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TOWARDS PROSPERITY

193 UN member states adopt Post-2015 Development Agenda

THE Post-2015 Development Agenda was unanimously adopted by 193 UN member states at the first day of the Plenary Meetings of the United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the Agenda being held on 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York, United States of America, during the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Leaders from the member and observer states of the United Nations, representatives from the organizations related to the United Nations, Non-Governmental Organizations and world leading business associations were present at the occasion. The leaders and representatives from the member states delivered statements regarding challenges, progress and unfinished businesses of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ongoing challenges, and future plans and inputs for implementing the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin delivered a statement on the second day of the Summit. In his statement, the Union Minister underscored that the adopted document entitled "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" which is the result of intensive and inclusive preparations and negotiations of nearly two years by all stakeholders is based on the un-

finished goals of the MDGs of the past 15 years guiding the development efforts for the coming 15 years. He said Myanmar is paying greater attention to enhancing investments in education, health, water and sanitation systems and creation of employment, among others, and has increased annual budget allocation for those sectors, while implementing the MDGs. Myanmar had made its utmost efforts to overcome the challenges in fulfilling the MDGs like other developing countries and is confident that it would likewise be able to address the future challenges in collaboration with the UN and other development partners, the Union Minister said.

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin and Colombia Foreign Minister Mrs. Maria Angela Holguin Cuellar signed the MoU on the Technical Cooperation between Myanmar and Colombia in the morning of 26 September 2015 at the United Nations.

In line with the objectives of the MoU, Myanmar and Colombia will cooperate to strengthen the existing ties of friendship between the two countries by promoting the preparation and execution of programs, projects and any other forms of technical cooperation in areas of mutual interest in accordance with their national legislation.

The Union Minister met the



Two Foreign Ministers exchanging MoU on the Technical Cooperation between Myanmar and Colombia.

PHOTO: MOFA

Netherlands Foreign Minister Mr. Bert Koenders in the afternoon. During the meeting, they exchanged views to promote bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries in the regional and international arena.

The Union Minister also attended the Special High-level

Event on "A New Rural Development Paradigm and the Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities Model inspired by the Saemaul Undong" jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of the Republic of Korea. The event was

also attended by the President of the Republic of Korea Ms. Park Geun-Hye, the Presidents from Peru, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Rawanda, United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Foreign Ministers, UNDP Administrator Ms. Helen Clark and senior representatives.—MNA

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It takes informed reading to be good writers

Myat Sandy Thin Zaw

ATTENDING a literary talk last week nourished my soul with thoughts about how to live like a responsible, well-informed writer who holds ethical codes of conduct in high esteem.

Seasoned writers gave enlightening talks on how works of fiction and non-fiction can best serve the interests of the people through their aesthetic qualities, sharing their views on the strengths and weaknesses of short

stories published online.

Well-known Myanmar writer Kyi Min argued against the notion that the role of short stories either has disappeared or is fading fast. He claimed that such speculations might have some connection with the sales figures of books. According to him, the event was organized with the intention of making the world known to the fact that Myanmar boasts short stories that are up to par in every way with international standards. He urged readers to put aside some time for

aesthetic literary experiences amid distractions of the internet surfing and other forms of entertainment that shorten our attention span.

Kyu Kyu Thin, a famous female writer, stressed that it took informed reading to become a good writer, claiming that online short stories are more of speech than of composition, and that perhaps naturally, many spelling mistakes can be found.

Another female writer Hnin Wai Nyein recognized the intellectual maturity of today's online

novice writers, expressing hope that they were using online media as a training ground and that they would one day try their pen in the print arena.

Ko Yoe Kunt called for undivided attention to be paid to the correct spelling and creative expression as an individual.

"It's hard to write in such a way, but it's certainly worth a try," he said.

The writers recounted great literary works of the past and how they manage their literary efforts.

Chinlone skills on display at Eindawya Pagoda Festival

CHINLONE demonstrations were held at the 41st Eindawya Pagoda Festival, which began on Saturday. The demonstrations will continue at the festival from 9am until midnight every day until 25 October.

Chinlone is a popular sport among Mandalay residents as well as a major tourist attraction in the city. It sometimes called 'cane ball.' A total of 895 teams from around the country will take part in the demonstrations, with 30 teams performing every day during the festival for 30 minutes each.—*Tin Maung*



Chinlone players show their skill at Eindawya pagod festival. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG

Geologists discuss earthquake risks



Geologists in Mandalay and Indonesian earthquake expert discuss Seismology.

PHOTO: TIN MAUNG

THE Myanmar Geosciences Society held a discussion on earthquake hazards in Mandalay on Friday.

Indonesian seismologist Professor Dr Subagyo presented a study on tectonic plates and geohazards, which was later discussed by participants.

Associate Professor Dr Tun Naing led a discussion on seismic microzonation, which is defined as the process of subdividing a potential seismic or earthquake prone area into

zones with respect to some geological and geophysical characteristics of the sites such as ground shaking and liquefaction susceptibility, so that seismic hazards at different locations within the area can correctly be identified.

The associate professor said that earthquakes affect cities differently due to differences in soil types. He said soil variations explain why sometimes cities near the epicentre of an earthquake suffering less

damage than those further away from it.

The professor said that such a phenomenon is rare in Myanmar, but is nonetheless worth understanding because the country is prone to earthquakes. The Sagaing Fault is the most active fault in the country – it stretches about 1,500 kilometres from northern Myanmar to the Gulf of Mottama. An earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale killed 10 people in Shan State in March 2011.—*Tin Maung*

Tech savvy course to start in Oct at MIIT

A NINE-MONTH postgraduate diploma course on software development will begin at Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIIT) on October 23. An event was held to introduce MIIT and its new website on Sunday. It was attended by Mandalay Region's Minister for Finance Dr Myint Kyu and the Consulate General of the Indian Consulate Mr Nanda Kummer and held at Mandalay ICT Hall.

The governments of India and Myanmar collaborated in developing the curriculum with the aim of creating job opportunities for young people in Myanmar. Links have been forged between MIIT and the Indian graduate school of International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore,

(IIIT-B) which will see students in both countries exchange views via teleconferences and the like. Students who enroll at MIIT will be provided with a laptop, software, reference books and digital resources. Applications can be submitted via the website of the University of Computer Studies in Mandalay (<http://www.ucsm.edu.mm>) by 9 October. Those who wish to sit the entrance exam must send a passport sized photo (taken within the last six months), a copy of the applicant's undergraduate degree certificate and final year marks to miitmdystd@gmail.com by October 9. Qualified applicants will be required to sit entrance exams at the Universities of Computer Science in Mandalay and Yangon on October 16.—*Thiha Ko Ko*



Links have been forged between Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIIT) and the Indian graduate school of International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

Mandalay and Thai business networking event held

MEMBERS of the Mandalay Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the International Trade Department under Thailand's Ministry of Commerce met on September 24 at the Wilson Hotel in Mandalay to discuss business and investment opportunities.

MFCCI President U Aung Than and MFCCI Secretary Dr

Maung Maung explained the region's investment opportunities, with the two sides discussing a number of potential areas for trade, including the food industry, interior design and home decoration, spare motorcycle parts, high-end construction and manufacturing construction tools. The event also included a business matching session.—*Thiha Ko Ko*



Myanmar and Thai businessmen eye cooperation. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

Township associations of Ayeyawady Region offer Waso robes

THE Waso Robe Offering Ceremony of township associations and trusteeship committee Ayeyawady Region Prayer Hall was held at the prayer hall in Bahan Township, Yangon, on Sunday.

Present at the ceremony were

Sayadaws, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Chief Minister U Thein Aung of Ayeyawady Region and officials.

First, the congregation received the five precepts from the Pro-rector Sayadaw of State

Theravada Buddha University and offered robes to monks.

The Pyithu Hluttaw speaker accepted cash donation for monks at the ceremony and presented certificates of honour to well-wishers.—MNA

Asia-Pacific scouts visit Yangon schools



Officials of Asia-Pacific Chapter of World Organization of Scout Movement seen with members of Myanmar Scout Federation. PHOTO: MNA

THE Myanmar Scout Federation and the Asia-Pacific chapter of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement held a joint coordination meeting on Saturday in Yangon.

Representatives from the Myanmar Scout Federation explained its current activities to Asia-Pacific Regional Director

Mr J. Rizal C Pangilinan.

They visited No. 1 Basic Education High School in Dagon Township to observe its scout troop's activities, including its first-aid services and the scouts' skills with rope and other materials. The meeting will continue on 28 September at the University

of Yangon, the Practising High School at the Yangon Institute of Education, and No. 2 Basic Education High School in Kamayut Township. World Organization of the Scout Movement will provide assistance for courses that will enable Myanmar Scout Federation to become a member.—MNA

What they stand for: campaigns aired

The Kachin State Democracy Party, the Kachin National Congress for Democracy and the Lisu National Development Party broadcast campaign speeches on state radio and television networks on Sunday.

Kachin State Democracy Party



KSDP central executive committee member and spokesperson Dr Nang Zain Lu Ang said his party places emphasis on peace, democracy and the fight against narcotic drugs. He said the party also seeks to serve interests of the people, prevent activities that are harmful to the people of Kachin State, to preserve Kachin State as a political entity and to pursue the ideals of peace, national unity, justice and the rule of law.

Kachin National Congress for Democracy



KNCD central committee member Daw M.D Khaw Nyaei expounded her party's policies by first explaining the history of the party, which was founded by Kachin youths in 1949. She said the party aims to establish a genuine federal union, to amend the 2008 constitution, to work towards peace and strengthen democracy and human rights. She said the party will also work to raise living standards among the people of Kachin State.

Lisu National Development Party



LNDP patron U Le Paw Yei said the Lisu National Development Party promotes federalism, foreign direct investment, international education standards and quality healthcare for all citizens in Myanmar. The party will also strive for equal civil and human rights of all citizens, including ethnic minorities. He said eliminating discrimination against ethnic groups is essential to ensuring national unity and peace.—GNLM

Union Minister observes vocational training courses in Shan State

UNION Minister for Livestock, Fisheries, and Rural Development U Ohn Myint inspected the construction of a new training facility in Lashio, Shan State, on 25 September.

The union minister also met with staff of the Rural Development Department, Livestock and Husbandry Department, Fisheries Department and Bee Office. He explained his ministry's people-centred Emerald Green Rural Development Project, vocational training courses available to Lashio residents and the ministry's cooperation with international organisations to ensure

that urban and rural areas develop evenly. The minister and his team visited Khaynin village to observe courses being taught as part of the Emerald Green Rural Development Project and met with local community leaders

The team also inspected the Emerald Green Rural Development Project's managerial course at the Lashio District Rural Development Department. The minister urged trainees to master the project's implementation manual and pass their knowledge on to fellow community members and to devise effective bookkeeping systems.—MNA



Union Minister U Ohn Myint and party inspect construction of training facility for rural development. PHOTO: MNA

Construction Deputy Minister inspects roads and bridges

DEPUTY Union Minister of Construction U Soe Tint inspected bridges and roads between Mandalay and Monywa on Thursday.

The deputy minister met with members of the local road department in Sagaing Division and listened to details of proposed projects and progress in

the B.O.T system. Housing projects for government staff were also discussed, including those who were affected by the recent floods. The deputy minister also explained the priorities of the national rehabilitation process and urged authorities to complete recovery works as soon as possible.—MNA

Asphalt paver demonstration held in Kyauske

A TRAINING session on how to operate asphalt laying pavers was held on September 26 in Kyaukse, Mandalay Region. It was attended by Mandalay City Mayor U Aung Moun, and senior region officials, as well as 20-odd trainee-engineers

from Kyautsae, Nyaung Oo, Meikhtila, Pyin Oo Lwin, Yemaethin and Myingyan. Two pavers were recently purchased by the region government's city development committee, which lies under the mayor's office.—Thiha Ko Ko

Two, not three, party speeches to be broadcast today

CAMPAIGN speeches delivered by representatives from the Dawei Nationalities Party and the Federal Union Party will be broadcast on state radio and television networks on 28 September. MRTV, the Hluttaw channel, Myawady TV, Myanmar Radio and Shwe FM will broadcast the speeches.

Although three political party speeches are usually broadcast every day during the campaign period, only two speeches will be broadcast today because the Kachin Democratic Party is not participating in the broadcast programme.—GNLM

ELECTION COUNTDOWN

Make your voice count. Cast your vote.

41 DAYS

Anger continues over the disaster at the world's largest gathering last week

Jessica Mudditt

AT least three Myanmar pilgrims are confirmed to have been killed in a stampede that took place week during the Hajj in Saudi Arabia.

Another 10 Myanmar citizens are missing and the Myanmar Embassy in the Saudi capital of Riyadh has told local media that the numbers of Myanmar people who travelled to Saudi Arabia for the world's largest gathering is unknown.

Travel agencies do not inform the embassy of the numbers of people booked to attend the

annual hajj pilgrimage, which attracts some millions of people every year, according to The Myanmar Times on Sunday.

The three confirmed dead are Daw Nwe Aye, 57, Daw Moe Moe Aung, 34, and U Kyaw Than, 47, who was on a Myanmar-Saudi Arabia government programme.

The Hajj is a pilgrimage in the holy city of Mecca that every able-bodied Muslim with sufficient financial means is obliged to make once in their lifetime.

A central executive member of the Myanmar Muslim Nation-

al Federation, U Ko Ko Latt, told The Myanmar Times that 3,850 Myanmar pilgrims travelled to Mecca for the Hajj. This included 280 people who were supported by the Saudi government under a bilateral agreement.

On 23 September, at least 769 people were killed while 934 were injured during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, with media reports claiming the cause was the closure of a road near the "stoning of the devil" ritual.

The Saudi government has sparked anger by claiming that the deaths were caused by the pil-

grims' behavior, who they said failed to follow the instructions of authorities.

Last week's stampede is the second most deadly incident to have occurred during the hajj: 1,426 people were killed in 1990. Iran is asking the Saudi government to take responsibility for the deaths of 131 of its citizens, while protests have been held in Iran.

Saudi King Salman has ordered a review of hajj plans and the health minister promised to launch an investigation on Friday, Reuters reported.

India's Modi prides Gandhi family legacy from heirs

NEW DELHI — A stately New Delhi mansion, once home to India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and now a museum to his life, has emerged as a flashpoint in the growing ideological war between his heirs and the Hindu nationalist government.

Since trouncing the Congress party of the Nehru-Gandhi family

in a general election last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has chipped away at the dynasty's grip on India's post-colonial history.

For long-term dominance in the world's second-most populous nation, Modi has to ensure his pro-business, conservative ideology prevails over the secular, so-

cialist legacy bequeathed by Nehru.

Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma, who is in charge of overseeing the teak-panelled museum that preserves Nehru's portraits, writing and the rooms he lived in, wants the institution to reflect a wider range of India's past and present leaders.

Earlier this month, the government of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) forced out the head of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, a historian seen as close to the Gandhi family. The historian, Mahesh Rangarajan, did not respond to requests for comment. A replacement has not yet been named.—Reuters

China, Bangladesh pledge closer cooperation

UNITED NATIONS — Chinese President Xi Jinping met here Saturday with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the two leaders agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in various areas.

Calling Bangladesh "a good neighbour, good friend and good partner," Xi said Beijing regards Bangladesh as an important cooperation partner in the South Asia-Indian Ocean region and stands ready to maintain high-level exchanges with Dhaka and expand bilateral cooperation in such key areas as trade, production capacity, energy development and infrastructure construction.

He urged the two countries to make a success of the activities marking the 40th anniversary of bilateral ties, boost cooperation in education and radio and TV services and between universities, and facilitate personnel exchanges.

The two countries should also maintain communication and coordination on major international and regional issues, Xi said, adding that China will provide assistance within its capacity for Bangladesh to cope with climate change.

Noting that the Chinese people are endeavoring to realise the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation and have launched the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative, Xi said China hopes to share the development opportunities with its neighbours and friends, including Bangladesh.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) meets with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in New York, the United States, 26 September, 2015. PHOTO: XINHUA

Beijing, he added, encourages Chinese companies to invest in Bangladesh and is willing to provide financing support for major cooperation projects the two sides have agreed to.

Also, China values the constructive role Bangladesh plays in promoting the construction of an economic corridor connecting Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar, and will work closely with all other sides to achieve results as soon as possible, added the Chinese president.

Hasina, for her part, said Bangladesh and China have built a close partnership since the establishment of diplomatic relations 40 years ago and Dhaka is

grateful to China for its long-time assistance for Bangladesh's social and economic development.

Expressing her great pleasure to attend the South-South cooperation roundtable Xi hosted at the UN headquarters, she said her country and other developing countries deeply welcome the measures Xi announced at the conference.

Bangladesh, she said, is willing to strengthen cooperation with China in such areas as trade, finance, infrastructure construction and culture, and will actively participate in cooperation programs under the framework of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar corridor.—Xinhua

Malaysia air pollution spikes due to Indonesian smoke

KUALA LUMPUR — Air pollution in Malaysia's capital spiked to "very unhealthy" levels Sunday as acrid smoke billowing from Indonesian agricultural fires intensified, in an environmental crisis that is fraying regional tempers.

Pollution readings soared past the 200-point level Sunday morning in the Malaysian government's hourly air-quality index, a threshold that triggers automatic school closures during weekdays.

As the haze built up in Malaysia on Saturday, an airport just outside Kuala Lumpur closed temporarily in the afternoon as visibility dropped to less than 400 metres (yards).

The closure forced at least 20 flights to be cancelled, according to Malaysian media reports, and followed Singapore's shuttering of schools on Friday as air there worsened to "hazardous" levels.

Parts of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have been shrouded for weeks in a choking smoke haze from tinder-dry parts of Indonesia's Sumatra island.

The haze crisis — the worst since mid-2013 — grips the region nearly every year during the dry season, when agricultural land is illegally cleared by burning.

Indonesia has faced pressure from its neighbours to address the problem since it first emerged about 20 years ago.

But the issue has persisted, especially as plantations have expanded, driven in large part by rising global demand for palm oil, a key ingredient in a vast range of everyday consumer products.

Malaysian skies have been a smoky grey for most of the past month, and authorities on 15 September ordered schools closed in Kuala Lumpur and neighbouring states.

Singapore Foreign Minister K Shanmugam on Friday lashed out at what he called "shocking statements" by senior Indonesian officials perceived as making light of the problem. Haze levels in Singapore had improved by Sunday, dropping below the "unhealthy" mark.

Indonesian authorities have indicated the problem may not clear up anytime soon. National Disaster Management Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said Saturday that "fires continue to rage" despite a push to extinguish the blazes on farm expanses and peatlands that has included the deployment of military personnel.—AFP

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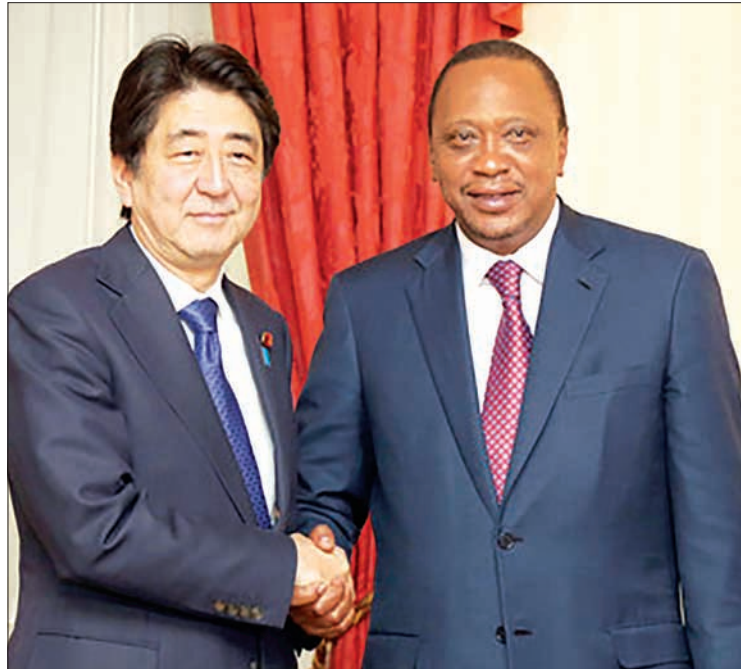
Japan to eye health, extremism in development talks with Africa

NEW YORK — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Saturday that Japan will focus on ways to improve the health system in Africa and curb extremism there during next year's Tokyo-led African development summit, which will be held on the continent for the first time.

In a meeting with African leaders and officials in New York, Abe said Japan will show its contribution to the restructuring of the health system in Africa and antiterrorism measures such as the fight against the Boko Haram extremist group at the next summit in Kenya of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

Abe said Japan will back up African people's "firm will" to overcome challenges such as the Ebola virus outbreak, the expansion of violent extremism and terrorism, and falls in commodity prices — issues that have posed a threat to Africa's economic foundations, peace and stability since the last TICAD summit was held in 2013 in Yokohama.

"In cooperation with each African country and each co-sponsor, Japan is determined



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (L) and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta shake hands in New York on 26 September, 2015, ahead of their talks. The two leaders agreed to closely cooperate in ensuring the success of the TICAD summit in Kenya next year. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

to ensure success in the next TICAD summit for Japan, Africa and the whole of the international community," Abe said in the meeting, which was broadcast live on the Internet.

The prime minister was re-

ferred to co-sponsors the United Nations, the World Bank and the African Union Commission.

Abe rallied Africa's support for Japan's bid to become a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council from next

year. He also sought close cooperation with African countries in reforming the 15-member council so as to better represent the international community of the 21st century.

"A majority of discussions at the Security Council concern peace and stability of Africa," he said. "Japan is determined to make proactive contributions to such discussions, and we would like to have your support."

In a separate meeting, Abe and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta agreed to closely cooperate in ensuring the success of the TICAD summit in Kenya, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Referring to Japan's security laws enacted last week, Abe said they represent Japan's specific action to further contribute to peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world, the ministry said in a news release.

Kenyatta expressed support for the laws that expand the scope of operations of Japanese troops abroad, saying the international community needs to take steps actively in the face of new types of threat, it said.—*Kyodo News*

Swiss asylum shelter destroyed by fire overnight

ZURICH — A Swiss asylum shelter was destroyed by a fire overnight on Sunday, leaving its 24 residents uninjured but dislodged from their temporary home.

More than 70 fire fighters fought the blaze that broke out shortly after midnight at the Kaltbrunn, St. Gallen, home, before bringing the fire under control after two hours.

The 14 residents present at the time were able to leave the burning house unhurt.

They were temporarily lodged in the municipality's civil defense facility, located in the town school, and it is now up to the municipality to determine where they will stay, police said. The police's forensic services are investigating the matter, a spokesman for the cantonal police said, but the cause of the fire remains unknown. Neither arson or most other possible causes could be ruled out, he said, adding it was not yet known where in the house the fire started.

The municipality could not immediately be reached for comment.—*Reuters*

Nepal takes fuel-saving measures after India's tacit trade blockade

KATHMANDU — Nepal launched measures Sunday to save fuel after supplies stopped arriving from India in an apparent punitive trade blockade by the world's largest democracy against its landlocked neighbour following the adoption of a new Constitution ignoring New Delhi's objections to some clauses.

The blockade has resulted in acute shortages in all kinds of fuel including gasoline and diesel in Kathmandu. Most fueling stations are shuttered, and the few that are open are struggling with long queues.

"The measure has been announced to make the most efficient use of available fuel in view of Indian Oil Corporation's refusal to supply fuel to Nepal."

— *Laxmi Prasad Dhakal*

Nepal's Home Ministry has announced an odd-even registration number system effective from Sunday for all vehicles except those operated by security agencies, essential services, and government monitoring units.

Under the system, vehicles with even registration numbers are allowed to operate on even dates and those with odd numbers on odd dates.

"The measure has been announced to make the most efficient use of available fuel in view of Indian Oil Corporation's refusal to supply fuel to Nepal," said ministry spokes-

man Laxmi Prasad Dhakal.

Nepal relies completely on India for its fuel imports. The country imports 25,000 kiloliters of gasoline, 80,000 kl of diesel, 2,000 kl of kerosene, 12,000 kl of aviation fuel and 22,000 metric tons of cooking gas from Indian Oil on a monthly basis.

A cooking gas shortage has also gripped Kathmandu, with most gas retailers having been forced to close shop.

To prevent an aviation shutdown, the government has asked international airlines to refill at airports abroad.

India denies imposing a blockade on Nepal and blames the situation on "unrest, protests and demonstrations on the Nepalese side, by sections of their population."

Nepal's Foreign Ministry has voiced concern over "undue delay in the movement and

clearance of Nepal-bound cargo vehicles" on the Indian side of the border.

"This decreased flow has been noted particularly since 23 September, whereas the security situation has remained the same for more than a month and has been improving gradually," the ministry said in a statement.

India has not welcomed Nepal's new Constitution, which was overwhelmingly adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 20 September. On the contrary, it has increasingly brought pressure to bear on Nepal to address demands of groups protesting in southern Nepal.

The protesting Madhesis, who have cultural and linguistic affinity with India, are demanding more land in their province and greater representation for their group.

Nepal's new charter federates the country into seven prov-

inces, of which one has been carved out for the Madhesis. According to the Constitution, this province will have eight of Nepal's 75 districts. However, the Madhesis are demanding all 22 districts stretching from east to west of southern Nepal in their province.

Nepal's trading routes with China have remained closed since massive quakes in April and May resulted in landslides damaging the routes.

The blockade by India has led to complete trade isolation of Nepal.

Nepal's major parties have repeatedly invited Madhese parties, comprising just 9 percent of the parliament, for talks and have said their reasonable demands can be addressed by amending the Constitution. But the overtures haven't been fruitful. The Constitution passed by 507 to 25 votes.—*Kyodo News*

Malaysia summons China envoy over comments on planned pro-Malay rally

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia has summoned China's ambassador to clarify his remarks criticising extremism and racism ahead of a planned pro-Malay rally in the capital.

Local newspaper The Star said on Friday Ambassador Huang Huikang had warned that Beijing had no fear of speaking out against actions that threatened

its interests and affected the rights of its people.

"The Chinese government opposes terrorism and any form of discrimination against races and any form of extremism," The Star quoted Huang saying.

Huang's reported comments preceded a planned rally by a Malay-dominated, pro-government group that was reported to demand

more Malay participation in Petaling Street, where most vendors are ethnic Chinese.

China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Malaysia's foreign ministry said it would meet Huang on Monday to clarify comments that "attracted attention and caused concern to the Malaysian public".

Huang made the comments during a visit to the popular Petaling Street market, known as Chinatown, on Friday. Rally organizers said on Friday night they had cancelled the planned protest on advice from the police.

Mostly-Malay 'red shirts' had taken the streets with 30,000 marchers in the middle of September to show support for Prime

Minister Najib Razak, who is battling allegations of corruption and mismanagement at indebted state fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB). But previous anti-government protests, critics said, led by a pro-democracy group called Bersih and which attracted many urban Chinese people, had insulted the country's Malay leaders.—*Reuters*

Cuba's Castro slams US trade embargo at United Nations

UNITED NATIONS — Cuba's President Raul Castro, speaking at the United Nations for the first time, on Saturday hailed renewed diplomatic ties with the United States as "major progress" but slammed a US trade embargo as the top obstacle to Cuba's economic development. Castro and US President Barack Obama in December announced a detente following more than half a century of animosity between the former Cold War foes that culminated in the restoration of diplomatic relations on 20 July.

Although Obama has taken

steps to ease trade and travel restrictions, only the US Congress can lift the full embargo and that is not viewed as likely at the moment. The embargo is "the main obstacle to our country's economic development, while affecting other na-

"Such policy is rejected by 188 United Nations members states that demand its removal."
—Raul Castro

tions due to its extraterritorial scope, and hurting the interests of American citizens and companies," Castro told a UN summit of world leaders on sustainable development.

"Such policy is rejected by 188 United Nations members states that demand its removal," he said, referring to an annual UN General Assembly resolution that has condemned the US embargo for more than two decades.

Cuba estimates the embargo has caused \$121 billion in damage to its economy. It has launched a campaign for the General Assem-



Cuba's President Raul Castro. PHOTO: REUTERS

bly to again adopt the resolution calling for the embargo to be lifted. UN diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Washington is considering abstaining from the UN vote on the resolution, provided the draft text is amended from previous years to tone down the criticism of the United States.

Adoption of the resolution has become an annual ritual. The United States and Israel have always voted against the declaration. While the General Assembly's vote is nonbinding and symbolic, it has served to highlight US isolation regarding Havana.—Reuters

Catalonia vote opens with separatists tipped to win

BARCELONA — Polls opened Sunday in a regional election in Catalonia seen as the most important in Spain's recent history, with separatists tipped to win. Polling stations opened under cloudy skies in Barcelona, where red- and yellow-striped Catalan flags hung from buildings, AFP reporters saw.

More than 5.5 million of Catalonia's 7.5 million inhabitants were eligible to vote at nearly 2,700 polling stations across the region. A pro-independence alliance led by regional president Artur Mas has vowed to proceed towards a declaration of independence by 2017 if it secures a majority in the regional parliament, even if it manages to do so without a majority of votes.

Spain's central government brands secession illegal and has called for the country to stay united as the eurozone's fourth-big-



A woman casts her ballot during a regional parliamentary election in Barcelona, Spain on 27 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

gest economy recovers from recession. Madrid says Catalonia would drop out of the European Union and eurozone if it broke away from Spain.

"Catalonia decides its future

in Europe," ran Sunday's front-page headline in the centre-right national daily El Mundo.

"The future of Catalonia is at stake," said Catalan daily La Vanguardia. Centre-left national El

Pais declared the ballots "historic" on its front page.

Nationalists in Catalonia, which has its own language and cultural traditions, complain that they get less back from Madrid than they pay in taxes.

Separatist demands have surged in the recent years of economic crisis. Mas wants Catalonia to follow the example of Scotland and Quebec in Canada by holding a vote on independence — though in both those cases most voters rejected a breakaway.

Since Madrid has blocked Mas's efforts to hold a straight referendum, he has framed Sunday's election for the regional parliament as an indirect vote on secession. Madrid has garnered support in the dispute from world leaders such as US President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron, who have defended the unity of Spain.—AFP

While EU governments demur, refugees find a welcome on the Web

PARIS — With one million people expected to seek asylum in Europe this year and governments arguing over how to cope, thousands of volunteers are taking to the Internet to offer refugees shelter free of charge.

In France, the Netherlands and other European countries, private individuals are proposing free lodging via Web-based platforms inspired by Airbnb, the home rental venture that has flourished with the rise of smartphones.

Some fear private endeavours may complicate government efforts to direct the refugee flow, or simply prove too short-lived as the strains of sharing a home take their toll.

"It's laudable symbolically but it's not the model favoured by the state," said an official at the interior ministry of France, where arrivals are despatched to accommodation centres or state-paid hotel rooms. But refugees, many of whom relied heavily on mobile phone maps and communications during their journey to Europe from Syria, Iraq or Africa, will find plenty of offers online.

On one Irish website, more than 1,000 people "pledged a bed"

for refugees within three hours. In Germany, "Refugees Welcome" offers a matching service to put people with lodgings in touch with refugees. One French venture, Singa, has registered 10,000 offers of free lodgings since it started up in June and now has 10 volunteers working full time to match refugees with hosts.

"We're overwhelmed. We had no idea there would be such an enthusiastic response," said founder Nathanael Molle. So far, Singa has put 47 refugees in homes around Paris.

Civil servant Clara de Bort, 40, used to rent a spare room to paying tourists. Now she shares her home for free with Aicha, a woman who fled ethnic conflict and forced marriage in Chad and who has been through 14 different state-funded accommodation centres and hotels since she arrived two years ago.

Aicha, 25, recently equipped with a book to help her learn French, hopes for a convivial living arrangement and eventual stability. "What I need now is to speak French properly, get a job and find a HLM (long-term social housing)," said the Arabic-speak-

er. She asked not to have her family name published.

Dutch-based Refugee Hero, whose founders describe it as a "mobile-friendly website with similar functionality to Airbnb", says 50 refugees have made contact since it started a few days ago.

It has yet to conclude a placement but already "we've got over a hundred listings from all over the world, from Portugal to Brazil, to Austria and the Netherlands," Ay-

oub Aouragh, one of three young co-founders, told Reuters.

Jurrien ten Brinke in the Dutch city of Apeldoorn aims to fill gaps in public housing and is linking up with non-governmental organisations to train volunteers to help refugees. More than 24,000 people have signed up to help and 6,000 of them are offering to house refugees if and when the authorities acknowledge they are stretched.—Reuters



Syrian refugees disembark from a fishing boat at a beach on the Greek island of Lesbos after crossing a part of the Aegean Sea from the Turkish coast to Lesbos on 27 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Canada opposition Liberals vow crackdown on tax loopholes

OTTAWA — Canada's opposition Liberal Party, under fire for promising to run budget deficits if it wins an 19 October election, said on Saturday it would raise billions by cracking down on tax loopholes and trimming expenditure.

Most recent polls show the center-left Liberals stuck on around 30 percent with both the rival New Democrats and the ruling right-of-center Conservatives, who are trying to pull off a rare fourth consecutive victory. The Liberals say they need to run deficits for three years to help finance a national infrastructure programme needed to bolster a sluggish economy. Rival parties, who promise to keep the budget balanced, say the Liberals will run short of money and the deficits would be crippling.

In a detailed costing of their programme, the Liberals said that by the 2019/20 fiscal year they would raise C\$3 billion (\$2.3 billion) annually by cutting expenditure and boosting personal income tax revenue.

"We are very confident we can find these savings ... I think it is the responsibility of any government to continue to seek ways to spend taxpayers' money prudently," said Liberal legislator John McCallum, a former national revenue minister.

The Liberals promise to cut tax benefits for those earning more than C\$200,000 a year, cap how much people can claim through stock option deductions and clamp down on tax evasion.

The Conservatives, who insist they are the only party capable of managing the economy, said careful study of the documents revealed Liberal leader Justin Trudeau was in fact hiding a \$6.5 billion hole. "(His) recklessness means \$6.5 billion in new tax hikes on top of the billions in tax hikes he has already promised, all while running massive deficits," said Employment Minister Pierre Poilievre.—Reuters

Iraq says Russia, Iran, Syria cooperating on security issues in Baghdad

BAGHDAD — Iraq said on Saturday that its military officials were engaged in intelligence and security cooperation in Baghdad with Russia, Iran and Syria to counter the threat from the Islamic State militant group, a pact that could raise concerns in Washington.

A statement from the Iraqi military's joint operations command said the cooperation had come "with increased Russian concern about the presence of thousands of terrorists from Russia undertaking criminal acts with Daesh (Islamic State)."

The move could give Moscow more sway in the Middle East. It has stepped up its military involvement in Syria in recent weeks while pressing for Damascus to be included in international efforts to fight Islamic State, a demand Washington rejects.

Moscow's involvement in Iraq could mean increased competition for Washington from a Cold War enemy as long-time enemy Iran increases its influence through Shi'ite militia allies just four years after the withdrawal of US troops.

By raising the stakes in Syria's four-year-old civil war, Russia has prompted its Cold War foe to expand



Riot policemen stand in front of protesters during demonstration against the poor quality of basic services, power outages and calling for trial of corrupt politicians in Baghdad, Iraq, 4 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

diplomatic channels with it.

Western officials have said US Secretary of State John Kerry wants to launch a new effort at the UN General Assembly this week to try to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict.

Diplomacy has taken on new urgency in light of Russia's military build-up in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and a

refugee crisis that has spilled into Europe.

Critics have urged US President Barack Obama to be more decisive in the Middle East, particularly towards the Syrian conflict, and say lack of a clear American policy has given Islamic State opportunities to expand.

Russian news agency Interfax quoted a military diplomatic

source in Moscow as saying the Baghdad coordination centre would be led on a rotating basis by officers of the four countries, starting with Iraq.

The source added a committee might be created in Baghdad to plan military operations and control armed forces units in the fight against Islamic State.

A Russian foreign ministry

official told Interfax on Friday that Moscow could "theoretically" join the US-led coalition against Islamic State if Damascus were included in international efforts to combat Islamic State and any international military operation in Syria had a United Nations mandate.

Iraqi officials on Friday had denied reports of a coordination cell in Baghdad set up by Russian, Syrian and Iranian military commanders aimed at working with Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

The armed groups, some of which have fought alongside troops loyal to Assad, are seen as a critical weapon in Baghdad's battle against the radical Sunni militants of Islamic State.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari said in New York on Friday that his country had not received any Russian military advisers to help its forces but called for the US-led coalition to bomb more Islamic State targets in Iraq.

Despite more than \$20 billion in US aid and training, Iraq's army has nearly collapsed twice in the last year in the face of advances by Islamic State, which controls large swathes of territory in the north and west of the OPEC oil producer.—Reuters

France carries out first air strikes on IS in Syria

PARIS — France said Sunday it had carried out its first air strikes against the Islamic State group in Syria following nearly three weeks of surveillance flights.

The office of President Francois Hollande said the strikes were aimed at targets identified during surveillance missions conducted since 8 September.

The operation to "fight the terrorist threat" of IS was coordinated with regional partners, a statement said.

"We will strike any time our national security is at stake," it said.

In an announcement earlier this month, France cited self-defence as its rationale for planning the strikes, while ruling out ground operations.

French planes are already involved in air strikes against the jihadists in neighbouring Iraq. The announcement of the

strikes in Syria comes the day before Hollande joins world leaders for the start of the UN General Assembly in New York, where the four-year Syrian war is expected to be at the centre of debate.

Sunday's statement from the French presidency called for a "comprehensive response (to the) Syrian chaos", saying: "Civilian populations must be protected against all forms of violence, that of Daesh (IS) and other terrorist groups, but also against the murderous bombings of (Syrian President) Bashar al-Assad."

Iran and Russia have given strong backing to Assad, whom the United States and European countries such as France see as the instigator of a civil war that has left 250,000 dead and large parts of his country in the hands of IS.

Russia meanwhile has ruffled the West by strengthening its military presence in Syria in recent weeks.

Ahead of the UN gathering, US Secretary of State John Kerry met with Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif on Saturday to discuss Syria.

Washington refuses to accept a peace process that would leave Assad in power and so has backed and armed small "moderate" rebel groups.—AFP

Nearly 30,000 foreign fighters went to Syria and Iraq: report

NEW YORK — US intelligence fears nearly 30,000 foreign fighters have traveled to Iraq and Syria since 2011, many of them to join the Islamic State group, The New York Times reported Saturday.

The number, which reportedly includes many westerners including perhaps 250 Americans, represents a doubling of last year's US assessment and will dismay US war planners.

The New York Times' report cites anonymous "intelligence and law enforcement officials."

Saudi general killed on Yemen border

RIYADH — A Saudi general has been killed in the south of the country near the border with Yemen, where he had been "defending the country", the army announced Sunday.

Brigadier General Ibrahim Hamzi, deputy commander of the 8th brigade in Jazan, died from his injuries after being taken to hospital, Saudi Arabia's official news agency said, without giving the date or exact circumstances of the incident.

He is the second high-ranking Saudi military official to have been announced killed on the Yemen border this weekend.

A colonel and another border guard were killed late Friday

In recent weeks, there have been allegations that the US military has been playing down the IS threat in intelligence reports, to paint a rosier picture of its efforts.

But US President Barack Obama will on Tuesday next week chair an international summit on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly for leaders fighting the IS group and "violent extremism." And on Tuesday, a US Congressional report into foreign fighter flows is expected to paint a bleaker picture, suggesting that a year of US-led air

strikes has not slowed recruitment.

Aside from the aerial bombardment of IS targets by a US-led coalition of Arab and Western powers, the Pentagon has also set up a \$500 million programme to train "moderate" Syrian rebels.

But this, too, has proved an embarrassment.

A first cross-border foray by 54 US-trained fighters was defeated by an Al-Qaeda linked militia and a second appears to have traded many of their arms to jihadists for safe passage.—AFP

in a gun battle after a landmine blast along the frontier with Yemen, according to the interior ministry.

Several other Saudi soldiers have also been killed since March when the kingdom formed an Arab coalition to fight Shiite Huthi rebels in Yemen.

In June, a Saudi lieutenant colonel died in a landmine blast in Jazan, while another general was killed in cross-border fire in August.

Riyadh launched air strikes against the Huthis to support the internationally-backed government of Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, which was losing ground.

Saudi Arabia feared the Huthis would take over all of Yemen and move its neighbour into the orbit of the Sunni kingdom's Shiite regional rival Iran.

But the rebels have lost territory since late July when the coalition began deploying ground troops in support of local forces.

Around 70 people have been killed in Saudi Arabia from border shelling and skirmishes since the coalition campaign began. Soldiers have accounted for most of the border casualties.

The United Nations says nearly 4,900 people, including a vast number of civilians, have been killed in Yemen since late March.—AFP

"We will strike any time our national security is at stake."

— The office of President Francois Hollande

PERSPECTIVES

Play it fair and square

Kyaw Thura

For a country to be truly democratic, the election process must give voters full and unfettered rights to choose their representatives in government. It is obvious that political parties and independent candidates are key stakeholders who are assigned to perform the representative function of the public in general.

All politicians are responsible for encouraging their fellow supporters to play an active

part in the political process by convincing them how effective their votes are in shaping the policies for the country. Another important thing about standing for election is that the electoral competition must be fair and peaceful, as well as free from hate speech and defamation. That is to say, there ought to be no dirty tricks.

On top of that is electoral integrity, which is central to the success of elections. This case highlights the importance of winning public support. Not only the election commissions but also the political parties and independent candidates must strive for credible public support. Otherwise, electoral integrity becomes more of a political problem than a technical problem.

At a time when people in Myanmar still feel reluctant to get involved in the political process,

the inaccuracies of the electoral rolls no doubt pose a major hindrance to potential voters. This calls for political parties, independent candidates and voters to come up with more sense than prejudice. Our hope is to build a genuine democracy without further hindrance.

Write for us

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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.

Minister of Culture visits ancient Toungoo capital



Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu inspects old moat in Toungoo. PHOTO: CULTURE MINISTRY

ON Friday, Union Minister of Culture U Aye Myint Kyu visited the site of the ancient capital city of Toungoo in Bago Region.

Among Myanmar's six historic dynasties, the Toungoo Dynasty was one of the most accomplished. The Toungoo Dynasty went on to reunite the for-

mer territories of the Bagan Kingdom for the first time since 1287.

The Toungoo Dynasty was founded by King Mingyi Nyo in 1485, whose empire survived until 1752. The Second Myanmar Empire, as the dynasty's holdings are often described, stretched from Assam in the

west to Indochina in the south-east. The ancient city walls, moat and palace site of Taungoo, which is located in the centre of Myanmar, are now surrounded by modern residential neighbourhoods. Many of these sites are kept intact by the residents of Taungoo, who recognise and promote their historical

significance. The union minister instructed his staff to keep systematic records of the remnants of the ancient capital.

The site of the palace, known as 'Tharadipaaungchawady,' currently houses the compound of No. 2 Basic Education High School in downtown Toungoo.—GNLM

Deputy health minister observes Comprehensive Health Plan preparation

DEPUTY Minister for Health Dr Thein Thein Htay inspected the rural health office in Nathuye village, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, on Sunday. The office is offering training courses to health professionals in preparation for the enactment of the Comprehensive Health Plan.

The government's Comprehensive Health Plan can only be drawn after the healthcare needs of rural areas are thoroughly recorded, the deputy minister said. After the visit, the group discussed their findings at the Pyinmana Township hospital.

The four-day training course is scheduled to be conducted at the Ministry of Health.

Following their training courses, senior health officer trainees from various regions and states will conduct their own training courses for their respective township health personnel.—MNA



Deputy Minister for Health Dr Thein Thein Htay discuss health matters with officials at the rural health office in Nathuye village, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. PHOTO: MNA

Land leases given to Thaungtha Township villagers

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein arranged for land leases to be given to 34 residents of Tamangyi village in Mandalay Region on 26 September.

The leases will provide legal land ownership to the villagers, which will improve their living standards and social status. The new land owners will be able to sell their plots or use them to secure bank loans, which will enable many to sustain small business enterprises.

The leases are also expected to raise the value of the villagers' land plots.

The land leases were presented to the 34 villagers by Myingyan district commissioner U Myint Thin Aung, who also chairs the District Rural Land Lease Presentation Committee, in Tamangyi village.

The commissioner said more leases will also be given to villagers who are living in the areas surrounding the village.

At the presentation ceremony, recipients of the land leases offered words of gratitude.—Kyaw Myo Naing (Thaungtha)

Ballot booth officers attend training course in Thaungtha

THAUNGTHA Township's ballot booth officers and their deputies were given an orientation course on election procedures at the township's high school on 27 and 28 September.

Township election commission chairman U Soe Naing lectured the 132 trainees on their duties and powers. He also explained how to prepare for the election, how to distinguish between valid and void ballots and how to process advance votes.

The national election will take place on November 8.—Kyaw Myo Naing (Thaungtha)

Cycle of Debt Leeches off the Poor as Illegal Lending Flourishes

Tin Mg Oo & Moh Moh Kyi

WHILE running a small business in Yangon can be a way out of a low-paid laborious job it can also create a cycle of debt, most often financed by black market money lenders.

Ni Ni Tun (not her real name), who sells Mot-phathtote (a sweet and spicy ball of sticky rice), said that paying back money to lenders is a routine chore – the money she loans to do her business must be paid back every 24 days before more can be borrowed for the next round of supplies.

She moved from Mandalay to Yangon's suburban South Dagon township, where she started from scratch.

"I am not educated so I can only earn a small salary if I work somewhere as a full-time worker. Instead, I borrow money at a daily interest rate from a money lender and use it for my snacks business. I earn about K8,000 per day," she said.

During the term of the recent government, the Ministry of Cooperatives and even some political parties and organisations have provided loans to finance people in need. The Ministry of Cooperatives asked for \$400 million from China to provide loans to individuals, out of which \$200 million has arrived.

Banks and government departments also provide loans for small and medium enterprises. However, informal money lending at exorbitant and unfair interest rates is still widespread in the society, especially among poor people.

U Win Shwe, a union level

lawyer, told Myanmar Business Today, "Although some loans are provided by government organisations there is still illegal money lending at 20 percent interest rate. There are people who are running away without paying back loans and some have been accused of theft in court. Many lives are getting destroyed."

When people borrow money from an illegal money lender, a contract is written mentioning that the owner entrusts this person with the money for a period, but it does not mention the interest paid. If someone does not pay the money back, the original principal can be recovered in court.

Currently, illegal lending of money takes many forms, with interest rates of 10, 20 or as high as 25 percent, to be paid back daily or monthly. When it is the time to pay back the loans people usually borrow from other money lenders and the vicious cycle continues.

"Informal money lending at exorbitant and unfair interest rates is still widespread in the society, especially among poor people."

A woman living in South Dagon said, "I lend money at 10 percent interest rate to people who I know. But for those who are not familiar to me, the interest rate will be 20 percent. If it is with a daily interest rate, for instance, a customer borrowing K10,000 has to pay K500 per day for 24 days."

U Win Shwe said that there is a Microfinance Law that was enacted in 1954, but the law has not been updated and is completely out of date. For instance, the amount of fines for illegal money lending specified in the law is a maximum of K200 (16 cents). There is a provision of two years' imprisonment also, but U Win Shwe said illegal money lenders usually bribe their way out of it.

This is only a part of why many illegal money lending businesses have thrived in Myanmar. These illegal businesses have persisted because people can borrow money easily, without the hurdles of official channels. Accurate data and documents are needed to borrow money from banks or other official lenders. For example, there are associations providing loans but papers like household member list need to be submitted. The loans are provided after 10 days of application and it can amount only up to K100,000 (\$78).

Daw Ye, a resident of South Dagon township, said, "There are some associations providing loans with only small interest rates in our ward. But the household member list needs to be submitted. I rent my house so I don't have the household member list with the address of this house. Therefore I can't borrow money."

Interestingly, political parties and associations also provide loans with cheap interest rates, claiming to "reduce poverty and provide investment to develop



small industries". One person living in South Okkalapa said these loans are usually used by people to pay back informal money lenders.

U Aung Thein Lin, head of the Yangon branch of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), said that USDP provided K500 million (US\$388,000) in loans with cheap interest rates in Yangon region in 2011.

"I was fired from my position because of problems about the loans. We encountered huge issues when the time arrived to get back the money. I just couldn't make people to pay back their loans. I was fired after being accused that my persuasive skills are not good. Now, I know it is not appropriate to provide 'monetary help' in this way for the development of people."

Currently there are many illegal money lenders in the country and businesses have expanded widely. U Aung Thein Lin said that actions can be taken and a sentence of two years' imprison-

ment can be handed if such operation is found illegal according to the law.

Daw Ye said, "We know the interest rate is unfair. But when we need money urgently, we borrow from them. My husband transfers money every month but it is not enough. We cannot borrow money immediately from associations when we need. But it is easy to get from money lender."

A member of the Parliament U Thein Nyunt recently urged the Parliament to take action on illegal money lenders. Brigadier General Kyaw Zan Myint, deputy minister for home affairs, promised that actions will be taken against illegal money lenders according to the Microfinance Law. However, one police officer said that no such actions have been taken against illegal money lenders until now.

(This article was originally published in Myanmar Business Today on 17 September 2015.)

Nay Pyi Taw primary schools honour outstanding students

WIN of Wisdom private Primary School in Tatkon, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, honoured its outstanding students from the 2014-2015 academic year on 26 September at Aung San Hall.

Eight scholarships and punctuality prizes were given

to the top three students in kindergarten, first grade, second grade and third grade by township education officer U Tint San and other school staff.

According to a school official, the school's daily schedule includes study time, as well as

physical education and family time for the students.

The school also cooperates with parents in making time for students to watch films, play video games and read books, added the official.

On the same day in Pob-

bathiri Township, outstanding students were honoured at the township's No 13 Basic Education High School.

Othaya District education officer U Ba Tun, township deputy education officer U Maung Tint and school princi-

ple U Tin San presented awards to teachers and 24 outstanding students.

At the ceremony, students performed songs and dances after the awards were distributed.—*Tin Soe Lwin (IPRD) and Shwe Ye Yint*



Win of Wisdom's children show their skill at the awarding ceremony. PHOTO: TIN SOE LWIN

Global regulators reach agreement on bail-in bonds plan for top banks

LONDON — Global regulators have reached a draft agreement on a rule on stopping banks from being “too big to fail” by requiring them to hold enough equity capital and bonds to avoid taxpayers being called on in a crisis.

The proposed standard is known as total loss absorbency capacity or

TLAC and Bank of England governor Mark Carney — who chairs the global regulatory Financial Services Board (FSB) — has described it as the last major reform after the 2007-09 financial crisis forced governments to shore up lenders.

The rule will apply to nearly all the 30 big banks

that the FSB has deemed to be “globally systemic” such as Goldman Sachs (GS.N), Deutsche Bank (DBKGn.DE) and HSBC (HSBA.L).

“At today’s meeting FSB members discussed the TLAC impact assessments, and agreed the draft final principles and the updated term sheet,” the FSB

said in a statement late on Friday. The FSB did not publish details of the agreement, but a source familiar with the deal said it mirrored proposals made at a G20 meeting in Ankara earlier this month.

That would see the two-stage introduction of a buffer of debt from 2019 that can be “bailed in” to raise equity equivalent to 16 percent of a bank’s risk-weighted assets, the source said, rising to 20 percent from 2022.

The FSB said members supported consistent implementation of the robust minimum standard, adding that the TLAC standard and its timelines would be finalised by the time of the G20 Summit in November.

Separately, the FSB also approved the first version of a similar rule for major insurers, the Higher Loss Absorbency standard, which requires them to hold an extra buffer on top of the basic capital requirements.—Reuters

Facebook founder calls for universal Internet to help cure global ills



Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during his keynote address at Facebook F8 in San Francisco, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS — Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and a host of celebrities kicked off a campaign on Saturday to make Internet access universal, saying this was critical to fulfilling the United Nations’ newly adopted agenda to combat global ills.

Calling for efforts to ensure Internet access for everyone globally by 2020, Zuckerberg said Internet connections are a dynamic tool for sharing knowledge, creating opportunities, lifting communities out of poverty and promoting peace.

“A ‘like’ or a post won’t stop a tank or a bullet, but when people are connected, we have a chance to build a common global community with a shared understanding,” Zuckerberg told at a private luncheon with business leaders at the United Nations.

“That’s a powerful force.” The 193 UN member nations on Friday formally adopted a sweeping set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, or

SDGs, that aim to end poverty and combat inequality and climate change over the next 15 years and call for shared peace and prosperity.

The objectives, described as “a to-do list for people and planet” by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, are intended as a roadmap to be implemented by government and the private sector. The connectivity campaign calls on governments, businesses and innovators to bring the Internet to the some 4 billion people who now do not have access, organisers said.

Signing on to the connectivity campaign were U2 star Bono, co-founder of One, a group that fights extreme poverty; actress Charlize Theron, founder of Africa Outreach Project; philanthropists Bill and Melinda Gates; British entrepreneur Richard Branson; Huffington Post editor Arianna Huffington; Colombian singer Shakira, actor and activist George Takei and Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales.—Reuters



The Canary Wharf financial district is seen at dusk in east London. PHOTO: REUTERS

Fans flock to first-ever video game live-streaming expo

SAN FRANCISCO — Video gamers who live-stream their matches online and the throngs of fans who tune in daily to watch them swarmed a first-of-its kind convention in San Francisco on Friday, as interest swells in the medium of online video game broadcasting.

Lyndon Lauder, 23, traveled from Montreal, Canada, in hopes of meeting his favourite player, Jaryd “summitlg” Lazar, who has attracted more than 1 million followers to his game broadcasting page.

“If I see him, I’m just going to tackle him,” Lauder joked.

Gaming-focused conventions are nothing new, but TwitchCon 2015 is the first time fans, aspiring broadcasters and the virtual stars they watch will come together for a two-day conference dedicated solely to online game broadcasting.

Twitch, the biggest online home for game live-streams with roughly 100 million unique viewers per month, is hosting the event and expects 15,000 gamers to attend.

Lauder, both fan and broadcaster, goes by “Lyn-

donFPS” online. He said Twitch recently invited him into an exclusive revenue-sharing partnership after he built a large enough following on his own.

By hobnobbing with other fans at the conference, he hopes to raise his profile enough to quit his job as an electrician and focus full-time on live-streaming himself playing the popular zombie survival horror game H1Z1 and other titles.

“It’s what I like to watch and what I like to do,” he said.

Exact numbers of how many players are able to make a career of game

broadcasting are hard to pin down, but Twitch Vice President of Marketing Matthew DiPietro said “dozens” of people are earning six-figure salaries on Twitch, and more have turned it into full-time jobs.

Opportunities for players are likely to grow. Amazon.com Inc acquired Twitch in August 2014 for \$970 million after outbidding Google Inc, which launched a rival service in June, dubbed YouTube Gaming.

The growth of game broadcasting has coincided with a parallel surge in competitive gaming in the United States. In August,

Seattle’s Key Arena was sold out for a video game tournament that featured a \$18 million prize pool.

At San Francisco’s Moscone Centre West, attendees wandered past booths at which companies pitched their latest streaming-related technology to up-and-coming broadcasters, stopped in to listen to panels on subjects ranging from women in gaming to building an online presence, and lined up for the chance to pose for selfies and get autographs from their favourite players.

Jordan Maron, who goes by the handle “CaptainSparklez” online and has 1.2 million followers on Twitch and about 7 million subscribers on YouTube, had several dozen people waiting in line to for the chance to briefly meet him.

The 23-year-old gamer, who recently tweeted out a picture of a Bentley luxury car he bought, said he lives “comfortably” but is most rewarded by hearing from people he’s inspired with his playing.

“Whenever I get to meet people like that,” Maron said, “That’s pretty awesome.”—Reuters



A man wears a headset while playing ‘The Walking Dead’ video game at TwitchCon 2015 in San Francisco, California on 25 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

India to launch first astronomical observatory

NEW DELHI — The countdown has begun for the launch of India’s first home-made astronomical observatory that will be launched Monday, a space official said Sunday.

“AstroSat, which is intended to study distant celestial objects, will be launched by the state-owned Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) from the southern spaceport of Sriharikota around 10 am (local time) Monday,” he said, on condition of anonymity.

The official added: “It will be placed in an orbit which is almost 650 kms

above the surface of the Earth and is expected to have a mission life of five years.”

If the launch is successful, then India will join an elite club — the United States, European Union and Japan which have so far managed to have their own telescope in space. The space observatory will be launched on board the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle that will also carry six tiny satellites of three foreign countries, weighing around 118 kilograms. These satellites will include four US satellites, the official said.—Xinhua

US culls over 1,200 Oregon cormorants, sparks outcry

PORTLAND — The US federal government has killed more than 1,000 seabirds on an Oregon island since May to protect endangered salmon as part of a plan that environmentalists say is flawed and are seeking to stop with a lawsuit.

So far, 1,221 adult cormorants have been killed and more than 5,000 nests destroyed, US officials said on Friday, adding the killing was expected to continue until mid- to late October when the seabirds migrate for the winter.

“Government agents are racing about in their boat blowing birds out of the sky,” said Bob Sallinger, conservation director of the Audubon Society of Portland. “The public has a right to see how the federal government is squandering millions of taxpayer dollars



Double-crested cormorants nest at Tommy Thompson Park in Toronto. PHOTO: REUTERS

“We would prefer not to have to kill the birds but this is based on the science and the research that we’ve been doing for years.”

— **Diana Fredlund, Army Corps of Engineers Portland District**

killing protected wild birds.”

The government workers started culling the birds on 24 May as part of a multi-year plan to kill 11,000 double-crested cormorants, which US wildlife officials say are putting endangered salmon at risk by eating juvenile fish.

Some species of salmon and steelhead trout are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

“If we don’t do (the culling) ... we are in danger of violating the Endangered Species Act,” said Diana Fredlund, a spokeswoman for

the Army Corps of Engineers Portland District.

“We would prefer not to have to kill the birds but this is based on the science and the research that we’ve been doing for years,” Fredlund said.

Conservationists, led by Audubon in Portland, disagree. They argue the federal government is ignoring the real threat to salmon: management of hydroelectric dams. They also say the government failed to use non-lethal methods of cormorant control on East Sand Island in the

Columbia River, and say killing the birds will do little to save salmon.

Audubon and other conservation and animal welfare groups filed a lawsuit last month seeking to stop the killing and demanded an investigation into a recently released US Fish and Wildlife report that showed killing the birds would not save the threatened fish. US Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Miel Corbett said the report is a draft that has not been through an internal review. —Reuters

US says to spend \$300 million to fight HIV in Africa

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration said on Saturday it was allotting an additional \$300 million to the effort to reduce HIV infection among girls and young women in 10 sub-Saharan African countries.

The sum would help the main US programme for fighting AIDS in Africa to meet goals including providing antiretroviral treatment to 12.9 million people by the end of 2017, said Susan Rice, President Barack Obama’s national security adviser.

“No greater action is needed right now than empowering adolescent girls and young women to defeat HIV/AIDS. Every year, 380,000 adolescent girls and young women are infected with HIV,” she said in a statement. The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, working with partner countries, now provides antiretroviral treatment for 7.7 million people worldwide, Rice said. The programme, known as PEPFAR, was launched in 2003 by former President George W. Bush and has provided billions of dollars for antiretroviral drugs and treatment in Africa.

By 2017, Rice said, PEPFAR also aims to “provide 13 million male circumcisions for HIV prevention, and reduce HIV incidence by 40 percent among adolescent girls and young women within the highest burdened areas of 10 sub-Saharan African countries.” The countries at the focus of the programme are: Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. —Reuters



National Security Advisor Susan Rice. PHOTO: REUTERS

Roche says new drug shows benefits in lung, bladder cancer tests

ZURICH — Roche’s new immune-system boosting cancer drug has given positive results in tests on patients suffering from some lung and bladder cancers, according to data released on Sunday at the European Cancer Congress in Vienna that the company hopes will help it win quick regulatory approval. In its Phase II trial targeting advanced or metastatic bladder cancer, Roche said its atezolizumab immunotherapy drug shrank tumors in 27 percent of people who expressed medium and high levels of PD-L1, a protein that appears to help cancers evade the immune system.

In two separate Phase II trials targeting advanced non-small cell

lung cancer, Roche said patients getting atezolizumab lived 7.7 months longer than those who got chemotherapy. The drug also shrank tumors in up to 27 percent of lung cancer sufferers whose disease had progressed with other treatments and who expressed the highest PD-L1 levels, the Swiss company said. Roche, the largest maker of cancer drugs, is banking on atezolizumab as its next blockbuster to keep pace with rivals including Merck & Co and Bristol-Myers Squibb in cancer immunotherapy development. It hopes the drug will be on the market by late-2016 and said data from these latest studies will help.

“We plan to submit these re-

sults to global health authorities to bring this potential new option to people as soon as possible,” said Sandra Hornung, Roche’s chief medical officer, in a statement.

Roche won ‘breakthrough therapy status’ for atezolizumab in February from the US Food and Drug Administration and is now calling it the “first new therapy for bladder cancer in 30 years.” “Durable responses are not something you currently see in bladder cancer with chemotherapy,” said Thomas Buechele, Roche’s head of global medical affairs in hematology and oncology, in an interview.

Analysts said Roche is under the gun to win the blessing of regulators, to not fall further behind ri-

vals. “Merck filed Keytruda in lung cancer in April and Bristol-Myers Squibb has filed Opdivo,” said Michael Leuchten of Barclays, in a note to investors. “As such, Roche needs to follow suit as soon as possible.”

Adverse events associated with atezolizumab, including fatigue, itching, rash and joint pain, were consistent with previous studies, Roche said of its trials. The monoclonal antibody is designed to interfere with the protein called programmed death-ligand 1, or PD-L1, that normally plays a role in preventing autoimmunity but can be produced by some tumors, enabling them to evade the immune system. —Reuters

Liberia struggles to regain economic footing after Ebola

UNITED NATIONS — Liberia needs two years to regain its economic footing after it was battered by the Ebola epidemic, as it moves to boost access to electricity and infrastructure and diversify the economy, Liberia’s president said in an interview on Saturday.

Liberia had been slowly rebuilding from a civil war that ended in 2003 when the Ebola epidemic erupted more than 18 months ago. The disease has since killed 4,800 people in Liberia, and

a total of 11,000 people in West Africa. “Our target is to get it done in two years,” Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said of the hoped-for economic recovery, in an interview on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Liberia was declared free of the Ebola virus for a second time on 3 September, entering a 90-day period of heightened surveillance.

The country was declared Eb-

ola-free in May but more cases appeared in late June, probably via transmission from sexual contact as the virus can survive in semen well beyond the usual 21-day incubation period.

Johnson Sirleaf said she was “concerned” about the continued Ebola risk, and said the government could be doing more to educate Liberians, including advocating safe sex. But she cautioned that it was important to avoid unfairly stigmatizing Ebola survivors.

The United States has approved a \$257 million grant to Liberia under its Millennium Challenge Compact programme, which Johnson Sirleaf said she hopes to dedicate to expanding the country’s power capacity which currently reaches fewer than 2 percent of Liberia’s 4.3 million people have access to electricity, she said.

“We said, ‘What is the area that could provide the best impetus for getting our economy moving at a higher pace?’ Power came out

above anything else,” she said. “If you don’t have power, you install the best of machines and they blow out. The Mount Coffee dam on the River Paul in Montserrado County once powered a third of households in the West African country, but it was left battered by Liberia’s 1989-2003 civil war. Johnson Sirleaf said she was hopeful that a rehabilitation of the dam would be complete by late 2016, after the Ebola epidemic delayed the rehabilitation work. —Reuters

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Customers look at a 10-metre-tall installation in the shape of the moon, to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, at a department store in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, China, 26 September, 2015. The Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month in the lunar calendar during a full moon, which falls on 27 September this year. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japanese climber attempting Mount Everest summit turns back

KATHMANDU — A Japanese climber who was attempting the first summit of Mount Everest since a deadly quake-triggered avalanche destroyed part of base camp in April said Sunday he had turned back.

Thirty-three year-old Nobukazu Kuriki, who lost nine fingers to frostbite during a 2012 attempt to climb Everest, was the only mountaineer pursuing the summit this year after an avalanche set off by a massive quake killed 18 people at base camp.

The disaster saw hundreds of climbers abandon their bids to ascend the 8,848-metre (29,029-foot) peak, marking a second spring season with virtually no one reaching the summit.

The deaths of 16 Nepali guides in an avalanche in 2014 sparked a shutdown that year.

It was Kuriki's fifth attempt to climb the world's highest mountain.

"I decide to descend," he posted on his official Facebook page in the early hours of Sunday.

"I tried hard taking all my energy, but it took too much time to move in deep deep snow. I realised if I kept going, I wouldn't be able to come back alive, so I decided to descend.

"Thank you so much for all your support. I appreciate you all from bottom of my heart."

Without the aid of bottled oxygen, a determined Kuriki had

planned to tackle the final stretch alone overnight, ascending into the "death zone" — located above 8,000 metres, notorious for its difficult terrain and thin air.

The risks are higher than usual thanks to regular aftershocks increasing the chance of avalanches, while mountaineering experts say climbing in the autumn is more dangerous than spring due to high winds and lower temperatures.

Mountaineers usually begin their summit attempts late at night, which allows them to descend in daylight, lowering the risk of them falling to their deaths due to exhaustion.

Kuriki had originally

planned to summit in mid-September before bad weather forced him to delay. Mountaineering is a major revenue-earner for impoverished Nepal, home to eight of the world's 14 peaks over 8,000 metres.

The 25 April earthquake killed nearly 8,900 people in the Himalayan nation. Apart from the Everest avalanche it destroyed the popular Langtang trekking route, raising fears for the immediate future of the tourism industry.

Kuriki has previously said he wanted to help Nepal.

"Everest has seen tragedies in the last two years, and I want to help Nepal revive its tourism," he said.—AFP

Thousands evacuated from Taiwan islands as typhoon nears

TAIPEI — Almost 3,000 people, most of them tourists, were evacuated from outlying islands off Taiwan on Sunday as Typhoon Dujuan gathered strength as it neared, looking set to bring heavy rains and high tides.

Typhoon Dujuan, packing maximum winds of up to 209 kilometres (130 miles) per hour, was 560 kilometres southeast of Hualien county at 2:30 pm (0630 GMT), and lay around 350 kilometres from the Japanese island of

Ishigaki. "It's at the upper limit of a moderate storm, and we do not rule out that it gets stronger," a spokesman from Taiwan's weather bureau told AFP.

Ferry operators increased trips to move people from Green Island and Orchid Island, popular with tourists, and services will be suspended later Sunday.

A total of nearly 3,000 people were being evacuated from the two islands, the local tourism bureau said.

The storm threatens long-weekend plans for many as Taiwan celebrates the Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as Moon Festival, when families typically gather and moon-gaze.

Dujuan is set to hit Ishigaki at around midday on Monday, and make landfall in Taiwan later the same evening. The storm is on course to hit mainland China from Tuesday after moving through Taiwan.

Japan's meteorological agen-

cy has warned it could trigger waves 13 metres (42 feet) high when it strikes the country.

So far there have been no reports of damage or injuries in connection with the typhoon, but "winds are getting stronger now", an Ishigaki official told AFP by phone. At least three flights were cancelled, Japanese news reports and airline officials said, and the country's meteorological agency warned of possible landslides, high waves and heavy rain.—AFP

Nicaraguan volcano belches gas, ashes and rocks

MANAGUA — The Telica volcano in northwestern Nicaragua belched gas, ashes and rocks Saturday in a series of blasts that raised fears of a full-on eruption, authorities said.

"Five explosions of medium intensity accompanied by a volcanic tremor were registered," said First Lady Rosario Murillo, citing reports by the Nicaraguan Institute of Earth Studies.

Murillo, who is the government's chief spokesperson, said the activity had raised concerns that a volcanic eruption may be in the offing.

"We had 25 minutes of anomalous activity," she said, adding that experts were closely monitoring the activity.

Telica, which is 1,060 metres (3,478 feet) high, is located some 150 kilometres (93 miles) northwest of the capital Managua.

On Wednesday, the volcano sent up dense columns of ash after a series of explosions.—AFP

Ceasefire holds in northwest Syria after violation overnight, monitor says

BEIRUT — A week-old ceasefire agreement in northwest Syria appeared to hold on Sunday after it was violated for the first time overnight, a monitoring group said.

An online statement attributed to insurgent alliance the Army of Conquest said rebels shelled Shi'ite village al-Foua in retaliation for government attacks on areas nearby and in the city of Homs farther south.

The insurgents blamed government forces for violation of the ceasefire. Under the Iranian- and Turkish-backed ceasefire, warring sides have agreed to cease hostilities in at least two villages in northwestern province Idlib, and a town near the Lebanese border for up to six months.

During that time, insurgent fighters are to withdraw from the border town, Zabadani, where they are surrounded by pro-government forces. In return, civilians would be evacuated from the Shi'ite villages of al-Foua and Kefraya in Idlib which are under rebel siege.

Rebels shelled al-Foua overnight, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The Homs attack, a rocket fired at a rebel-controlled neighbourhood, killed at least 17 people including four children on Saturday, the Observatory said.—Reuters

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 1st October (Thursday) 2015, "Bank Holiday" Under the Negotiable Instruments Act. Central Bank of Myanmar

WEATHER REPORT**BAY INFERENCE:**

Weather is partly cloudy in the North Bay, monsoon is weak to moderate in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 28th September, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region, fairly widespread in Kachin State, scattered in Naypyitaw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States, isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of southwest monsoon withdrawal from Deltaic areas.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th September, 2015: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th September, 2015: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th September, 2015: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Hairdresser's charity helps children with hair loss

KOCHI — Kiichi Watanabe, who works in a beauty salon in western Japan, believes that the best way he can contribute to society as a hairdresser is by offering wigs made of donated human hair to children who lack hair of their own.

Watanabe, 44, founded a nonprofit organization called Japan Hair Donation & Charity or JHDAC in Osaka along with two other hair stylists in 2009, a year after they opened a hair salon in the city.

To date their hairpieces have been given to more than 70 children under the age 18 left without hair due to a congenital condition, cancer treatment or an accident.

"It had been so long since I had seen myself truly smiling in the mirror," said a senior high school girl, recalling the day she became the first recipient of one of JHDAC's wigs.

"As a hair stylist, this is something you can do on a volunteer basis. It doesn't take a special effort," said Watanabe.

"Anything could happen to us tomorrow, so we should always place ourselves in another person's shoes," he said.

The hairpieces are made of human hair donated by customers of participating beauty salons across Japan. The group has wig-makers make the hairpieces to order after visiting the intended recipient at home or in hospital to take measurements.

The price of a human-hair wig runs to 300,000 yen or more and is not covered by public health insurance, but the NPO pays for it out of proceeds from the sale of donated hair that is too short for a hairpiece but useful for training hairdressers. It also relies on cash contributions collected at the around

250 salons in 42 prefectures supporting the programme.

A wig made of human hair deteriorates in about two years, according to Watanabe. In June, a girl in Osaka Prefecture collected her second hairpiece from the NPO.

"Even if we could afford it, we couldn't find such a high quality hairpiece," her mother said. "My daughter is so happy now."

The hair donation movement began in the United States in the 1990s. Watanabe was moved to start something similar in Japan after one of his customers stopped coming because she lost her hair due to illness.

"I was a hair professional, but I couldn't do anything for her. When she really needed someone to talk to about it, I couldn't be that person," he said, recalling the helplessness he felt and how it led him to re-evalu-

ate his role. His organisation accepts hair that is 31 centimetres or longer and in good condition, regardless of whether it comes from a man or woman.

Ganesh, a salon in Kochi City, western Japan, became a supporter of the campaign one and a half year ago.

"I felt this was a form of social contribution I could make as a hairdresser," 41-year-old salon manager Mari Yoshimoto said.

In July 2014, a senior high school student in the city came to Ganesh to have her tresses cut after learning of the hair donation campaign over the Internet.

"I want to encourage people who are suffering from hair loss," she said, adding that she plans to make another donation someday.

JHDAC is currently the only group in Japan that collects hair donations from the general public,



Kiichi Watanabe makes and donates hair wigs for children aged 18 or younger who have no hair due to alopecia or who have lost their hair as a result of cancer treatment. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

according to Watanabe, who believes the campaign should be promoted more widely.

"If it became the norm for people to ask a friend who had their hair cut short, 'Did you make a hair donation?' that would be fantastic," he said.—Kyodo News

IN PICTURE

People take part in a procession during a festival to mark the Tiger Day in the far eastern city of Vladivostok, Russia, September 27, 2015. The festival is dedicated to the protection of the Amur tiger, an endangered species. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tropical storm Marty forms off Mexico's Pacific coast

MEXICO CITY — Tropical storm Marty formed off Mexico's Pacific coast on Saturday night and could be near hurricane strength by Monday, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

Churning 305 miles (490 km) southwest of the beach resort of Acapulco, Marty is heading north at 5 miles per hour (8 kmh) and producing maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kmh), the NHC said. The Miami-based center forecast Marty would be close to the coast by Monday, but should stay offshore.—Reuters

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Florida woman charged with felony for allegedly riding sea turtle

BREVARD COUNTY — A 20-year-old Florida woman was arrested on Saturday on suspicion of riding a sea turtle on the beach in photos that went viral on social media in early July, police said.

Stephanie Moore, of Melbourne, faces a felony charge of possessing, selling, or molesting a marine turtle or eggs nest, a violation of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission rules, according to a statement by the Melbourne Police Department. She was booked into

the Brevard County Jail at around 7 am and remained there on Saturday afternoon in lieu of a \$2,000 bond, according to jail records.

Moore was one of two young women whose photos showed up on Facebook in early July, in which they appeared to be riding a turtle on the beach, police said.

"These pictures flooded social media networks and eventually multiple complaints were forwarded to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, who handled the

criminal investigation," the statement said.

The second woman has been identified by authorities but has not been arrested, said David Hochberg, chairman of the board of the Florida-based nonprofit Sea Turtle Preservation Society.

Moore was arrested early on Saturday after police responded to a call about a disturbance at a home in Melbourne, the statement said.

When police arrived, they encountered Moore and found out she had a felony

warrant related to the turtle incident, the statement said.

The state wildlife commission protects the state's five species of marine turtles, which officials say are vulnerable due to illegal harvesting, habitat encroachment, and pollution.

"Sea turtles, which are among the oldest creatures on earth, have remained essentially unchanged for 110 million years," the commission's website reads. "However, they face an uncertain future."—Reuters

Steven Tyler joins Taylor Swift onstage

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Taylor Swift took her 1989 World Tour to Nashville, and she surprised her fans with Aerosmith's Steven Tyler joining her on stage for a song.

Swift has been joined by a number of her celebrity friends and fans in recent months.

The Aerosmith frontman joined the "Wildest Dreams" singer for a memorable performance of his band's hit single "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing", with Swift later tweeting a video of the pair's rendition of the track. "Singing 'I Don't Want to Miss a Thing' with @IamStevenT was an honour. So inspired by how sweet he was to all of us."

Tyler also shared his joy at being involved in the performance by replying to an old tweet

of Swift's from 2012 mentioning his 1998 track.

"I feel like I'd be more understood if people knew 'I Don't Want to Miss a Thing' by Aerosmith is how most of my emotions sound in my head," the singer had written.

"Well ma darlin'," Tyler replied this morning. "You sure were overstood tonight! A++ ... Epic Show ... Until Nexttime..."

While some of Swift's special guest stars on her tour have included the likes of Fifth Harmony, Lisa Kudrow and Nick Jonas, Tyler's recent performances have been a lot more low-key.

Earlier this month, the US band's singer joined a Russian busker for an impromptu performance in front of a few passers-by.—PTI



Pop star Taylor Swift & Aerosmith's Steven Tyler. PHOTO: PTI

Australia set to refuse visa for singer Chris Brown

SYDNEY — Australia intends to refuse a visa for US singer and hip-hop star Chris Brown, a government spokesman said on Sunday, following through on a threat made last week over the singer's history of domestic violence.

Brown, 26, had been due to perform at a series of concerts in four Australian cities in December.

A spokesman for Immigra-

tion Minister Peter Dutton said a notice had been sent to the singer indicating the government intends to consider refusal and he had four weeks to respond.

"People to whom these notices are issued have 28 days to present material as to why they should be given a visa to enter Australia," the spokesman said in a statement.

A final decision on whether to issue the visa would be made

after considering any material presented on the singer's behalf, the spokesman said.

In 2009, Brown pleaded guilty to a charge of assaulting his then girlfriend, singer Rihanna, and was sentenced in the United States to five years probation, which was lifted in February.

He has been denied entry by Britain and Canada since his conviction.

Australian Minister for

Women Michaelia Cash last week urged Dutton to consider refusing Brown entry.

Neighbouring New Zealand has already ruled Brown ineligible for entry as a result of Britain refusing him admission, casting doubt over the Antipodean leg of his world tour. The Australian government last week earmarked A\$100 million (\$70.2 million) to combat domestic violence.—Reuters

Tom Hardy would be a great Wolverine: Hugh Jackman

LOS ANGELES — Actor Hugh Jackman, who is will be dropping his claws following "Wolverine 3", feels "Mad Max: Fury Road" actor Tom Hardy will make a good Wolverine.

Jackman, 46, has been frequently asked about his successor as the clawed superhero, but the Australian star says he has not given a serious thought about it, reported The Wrap.

"I think Tom Hardy would be a great Wolverine. He is younger than me for sure... However, I haven't really given it a lot of thought I'm always like, 'I don't wanna make it too easy on the studio to replace me,' you know?"

I've still got one more (film) to do. I'm sure they're already talking about it, and there's some



Hugh Jackman. PHOTO: PTI

actor (they've told) 'shh, keep it quiet but we want you next.'" he said. Jackman, who first played Logan/Wolverine in 2000 film "X-Men," went on to play the role five consecutive times since then.

He is set to appear in "X-Men: Apocalypse" followed by "Wolverine 3" which will mark his final outing with the franchise.

The films are slated for May, 2016 and March, 2017 release respectively.—PTI

At least 10 people injured at Arizona music festival

TEMPE — At least 10 people were injured on Saturday when the crowd at a music festival in Arizona rushed the stage, according to local media.

At least seven people were taken to the hospital with injuries after the crowd at the Summer Ends music festival in

Tempe pushed toward the stage, AZFamily.com reported. Ten to 12 people were injured in the melee, the news site said.

Hip-hop artist J. Cole was the headliner at the festival on Saturday evening. It is unclear whether he was on stage when the incident occurred.—Reuters

Rapper Fetty Wap injured in New Jersey collision, TMZ reports

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Fetty Wap, a rising star in hip hop, was injured on Saturday when he collided with a vehicle while riding his motorcycle in his hometown of Patterson, New Jersey, celebrity website TMZ reported.

TMZ posted photos from the scene of the crash, including one that appeared to show Fetty Wap, 24, on the ground next to a Suzuki motorcycle, and another one that seemed to show paramedics wheeling away the recording artist on a stretcher.

DJ Louie Styles, who has worked with Fetty Wap, said on Twitter that the rapper was in

good shape. He posted a photo of Fetty Wap looking alert with a brace around his left calf as he received treatment in what appeared to be a hospital room.

Police in Patterson, New Jersey, could not be reached for comment and Fetty Wap's representatives did not immediately return calls or emails.

Fetty Wap, whose real name is Willie Maxwell II, had his singles "Trap Queen," "My Way," "679" and "Again" land on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

He dropped his first full-length album, the eponymous "Fetty Wap," on Friday.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

Leonardo DiCaprio to receive SAG honour

LONDON — Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio will receive the Screen Actors Guild's Actors Inspiration Award in recognition of his film accomplishments and charity work.

The 40-year-old "Wolf of Wall Street" star will be handed the coveted accolade at the SAG Foundation's 30th Anniversary Celebration at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills on 5 November.

He will be recognised for his on-screen achievements, including eight SAG nominations and five Oscar nominations — and his charity work through the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, which was founded in 1998 and has donated over \$30 million toward environmental causes.



PHOTO: REUTERS

"To commemorate our landmark anniversary, we're excited to honour Leonardo DiCaprio's outstanding achievements with our Actors Inspiration Award," said SAG Foundation President JoBeth Williams.

"With beloved and acclaimed films as diverse as 'Titanic' to 'The Wolf of Wall Street' to his latest film 'The Revenant', Leonardo's career is a gold standard example to his craft. Also, his work with LDF demonstrates his commitment to conservation and protection of our environment."

The actor is "honoured" to be receiving the award and is "proud" to be associated with the organisation.

"It is an honour to be recognised by the SAG Foundation, a group which does so much to support, sustain, and educate my fellow actors and give back to the entertainment industry, as well as the work it has done to advance children's literacy," he said in a statement.

"As the SAG Foundation moves into its next 30 years, I'm proud to be a continuing supporter and contributor to its legacy and its future," DiCaprio added.—PTI

“Confucius Prize” awarded to Madagascar, Chilean, Slovakian programmes

JINAN — Three educational programmes for out-of-school children, prisoners and former nomads won this year’s UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy on Saturday in Qufu, east China’s Shandong Province.

The programmes came from Madagascar, Chile and Slovakia, UNESCO official David Atchoarena announced at the opening ceremony of China Qufu International Confucius Cultural Festival.

The programme by Madagascar’s Platform of Associations in Charge of ASAMA and Post-ASAMA is to help out-of-school young people resume studies. The programme by Juan Luis Vives School of Valparaiso in Chile is to teach adult prisoners. And

the one by the Association Svatobor in Slovakia is to provide education and skill training to disadvantaged Roma people.

The Confucius Prize for Literacy was established in 2005 to recognise efforts of individuals, governments and NGOs in raising literacy.

Twenty-seven people and organisations have received this prize, the first international prize named after a Chinese, according to Zhou Jiagui, vice secretary general of the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China for UNESCO. Confucius was born in 551 BC in Qufu. His theories of benevolence and courtesy have been a dominant ideology in China for more than 2,000 years.—Xinhua

IN PICTURE



A boy reacts as a butterfly stops on his nose during a butterfly exhibition at a park in Kunming, Yunnan province, China on 26 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Dundas brings fresh take on Cavalli in debut line

MILAN — Peter Dundas presented his debut collection as creative director of Italian fashion house Roberto Cavalli on Saturday, offering a youthful take on a brand known for bold animal prints.

Dundas takes on the main designer role from founder Roberto Cavalli, 74, and his wife, Eva.

The celebrity-favourite fashion house has been through several changes this year, with private equity fund Clessidra acquiring control in April. Cavalli retains 10 percent.

Dundas, who was previously at fellow Italian fashion house Emilio Pucci, worked at Cavalli from 2002 to 2005.

At the Milan Fashion Week spring/summer 2016 show, he cut sleeves off denim jackets and coloured them in pastels, teaming them with skin-tight or looser high-waisted trousers.

Other denim jackets were short with plaits running down the sides.

Dundas kept up the trademark animal prints by putting lions’ faces on dresses. Zebra print featured on gilets and mini dresses.

He also tied large bows on one-shoulder crop tops, and embroidered tassels across his denim creations and dresses.

For a brand known for floaty gowns, the nod

to long dresses came in ball skirts that were short in front and had flowing trains at the back.

Company Chief Executive Renato Semerari said the line showed “a new face” of the brand.

“He (Dundas) will bring fresh air to the brand, and that’s very much what we’re looking for,” he told Reuters.

Semerari said the company was eyeing more offerings in daywear and

accessories. It also seeks geographical expansion in Asia, namely China — despite signals of strains and market turmoil in the country.

“To start with, we want to solidify what we already have ... Our presence is very limited (in China) at the moment, so it is a big opportunity for us in the future.”

“If you have 40 stores in China you may be scared about what is

happening, but this is not our case. China remains a huge market.”

Asked about a time frame, Semerari said the expansion phase would likely start in the second half of 2016.

“Turbulence or not, we are going to go ahead in that country,” he said, adding business at the moment was “soft”.

Roberto Cavalli himself was not at the show.—Reuters



A model presents a creation from the Roberto Cavalli Spring/Summer 2016 collection during Milan Fashion Week in Italy, 26 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(28-9-2015, Monday)

6:00 am	• Mono Classical Songs	8:40 am	• Musical Programme
6:15 am	• Myanmar Series	8:55 am	• Teleplay
6:55 am	• Teleplay	10:05 am	• ASEAN Cultural Fair (2014)
7:10 am	• TV Drama Series	10:20 am	• Myanmar Video
7:55 am	• TV Drama Series	12:00 noon	• Close Down

mitv Myanmar International

(28-9-2015 07:00 am~29 -9-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-1) The Culture Of Pennant Pillar
07:41	Am	The Art of Making Glaze Ware
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Rakhine The Land Of Sublime Pagodas
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Pretty Play Things From Pakokku
09:33	Am	Writer
09:39	Am	Oboist and His Life
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	An Ardent Aficionado Of Traditional Design
10:56	Am	Scented Buddha Images

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Sunday 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	Food Trip (Ep-3) (Part-1)
07:50	Pm	Maha Muni Pagoda
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Stories Of The Great Souls (Daw Saw Mone Nyin- A Living Literary Legend Of Myanmar)
08:52	Pm	Culture Shows: Composer Ma Mya Lay

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



Ayeyawady FC emerge champion in the final match of the General Aung San Shield 2015 on Sunday. They beat their rivals Yadanbon 2-1 in the tough match. The champions win K 30 million cash award while the Yadanabon, K 15 million. PHOTO: MFF

Radwanska wins Pan Pacific Open title

TOKYO — Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska beat rising star Belinda Bencic 6-2, 6-2 in the final of the Pan Pacific Open on Sunday to capture her first WTA title in more than a year and return to the world's top 10 rankings.

The 26-year-old Radwanska turned in a near flawless display

against Bencic, smashing 28 winners past the Swiss teenager to win her second Pan Pacific Open and her first WTA title since last year's Rogers Cup in Montreal.

"I'm just so, so happy I could really play my best tennis today, and this is the first tour-

nament I've won twice, so it's definitely very special for me," Radwanska said in her on-court interview.

"I knew I was playing one of the best players in the world, but this is the final and you just want to win, so you do whatever it takes to win every point."—Reuters

Messi faces two-month injury layoff, Madrid held by Malaga

MADRID — Lionel Messi will be out for up to eight weeks with knee ligament damage suffered as Barcelona beat Las Palmas 2-1 on Saturday.

Barca's troubles were eased, though, as Real Madrid remain a point behind the Catalans after being held 0-0 at home by 10-man Malaga.

Villarreal now lead La Liga as Leo Baptistao scored the only goal of the game against his parent club Atletico Madrid.

Luis Suarez struck twice to ensure no more damage was done to Barca's title chances, but the hosts were left hanging on after Jonathan Viera's deflected effort three minutes from time halved the deficit.

"Firstly, it is always sad when a player gets injured. It is without doubt the worst thing in football for the players," said Barca boss Luis Enrique.

"Obviously, when it is Leo Messi even more so for the weight he carries amongst our group.

"It is logical in football that players will get injured and we

have to know how to overcome it. I am sure we will perform at a good level."

Barca had been humiliated 4-1 at Celta Vigo in midweek and hopes of a trouble-free afternoon were ended after just 10 minutes when Messi injured his left knee in a clash with Pedro Bigas.

Messi, 28, was injured as he tried to turn the ball home after taking a wonderful first touch inside the area.

The four-time World Player of the Year briefly returned to the field after receiving treatment, but was clearly unable to run freely before he was replaced by Munir El Haddadi.

Suarez opened the scoring on 25 minutes as he rose to head home Sergi Roberto's inch-perfect cross from the right to settle Barca's nerves.

Barca made sure of a return to winning ways thanks to a wonderful team move seven minutes after the break as Neymar picked out Munir and his cross was left by Sergio Busquets for Suarez to fire into the top corner.—AFP

Win takes United top after Spurs crush City

MANCHESTER United topped the Premier League for the first time in two years following a 3-0 victory over Sunderland on Saturday while morning leaders Manchester City crumbled to a 4-1 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur.

At the other end of the table, Chelsea were indebted to Brazilian duo Ramires and Willian who both scored late on to salvage a 2-2 draw for the champions at second from bottom Newcastle United.

Wayne Rooney ended an 11-match run without a league goal in United's victory at Old Trafford, with Memphis Depay also scoring his first league goal for the club.

Rooney's goal, bundled in 40 seconds after the break, took his league tally for the former European champions to 171, joint third with Denis Law on the club's all-time list.

City's second successive league defeat, after winning their first five matches, meant United moved top for the first time since the opening day of the 2013-14 season.

Louis van Gaal's men now have 16 points, one more than City who took the lead at Tottenham through record signing Kevin de Bruyne before the hosts stormed back with England striker Harry Kane finally on target after 12 hours without a goal for his club.

Arsenal fell behind at previously unbeaten Leicester City but Chile striker Alexis Sanchez returned to his best with a hat-trick in a 5-2 victory that lifted them to fourth with 13 points.

West Ham United are level with Arsenal after drawing 2-2 at home to Norwich City. Tottenham are up to fifth on 12 points. Struggling Chelsea are sixth from bot-

tom with eight points from seven matches.

"In the first half, from zero to 10, (we were) minus one," manager Jose Mourinho told Sky Sports after the draw at Newcastle. "But in the second half we played very well."

Under-pressure Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers enjoyed some relief with Daniel Sturridge bagging a double in a nervy 3-2 home win against Aston Villa.

Southampton breezed past Swansea City 3-1 while Stoke City beat Bournemouth 2-1, their first league win of the season.

With Rooney back among the goals and Depay also on target, optimism is growing at Manchester United after going two seasons without challenging for the title.

Depay opened the scoring from Juan Mata's cut-back and once Rooney had doubled the lead there was no way back for rock bottom Sunderland who have only two points this season.

Mata made sure of victory with the third goal in the final minute. "That's what we're all playing for. We have to work hard to make sure we stay there," Rooney said on Twitter.

Manchester City manager Manuel Pellegrini refused to blame the match officials for his side's capitulation at Spurs despite the home side's first and third goals being offside.

"We didn't play very well against West Ham (last week) in the first half, we didn't play well here in the second half," Pellegrini said.

De Bruyne put City ahead in the 25th minute after a counter-attack led by Yaya Toure who failed to finish the game due to

a hamstring injury.

Eric Dier levelled for Tottenham on the stroke of halftime with a low shot although Kyle Walker was several metres offside before crossing in the build-up to the goal.



Memphis Depay celebrates after scoring for the first goal for Manchester United against Sunderland during their Barclays Premier League at Old Trafford on 26 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

A header from Toby Alderweireld put Tottenham ahead in the 50th minute before Kane, also looking offside, coolly clipped in a rebound when Christian Eriksen's free kick hit the bar and Erik Lamela completed the rout.

Arsenal fell behind to Jamie Vardy's early strike but Sanchez then became the first player to score a hat-trick in the top flights of England, Spain and Italy.

Theo Walcott equalised before Sanchez put Arsenal ahead after 33 minutes. The Chilean headed his second in the 57th and completed his treble nine minutes from time.

"He is back to his best level," manager Arsene Wenger said of Sanchez. "I could see in training a different player in the last week or two and he has shown that today." The fifth Arsenal goal came from Olivier Giroud deep into stoppage time.—Reuters