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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IV, No. 4, 10th Waning of Tagu 1379 ME www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com Friday, 21 April 2017

Wind and hail headed for northern Myanmar

THE weather bureau has warned of hailstones and gale-force winds in nine regions and states from 20 to 24 April due to a wave of dangerous weather that has moved from the west to east.

The Meteorology and Hydrology Department has alerted the people in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Bago regions and Kachin, Shan, Chin and Rakhine states to take precautions to protect themselves from the gales, which may reach 30 to 35 mph and hailstorms, which might occur along with isolated heavy rainfall.

The weather bureau announced the warning following its 10.30 am observation yesterday.

Prominent weather expert Dr Tun Lwin has also warned in a Facebook post yesterday that the northern part of Myanmar comprised of Kachin State, Chin State and upper Sagaing Region are expected to receive moderate rainfall which may reach about 3 inches within three days and isolated heavy rainfall, with five to eight inches expected over Kachin State, upper Sagaing and northern Shan State in the same period.

“Due to heavy rainfall, local people should be alerted to flash floods and landslides and gales, lightning and hailstones due to cumulus clouds. Degree of certainty is 60 per cent,” said Dr Tun Lwin. He is also a former director-general of the Meteorology and Hydrology Department of



File photo shows roof damaged by hailstones at a village in Kyaukse, Mandalay, in April 2016. PHOTO: MIZZIMA

Myanmar.

Strong gales accompanied by heavy rain and hailstones struck two townships in Mandalay Region on 22 April in 2016, levelling trees, destroying houses and killing people and animals.

The water flowing downhill resulting from torrential rains caused havoc in the townships of Sintgaing and Kyaukse, blowing the roofs off over 450 buildings and killing six people and over 300 domesticated animals, with two children reported missing.

Amid the weather warning, the Union Minister for Social



Tennis ball-sized hailstones from a 2016 storm. PHOTO: MIZZIMA

Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye is touring areas in central Myanmar that experienced natural disasters in April last year, as part of the ministry’s awareness campaign.

The ministry has been making efforts to get ready for natural disasters, stressing preparedness during the present year after taking lessons from previous years.

Due to a sudden rise of the water level in the Sinthay creek in August, 2016, Thanpayargone village, Letpan Ai village in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw and Sattoepauk and Aung Chanthar villages in Yamethin township in Mandalay Region were flooded, with 37 houses under water, 373 houses ruined and a population of 1,783 rendered homeless.

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7 suspects in robbery in Maungtau Tsp arrested

SEVEN suspects were arrested in connection with a robbery that took place in Thawunchaung village in Maungtau township on 17 April.

On that day, four robbers including the person assumed to be Abdu Rahein entered the village of Thawunchaung, robbing and then shooting a villager.

Two days later, local police made a surprise search in the village of Innidin (west) village, also known as Htonsins village, at about 4pm and arrested seven suspects — Noro Salam, 24, Sirasu, 15, Rawfi Oolar, 13, Robby, 27, Mamauk Isuf, 45, Khaikro Salin, 20 and Noro Lamein, 26.

Initial investigation has been made in accord with the law, according to the State Counsellor Office’s information committee.— Myanmar News Agency

INSIDE



Rare Species — Ayeyawady Dolphins

Of the 100 species of animals in the world, the Ayeyawady dolphin is one of the rarest. It is found only in the Ayeyawady River in Myanmar. The dolphin is a small, dark-colored animal that lives in the water. It is known for its unique sound, which is a series of short, sharp clicks. The dolphin is also known for its ability to jump out of the water. It is a very intelligent animal and is capable of learning tricks. The dolphin is a very important part of the Ayeyawady ecosystem and is a symbol of the river's biodiversity.

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LOCAL Business

Import with ITCs at borders hits over Ks1 billion in first week of April

IMPORT value with the Individual Trading Card (ITC) through border trade camps reached over Ks1 billion over the first week of current fiscal year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 April and 7 April, the total border trade value with ITCs amounted to Ks1.122 billion, including Ks48.307 million from the export sector.

The Myawady border trade camp is reported to have the largest volume of trade with a value of more than Ks937 million.

Border trade values through ITCs were Ks73 million at Tamu trade camp; Ks2.249m at Muse border gate; Ks46m at Tachilek trade camp; over Ks23m at Kanpikete border gate; over Ks3.846m at Kawthoung border town; over Ks19m at Reed border trade camp and over Ks15m at Mawtaung.

The commerce ministry allowed five individual businessmen to trade at borders with ITCs. From FY2012-2013 to date, the ministry issued a total of 1,269 ITCs to the border merchants. It permitted 292 ITCs in FY2012-13; 261 cards in FY2013-14; 317 cards in FY2014-15; 146 cards in FY2015-16 and 248 cards in FY2016-17.

In 2016-17 FY, cross-border trade with ITCs was more than Ks18 billion.—*Kyaw Swa*



A trader evaluates jade stones at the Gems and Jade emporium in Nay Pyi Taw in March 2017. PHOTO: MNA

Price of jade falls in Mandalay market post-Thingyan

THE PRICE of jade has steadily declined in the domestic market after the period of the Thingyan New Year celebration, according to the merchants in Mandalay Region.

“For the time being, demand for jade here is cooling down because of a lack of Chinese buyers who temporarily return to their country of origin as the gems sales centre closed

during the Thingyan holidays,” said a local jade dealer.

In Mandalay, jade sales for the local market are predominantly conducted at jade and gems market in Mahaangmye Township. The sale of raw jade in Mandalay’s gems sale centre is said to be good but the demand is exceeding supply due to lack of raw materials imported by Hpakant, Kachin State, the land

of jade, which is famous for its high-quality stones.

Although Chinese currency remains stable in the market after the water festival, some jade collectors make money by selling their products to local buyers at a reduced price.

The cooling market is expected to be active again soon, merchants say.—*Maung Pyithu (Mandalay)*

Export value up by over \$130 million in current FY

THE value of exports over the first week of the current fiscal year was up by more than US\$130 million compared to the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 April and 7 April, the total value of exports reached over \$288 million, including \$82.817 million from the government sector and \$205.570 million from the private sector, whereas last year the figure was \$155 million.

On the first seven days of the 2017-2018 FY, the country exported \$76 million worth of agricultural products, \$0.620 million worth of animal products, over \$15 million worth of fishery products, over \$22 million worth of minerals, \$14.237 million worth of forest products, more than \$56 million worth of manufacturing goods and others worth over \$100 million.

Myanmar continues to trade with Asian countries, ASEAN member states, island nations, Middle East countries, some European and African states, and other western countries mainly through by sea.

According to official figures, the country imported \$443.526 million worth of products covering capital goods, consumer products and intermediate goods.—*Khine Khant*

Bilateral trade with China hit US \$9.4 billion before end of FY2016-17

BILATERAL trade between Myanmar and China amounted to almost over US\$9 billion before the last month of the 2016-17 fiscal year, a decrease of \$1.546 billion from the 2015-16 FY, according to the statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar-China trade totalled US \$9.446 billion between April of last year and February of this year. Of the total, Myanmar’s export to the world’s most populous nation hit about US \$4.290 billion and its imports from the largest

neighbour reached US \$5.155 billion.

In 2015-16 FY, the trade value between the two countries was \$10.992 billion in total, including \$4.596 billion from the export sector and US \$6.395 billion from the import sector.

Myanmar predominantly exports agriculture products, marine products, forestry products to the Chinese market. Imports from the China include medicine and related equipment, personal goods, electronic devices and accessories, and other commodities.

The bilateral trade reached US \$9.712 billion in 2014-2015 FY. The trade of both countries was US \$7.033 billion in 2013-2014 FY, US \$4.957 billion in 2012-2013 FY and US \$5.001 billion in 2011-2012 FY.

According to the latest figures issued by the Myanmar Investment Commission, China remains as the largest foreign investor in Myanmar with over US \$18 billion investment.

The MIC approved \$482.591 million investment from China in 2016-2017 FY.—*Swe Nyein*

Myanmar, Japan to boost collaboration on SME development

MYANMAR business leaders will work together with Japanese entrepreneurs to implement the development plan for the country’s immature small-and-medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), according to the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

U Zaw Min Win, president of the UMFCCI, said that the representatives of the federation will leave for Japan’s Osaka, a large port city and commercial center, last week of this month to sign a cooperation agreement with Japanese officials. The delegation schedules to stay there between 25 and 28 April.

This is part of the federation’s efforts to promote the developing SMEs, which need monetary assistance for further business expansion. After signing the bilateral agreement with Japan, better opportunities for SMEs will be created through special programmes designed under the agreement.

The development strategies for SMEs are planned to be submitted to the government, said U Zaw Min Win.

He also said that elimination of all forms of illegal trade through collaborative efforts of the government and private entrepreneurs plays an important role in promoting the country’s economy.—200



Vice President U Henry Van Thio accompanied by Director Mr. Rene Van Der Pals inspects the Rotterdam Port. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President U Henry Van Thio tours Rotterdam Port in the Netherlands

A MYANMAR Delegation led by Vice President U Henry Van Thio, who is on a working visit to the Netherlands observed the delta works which is a series of construction projects in the southwest of the Netherlands to protect a large area of land around the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt Delta from the sea by helicopter at 9 am local standard time yesterday.

They also took a tour of Port

of Rotterdam and Maasvlakte 1 and 2, which are major civil engineering projects in Rotterdam. Then, the Vice President and entourage visited the Port of Rotterdam by ship where they were briefed about the procedures of the port by Director Mr. Rene Van Der Pals. Rotterdam Port is one of the largest ports on the European continent.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MOI donates stationery to Tiddim and Reedhorda libraries



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint viewing Chin traditional handicraft. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister of Information Dr. Pe Myint, together with his entourage and Chin State Minister for Social Affairs U Paung LunHtan, arrived in Tiddim, Chin State on Wednesday morning.

They arrived in Shaungawn village around 1 pm and observed Chin traditional accessories and traditional buildings, then provided cash donations for the village.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and entourage visited the Information and Public Relations Department and inspected the children's reading room, library and Chin traditional handicrafts on display.

The Union Minister instructed on how to include the history behind the handicrafts on display and supply information on their day-to-day use, and also gave

instructions on how to adapt the department building into a community centre. He then presented exercise books for the children of staff members.

At around 3 pm, the Union Minister and entourage travelled to Laintwe and Shinsham villages near the Tiddim-Reed highway and donated the periodicals to the libraries.

Later, they arrived in Reedhorda around 5:30 pm and yesterday morning and visited the Township's Information and Public Relations Department and inspected the children's reading room, library and Chin traditional handicrafts on display. The Union Minister then donated exercise books for children of the staff members.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Wind and hail headed for northern Myanmar

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Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, who is also vice-chairman of the national management committee on natural disasters, accompanied by U Tin Htut, a member of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, visited Thanpayargone village in Tatkon township, which was hit by floods last year, to meet with villagers at the Thanpayargone monastery and with residents of Sattoepauk village in Yamethin township at the Ywa U monastery.

"The ministry has been prioritising the task of preparing to fight against natural disasters by managing effective preventive works after finding out the ac-

tual needs of the villagers. And we must bring about the emergence of better situations after taking lessons from the natural disasters which struck last year. Now we have come to know that we have difficult access to the villages and rescue teams cannot go there quickly. As regards natural disasters, preparedness is mainly connected with public transport. For better transport, we will co-operate with respective ministries", the Union Minister said.

"As for the villagers, they need to have knowledge and awareness on natural disasters. Our government has arranged to fight against natural disasters by forming management commit-

tees on natural disasters at region, state, district and township levels.

Basically, we have known from previous experience that people's participation can lead to successful implementation. So we came here to meet the villagers so that we can operate the task hand-in-hand with the people."

Afterward, the Union Minister advised necessary matters over the discussions and presentations of the villagers, followed by an educative talk by the head of Mandalay Region's department of social welfare, rescue and resettlement, and delivery of leaflets on natural disasters.—*GNLM*

Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw meets with Secretary-General of Liberal Democratic Party in Japan



A Myanmar delegation headed by the Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Thar Aung was honored with a luncheon by Mr. Toshihiro Nikai, Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Tokyo on 12 April, according to press release issued by the Myanmar News Agency.

The Amyotha Hluttaw

Secretary-General Mr. Nikai of the LDP presents honorary certificate to a member of Myanmar delegation in presence of U Aye Thar Aung.

Deputy Speaker and Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung held talks with the Secretary-General and lawmakers from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) at LDP's Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan on 11 April afternoon, the press release said.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and party were also hosted breakfast by Mr. Toshihiro, President of Okura Hotel and Japanese hotel entrepreneurs at Okura Hotel in Tokyo in the morning of 10 April.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar Central Bank Governor attends 13th ACGM and 3rd AFCGM meeting

A Myanmar delegation led by U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, attended the 50th anniversary of the ASEAN foundation event, the 13th ASEAN Central Bank Governors' Meeting (13thACGM) and the 3rd ASEAN Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting (3rd AFCGM) in Cebu, Philippines from 6 to 7 April.

The meetings were attended by ASEAN Finance Ministers, ASEAN Central Bank Governors, representatives from Asean+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) and the ASEAN Secretariat.

On the afternoon of 6 April, ASEAN Central Bank Governors and Executive Directors of Financial Institutions held a discussion titled "Furthering ASEAN Financial Integration: Opportunities in Addressing Systemic Risks."

On the morning of 7 April, the Myanmar Central Bank Gov-

ernor attended the 13th ACGM. At the meeting the Central Bank Governors agreed and confirmed the progresses in the implementation of 2015 ASEAN Financial Integration and provide guidance on future work.

Later in the afternoon, he attended the 3rd AFCGM. At the meeting, progress on the ASEAN Financial Integration road map based on the Asean Economic Community (AEC) road map, progress on the Asean+3 Financial Integration, progress on formation of 2 Working Groups: Working Group 1 consisting of Japan, China, Korea, Philippine, Thailand, Malaysia and AMRO on conducting fundamental issues of Chiang Mai Initiative multi-lateralization (CMIM) process, Working Group 2 consisting of Japan, China, Korea, Philippine, Indonesia, Lao and AMRO on collaboration with the IMF and increasing the IMF De-linked Portion (IDLIP) from 30 to 40% in the CMIM loan program

were confirmed by the ASEAN Finance Ministers and ASEAN Central Bank Governors.

Discussions on this CMIM process will be continued at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) annual meeting and ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting to be held in Yokohama, Japan from 3 to 5 May.

Furthermore, a joint communiqué of the 3rd AFCGM was also issued.

Before and during the meetings, Myanmar Central Bank Governor met with a delegation led by US Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Mr. Kaproth on 5 April and a delegation led by President and CEO Mr. Alexander C. Feldman of US-Asean Business Council on 7 April and exchanged views on banking and financial matters.

The delegation led by Myanmar Central Bank Governor returned to Yangon on 8 April.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Crime NEWS

Drugs seized in Kawthoung and Sittway

A local anti-narcotic squad discovered 100 grams of crystal meth or 'ice' from a man staying at a hotel in Kawthoung on 18th April.

Acting on a tip-off that a man known as Chan Nyein Aung (alias) Shane, smuggling drugs in room 102 of "Kawthoung Hotel", Paduakshwewar ward, the police apprehended Chan Nyein Aung as he came down the stairs carrying a

foam box, which upon inspection, contained 100 grams of crystal meth or 'ice'.

When the officials went up to room 102, Chan Nyein Aung's accomplice Ye Yint Naing (alias) Ko Chit fled from the hotel's window leaving behind 20 grams of 'ice' and 46 tablets of amphetamine in a plastic bag on the bed. Officials also confiscated their

motorbike.

Similarly on 19 April, Sittway Border Guard Police searched the house of Ma Zubaythar Baygaung in Inpari village and discovered 3,220 tablets of amphetamines on the upper floor of the house.

The suspects will be charged with violating the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

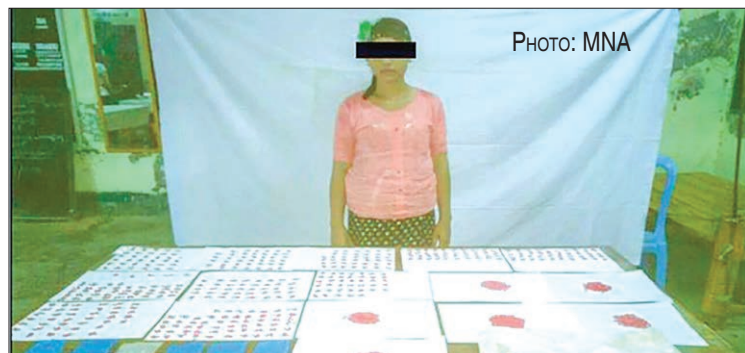
Landmine kills one, injures in Kachin State

A family that lived in Pyin Oo Lwin Ward, Mansi, Bhamo District was working in their farm about 3 furlong east of their home on 19 April afternoon when a landmine exploded. The explosion killed Ma Tu Taung, aged 8, a third grader. Her two sisters,

Ma Gya Sai Pan aged 22 who was a fourth year student at Sagaing Education University and Ma Gyi Pan aged 15 who had sat in the basic education high school examination this year were wounded while their mother, Daw Alaymi, aged 40 was unhurt.

The two sisters were undergoing treatment at Bhamo hospital and were provided with relief supports from the Tatmadaw and Bhamo Police force personnel who visited them at the hospital and gave words of sympathy.—*Myanmar News Agency*

More than 3200 Amphetamine pills seized in Sittway



THE police in Sittway seized a total of 3,220 Amphetamine pills worth K9.6 million in Innpari village, Sittway Township, Rakhine State, yesterday.

The police discovered the drug during their search of Ma Zubay Darbaygaung's house in Innpari Village.

The suspect is being charged under the law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

U Myo Myint Than appointed as Ambassador to Kingdom of Thailand

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Myo Myint Than, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Thailand.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

PRESS RELEASE

Diplomatic Relations established between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of the Marshall Islands established diplomatic relations at the Ambassadorial level, with effect from 21 April 2017 as the two countries are desirous of establishing friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of International Law in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations was signed in Tokyo on 21 April 2017 by the Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Japan and the Ambassador of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to Japan.

Myanmar is expanding its diplomatic relations with countries around the world. The Republic of the Marshall Islands is the 117th country with which Myanmar has established diplomatic relations.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

About 3 million passengers expected to take circular train in Yangon in 2020

MYANMA Railways (MR) plans to increase the number of riders of the circular train in Yangon up to about three million by 2020. Currently, MR is cooperating with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to promote the use of the circular trains, which is currently used by only 4 per cent of Yangon dwellers.

To attract more riders, Myanmar Railways will raise the speed from 20 kmph to 40 kmph, with an aim to save the passengers' precious time. To be able to run the circular trains at a higher speed, MR will buy new coaches and upgrade the railroad tracks with the assistance of JICA.

The circular trains will run for only 1 hour and 50 minutes instead of three hours. Moreover, MR has invited tenders for the upgrading of the Shwedagon Pagoda Road-Insein and Danyingon-Pazundaung railroad tracks.

After the announcement that tenders would be invited for 10 projects, including the upgrading of the Yangon circular railway in April, tender Nos. MR/YCR/UGCP 101 (T) 2017-2018 and MR/YCR/UGCP 102(T) were invited.

The MR has been upgrading railway stations and platforms



A circular train runs on railway lines at a rural railway station. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

with government budgets and US\$207million loans from Japan.

Some circular train stations to be closed in Yangon

SOME circular train stations which are rarely used by passengers in the Yangon region will be closed after a survey has been conducted, it is learnt.

Some circular train stations

have to be shut down in order to reduce travelling time. The distance between some railway stations is only half a mile, officials said. The MR will run the circular trains at a much faster speed in 2020.

Upon completion of the up-

grade, MR will buy new train coaches. For safe driving, MR is constructing brick walls, which will be completed no later than 2022. MR has been upgrading the circular railway lines to increase the number of circular train commuters to reduce traffic congestion.—200

District-level tournaments of Shan State Chief Minister's Trophy to begin

THE district-level rounds of Shan State Chief Minister's Trophy tournament will be launched on 25 April in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State, according to the state government.

Turning out talented athletes and promoting healthy habits of residents are the main reasons why the state government annually holds the sports events, officials said. The tournament competitions will include badminton, billiards, snooker and chess, which are scheduled to take place between 25 April and 8 May.

Competition among district-level badminton contestants below 25 years of age will be held on 25-27 April in Taunggyi Township.

The township-level chess contests are due to start on 5 May and will last until 8 May. The district-level billiard and snooker contests are scheduled to take place between 27 April and 2 May. The winning teams of all tournaments will receive cash awards offered by the state authorities.—200



Photographers take pictures as the Soyuz MS-04 spacecraft carrying the crew of Jack Fischer of the US and Fyodor Yurchikhin of Russia blasts off to the International Space Station (ISS) from the launchpad at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, on 20 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

US-Russian crew blasts off for space station with one empty seat

CAPE CANAVERAL, (Fla) — A scaled-down, two-man US-Russian crew blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Thursday for a six-hour ride to the International Space Station, a NASA TV broadcast showed.

A Russian Soyuz capsule carrying NASA astronaut Jack Fischer, 43, and Russian cosmonaut Fyodor Yurchikhin, 58, lifted off at 1:13 pm local time/3:13 am EDT with a rare empty third seat. Russia is scaling back space station staffing until its long-delayed science laboratory is flown to the orbiting outpost next year.

Fischer and Yurchikhin were scheduled to reach the \$100 bil-

lion space station, which orbits about 250 miles (400 km) above Earth, at 9:23 am EDT.

Fischer said he suspects the biggest challenge he faces in his first voyage into space will be learning how to use the station's zero-gravity toilet.

"It's all about suction, it's really difficult," Fischer said in a NASA interview before launch. "You just can't train for that on the ground, so I approach my space-toilet activities with respect, preparation and a healthy dose of sheer terror."

The rookie astronaut will be sharing the station with two seasoned veterans.

Soyuz crewmate Yur-

chikhin has made four previous spaceflights. Station commander Peggy Whitson, 57, in the midst of her third long-duration mission, is due on Monday to beat the 534-day record for cumulative time spent in space by a US astronaut.

She is expected to receive a congratulatory phone call on Monday from US President Donald Trump, NASA said on Wednesday.

Whitson, who flew to the station in November along with Russian cosmonaut Oleg Novitskiy and French astronaut Thomas Pesquet, will remain aboard with Fischer and Yurchikhin until September.—Reuters

On your bike — Cycling to work linked with large health benefits

LONDON — People who cycle to work have a substantially lower risk of developing cancer or heart disease or dying prematurely, and governments should do all they can to encourage more active commuting, scientists said on Thursday. In a study published in the BMJ British medical journal, the researchers found that cycling to work was linked to the most significant health benefits - including a 45 per cent lower risk of developing cancer and a 46 per cent lower risk of heart disease compared to non-active commuters.

Walking to work was linked to a 27 per cent lower risk of developing heart disease and a 36 per cent lower risk of dying from it, though it also appeared to have no effect on cancer risk or overall premature death risk, the study showed.

The research involved 264,377 people with an average age of 53 whose data forms part of the UK Biobank - a database of biological information from half a million British adults.

Since the study was observational, no firm conclusions can be drawn about cause and

effect, the researchers said. Its findings could also be affected by some confounding factors, they added, including that the mode and distance of commuting was self-reported, rather than objectively measured.

However, "the findings, if causal, suggest population health may be improved by policies that increase active commuting, particularly cycling", they said.

These would include creating more cycle lanes, introducing more bike buying or hiring schemes, and providing better access for cyclists on public transport. Lars Bo Andersen, a professor at the Western Norwegian University of Applied Sciences, who was not directly involved in the research but wrote a commentary on it in the BMJ, said its findings "are a clear call for political action on active commuting", saying this had the potential to significantly improve public health by reducing rates of chronic disease.

"A shift from cars to more active modes of travel will also decrease traffic in congested city centres and help reduce air pollution, with further benefits for health," he said.—Reuters



Commuters cycle past a bus queue outside Waterloo Station in London, Britain in 2015. People who commute by bike or on foot have a substantially lower risk of developing cancer or heart disease or dying prematurely, scientists said on Thursday, and governments should do all they can to encourage more active commuting. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sleep doctors call for later school start times

WASHINGTON — Starting classes at middle school and high schools no earlier than 8:30 am would help teens arrive alert, healthy and ready to learn, US sleep medicine specialists say.

"The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that teens between 13 and 18 years of age should sleep 8 to 10 hours per night on a regular basis to promote optimal health," lead author of the new AASM position statement Dr. Nathaniel Watson told Reuters Health in an email.

"Biology and school start times may share the blame for teen sleep loss. A natural shift in the timing of the body's internal 'circadian' clock occurs during puberty, and as a result, most teens have a biological prefer-

ence for a late-night bedtime," said Watson, a sleep specialist at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Studies show that short sleep in adolescents is associated with poor school performance, obesity, metabolic dysfunction and heart disease, increased depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, risk-taking behaviors and athletic injuries, Watson and his coauthors write in the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine.

Students also have a higher risk of being involved in a car accident when they're sleep deprived, they note. About 35 per cent of teen deaths are due to car accidents.

Previous studies on delayed school start times have shown benefits including longer sleep

times, less daytime sleepiness, more participation in school and fewer absences and late arrivals, the researchers add. Later school starts have also been associated with less depression and anxiety.

Reaction times are improved and delaying school times by one hour could potentially reduce car crashes by approximately 16 per cent, the authors write.

Watson said kids could also take steps to improve their sleep such as identifying a consistent bedtime that allows them to get at least eight hours of sleep and making a goal to be in bed with the lights out by bedtime each night.

Students should set bedtime alarms to remind them when it is time to get ready for bed, power down all electronic devices at

least 30 minutes before bedtime and put their cell phones away at night, Watson said.

"If parents notice their child is having extreme difficulty waking up on time for school, or experiencing significant daytime sleepiness, they should consider scheduling a consultation with the adolescent's primary care provider or a sleep medicine specialist to evaluate for a sleep disorder, regardless of the student's school start time," he said.

"The nation's leading organization for sleep professionals has added its voice to that of other health advocacy groups such as the AMA, AAP, AACAP, CDC and American Psychological Association in support of healthy school start times for middle and high school students," Dr. Judith

Owens told Reuters Health in an email.

Owens, who is the director of the Center for Pediatric Sleep Disorders at Boston Children's Hospital, wasn't involved in the AASM position statement but she was lead author of a similar policy statement published by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2014.

The new AASM position statement urges schools, school boards, parents and policy makers to raise awareness and promote later start times.

"Parents and local school boards can work together to implement high school start times that allow teens to get the healthy sleep they need to meet their full potential," Watson said.—Reuters

Philippines wind farm generates power, jobs and curious tourists

MANILA — Wind turbines are helping the Philippines diversify its energy sources beyond fossil fuels and generating not only power, but jobs, revenue and interest among thousands of curious tourists.

On the hills of Rizal province east of the capital Manila, 340,000 visitors have hit the viewing deck of Pililla town's wind farm since it opened to the public last year, photographing and marveling at its 27 white wind turbines that stand 125 meters (410 feet) high on a 4,500-hectare site.

Wind power is slowly taking off in the Philippines, which faces a huge challenge to find cheaper, cleaner and more efficient ways to power what is one of the world's fastest growing economies and a swelling population of over 100 million people.

It's proving a draw for

this province and supporting livelihoods too, with 300 people working at the farm and a further 45 making wooden souvenirs of mini turbines the size of hand-held fans.

"A lot of people can see the beauty of the Philippines," said tourist Christian Lagaja. "Here, the air is fresh and people are benefiting from the electricity it generates."

Wind energy is a work in progress and farms like this produce only a fraction of the country's installed capacity of 20,055 megawatts, which the energy minister recently said needs to double by 2030 to meet demand.

Power in the Philippines at present is generated 34 per cent by coal, 34 per cent by oil and gas and 32 per cent from renewable sources, among them wind, biomass, hydropower and solar.—Reuters

Mongolia launches its first satellite

ULAANBAATAR — Mongolia launched its first satellite on Wednesday, part of its efforts to make use of new technology to diversify its resource-dependent economy.

The 1,227-megahertz satellite, called Mongol Sat-1, will help landlocked Mongolia expand its television, telecoms and broadband services, according to a video posted on the official website of Mongolia's parliament <www.parliament.mn/n/myxo>.

The satellite was launched in partnership with Asia Broadcast Satellite (ABS), a telecoms and broadcast provider for the region. No details about the cost of the satellite and the launch were provided, and government agencies could not be immediately reached for comment. "The project that began over 10 years ago has been finally accomplished," said Parliament Speaker Miyegombo Enkhbold in a meeting with ABS Chief Executive

Officer Thomas Choi at the satellite's launch. "This is a historic advance, and we are proud that Mongolia sends its first satellite off into space," Enkhbold said the satellite would also be used to help with space research, map making and with preparing for natural disasters. Mongolia has been adopting new technologies to help connect its most remote and inaccessible regions, and dozens of new television broadcasters have also been launched in the last decade.

Mobile phones have also become an essential part of life for Mongolia's traditional nomadic herders, providing remote settlements with access to banking and weather alerts. The International Monetary Fund has urged Mongolia to diversify its economy as part of a \$5.5 billion bailout. Mongolia plunged into an economic and financial crisis last year after a collapse in commodity prices eroded growth and sent its currency, the tugrik, plummeting.—Reuters

Cambodia's Hun Sen says 'no war' on Korean Peninsula

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said Thursday he was confident there will be "no war" on the Korean Peninsula despite military posturing between Washington and Pyongyang, adding that he did not see the need to evacuate Cambodians working there.

"I can say (with) 99.99 (per cent certainty), there will be no war," he said at a graduation ceremony in Phnom Penh.

"The issue is that the fighting will not bring an end to the conflict, but the mass destruction will be in South Korea and Japan and therefore, the United States will have to consider it seriously on those options," he said.

"Of course, the United States will be less or little affected given its far distance, but there will be significant consequence on American soldiers in South Korea and Japan," he added. Hun Sen

said there is, therefore, no need for Cambodia to ever consider evacuating the more than 40,000 Cambodians working in South Korea.

Evacuation of Cambodian citizens or its diplomats from abroad at a time of tension out of fear of war, chaos or natural disaster is not Cambodia's primary choice, the premier said.

He said in 2014, he refused to allow Cambodian diplomats to leave Pyongyang even though North

Korea was suggesting they leave due to possible war, and a similar case when he rejected Cambodian diplomats' request to leave Japan following the March 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster.

Meanwhile, Hun Sen also appealed to all parties concerned for "utmost restraint," saying there will be "no winner but all losers, and the real losers are their neighbors" should war break out.—Kyodo News

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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

Expatriate Consultant Editor
Mark Angeles

markrangeles@gmail.com

Senior Translators

Khin Maung Oo

editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Copy Writer Min Zaw

International News Editor

Ye Htut Tin

editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Local News Editors

Tun Tun Naing (Editor)

intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)

Translators

Khaing Thanda Lwin,

reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Hay Mar Tin Win,

translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Ei Myat Mon

Chief Reporter

Tun Aung Kyaw,

reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Computer Team

Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team), Thein Ngwe,

Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin,

Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532, Hotline - 09 974424114

Advertising inquiry

01 8604530, Hotline - 09 974424848

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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

Southern Thailand attacks reflect tension over peace talks, conflict monitor says

BANGKOK — A string of gun and grenade attacks in southern Thailand that killed two people reflects tension over talks aimed at ending violence there, a conflict monitoring group said on Thursday, warning against similar attacks in future.

Thailand's far south has battled a separatist insurgency since 2004, when resistance to Buddhist rule in the Muslim-majority region flared. More than 6,500 people, most of them civilians, have died in separatist violence since.

Eight people were wounded in 13 incidents on Wednesday across the provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Songkhla, near Thailand's border with Malaysia. No group has yet claimed responsibility.

The attacks follow the Thai government's rejection of a conditional offer for peace talks made this month by one of the main insurgent groups, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN).

The violence was the BRN's way of showing it is capable of coordinated



Military personnel inspect a site of an attack at the Saba Yoi district, in the troubled southern province of Songkhla, Thailand, on 20 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

strikes as a way to push for peace talks, said Srisompob Jitpiromsri, head of independent monitoring group Deep South Watch.

"This reflects attempts to create conditions for peace talks in the future," Srisompob, whose group tracks violent incidents in the region, told Reuters.

"The group is expected to carry out similar attacks periodically, which will likely affect peace dialogues in the long run." A Thai security official blamed the attacks, which targeted security forces and civilians on "people who want to cause

chaos", but did not single out the BRN.

"It looks like their intention wasn't to kill, but rather to cause disorder," Colonel Yutthanam Petchmuang, a spokesman for the Internal Security Operations Command, told Reuters.

The violence followed coordinated attacks in the region on 7 April, just hours after King Maha Vajiralongkorn signed into law a new constitution, as a step towards ending military rule.

The new constitution, which critics say will entrench military rule in

Thailand, was widely opposed in the south.

"The BRN is showing that it is the right negotiating partner, which can control and command the fighters on the ground," Rungrawee Chalermripinyorat, an independent researcher who monitors the conflict, told Reuters.

Talks between the government and a handful of shadowy insurgent groups began in 2013, under the democratically-elected government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, overthrown in 2014 by the military in the name of ending political turmoil.

In February, the government said it had reached a breakthrough pact with MARA Patani, an umbrella group that says it speaks for insurgent groups in the south. Analysts say only a handful of BRN members belong to the group, however.

The provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala formed part of an independent Malay Muslim sultanate before being annexed by Thailand in 1909.—Reuters

Pence tours Southeast Asia's biggest mosque, talks trade in Indonesia

JAKARTA — US Vice President Mike Pence toured Southeast Asia's largest mosque on Thursday during a visit to Indonesia, calling the Muslim-majority nation's tradition of following a moderate form of Islam "an inspiration to the world". Pence, an evangelical Christian, has sought to use his trip to soften some of the harsher edges of rhetoric about the Muslim world used by US President Donald Trump, who has frequently railed against "radical Islamic terrorism."

As leader of the world's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesian President Widodo has voiced worries about Trump's immigration policy, which critics say is biased against Muslims.

Pence, standing side by side with Widodo at a news conference, said: "One of the greatest threats we face is the rise and spread of terrorism," though he did not refer to "radical Islam" and praised the religion in Indonesia.

"As the largest majority-Muslim country, Indonesia's tradition of moderate Islam, frankly, is an inspiration to the world," he said.

"In your nation as in mine, religion unifies, it doesn't divide," he added. Pence, joined by his wife and daughters, later went on a tour of Jakarta's Istiqlal mosque, posing for pictures in the massive empty courtyard and walking through the five-storey prayer hall, big enough



US Vice President Mike Pence (L) walks with Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the presidential palace in Jakarta, Indonesia on 20 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

to hold 200,000 people.

Afterwards, he met religious leaders from various faiths, including Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and others.

Indonesia is officially secular and most of its 220 million Muslims practise a moderate form of Islam, although the country has some vocal Islamist groups and has suffered in the past from attacks by militants. Pence is visiting Indonesia a day after the Indonesian capital Jakarta elected a new Muslim governor who rode a wave of conservative Islamist to defeat an incumbent Christian on trial charged

with blasphemy against the Koran.

Hardline Islamic groups on Wednesday night had celebrated the election win at the Istiqlal mosque. After meeting President Widodo, Pence said his administration wanted fairer trade with Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

Indonesia is one of 16 countries under review for having a trade surplus with the United States. Official data from Indonesia's trade ministry puts total trade between the countries at \$23.44 billion in 2016, with Indonesia recording a surplus of \$8.84 billion. Indonesia mainly exports textiles,

footwear and seafood and mainly imports aircraft, machinery and soybeans from America.

Pence arrived in Jakarta late on Wednesday from Japan where he reassured Tokyo of a US commitment to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile ambitions.

Washington had billed Pence's visit to Jakarta as a booster for a strategic partnership between the world's second- and third-largest democracies, but a raft of bilateral disputes with US companies could sap the goodwill from his trip. Over the past six months, Indonesia has wrestled with mining giant Free-

port McMoRan, demanding the company divest 51 per cent of its shares in its Papua-based gold and copper mine, and has demanded that Google Inc. settle unpaid taxes of more than \$400 million. Jakarta also deleted JP Morgan from its list of primary bond dealers after what was deemed a negative research report. Google declined to comment for this report and JPMorgan did not respond to a request for comment.

Freeport Indonesia spokesman Riza Pratama said: "This visit is happening entirely independent of our current negotiations with the government of Indonesia."

Widodo's approach to foreign policy has been led more by economic interests than geopolitical considerations: he has pursued increased trade and investment from China, but keeps a diplomatic distance from Beijing and established a strategic partnership with Washington under former President Barack Obama.

Widodo said at the joint news conference with Pence that the two countries would "increase the strategic partnership... which will focus on cooperation and investments". He said over the next month the two sides will form a team to discuss the "management of bilateral trades and investment based on the principle of a win-win solution".—Reuters

Mongolian capital mayor aims for sister city deal with Tokyo by 2020



During an interview with Kyodo News in Tokyo on 19 April, 2017, Ulan Bator Mayor Sundui Batbold expresses hope that a sister city agreement can be forged with Tokyo by 2020. He also is looking to an expansion in bilateral ties through tourism, culture and sports. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — The mayor of Mongolia's capital said Wednesday that Ulan Bator is seeking to forge a sister city agreement with Tokyo by 2020 and expand bilateral ties through tourism, culture and sports.

"I conveyed our wish to establish a sister city agreement with Tokyo and upgrade our ties," Sundui Batbold said in an interview with Kyodo News, following his meeting with Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike, whose city is hosting the Olympics and Paralympics three years from now.

Under an envisioned sister city deal, hoped to be concluded while he is in office until 2020, Batbold said he wants his city to gain more knowledge and technical expertise from the Japanese capital in waste disposal and recycling, and attract more tourists to Ulan Bator.

On Tokyo's hosting of the Olympics, Batbold quoted Koike as telling him she welcomed the

participation of more Mongolian athletes in them, and he expressed hope for many of his compatriots to take part in the event.

As part of efforts to boost ties at the grassroots level, Batbold said, "I would like to seek the cooperation of Mongolian sumo wrestlers, for instance, Hakuho, and see the exchange of our cities' cultural ambassadors." Hakuho is a Mongolian yokozuna or grand champion.

Over the years, Japan and Mongolia have forged close ties, given their shared interest in sumo, with Mongolian wrestlers showing dominance in Japan's traditional sport. In 2015, the geographically close nations signed a free trade agreement, a first for the country. Batbold, who is in Tokyo for a five-day visit through Friday to meet with Koike and learn partly about city planning, said he sees the FTA as a key driver to enhance trade and investment for their countries.—Kyodo News

South Korea, US, Japan seek nuclear envoys' talks in Tokyo next week

SEOUL — South Korea, the United States, and Japan are seeking to hold a meeting of their head delegates to the long-stalled six-party talks on North Korea's denuclearization in Tokyo next week, the South Korean Foreign Ministry said Thursday.

"The specific date and agenda items are being worked out (for the talks)," ministry spokesman Cho June Hyuck told reporters. Japan, the host of the talks, is expected to make an official announcement after details are finalized, he said. The talks will be held between Kim Hong Kyun, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs at the South Korean Foreign Ministry, Joseph Yun, US special representative for North Korea policy, and Kenji Kanasugi, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau. The participants are expected to discuss joint responses to North Korea's continual provocations amid signs that the North may conduct its sixth nuclear test. The upcoming meeting will follow up on a similar meeting they held in Washington in February. The six-party talks involving the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, China, and Russia, have been deadlocked since late 2008.—Kyodo News

South Koreans injured in blocking construction equipment toward THAAD site

SEOUL — South Korean residents were injured by police early Thursday when they tried in vain to block the entrance of construction equipment into the deployment site for the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) missile defence system.

Two payloaders, which were driven by soldiers of the US Forces Korea (USFK), attempted to enter the golf course in southeast

South Korea at about 6:25 am local time, according to the association that is composed of residents and civic group activists to prevent the deployment of the US missile shield.

The golf course is located in the northern part of Seongju county, South Gyeongsang province, where Seoul and Washington agreed in July last year to deploy one THAAD battery. The pay-

loader is a heavy construction machine used to flatten or excavate soil.

Tens of residents and peace activists thwarted the entrance attempt for about 30 minutes, but they were violently shoved and thrust by hundreds of police officers, allowing the payloaders to be driven inside the golf course.

During the tussle, two residents were wounded and taken to

a nearby hospital.

Residents in the Soseongri village, the northern town of the Seongju county, are mostly those in their 70s and 80s. The village has a population of about 160.

At about noon, police officers attempted to shove and thrust the residents to help other equipment enter inside the THAAD site, but the second attempt was unsuccessful.—Xinhua

Opinion

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

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

Only we can choose our leader

Khin Maung Oo

ONE of the definitions concerning the word, “leader,” in dictionaries is meant for a person who leads a group of people, especially the head of a country, an organization, etc. Here, we need to think about leaders deeply. Leaders are born out of the public. Outstanding leaders have emerged in Myanmar throughout history. These leaders had different kinds of abilities and capacities. According to the laws of nature, a person who exudes Metta (loving-kindness) will get back the same in return from others. A leader who is willing and ready to sacrifice his life, if needed, devoting himself to the wellbeing of the people will gain people’s metta. People designated Bogyoke Aung San as our national leader for his simple way of life, genuine attitudes toward the country and its people, zealous efforts for gaining Independence and brilliant leadership. No one but the people conferred him the Title. No one can get people’s love by means of arms or money.

We chose Bogyoke Aung San as our national leader, but he could not give us a worthy successor. He himself had not been required to and did not decide who out of three children born to them who should succeed him. Though it is nearly 70 years that Myanmar gained her Independence, nationwide peace cannot yet be achieved, in spite of the efforts that had been made by successive governments to gain peace. A good leader needs to have good followers. Accordingly our people, our forefathers, followed Bogyoke Aung San’s leadership and they acquired the Independence they aspired to. Yet, in our days we yielded to the suppression of the then governments, having to live in the backwater of human rights, or democracy. Being frightened, we had had the government we deserved. In 1987-1988 or so, people’s endurance reached the climax on the totem pole, and people overthrew the government. The uprising made the then youths love truth and yearn for good governance. However, they needed a good leader who could lead the whole populace. Fortunately enough, there emerged respectable leaders and the leader assumed to bring about the fruits for our future, who can lead us — most of the whole populace. Our national leader, Bogyoke Aung San did not give us a worthy leader as desired by him. We ourselves recognized our worthy leader on our own.

It is natural for the new breed of political leaders to take the place of the dying breed of elder statesmen one day. Young but medium level educated-and-inexperienced politicians in our country are strong-minded. In my opinion, we need such kinds of people in our country, especially in such a time of building up a nation. Being qualified is better than being certified, especially in our country, because our poor education systems produced myriad amounts of graduates and post graduates in the past 50 years or so. We should stop and think if we were really qualified for the degrees we had already got. Education or knowledge can be acquired through books. But, knowledge cannot come into our minds just by sitting in a library all the time. Knowledge acquired from books can help fortify our spirits, beliefs, judgments and intellects, broaden our visions, change our mindsets and become a well-qualified person or leader. As for me, I want our leaders-to-be to read a lot, so as not to be called naive by those who will always blame others. We are watching your abilities, capacities and simplicity. We will designate you as worthy successors, on behalf of our great leader.



A pair of Ayeyawady dolphins are seen in the conservation area in the Ayeyawady River near Mandalay.

Rare Species — Ayeyawady Dolphins

Maung Tha (Archaeology)

OUT of the myriad of aquatic animals that flourish in the water of the present world, only three species of warm-blooded mammals are found living in aquatic habitat. Those mammals are dolphin, whale and dugong all of which except one species of dolphin are found in sea water. (30) different species of dolphin are known so far and only one is found as fresh water species and its scientific name is Orcaella brevirostris. It is widely known as Ayeyawady Dolphin.

Sir Richard Owen recorded in 1866 about his discovery of Ayeyawady Dolphin species in 1852 near the harbor of Visakhapatnam on the eastern coast of India.

An English naturalist, John Anderson had been to Myanmar and made a research exploration along Ayeyawady river from 1871 to 1879. During his research trip he discovered the round-snouted ash grey dolphin in Ayeyawady river and he became the first person who ever had discovered such type of fresh water dolphin. When he got back to London he wrote a research paper under the title “Description of a new cetacean from the Irrawaddy River, Burma” and submitted to London Zoological Association. He described those ash-grey dolphin as Ayeyawady Dolphin in his paper and henceforth it has been widely known as Ayeyawady Dolphin. The similar

species found in other parts of the world are also referred to Ayeyawady Dolphin.

Myanmar and its Ayeyawady Dolphin

Professor H.G Luce of History Department, University of Rangoon wrote a research paper in Burma Research Association Journal with title “Ancient Pyu” in which Professor Luce mentioned that he found out the fact that the dolphin was discovered in Ayeyawady river and was then called “River Pig” in a record that had been written about Pyu. According to that record of Pyu era we can deduce the fact that the Ayeyawady dolphins have been inhabiting in the Ayeyawady river



Fishermen catch fish in the Ayeyawady River with the help of a dolphin. PHOTO: MYANMAR BIODIVERSITY.ORG

er since the time of Pyu ie. more than 1000 years ago.

Apart from Myanmar waters, the species are also found in Chilka Lagoon near Orrisa State sea coast of India, Mahakan River of Indonesia Borneo Island, Songkla Lake of Thailand and Mekong River.

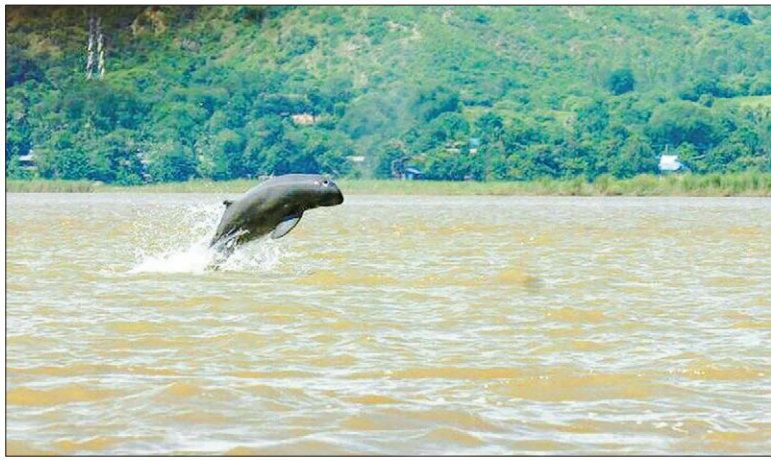
Though Anderson recorded his finding of Ayeyawady dolphin between Yenanchaung and Bhamo, Ayeyawady dolphins now occur only in the upstream of Mingun of Ayeyawady river. Myanmar Fisheries Department and Fauna Conservation Association has acted on the conservation of dolphins by dividing the 275 miles long part of Ayeyawady river between Mingun

and Bhamo into 6 segments as follows:

1. From Myazedi village upstream of Bhamo to Sinkhan
2. From Sinkhan to 2nd Defile near Shweku
3. From 2nd Defile to Tagaung
4. From Tagaung to Sanpanago
5. From Sanpanago to 3rd Defile of Kyauk Myaung
6. From Kyauk Myaung to Mingun

Out of those segments, the part between Kyauk Myaung and Mingun is the area most flourishing with Ayeyawady dolphins. 20 to 23 dolphins are usually found in

“ Myanmar is also doing its best to conserve the dolphins by monitoring, controlling and deterring the catching, catching by electric shock and killing of dolphins.



An Ayeyawady Dolphin seen jumping out of the water. PHOTO MCS

this part of the river and 46.25 mile long segment 6 between Kyauk Myaung and Mingun has been designated the main area for dolphin conservation.

Dolphins and fishermen

The dolphins thriving in the segment between Mingun and Kyauk Myaung are famous for having the very peculiar and interesting characteristics. The dolphins in this area demonstrate the enigmatic relationship with fishermen. They are supposed to assist the fishermen in finding the clusters of fish. The strange activities of dolphins are fascinating the people, both local and foreign and the dolphin lovers usually visit the place to watch the peculiarity of dolphins, thus forging a business in tourism like Dolphin Watching Tourism.

There are 10 villages between Kyauk Myaung and Mingun, fishermen from 7 villages are fishing with the help of the dolphins. It is so enthralling to watch the fishing with the help of dolphins that Dolphin watching Tourism will boom in near future.

A fishing boat is usually handled by two fishermen, one at the stern pedaling and steering the boat and the other throws the net into the water for catching the fish. The rower usually brings two oars, one short and another long one. Short one is used for propelling and the long one is used as punting pole for pushing the boat ahead in the very shallow part of the river where propelling by oar is impossible, by thrusting the long oar at the river bed and force the boat forward. The rower also brings a short wooden stick about one foot long with one end having about one inch in diameter and tapering to the other end.

The fishermen, when they are out fishing, try first to find the dolphins by inquiring the farmers working on the nearby bank and those working on sand bars in the middle of the river. Dolphins, being the warm blooded mammals, do not live long under water and often come up to the surface to breathe in the air. So people even on the distant bank can see the location of dolphins.

When the fishermen find the place of dolphins, they row their boat and approach the dolphins as nearly as possible and beat the side of the boat by the stick they bring rhythmically. Dolphins know the vibration produced by beating and they have sharp sensor to detect the location from where the vibration

comes. Commonly two to three dolphins come to the fishing boat and stay at a reasonable distance.

A dolphin supposed to be the leader of the group surges its head above the water and then sets its tail vertically above the water. The formation of this type of display indicates the signal for the fishermen to be ready to catch the fish. When the dolphin exposing its tail horizontally above the water and slaps the surface of the water, the fishermen understand it is the signal to follow them. The fishermen then follow the dolphins which lead to the place where they can find the fish.

The strange relationship and understanding each other between the fishermen and the dolphin is quite interesting. The dolphins signal the fishermen to be ready for fishing by showing its tail straight up above the water as they see the cluster of fishes in the water below. When the fisherman at the bow of the boat, on seeing the signal from dolphins gets himself ready for fishing.

The leader having its tail straight up above the water and swimming in a semi-circle shape is actually trying to drive the fishes stay in group in a circle. The other dolphins are also swimming around the fish with intention to deter the fishes from straying away. Those activities of dolphins are known as “scaring fish”(ngar chauk) “assembling fish”(ngar su) and “showing for fishing”(kunchet pya). Those three separate terms are collectively called “Si Kho” by local people. The places of fishes presence shown by dolphins are commonly around the sandbars, in the channels between two large sandbars and in shallow parts of the river.

Once the fisherman saw the dolphin’s tail straight up above the water and swaying sideways, he throws the fishing net into the water. Dolphins never take the fishes caught in the net for food, they are just devouring fishes outside the net. It is quite amusing to see the natural rule exhibiting the sharing of food between the fishermen and dolphins. They help fishermen in finding the fish but never breach the nature’s law of sharing food.

The relationship between fishermen and dolphins is something like a joint venture practiced in human business. Combined effort of dolphins and human beings can make an appreciable volume of food that is shared between the partners according to the natural rule. The fishes in the net are for

man and those outside the net are for dolphin. Another amazing thing about the astuteness of the dolphins can be seen in their nature that they never show the fish-flourishing place in deep water where most of the fishes are usually caught in the net and their share outside the net is remarkably reduced. They usually show the spot rich with fishes in shallow water where their shares are increased.

Conservation of dolphins

Average weight of Ayeyawady dolphin is between 200 and 400 lbs. and it has 12 to 19 teeth. The body is measured to be long about 7 ft. and the girth is about 4 ft. A male dolphin found in Thailand measured 9 ft. in length. Life span is about 30 years and can do reproduction at the age of 7 to 9 years. Conception period is 14 months and usually give birth a single baby. Dolphin can swim 12 to 14 miles an hour and hear the sound with vibration wave 60KHz.

The population of dolphin in the world is reduced to 7000 and they occur only in Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, India and Bangladesh. Every country is now striving to conserve the dolphins and Myanmar is also doing its best to conserve the dolphins by monitoring, controlling and deterring the catching, catching by electric shock and killing of dolphins.

In 2007 and 2008 NHK of Japan and German television and news media came to Myanmar and made television documentary on the life of dolphins and their activities in connection with finding the fish-thriving spot for the fishermen. The documentary was shown in their countries and Myanmar Ayeyawady dolphins could have attained worldwide interest and attention. The tourists taking riverine trip along the Ayeyawady river take television or photo records of the Ayeyawady dolphins. Dolphin lovers are also visiting Myanmar to watch the activities of dolphins in support of the fishing of local fishermen.

Despite high growth of population in the past, the Ayeyawady dolphin population is dwindling and only 70 dolphins were counted by the survey in 2014. Local people should have more awareness for the conservation of dolphins whereas the institutions concerned are now taking measures to prevent dolphins from extinction.—Translated by Khin Maung Win

May wins House of Commons backing for snap general election



Scottish National Party (SNP) leader and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon (R, front) speaks outside the houses of Parliament with deputy SNP leader Angus Robertson in London, Britain, on 19 April 2017. Members of Parliament in the British House of Commons gave their backing Wednesday to prime minister Theresa May's call for a snap general election on 8 June. PHOTO: XINHUA

LONDON — Members of Parliament (MPs) in the British House of Commons gave their backing Wednesday to Prime Minister Theresa May's call for a snap general election on 8 June.

MPs voted by 522 votes to 13 to support the election which May sees as a mandate for her strategy for Britain leaving the European Union (EU).

As the measure does not need approval from the House of Lords, the process of dissolving parliament next month in advance of the election will get underway.

Under current legislation, parliaments have to sit for five years before new elections take place. A two-thirds majority of MPs

must agree to a move that will shorten the lifespan of a parliament. As the last general election took place just two years ago, the vote was crucial for May.

She passed the required minimum needed of 434 MPs in support, after opposition MPs, mainly from Labour and the Liberal Democrats, voted in favor of an election.

May has already won approval from Queen Elizabeth for the snap election.

MPs, the PM said, have a window of opportunity to hold a general election before negotiations with the EU begin. May added that securing the "right deal" with Brussels for Britain is her priority.

Downing Street said the June election will not

affect May's Brexit timetable.

May told MPs the upcoming snap election will be about leadership and stability, saying: "I will be asking for the public's support to deliver my plan for a stronger Britain. The choice before us is clear: to trust the people and then let the public decide."

She said a general election will provide Britain with five years of strong and stable leadership to see the country through its negotiations with the EU to make sure "we are able to make a success of the EU referendum result."

"Britain is leaving the EU and there can be no turning back," asserted the British PM. Critics of an early election accuse

May of taking advantage of low ratings for the main opposition Labour Party. May has been insisting until days ago that she had no intention of calling an early election. Some opinion polls have put Labour more than 20 points behind the Conservatives.

May will be going into the election holding 330 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons, with a working majority of 17. The main opposition Labour Party has 229 seats, but many of the party's MPs are estranged from their leader Jeremy Corbyn.

May and her Brexit ministers face tough negotiations with Brussels to agree a deal for Britain after it leaves the EU. —Xinhua

Macron hangs on to lead in French election, Le Pen's camp rows with Brussels

PARIS — Centrist Emmanuel Macron clung on to his status as favourite to win France's presidential election in a four-way race that is too close to call, as the camp of far-right challenger Marine Le Pen ramped up its eurosceptic rhetoric in a row with Brussels.

A closely-watched Cevipof opinion poll published on Wednesday showed frontrunners Macron and Le Pen both losing some momentum ahead of Sunday's first round, and conservative

Francois Fillon and far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon still in contention for the second round run-off.

With millions of French voters still undecided or planning to abstain, the vote is the most unpredictable in France in decades and investors are nervous about potential last-minute surprises that could trigger market turmoil.

Le Pen and Melenchon, who both pitch themselves as defenders of French workers, say they could

take France out of the European Union and the euro currency. Banks have requisitioned their staff to be at their desks through the night on Sunday to enable them to respond fast to the outcome.

Le Pen has pressed hard her anti-immigration, anti-globalisation message as she seeks to mobilise voters. As she prepared for the last big rally of her campaign in the Mediterranean city of Marseille, her camp became embroiled in an angry Twitter exchange with

the European Commission.

Reacting to Le Pen's refusal to appear on France's TF1 television channel on Tuesday unless the EU's yellow-starred blue flag was removed, the Commission tweeted: "Proud of our flag, a symbol of unity, solidarity and harmony between the people of Europe. Let's not hide it."

Le Pen's deputy Florian Philippot fired back: "You'll see, we'll soon be sticking your oligarchic rag in the cupboard." —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian police bust terror module, arrest 3 suspected IS militants

NEW DELHI — Indian police on Thursday claimed to have busted a major terror module and arrested three suspected Islamic State (IS) militants on charges of terror conspiracy. A joint team of Delhi Police's special cell and the anti-terror squad of neighbouring northern state of Uttar Pradesh's Police arrested the three IS suspects from Jalandhar town in the northern state of Punjab, Bijnor town in Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai.

"We conducted raids in various places across the country and arrested the trio from the three different places since Wednesday night. They were arrested for hatching terror conspiracies," Additional Director General of Uttar Pradesh Police Daljit Chaudhury, told the media. —Xinhua

47 militants killed in fresh operations in Afghanistan: gov't

KABUL — Altogether 47 militants have been killed in fresh military operations across Afghanistan, said the country's Defence Ministry on Thursday.

"Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) carried out operations to clean some areas from terrorists and enemies of peace and stability of Afghanistan. As a result 47 armed militants were killed, 11 wounded and one was arrested by the ANSF over the last 24 hours," the ministry said in a statement providing daily operational updates. —Xinhua

Russia identifies mastermind behind St Petersburg metro bombing: Russian agencies

MOSCOW — Russia's Federal Security Service has identified the person who orchestrated an attack that killed 14 people on the St. Petersburg metro earlier this month, Russian news agencies reported on Thursday, citing FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov.

"He has been provisionally identified. Yes, yes, identified," agencies cited Bortnikov as saying.

Police have so far detained 10 people they suspect of being involved in the attack. —Reuters

AU probes death of soldier by colleague in Somalia

MOGADISHU — The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) said Thursday it had launched investigations into the killing of one of its soldiers in Bula-burte town in Hiiraan region of central Somalia on Wednesday.

The Djiboutian soldier was reportedly killed by his colleague from the Somalia National Army (SNA) following an argument.

AMISOM Force Spokesperson Wilson Rono confirmed the incident, saying investigation is underway to establish the reasons behind it.

"A soldier from Djiboutian contingent under AMISOM was killed by another soldier from SNA on Wednesday after argument between them in Bula-burte town. We are investigating the cause of the incident," Rono told Xinhua by telephone. —Xinhua

Sri Lanka to upgrade standards for Adventure Tourism

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka will strengthen the standards of its Adventure Tourism in accordance with international standards and the assistance of the tri forces will be sought for this purpose, a statement released by the Prime Minister's Office said here Thursday.

"Adventure Tourism and Adventure Training is fast becoming a popular industry," the statement said.

"There are international standards for all adventure activities, the need was for Sri Lankan standards, equal to the international standards to be developed." —Xinhua

Gates backs Big Pharma push to wipe out tropical diseases

GENEVA — The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Western countries and drug companies pledged fresh support on Wednesday to wipe out diseases that blind, disable and disfigure millions of poor in tropical areas each year and urged new donors to join the fight.

Some 1.5 billion people, mainly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, are infected with one of 18 neglected tropical diseases known as NTDs, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said. One billion of them are receiving treatment, half of them children.

“The best thing with these diseases is not to debate whether they are neglected or not, but to proceed to make them history,” Bill Gates told a global partners’ meeting held at WHO.

“We need a broader, deeper bench of investors... so that by 2030 we can achieve the goal of reaching 90 percent of the people who need treatment. I know this is achievable.”

Gates, who has supported the initiative for over a decade with \$1 billion, pledged \$335 million over the next 4 years, including \$42 million to continue efforts to wipe out Guinea-worm disease.

The crippling disease, transmitted by contaminated water,



Bill Gates (L), co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Margaret Chan (R) after a news conference on neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

can lead to a 100 cm long (40-inch) worm growing in the body.

“Guinea worm is one of our great success stories, even though we’re not absolutely at zero, we are down to very small numbers. Thirty years ago over 3 million people in over 20 countries were afflicted,” Gates said.

Only 25 cases of Guinea-worm disease were reported in six countries last year, “putting eradication within reach”, the WHO says.

The Carter Center, set up by

former US President Jimmy Carter, has worked for more than 20 years to wipe it out.

“We are close to finishing off this debilitating disease,” Carter said, speaking by video from Atlanta, Georgia.

“We cannot be complacent, we must be creative and persistent. The Carter Center will not give up until the last Guinea worm is gone.”

Dengue, onchocerciasis (river blindness), and sleeping sickness are among those carried

by mosquitoes or flies that are spreading from rural areas to urban slums, the WHO warned.

“NTDs are really the diseases of neglected people, they are diseases of poverty and inequality that affect the most vulnerable among us,” World Bank President Jim Kim said by video.

“Now we have the largest drug donation program in history with 1.5 billion treatments in 2015 alone,” he said.

GlaxoSmithKline, Novartis and Sanofi are among major donors, WHO says.

Merck said on Tuesday it was developing a children’s formula of its drug to treat schistosomiasis, a parasitic worm disease which kills 280,000 a year in Africa.

Britain’s Minister of State for International Development, Lord Bates, said the UK government was committing an additional 250 million pounds (\$321.35 million) to NTD programmes.

Belgium’s deputy prime minister Alexander de Croo pledged 25 million euros (\$26.81 million) through 2025 to eradicate African sleeping sickness.

“Today the stars are aligned to eradicate it completely,” de Croo told the talks. “The pay-off is huge.”—Reuters

Police investigating possible 384 million yen cash heist in Fukuoka

FUKUOKA — A man called police Thursday claiming he had been robbed of around 384 million yen (\$3.5 million) in cash just after withdrawing it from a bank in the city of Fukuoka in southwestern Japan, prompting the police to search for three suspected robbers.

The 29-year-old company employee from Tokyo’s Adachi Ward reported to police that he had been sprayed with a substance before being robbed at a parking lot across the street from Mizuho Bank’s Fukuoka branch in the busy Tenjin district of Fukuoka at around 12:25 pm.

The suspected robbers are believed to be a group of three. One of the suspects was wearing gray working clothes, and another was wearing black working clothes with a white head covering and a mask, according to the police.

The other suspect was apparently waiting in a white van in the parking area. They all fled the scene by car, the police said. —Kyodo News

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PETRONAS, an oil and gas company, wishes Myanmar and all citizens possess sustained happiness and well-beings in the auspicious Myanmar New Year

Colombia landslide kills at least 17 as rains lash Andes

BOGOTA — At least 17 people were killed and seven are missing after a landslide sent mud and rocks crashing into several neighbourhoods in Manizales, Colombia, the government said on Wednesday, the second deadly landslide in the country this month.

Recent heavy rains have endangered residents in dozens of provincial towns, where makeshift construction on the slopes of the Andes mountains makes neighbourhoods particularly susceptible to avalanches and flooding.

The landslide in Manizales, capital of coffee-growing Caldas province west of Bogota, followed a similar disaster in Mocoa, Putumayo earlier this month that killed more than 320 people and displaced thousands from their homes.

“We are helping to find the disappeared ... and unfortunately the number will rise,” President Juan Manuel Santos said of the death toll after arriving in Manizales.

At least 57 houses have been affected, the government said.

Local media reported that Manizales received a month’s average rainfall just overnight.

Rescuers from the Red Cross, civil defence, firefighters and armed forces are searching for the disappeared in the mud and debris of destroyed buildings.

Running water, electricity and gas services have been suspended in the areas affected by the landslides.

“The situation in Manizales is very worrying. The toll is sad-denening,” Transport Minister Jorge Eduardo Rojas said after meeting with the province’s governor and the mayor of the city.

The forecast is for at least another two days of rain in the area.

Even in a country where rains, a mountainous landscape and informal construction combine to make landslides a common occurrence, the scale of the Mocoa disaster far surpassed recent tragedies, including a 2015 landslide that killed nearly 100 people.

Colombia’s deadliest landslide, the 1985 Armero disaster, killed more than 20,000. —Reuters



View of a neighbourhood destroyed after mudslides, caused by heavy rains leading several rivers to overflow, pushing sediment and rocks into buildings and roads, in Manizales, Colombia, on 19 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Iraqi forces free new neighbourhood from IS militants in western Mosul

MOSUL — Iraqi security forces on Thursday retook control of a new neighbourhood in the western side of Mosul after heavy clashes against the Islamic State (IS) militants, the Iraqi military said.

The elite forces, known as Counter Terrorism Service (CTS), liberated the neighborhood of al-Thawra in northwest of Mosul’s old city center and raised the Iraqi flags on some of its buildings after days of fierce clashes with the extremist IS militants, Lt. Gen. Abdul-Amir Yarallah, from the Joint Operations Command (JOC), said in a statement.

The recapture of al-Thawra neighbourhood is part of slow push toward the western edge of Mosul’s densely populated old city center, where roughly 400,000 residents are believed to still be trapped under IS rule.

Meanwhile, the federal police and interior ministry special forces, known as Rapid Response, continued their battles on the southern and western front lines at the edge of the old city center.

The troops are trying to advance through the narrow streets in the old neighbourhoods around the historical al-Nuri Mosque in the middle of Mosul’s old city center, the source said.

The progress in the old city

center is much slower than the early phases of the offensive after the troops restricted the use of bombs and increased sniper fire against terrorist militants holed up in densely populated old city center.

The liberation of al-Thawra neighbourhood came hours after the Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi paid a visit to the western side of Mosul and met with Iraqi military commanders and civilians at the freed neighbourhoods of the city.

Abadi, who is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, announced the start of an offensive on 19 February to drive extremist militants out of the western side of Mosul, locally known as the right bank of the Tigris River which bisects the city.

Late in January, Abadi declared the liberation of Mosul’s eastern side, or the left bank of Tigris, after over 100 days of fighting IS militants.

However, the western part of Mosul, with its narrow streets and heavily populated neighborhoods, appears to be a bigger challenge to the Iraqi forces. Mosul, 400 km north of Iraqi capital Baghdad, has been under IS control since June 2014, when government forces abandoned their posts and fled, enabling IS militants to take control of parts of Iraq’s northern and western regions. —Xinhua

Russian navy visits Philippines as Duterte tightens ties with US foes

MANILA — Russian navy vessels arrived in the Philippines on Thursday for joint exercises as part of a drive for new security ties under President Rodrigo Duterte’s revamped foreign policy of courting the traditional foes of Manila’s top ally, Washington. The guided-missile cruiser Varyag, accompanied by the fuel tanker ship, Pechenge, are on a four-day goodwill visit to the Philippines, the second port call by Russian warships in three months.

The move is part of what Duterte describes as a pursuit of a constitutionally mandated “independent foreign policy”. He has made no secret of his grudge against the United States and has made befriending Russia and

China the priority of his diversification drive.

Captain Lued Lincuna, director of the Philippine navy’s public affairs, said the Philippines hoped to learn from the Russians during training activities and a demonstration of advanced equipment and weapons systems.

The schedule includes training and sports activities with the flagship vessel of the Russian Pacific fleet, plus a Russian concert in a park. Russian commander Captain Alexsei Ulyanenko said the port call would make a “significant contribution” to strengthening relations and maintaining stability in the region. Moscow wants to help Manila combat extremism and

piracy, stepping up cooperation and training in areas where the Philippines has traditionally worked closely with its former colonial master the United States. The relationship is expected to develop further next month when Duterte and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin witness the signing of defence agreements in Moscow.

When Duterte met Putin for the first time last year, the Philippine leader spoke at length about what he called US “hypocrisy”.

Duterte has instructed his defence minister to look into how the Philippines could acquire modern military equipment from Russia, like drones, night-vision gear, sniper rifles, and even helicopters. —Reuters

Turkey says European rights court has no jurisdiction over referendum

ISTANBUL — Turkey’s justice minister said on Thursday that any opposition challenge to a referendum that expanded President Tayyip Erdogan’s powers would be rejected by the constitutional court, and Europe’s human rights court had no jurisdiction on the matter.

The main opposition CHP party said on Wednesday it was considering taking its appeal for the referendum to be annulled to Turkey’s Constitutional Court or the European Court of Human Rights after the country’s electoral authority rejected chal-

lenges by the CHP and two other parties.

“If the opposition takes the appeal to the Constitutional Court, the court has no other option than to reject it,” Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag told television news channel A Haber.

“It can also apply to the ECHR, but it cannot achieve a result there either, because the agreements Turkey signed do not give parties the right to apply.”

Bozdag also reiterated government criticism of a report by European election observers

who said the referendum, carried out under emergency law, took place on an “uneven playing field”.

The observers said a last-minute decision by election authorities to allow unstamped ballots to be counted “undermined an important safeguard and contradicted the law which explicitly states that such ballots should be considered invalid”.

Bozdag said the report lacked fairness and objectivity. “Those who prepared this report are partial,” he said. —Reuters

Canada oil sands beefing up defences as wildfire season looms

CALGARY, (Alberta) — Northern Alberta's oil sands producers and communities are stepping up preparations for wildfire season to avoid a repeat of last year's devastating blaze that shut in more than a quarter of Canadian crude output and left thousands homeless.

The May 2016 fire ripped through the oil sands hub of Fort McMurray, destroying 10 per cent of homes in the remote city of 88,000 people and shutting in more than a million barrels of crude production.

The region saw another mild winter, similar to the previous one, but has had a wetter fall and spring which should reduce the wildfire risk. Still, Fort McMurray has added eight new firefighters and begun fire-prevention measures like preemptively burning off vegetation that could fuel fires.

"Burning light fuels like dry grass started a month earlier than normal (this year)," said fire captain Damian Asher, who lost his home in the 2016 blaze.

Companies operating around Fort McMurray including Suncor



A Mountie surveys the damage on a street in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada in this May 4, 2016 image posted on social media. PHOTO: REUTERS

Energy (SU.TO), Canadian Natural Resources Ltd (CNQ.TO) and Royal Dutch Shell (RDSA.L) cut production for weeks because of the fire threat last year, dealing a heavy blow to revenues.

With crude prices hovering around \$50 a barrel CLc1, the high-cost oil sands sector, which has seen an exodus of international investment in re-

cent months, can ill afford more lengthy shut-ins.

Nearly all the projects are surrounded by dense boreal forest that provided ample fuel for last year's blaze.

Canadian Natural and Husky Energy (HSE.TO) said they have enhanced firebreaks at their respective 172,000 barrel-per-day Horizon and 34,000-bpd Sunrise

sites by cutting back surrounding vegetation.

Cenovus Energy (CVE.TO), in the process of acquiring total ownership of its 200,000 bpd Christina Lake and 160,000 bpd Foster Creek projects from ConocoPhillips (COP.N), said it has always kept a clear perimeter of 10 to 30 metres around its operations.

This year, its emergency response plan includes getting firefighters on scene faster by increasing the number of people on-call in its corporate centre Calgary and in the oil sands.

Cenovus has also given staff extra training on evacuations and put new operating procedures in place to improve communication during wildfires, spokesman Reg Curren said.

At Syncrude Canada, the 350,000 bpd mining and upgrading project majority-owned by Suncor, spokesman Will Gibson said the focus was on monitoring mental health and stress levels in employees who had to flee Fort McMurray last year.

Much of the vegetation to the south of the Syncrude site burned last year, but air pollution from large wildfires is a major problem for operators and can also trigger project shutdowns and evacuations.

"We can get smoked out pretty easily," said Gibson. "The flames didn't reach us last year but the smoke was pretty intense."—Reuters

Venezuelan protests against government leave three dead



Riot police take positions during the so called 'mother of all marches' against Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro in Caracas, Venezuela, on 19 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

CARACAS/SAN CRISTOBAL, (Venezuela) — Two Venezuelan students and a National Guard sergeant died on Wednesday after being shot during protests against unpopular leftist President Nicolas Maduro, increasing turmoil in the volatile nation amid a devastating economic crisis.

Opposition supporters protested in Caracas and other cities in what they called "the mother of all marches," denouncing Maduro for eroding democracy and plunging the oil-rich economy into chaos.

Crowds swelled to hundreds of thousands, including Maduro supporters who held a counter-demonstration in the capital at the urging of the president, and clashes were reported across the country during the most sustained protests since 2014.

Maduro says that beneath a peaceful facade, the protests are little more than opposition efforts to foment a coup to end socialism

in Venezuela. The opposition says he has morphed into a dictator and accuses his government of using armed civilians to spread violence and fear.

The deaths mean eight people have now been killed during protests in Venezuela this month. The opposition blames the deaths on security forces and alleged paramilitary groups. Over 400 people were arrested during protests on Wednesday, rights group Penal Forum said. The opposition called for another protest on Thursday, raising the specter of prolonged disruption in Venezuela.

"Same place, same time," said opposition leader Henrique Capriles on Wednesday night. "If we were millions today, tomorrow we'll be more."

Wednesday's dueling marches drew parallels to the clashes between pro and anti-government protesters in 2002 that triggered a brief coup against late President

Hugo Chavez.

Carlos Moreno, 18, a student, was leaving his home to play soccer in Caracas when armed government supporters approached a nearby opposition gathering and fired shots, according to witnesses. He was shot in the head, they said, and three security officials said he later died in a clinic after undergoing surgery.

Later on Wednesday in the opposition hotbed of San Cristobal near the Colombia border, university student Paola Ramirez died after being shot by men pursuing her and her boyfriend, according to relatives and witnesses.

"We were on a motorbike and they were following us, shooting," her boyfriend told Reuters. "I left her on a block where she was going to find her sister and I went to hide the bike. I heard shots and when I arrived she was on the ground. I tried to protect her as much as I could," he added, sobbing in front of her body.

The public prosecutor's office said it was investigating both cases.

The opposition attributed both deaths to groups known as "colectivos," armed government supporters who are frequently accused of involvement in confrontations during protests.

There are few clear ways of identifying colectivos, who call themselves community groups but whom the opposition accuses of being violent paramilitary wings of the ruling Socialist Party. A National Guard sergeant was killed by a sniper during "violent protests" in Miranda state and a colonel was injured, the human rights ombudsman Tarek Saab tweeted on Wednesday night.—Reuters

Two crested ibis chicks hatched in SW China breeding centre

CHENGDU — Two crested ibis chicks were hatched in an artificial breeding center for the endangered species in southwest China's Sichuan Province on Tuesday and Wednesday, local authorities said.

The two crested ibis chicks weighed 55.3 g and 51.7 g, respectively, and were in good health, according to the publicity department of the Emeishan city, Sichuan.

Experts in Sichuan brought 50 crested ibis from Henan, Zhejiang and Shaanxi provinces in November 2016 to establish a breeding program for the endangered bird.

The crested ibis began mating in February. As of Monday, 58 crested ibis eggs were collected for artificial incubation.

More crested ibis chicks are expected to be hatched in the coming days. The successful breeding means Sichuan will be able to rebuild the crested ibis population.

The crested ibis was last spotted 50 years ago in Sichuan's Guangyuan city. There have been no sightings in the province since.

In 1981, seven crested ibis were found in Shaanxi's Yangxian county, which is about 200 km away from Guangyuan.

During the past three decades, the population of crested ibis in China has grown from seven to more than 2,000 due to conservation efforts by the government and academic institutions. The endangered birds are under top national protection.—Xinhua



A staff member feeds a baby crested ibis at a breeding center of Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resources Sciences in Emeishan, southwest China's Sichuan Province, on 19 April 2017. PHOTO: XINHUA

Will Smith in early talks to star in Disney's 'Aladdin'

LOS ANGELES — Actor Will Smith is in early talks to play the Genie in Disney's live-action 'Aladdin' movie.

As Genie, the 48-year-old star would follow in the footsteps of Robin Williams, whose performance in the original 1992 animated film helped propel it to box office success and



PHOTO: PTI

critical acclaim, reported Entertainment Weekly.

"Sherlock Holmes" director Guy Ritchie is helming the new Aladdin movie, working from a script by John August.

The project comes amid a wave of beloved Disney toons being remade as live-action movies.—PTI

Fans thought first 'Star Wars' was a joke: Mark Hamill

LOS ANGELES — Actor Mark Hamill remembers when fans thought the first "Star Wars" film was a joke and says the audience laughed during the cinematic debut. The 65-year-old actor, who starred as Jedi Knight Luke Skywalker in the three original sci-fi films, says fans made fun of the project when "A New Hope" hit screens back in 1977, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

"At the end of the trailer it said: 'a billion light years in the making. And it's coming to your galaxy this summer.' Somebody in the balcony yelled

out: 'yeah and it's coming to the Late Show two weeks after that,'" he says.

The actor, who was at the screening with his now-late co-star Carrie Fisher, who played Princess Leia, says they both giggled with the crowd but adds that they were horrified.

Hamill recently returned to the 'Star Wars' franchise for the 2015 "The Force Awakens" and will be starring in the upcoming "The Last Jedi".—PTI

Stars of 'Unforgettable' attend premiere

LOS ANGELES — The stars of "Unforgettable" came out to premiere the new romantic thriller in Los Angeles on Tuesday night.

In the film, Rosario Dawson plays Julia, a young woman whose life is turned upside down by her husband's ex-wife Tessa, played by Katherine Heigl.

As the film progresses, Tessa becomes more and more obsessive as she tries to exact revenge on Julia.

"I think what I love about this movie is the fact that the women are all in their own ways striving to be perfect and are traumatized by that and are hurt-

ing themselves in their relationships," Dawson said on the red carpet. The film had numerous women in key roles, including Denise Di Novi as producer and director.

Di Novi, who is best known for producing credits including 'Edward Scissorhands', 'Batman Returns' and 'Crazy Stupid Love' was asked to direct by the studio when she pitched the project and demanded a female director - only to find herself being offered the role.

'Unforgettable' goes on release in the United States on 21 April.—Reuters



Katherine Heigl. PHOTO: REUTERS

JULIA ROBERTS NAMED PEOPLE'S 'MOST BEAUTIFUL' FOR RECORD FIFTH TIME

LOS ANGELES — Julia Roberts was named *People* magazine's world's most beautiful woman for a record 5th time on Wednesday, but the actress said she thought her best years were yet to come.

Roberts, 49, was first given the annual honor in 1991, a year after she skyrocketed to fame in the romantic comedy "Pretty Woman." She was also named most beautiful woman in 2000, 2005 and 2010.

"I'm very flattered," Roberts told *People* magazine, adding "I think I'm currently peaking." The actress, who won an Oscar in 2001 for playing against type in "Erin Brockovich," has been married for 14 years to cinematographer Danny Moder, with whom she has three children. Former "Friends" star Jennifer Aniston was last year's most beautiful woman for *People* magazine.—Reuters



Cast member Julia Roberts attends the premiere of "Mother's Day" in Los Angeles, in 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Prince estate seeks to stop release of new music

LOS ANGELES — Plans to release new music by Prince on Friday's one-year anniversary of the singer's death have been hit with a lawsuit claiming the works were stolen by his former sound engineer.

The six-song EP "Deliverance," was due to go on sale on Friday and would mark the first in a series of planned posthumous releases of material by Prince from the large vault of discarded or unfinished material he reportedly left behind.

According to a statement from independent record company Rogue Music Alliance (RMA), the six songs were recorded by Prince between 2006 and 2008.

After his death of an accidental drug overdose in 2016, his sound engineer, Ian Boxill, spent the last year completing, arranging and mixing the songs, RMA said.

Prince's estate however filed a civil lawsuit in Minnesota district court on Tuesday seeking an injunction against the release.

According to the court documents, the lawsuit claims breach of contract, theft and misappropriation by Boxill of the recordings.

Boxill and RMA did not immediately return calls for comment on the lawsuit on Wednesday.

However, Boxill said in a statement on Tuesday that he felt Prince would have wanted

the songs released independently because they were recorded at a time when he was embroiled in disputes with major record labels.

"Prince once told me that he would go to bed every night thinking of ways to bypass major labels and get his music directly to the public. When considering how to release this important work, we decided to go independent because that's what Prince would have wanted," Boxill said.

Prince split with record label Warner Bros. in 1996, when he changed his name to a symbol, but re-signed with them in 2014.

Warner Bros. said in February it would release two albums of new music from the pop funk musician in June, along with a remastered copy of his hit album "Purple Rain" and two complete concert films from the vault of the singer's Paisley Park recording complex near Minneapolis.

Prince died on 21 April 2016, at age 57 of an overdose of the painkiller fentanyl.

The value of his musical legacy, including a cache of unreleased recordings, has been estimated by some to exceed \$500 million when factoring in future royalties, retail sales and commercial rights.

Prince left no will and his estate has been plagued for the past year by disputes among his sister and five surviving half-siblings over how to manage and protect his legacy.—Reuters

Life's illusions catching up with Japan's middle-aged 'parasite singles'

TOKYO — Their youth long gone, members of Japan's generation of "parasite singles" face a precarious future, wondering how to survive once the parents many depended on for years pass away.

Some 4.5 million Japanese aged between 35 and 54 were living with their parents in 2016, according to a researcher at the Statistical Research and Training Institute on a demographic phenomena that emerged two decades ago, when youthful singles made headlines for mooching off parents to lead carefree lives.

Now, without pensions or savings of their own, these middle-aged stay-at-homes threaten to place an extra burden on a social welfare system that is already creaking under pressure from Japan's aging population and shrinking workforce.



54-y-o Hiromi Tanaka plays piano during an interview with Reuters at her house where she lives with her widowed mother in Tokyo, Japan, on 1 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Hiromi Tanaka once sang backup for pop groups, and epitomized the optimism of youth.

"I got used to living in an unstable situation and figured somehow it would work out," Tanaka told Reuters as she sat at the piano in a small parlor of an old house connected to her elderly mother's next

door. Now aged 54, Tanaka relies on income from giving private singing lessons to a dwindling number of students, and her mother's pension to make ends meet. She has no pension plan of her own, and has used up most of her savings.

"My father died last year so pension income

was halved," she said. "If things go on like this, my mother and I will fall together."

Tanaka is one of the growing ranks of "lifetime singles," whose numbers hit a record in 2015, according to data released this month that showed that among 50-year-olds, one-in-four men and one-in-seven women were unmarried.

"During the 'bubble economy' until the mid-1990s, the 20-somethings were happily amusing themselves. They thought by the time they were in their 30s, they'd be married," said Masahiro Yamada, a Chuo University sociologist who coined the term "parasite singles" in 1997.

"But one-third never married and are now around age 50," Yamada told Reuters in an interview.—*Reuters*

You say Austria, I say Australia: Airbus trips up on tricky typo

SYDNEY — Austria and Australia are 16,000 km (9,940 miles) and two key-strokes apart, as European aircraft manufacturer Airbus discovered to its chagrin this week.

The Financial Times, citing fine print in the company's 2016 financial accounts, reported on Monday that Airbus was being investigated by authorities in Australia for offences such as bribery or fraud.

The Airbus accounts did indeed say Australia, but a company spokesman said that was, in fact, a typographical error.

"It should read Austria and not Australia," he said.

In February, Airbus said prosecutors in Vienna had initiated a formal criminal investigation against Airbus and the Eurofighter consortium over alleged fraud related to a \$2 billion

order for the combat jet more than a decade ago.

The typo in the Airbus accounts is the latest in a series of mix-ups between the two similarly named but culturally distinct and geographically distant countries.

Global news network CNN was mocked by Twitter users last year for reporting Australia was building a fence on its Slovenian border.

In 2014, then United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon mistakenly offered his gratitude to hosts Australia when he spoke at a conference in Vienna, according to an Associated Press report. The Airbus spokesman was unable say whether his company planned to file a new set of accounts with regulators, without the geographical gaffe.—*Reuters*

Egypt discovers 3,000-year-old tomb of nobleman

CAIRO — Egyptian archaeologists have unearthed the tomb of a nobleman from more than 3,000 years ago, the latest in a series of major discoveries of ancient relics that Egypt hopes will revive a tourist business that has been hit by political instability.

The find near the Nile city of Luxor, is the tomb of Userhat, a judge from the New Kingdom. It consists of an open court leading into a rectangular hall, a corridor and inner chamber, the Ministry of Antiquities said on Tuesday.

In one of the rooms in the tomb, archaeologists found a collection of figurines, wooden masks and a handle of a sarcophagus lid. Excavation is continuing in a second chamber.

Earlier this year, Swedish archaeologists discovered 12 ancient Egyptian cemeteries near the southern city of Aswan that date back almost 3,500 years.

In March, Egypt unearthed an eight-meter statue in a Cairo slum that is believed to be King Psammetich 1, who ruled from 664 to 610 BC.

Hisham El Demery, chief of Egypt's Tourism Development Authority, said tourism was picking up and discoveries like the one at Luxor would encourage the sector.

"These discoveries are positive news from Egypt's tourism industry, which is something we all really need," he said. Tourism in Egypt has suffered in the aftermath of the mass protests that toppled former president Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Militant bomb attacks have also deterred foreign visitors.—*Reuters*



An Egyptian archaeologist documents the content of the tomb of Userhat, a judge from the New Kingdom at the Dra Abu-el Naga necropolis near the Nile city of Luxor, south of Cairo, Egypt, on 18 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(21-4-2017 07:00am ~ 22-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	To The Land Of Countless Temples - Bagan Trip (EP-1)
07:50	Am	Mt. Naw Bu Baw
08:03	Am	News
08:25	Am	Living in Off-Season
08:38	Am	A May Yay Yin Nat Festival (Episode -2)
08:55	Am	Myanmar Traditional Art Bronze Casting
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Well-trained Elephants
09:36	Am	Shwe U Min Natural Cave In Kalaw
09:52	Am	Myanmar Puppet
10:03	Am	News

10:25	Am	A Lucky Boy
10:42	Am	A Bike Ride in pursuit of Mural Art (Episode-1)

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Visit To Today's Along-Daw-Katthapha
07:43	Pm	The Eel Business (Fisherman the eel culture)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Stories Of The Great Souls (U Pyae Son)

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

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

Stone lion unearthed in downtown Lhasa

LHASA — A stone lion the height of a man was recently unearthed in Lhasa, near what is believed to be a former ministerial office, according to local authorities.

The stone lion, 169-cm tall and 104.7-cm wide, was excavated on 22 March by a team of construction workers on Dosengge Road in Lhasa's city center, according to a Tibet Autonomous Region cultural heritage bureau press release Wednesday. It said that experts from the bureau and Tibet's regional museum had spent weeks doing research before concluding that the statue was dated to the 18th century.

The site was at the former office of grand ministers stationed in Tibet by emperors of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) to supervise local governance on behalf of central authorities.

"Dosengge" means "stone lion" in Tibetan.

"The road was named after the two stone lions that sat at the entrance of the grand minister's office," said Professor Tseten Tashi, Tibet University historian. The ministerial office was inaugurated on Dosengge Road in 1728, a year after the first grand minister was stationed in Lhasa, according to the professor.—*Xinhua*



PHOTO: PHOE THAW ZIN

Poor results of Myanmar FCs; a bit hope for Yadanabon in AFC

All Myanmar Clubs are being faced unfavorable results in 2017 AFC Cup Competition except for Yadanabon FC which still has a bit of hope to step up to the next level while Magway FC has already left from the group.

The results of Yadanabon and Magway FC came to a bad end on April 18 and 19 matches. Global FC guaranteed a top two finish in Group F of the 2017 AFC Cup on Wednesday with a 4-2 away victory over Magway FC.

Magway FC could manage to lead with a goal till the 70 min mark of the match but later consecutive strikers' goals by Global FC caused terrible loss. Magway

FC left with 2 losses and 3 draws after their five played matches.

Yadanabon FC had lost to host Home United FC 4-1 and needs to struggle for second place to step up to the ASEAN zone semifinal.

Even if Yadanabon FC wins the Vietnam Club "Thann Quan Ninh" FC, it will still need to look after other club's standing conditions for the next step.

Myanmar football clubs entered the AFC Cup competition since 2012 and are just pleased with play off stage.

This year, competitions are being held as separated zones and Myanmar Clubs included in ASEAN zone.—Kyaw Zin Lin

Myanmar athletes participate in 2017 Singapore Championship

MYANMAR track and field athletes will participate in the 2017 Singapore Championship hosted by Singapore and they will compete as a trial in their pre-SEA Games preparation.

This competition will be held on 27 April and 28 April. Five Myanmar athletes, includ-

ing 3 men and 2 women, will compete, with U Kyaw Kyaw Win as a coach and event manager. San Naing will compete in the 5,000 and 10,000 meter running events, Pyae Phyo Htun and Aung Myo Kyaw in the 20 kilometer walking competition, Khin Mar Sel in the

5,000 meter running competition and Swe Li Myint in the 800 meter running event. This competition is considered preparation for Myanmar athletes for the 29th SEA Games in Malaysia, with opportunities for good competition and race experience.—200

Myanmar U 19 misses final even wins HAGL with flying goals



PHOTO: MFF

THE last day of the Vietnamese U19 championship was held yesterday evening.

Although they lost in the first two matches, Myanmar defeated Hoang Anh Gia Lai FC 3-0 but missed the final game after the loss to Gwangju FC. Still a technical play, the Myanmar players are impressed by the speed and good physical basis.

Thanks to these things they stood and made it through U.19 Hoang Anh Gia Lai was very difficult to deploy.

Myanmar U 19 got an opening goal by Win Naing Tun at 40 min. The kick-off of Myanmar with a winning streak is a big psychological advantage for the HAGL players.

In the second half, the pressure from the midfield caused U.19 HAGL in many cases to break or lose the ball.

The counter-flashes from those situations helped U.19 Myanmar get two more goals by Heint Htet Aung in the 71st and 82nd minutes which helped him

receive the player's trophy fixing a 3- 0 for Myanmar U 19.

After the group matches, Vietnam U 19 got 9 points, Gwangju got 8 points, Myanmar U 19 got 6 points, HAGL got 4 points and Chinese Taipei only got 1 point. Vietnam U 19 and Gwangju (South Korea) will play the final match for 1st and 2nd place, while Myanmar U 19 and Hoang Anh Gia Lai FC (Vietnam) will fight for 3rd place. Both matches will be held on 22 April.

—Kyaw Zin Lin

Mbappe, Falcao send Monaco into semi-finals

MONACO — Kylian Mbappe and Radamel Falcao struck early as Monaco reached the Champions League semi-finals with a 3-1 home win over Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday that sealed a 6-3 aggregate victory.

French prodigy Mbappe and Colombia striker Falcao scored in the third and 17th minutes before Marco Reus gave the visitors hope with a 48th-minute goal, only for substitute Valere Germain to wrap up the win for the French side nine minutes from time. Monaco joined Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid and Juven-

tus in the last four of Europe's premier club competition.

The kickoff was delayed by five minutes after the German team arrived late at the Louis-II stadium due to traffic problems, UEFA said.

Dortmund said on their Twitter feed that the bus had been held up by police at their hotel for 20 minutes.

The incident occurred a week after the first leg was postponed by 24 hours after the Borussia team bus was attacked with explosives on its way to the stadium.

—Reuters



Monaco's Radamel Falcao celebrates scoring their second goal during UEFA Champions League Quarter Final Second Leg at Stade Louis II, Monaco, on 19 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS