spares for Mitsubishi S6N Engine (36)Items	US\$
(9)	IFB-047(16-17)	1 1/2” Pitch Five Layer Roller Chain (2) Items	US\$
(10)	IFB-048(16-17)	Spares for QY 50K Mobile Crane (5) Items	US\$
(11)	IFB-049(16-17)	Spares for Grove Mobile Crane (16) Items	US\$
(12)	IFB-050(16-17)	Spares for Dongfeng Nissan Tractor (43) Items	US\$
(13)	IFB-051(16-17)	Spares for Dongfeng Nissan Tractor (21) Items	US\$
(14)	IFB-052(16-17)	Spares For Pressure Regulating System (10) Items	US\$
(15)	IFB-053(16-17)	Spares For Sino Truck (20-Ton Long Body) (29) Items	US\$
(16)	IFB-054(16-17)	Spares For GM 8V-71 Engine Ex Cementing Unit (22) Items	US\$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 29-9-2016, 16:30 Hr
Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 5TH September, 2016 at the Finance Department , Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Madonna, Guy Ritchie settle child custody dispute: court official

NEW YORK — Singer Madonna and her ex-husband, director Guy Ritchie, have settled a custody dispute over their 16-year-old son Rocco, a court official in New York said on Wednesday.

It was not immediately announced with which parent the teenager would live.

Madonna, 58, and Ritchie, 47, have been in a legal battle over their son since December, when the teenager ignored a court order to fly back from Ritchie's London home to live with his mother in New York.

The "Material Girl" singer, who concluded her worldwide "Rebel Heart" tour in March, and Ritchie, director of 2009 film "Sherlock Holmes," married in 2000. After they divorced in 2008, they agreed that Rocco would live with Madonna.

In March, a New York

judge and a British judge both separately urged the former spouses to find an amicable resolution for Rocco's sake.

Lucian Chalfen, a spokesman for the New York State court system, confirmed the case was officially settled on Wednesday but did not immediately provide further information.

Details of the settlement also were not revealed in online court records. Attorneys for Ritchie did not immediately return calls for comment and a representative for Madonna's lawyers said they do not comment on cases involving children.

Madonna and Ritchie also have an adopted son who was born in Malawi.

Ritchie is now married to British model Jacqui Ainsley, with whom he has three children.—Reuters



US pop star Madonna looks at her daughter Lourdes as she holds her adopted Malawian child Mercy James in 2010. PHOTO: REUTERS

Summer romance ends for Taylor Swift and Tom Hiddleston

LOS ANGELES — After spawning the hybrid name "Hiddle-swift," pop singer Taylor Swift and British actor Tom Hiddleston have called it quits, according to numerous media reports.

The three-month relationship was sparked shortly after

Swift and Scottish singer and DJ Calvin Harris split.

Representatives for Swift and Hiddleston, whose films include "I Saw the Light" and "The Avengers," did not return requests for comment.—Reuters



US singer Taylor Swift and British actor Tom Hiddleston arrive at Gold Coast airport in Australia, on 8 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



Drake presents Rihanna with the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award during the 2016 MTV Video Music Awards in New York, US, on 28 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Arrest made in \$3 million jewellery theft from rapper Drake's tour bus

PHOENIX — An Arizona stagehand was arrested on Wednesday on suspicion of stealing about \$3 million in jewellery from a bus used by Grammy-winning rapper Drake on his latest concert tour, Phoenix police said.

The suspect, identified as 21-year-old Travion King, snatched the briefcase after boarding the bus at about 10 pm on Tuesday at the Talking Stick Arena in Phoenix, police spokesman Vince Lewis said.

King has done unspecified contract work with local entertainment venues in the past, but was not known to be employed for work for that particular show,

Lewis added.

The bus was being used for a Phoenix show featuring Drake and his fellow rapper Future. It was apparently unoccupied at the time and the jewellery did not belong to Drake, according to Lewis. Drake and Future were appearing in the city's downtown as part of the "Summer Sixteen Tour," which began in July, according to the event website. It was scheduled to resume on Wednesday in Los Angeles.

A representative for Drake declined to comment on the case on Wednesday.

King was being held at a Maricopa County jail, Lewis said.

He was first arrested around 3 am in a separate matter by Arizona State University Police in Tempe, a Phoenix suburb, on suspicion of trespassing after officers found him in a dormitory with a bag that held the stolen jewellery, Lewis said.

Then, just before police released him on Wednesday afternoon, detectives investigating the jewellery theft learned he was being held at the jail and arrested him on suspicion of burglary, Lewis said.

Portions of King's activity were captured by arena surveillance cameras, Lewis said. Officers are working with the victim to account for the items reported stolen, Lewis said.—Reuters

Tom Hanks explores the drama and trauma of being a hero in 'Sully'

LOS ANGELES — When a US Airways pilot landed a damaged plane in the Hudson River in the middle of winter, saving all 155 people on board, he was immediately hailed a hero - but even heroes can be crumbling on the inside.

"Sully," directed by Clint Eastwood and out in theaters on Friday, follows the immediate aftermath of the extraordinary events on 15 January 2009 that saw Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger land the plane on the Hudson after the Airbus A320-214's two engines were destroyed by a flock of birds.

Following the landing, Sully, played by Tom Hanks, and his co-pilot Jeff Skiles (Aaron Eckhart) faced a lengthy National Transportation Safety Board investigation, which tried to determine whether Sully and Skiles had made an error and thus, put both their long-standing reputa-



Actor Aaron Eckhart, Captain Chesley 'Sully' Sullenberger, director Clint Eastwood, and actor Tom Hanks. PHOTO: REUTERS

tions at risk. The film spotlights the post-traumatic stress disorder that Sully faces as the world around him hails him as a hero. He struggles through vivid nightmares reliving different versions of the event where the plane crashes into New York buildings, an image that brings to mind the tragedy of 9/11.

While Sullenberger's actions were extraordinary, Hanks told Reuters that the captain's mental anguish throughout the hearing was "a human experience that a lot of people find relatable, because all of us at some point have been woken up by a dream that has bothered us." —Reuters

Japan's half-Indian Miss World contestant a challenge to its self-image

TOKYO — Priyanka Yoshikawa says she hopes that being crowned Miss World Japan will spur greater acceptance in her homeland of people with parents from different ethnic backgrounds, such as herself.

With a Japanese mother and an Indian father, Yoshikawa, 22, offers the latest challenge to Japan's self-image as a racially homogeneous nation, after she was selected on Monday to represent the country in the Miss World contest.

"I have a responsibility," said Yoshikawa. "I have to make things happen because I made a difference, being crowned as a mix."

She joins a wave of prominent "hafu", as

many Japanese call those with parents from different ethnic backgrounds, among them Mashu Baker, who won a gold medal in judo at the just-concluded Rio Olympics, and Asuka Cambridge, who anchored the silver medal-winning men's 4x100 metres relay team.

Some children of mixed ethnicity in Japanese schools have been bullied because they look different.

Other "hafu" have won fame in entertainment, but may yet not be regarded as genuine Japanese.

Yoshikawa is the second Japanese of mixed ethnicity to win a beauty contest in as many years.

Last year, Ariana Miyamoto, whose father is African-American, was

chosen as Japan's representative to the Miss Universe contest, a victory that Yoshikawa said had inspired her to enter for Miss World.

Miyamoto's win sparked a social media backlash, but the response to Yoshikawa has been more nuanced.

"Miss Japan is 'haafu'. I'm so happy!" wrote one social media commentator. Others said the two mixed-race choices showed Japan was more accepting of ethnic diversity.

Some were puzzled or critical. Miss Japan should "look good in kimono," said one person in a comment on Yahoo. Another said, "She's not bad, but wasn't there a pure Japanese to represent Japan?"

Such reactions reflect

a traditional mindset that is starting to change, said Yoshikawa, whose height of 1.76 m (5 ft 8 inches), exceeds that of the average Japanese woman.

"We've been told how Japanese look," she added. "How our faces are. We have to be pale, or the Asian look. But things change."

It's a small island, but we have a lot of people from other countries and we have a lot more 'hafus' in every single year."

International marriages are increasing in Japan, forming 3.3 per cent of the total in 2013, government figures show, four times those in 1980.

Mixed-race children accounted for 1.9 per cent of 2013 births. —Reuters



Priyanka Yoshikawa, winner of Miss World Japan 2016, poses for a photographer as she chooses a dress which she is going to wear in the Miss World competition, at a designer's atelier in Tokyo, Japan, on 7 September, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

'You Say You Want a Revolution?' 1960s exhibition opens in London

LONDON — If, as The Beatles sang, you say you want a revolution, a new major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London may have one for you.

The exhibition, titled "You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966-1970", explores the era-defining impact of the period on modern life, touching on music, civil rights, consumerism, multiculturalism and more.

The programme "investigates the upheaval, the explosive sense of freedom, and the legal changes that took place resulting in a fundamental shift in the

mindset of the Western World from 1966-1970," the museum said. "The years 1966-1970, 5 years, 1,828 days, were a real key part of the creation of the modern world," Geoffrey Marsh, co-creator of the exhibition, told Reuters.

"It seemed an interesting time to go back and look at this period because in lots of ways it has a huge impact on today," he added.

The exhibition includes more than 350 objects, encompassing photography, posters, music, film, fashion, artifacts, design and performance. The show features the space suit worn by William Anders, the

former NASA astronaut; a moon rock on loan from the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the suits worn by Beatles John Lennon and George Harrison on the cover of the Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album; clothes worn by Twiggy, the sixties model and style icon; and shards from rockers Jimi Hendrix's guitar.

"There's this extraordinary sense of freedom and the wish for change, and I think what we're trying to capture in this exhibition is there wasn't just one revolution, there were literally hundreds of revolutions," Marsh said. The exhibi-

tion focuses on particular places and events, like Carnaby Street in London, the Woodstock Festival of 1969 and alternative communities on the US West Coast.

"The sixties was genuinely a revolutionary period. You hope that people are inspired to try and have the kind of impact on society today," said Joe Boyd, a music producer who played a crucial role in the careers of rock group Pink Floyd. "But, you know, we can only hope."

The exhibition will be open to the public until 26 February, 2017. —Reuters

International contemporary dance festival to be held in Viet Nam

HANOI — The sixth edition of the international dance festival "Europe meets Asia in contemporary dance" will take place in Viet Nam's capital Hanoi and southern Ho Chi Minh City on 24-27 September.

International dancers from Germany, France, Israel, Japan, Austria, and Viet Nam will perform contemporary dances in a variety

of styles with breathtaking choreography, light and media installations, Viet Nam's state-run news agency VNA quoted the organiser as saying on Wednesday.

The event will help promote contemporary dance in Viet Nam and allow artists to exchange and share experiences, said the Goethe Institute, the festival's organiser. —Xinhua

Entertainment Channel

(9-9-2016, Friday)

<p>05 : 30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather Report <p>05 : 35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Drama Series <p>6 : 15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Drama Series <p>06 : 50 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRTV Entertainment Music <p>07 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live: Khit Thit Akari Art Show <p>00 : 05 Am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRTV Entertainment Music 	<p>00 : 15 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premier League (Review) <p>01 : 10 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Drama Series <p>01 : 50 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Drama Series <p>02 : 30 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRTV Entertainment Music <p>02 : 35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Video <p>04 : 35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Video
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(06:00 Am ~ 12:00 Pm) Transmission (Repeat - 00:00 Am ~ 06:00 Am)
(12:00 Pm ~ 06:00 Pm) Transmission (Repeat - 00:00 Am ~ 06:00 Am)

From 9-9-2016 (Friday) 6:00 pm
To 10-9-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 pm

Myanmar International

(9-9-2016 07:00am ~ 10-9-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh		
07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Discovering Tribes "Rvwang"
07:52	Am	Black Gold (Part- I)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Continuation In Rural Tradition
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Real Dream of Accidental Gift
09:51	Am	Today Myanmar "Union Peace Conference from 21 st Century Panglong to the Eternal Peace"
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The Green Corner "Newspaper Flower"
10:36	Am	The World's Largest Book

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

Prime Time		
07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-3)
07:41	Pm	Delicacies From Magwe
07:50	Pm	Welcome to the Southernmost Part of Myanmar
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	Sagaing: Gold Leaf

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

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

Paralympics striving to create fairer world, says Rio 2016 chief

RIO DE JANEIRO — The Rio Paralympics will strive to promote “a fairer, more fraternal world” while changing perceptions of people with disabilities, the head of the Rio 2016 organizing committee said on Wednesday.

The first Paralympic Games in South America began with a spectacular four-hour opening ceremony before more than 50,000 spectators at a rain-soaked Maracana stadium.

“We celebrate a great challenge today — to build a new world, more accessible to all,” Rio 2016 president Carlos Nuzman said during a speech.

“Fairer, more fraternal, where all are able to walk hand-in-hand with no obstacles. It is a difficult mission, which makes us stronger,” he added.

Philip Craven, the president of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), said recession-hit Brazil could draw inspiration from the feats of Paralympic athletes.

“In a country which has



The Brazilian (L) and Paralympic flags are raised during the opening ceremony of 2016 Rio Paralympics at Maracana in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 7 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

faced major challenges of late, Paralympians will switch your focus from perceived limitations to a world full of possibility and

endless opportunity,” Craven said. “They will surprise you, inspire and excite you, but, most of all, they will change you.”

Among the highlights of the ceremony was a stunt in which wheelchair athlete Aaron Wheelz sped down a 17-metre ramp

before completing a stunning reverse somersault.

Later, disabled dancer and Paralympic athlete Amy Purdy showed why machines cannot replace the creativity and spontaneity of humans by winning a dance-off against a robot. The US snowboarder sent the crowd into raptures with a routine that mixed contemporary dance with samba.

The ceremony reached a climax when swimmer Clodoaldo Silva made his way to the top of a large ramp in his wheelchair to light the flame.

Some 500 professionals, including choreographers and artists, and 2,000 volunteers were involved in the show. Over 4,000 athletes from 160 countries and regions took part in the parade.

Earlier on Wednesday, Craven said ticket sales for the 11-day Paralympics had reached almost 1.7 million, having risen from 300,000 less than three weeks ago. Organisers are hoping to overtake the 2.4 million tickets sold at the Beijing 2008 Games. *Xinhua*

United and City clash set to ignite season

LONDON — A clash between supposedly the two most expensive lineups in history overseen by two of the most decorated coaches will end the phoney war and ignite the Premier League season for real when Manchester United host Manchester City on Saturday.

Jose Mourinho's United and City, under the command of his old adversary Pep Guardiola, have enjoyed 100 per cent starts as tens of millions of pounds worth of summer buys bed in.

But much more will be known about their title-winning credentials when the final whistle sounds on the lunchtime kickoff at Old Trafford.

From the moment the fix-

ture list was published in June, the continuation of the often frosty and occasionally volatile Mourinho-Guardiola rivalry has been eagerly-anticipated.

The chance to land an early blow in the first seismic clash of the season will be irresistible.

Both clubs chronically under-achieved last season — City finishing above United on goal difference in fourth.

But after installing serial trophy hunters in the respective managerial hotseats and making a splurge of signings both have won their opening three games and moods have been transformed.

Mourinho spent upwards of 145 million pounds in the close season signing the likes of Paul

Pogba while Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who once dubbed Guardiola a ‘spineless coward’, joined for free after leaving Paris St Germain.

“He is the mastermind, the masterbrain,” Ibrahimovic said of Mourinho, who he played for at Inter Milan.

“He knows what he needs to do to win.”

Guardiola has spent around 175 million revamping City's creaking side with English defender John Stones and German winger Leroy Sane among those added to their already expensive ranks.

While City's Sergio Agueiro will be suspended and Sane injured, the two starting lineups are likely to feature six of the 12 most expensive players in English football history with the total value of the 22 to line up expected to be around 600 million pounds.

It should produce the kind of spectacle to justify the hype surrounding this year's Premier League in which Chelsea, under new coach Antonio Conte, are also 100 per cent after three games.

But the cameras will not only be aimed at the galaxy of talent on the pitch. What happens in the respective dugouts will be equally engrossing as Guardiola and Mourinho cross swords again, having been involved in some epic past skirmishes.—Reuters



Manchester United's Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Paul Pogba during Premier League at The Kingston Communications Stadium, on 27 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

PHOTO: REUTERS



Nishikori upsets Murray to reach US Open semis

NEW YORK — Japan's Kei Nishikori overcame second seed Andy Murray for a gruelling 1-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 see-saw victory on Wednesday to reach the US Open semi-finals.

Nishikori, who became the first Asian man to reach a grand slam final when he finished runner-up here in 2014, broke the Scotsman in the 11th game of the fifth set with a brilliant reflex volley and served out to complete the triumph.

The upset ended a stellar run by Murray that had taken him to seven successive finals, including victories at Wimbledon, the Rio Olympics, Queen's Club and Rome.

“It was too exciting on the court, but I tried to stay calm,” Nishikori said in an on-court inter-

view. “It was really tough to stay calm. There were many ups and downs.”

“In the end it was great tennis, so very happy.”

The four-hour match was a roller-coaster ride of emotions and momentum swings from the start. Murray hit a low point in the fourth set when Nishikori was serving at 1-1.

The world number two held double break-point at 15-40 when chair umpire Mariana Alves called a let and a replay during a point Murray was controlling because of a loud, intrusive sound from the public address system. Murray was annoyed because when he had complained of a sound disturbance earlier in the match, the umpire said in such instances the players would play on.—Reuters