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SEVEN BECOMES EIGHT

One more ethnic group joins as signatory to peace deal

Ye Myint

THE Restoration Council of Shan State/ Shan State Army, during its central committee meeting yesterday, agreed to be a signatory to the nationwide ceasefire accord along with seven other groups, according to a senior adviser at Myanmar Peace Centre.

It can be said that eight ethnic armed groups out of the 15 invited by the government to sign the truce pact have confirmed that they will go ahead with the signing process, said Myanmar Peace Centre's (MPC's) senior adviser U Hla Maung Shwe.

RCSS/SSA was one of eight ethnic groups who were present at the nationwide ceasefire accord (NCA) signing date meeting at the peace centre last Sunday.

The senior adviser affirmed the receipt of letters attached with the list of the names of three leaders who are going to sign the deal from seven groups.

"RCSS/SSA will send such kind of letter days to come," said MPC's senior adviser.

Seven groups — Karen National Union, Karen National Liberation Army-Peace Council, Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, Pa-O National Liberation Organization, Chin National Front, Arakan Liberation Party and All Burma Students' Democratic Front — confirmed that they will ink the peace pact with the government following an ethnic summit in Chiang Mai, Thailand, last week.

The exact date and place for NCA signing was announced after the Sunday meeting in Yangon, with a schedule to hold a signing



U Hla Maung Shwe (far left), P'doh Saw Kwe Htoo Win (middle) and U Myo Win answer queries raised by reporters at a press conference in Yangon. PHOTO: YE MYINT

ceremony at Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 October.

"It is up to each group to decide whether or not it will sign the deal", said P'doh Saw Kwe Htoo Win, general secretary of Karen National Union, one of the signatories, at a press conference after the meeting.

The government invited 15 ethnic groups to be involved in the signing process last month.

As there is a process for NCA signatories to be removed from the list of unlawful asso-

ciations a couple of days before the ceasefire is inked, the invited ethnic armed groups must inform the government of their decisions prior to the process, said U Hla Maung Shwe.

According to sources from ethnic groups, ethnic signatories to the accord will hold another summit with non-signatories before the signing of the ceasefire.

Despite having come to a deadlock over the ceasefire signing, ethnic groups who announced they will sign the accord and others who are yet to do so reached a

consensus on certain issues during a recent summit in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The groups are united in their goal of achieving a successful peace process and to do by working in cooperation, said U Myo Win, vice-chairman of ABSDF at a press conference last Sunday.

He did not mention a specific date or venue for the pre-ceasefire signing summit.

Despite possessing a willingness to take part in the signing process, some groups requested additional time in order to build

trust with the government as armed conflict is ongoing, as well as to ensure all-inclusiveness in the signing of the agreement, according to ethnic group sources.

If the ceasefire is signed on the scheduled date, signatories will be required to implement the post-signing steps laid out in the agreement shortly afterwards. These steps include finalising a code of conduct for both sides within 30 days, establishing a political framework within 60 days and holding political dialogue within 90 days.—GNLM

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Low pressure zone over Bay of Bengal likely to intensify

Aye Min Soe

THE Department of Meteorology and Hydrology announced Wednesday that a low pressure zone over the northern part of the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a depression within 24 hours.

Due to the depression, squalls with rough seas may occur along Myanmar's delta region, as well as in the Gulf of Mottama and along Rakhine State, with surface wind speeds reaching 30 to 35 miles per hour, the 4pm announcement said.

Isolated heavy falls are ex-

pected over Sagaing, Magway, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Kachin and Chin states on Thursday, with a 100 percent degree of certainty.

Meanwhile, rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region, Kayah and Kayin states, fairly widespread in

Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Region, Shan and Mon states and widespread in the remaining regions and states, the forecast said.

The weather bureau predicts that Sagaing Region and Kachin and Rakhine states will experience a continuation or increase of rain in the next two days.—GNLM

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa arrives back from Japan visit



Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa welcomed by officials at Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: MNA

DEPUTY Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa arrived back Yangon from the Japan visit attending GLOBE Asia Legislators Forum. To the arrival

of deputy speaker, Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw's International Relation Committee U Hla Myint Oo, Vice Chairman of Yangon Division Parliament U Tin

Aung, Representatives of Pyithu Hluttaw warmly welcomed to the deputy speaker at Yangon International Airport. —MNA

Committee plans healthy food programme in Mandalay



Authorities are stepping up efforts for food safety in Mandalay Region. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

THE first coordination meeting of the newly reorganised Mandalay Region Food and Medicine Supervisory Committee was held on 6 October at the Public Health Department.

The meeting was attended by committee members, entrepreneurs and officials from the Trade Promotion and Con-

sumers' Affairs Department, Mandalay City Development Committee and Public Health Department.

Regional minister for Health Dr Win Hline spoke at the opening of the meeting.

The meeting covered the health value of foods, medicines, cosmetics, water and cooking

oil available to consumers. They Members committed to inspecting schools and correcting any unhealthy activities.

In June, K2 billion (US\$1,545,535) worth of illegal and expired drugs and disqualified cosmetic products were destroyed in Mandalay.—Thiha Ko Ko

Two arrested for rape and murder of young couple

POLICE arrested two men for the murder and rape of a young couple in Nay Pyi Taw on Tuesday, while two other suspects remain at large.

Aung Tin Myo (alias Aung Paing), 20, who is the son of U Thangyaung and Kyaw Maung (alias Zaw Zaw Aung), 19, who is the son of U Khin U are in police custody and authorities are still searching for Zaw Lay, 22, and

16-year-old Maung Myo (alias Myo Zaw Win). Both who are in police custody are from Shwekyabin Ward in Zabuthiri Township.

The four men allegedly met for drinks and at around 1am on 30 September they set off on two motorbikes while under the influence.

They began following the young couple, who were also on a motorbike and forced them to

drive to the back of Junction Centre. When they reached Diplomatic B Road, they fatally stabbed the 16-year-old male and raped the 16-year-old female. The murder weapons were thrown into a lake near the Royal Golf Club.

Aung Tin Myo was in possession of a 10-inch dagger and Kyaw Maung a 8.5-inch dagger at the time of their arrest yesterday.—MNA

Government to open one-stop shops

MINISTRIES are planning to open one-stop shops as a step toward encouraging people-centred development

The move is aimed at preventing corruption among civil servants and encouraging checks and balances among government departments, said

Home Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Ko Ko at a coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

He also urged the involved ministries to do decentralise by relaxing their rules and regulations and to cooperate in opening the one-stop shops.—MNA

Two out of four convicted in murder-rape case in capital city

THE NEWS of a murder and rape is seen as a challenge to the rule of law. Four people murdered a man and raped his wife near the diplomatic zone in the capital city of Nay Pyi Taw late at night on 30 September.

The couple is reported meeting their tragic and violent fate on the way to the capital city, with Police Col Ko Ko Aung saying that the local police station was informed of the murder-rape case the next morning.

Local police rushed to the scene for further investigation, interrogating witnesses for more information that would help identify the suspects.

Two of the four convicts have been apprehended, the police officer said, stressing



Police Col Ko Ko Aung. PHOTO: MNA

that the crime had no relation to revenge or money.

He added that delinquent offenders were reported to have been under the influence of alcohol at the time of the felony.

Security has been further tightened in the capital city as the general election is approaching.—MNA

Ingapu holds management course for villagers

THE Ingapu Township Rural Development Department has conducted a management course under the Emerald Green Rural Development Plan on 5 October.

The course was attended by 165 villagers from 23 villages

under the development plan for the 2015-2016 financial year. The attendees were members of the village plan management committees.

The course will cover book-keeping, livestock and fishery practices.—Win Bo (IPRD)



Murder suspects Kyaw Maung (L) and Aung Tin Myo seen together with weapons used in the murder. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun meets Indian ambassador

VICE President U Nyan Tun received India's ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Gautam Mukhopadhaya at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

The two discussed promoting private sector relations between Myanmar and India by

holding a joint trade and investment forum; providing assistance to flood-affected areas; sharing technical assistance; and security and the rule of law in border areas.

Deputy ministers U Thant Kyaw and U Han Sein also attended the meeting. —MNA



Vice President U Nyan Tun receives India's ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Gautam Mukhopadhaya. PHOTO: MNA

UEC pledges transparency in advance voting



UEC Chairman U Tin Aye clarifies electoral processes at meeting politicians in Kalay. PHOTO: MNA

CHAIRMAN of the Union Election Commission U Tin Aye pledged that measures taken by the commission for advance voting in the upcoming election will be transparent.

"Political parties should not be in any doubt about advance voting if they read the rules and regulations of the Election Law and put themselves under the law's protection," said U Tin Aye at meeting with authorities and political parties in Kalay, Sagaing Region, on Monday.

He also pledged that no eligible voter would lose the right to vote due to errors in voting lists, adding that citizens will be able to vote as long as they have the recommendation of a local election commission.

U Tin Aye called on politicians to adhere to the code of conduct throughout the election period.

The UEC also clarified certain electoral processes, including campaign rules.—MNA

U Kyaw Zwar Minn presents Credentials to Queen of Denmark

U Kyaw Zwar Minn, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Denmark, presented his Credentials to Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark on 22 September 2015, in Copenhagen.—MNA

What they stand for: campaigns aired

The Negotiation, Stability and Peace Party (NSPP), Union Farmer Force Party (UFFP), Daingnet National Development Party (DNDP and United National Congress (UNC) broadcast campaign speeches on Wednesday.

Negotiation, Stability and Peace Party (NSPP)



THE party would concentrate on socioeconomic development, human rights and finding solutions to disputes, its Chairman U Myo Min Tun said, adding that it would guarantee the emergence of a government that is accountable to wide-ranging and equitable development, especially in areas concerning livelihoods, education, health and the economy. The chairman pledged his commitment to peaceful coexistence among communities and the rule of law, calling for all parties to cast their differences aside and get engaged in bringing the country forward. The party would also arrange for higher living standards for farmers and low-income workers.

Union Farmer Force Party (UFFP)



CHAIRMAN U Min Thu said that his party would protect the rights of farmers and make them renowned to the rest of the world while serving the interests of the nation. The chairman added that his party would ensure that sovereignty belongs to the people and that justice would be made for cases of land grabbing. The party would strive to provide better standards of healthcare, a stronger economy and better education alongside agricultural subsidies, farming methods, the shift from traditional to industrialised farming, and resolving farmland ownership disputes.

Daingnet National Development Party (DNDP)



THE party would work together with other ethnic groups to enable the country to stand proud in the international community, according to its chairman. U Aung Kyaw Zaw said the party would join hands with national brethren in helping a disciplined democracy take shape, while striving for better education, health, economy and infrastructure for its own people. He added that his party would protect the traditions, culture and character traits of its own ethnic group, while maintaining mutual respect for other ethnic groups.

United National Congress (UNC)



THE party would initiate a shift from a culture of working for the government to serving the interests of the people, its Central Executive Committee member U Tun Win said, adding that the implementation of an open market system would involve terminating the monopoly of the state and the wealthy and introducing a law that would guarantee free market mechanisms. He pledged his party's full cooperation with other political parties and civil society in the march to federalism that deters racial, religious and sexual discrimination.—GNLM

Media's role during election discussed in Kawlin

"FOR the general election to be a success, the media must play an important role," said Kawlin Journalist Association Vice Chairman U Khin Maung Nyein.

He made the remarks during the association's work coordination meeting on Tuesday.

"Journalists must follow the election rules and their own professional ethics," the vice chairman said.

The vice chairman also explained that media training is taking place in Mandalay and Myitkhina and distributed election pamphlets.—Shwe Lin Pyi Sone

ELECTION COUNTDOWN 31 DAYS
 Make your voice count. Cast your vote.

Sri Lanka's tooth relic replica to go on display during festival



Shwesandaw Pagoda where Sri Lanka's tooth relic will be displayed to public. PHOTO: GNLM-017

THE SHWESANDAW Pagoda Festival will be held in Pyay Township, Bago Region, from 19 to 28 November. During the festival, a replica of the tooth relic housed

in Kandy, Sri Lanka, which is said to have absorbed the aura of the original tooth relic, will be paraded through the township for the public to see.—GNLM-017

Two women injured by a landmine in Kachin State

TWO women were injured when a landmine exploded in Kachin State on Monday after one of the women stepped on it while walking through the jungle.

Daw Yu Yu Cho, 37, and Daw San Oo, 48, accompanied by Ko Maung Gyi, walked into the jungle east of Htandabin village, Monyin Township, to pluck vegetables. One of the two women stepped on the mine, and both sustained injuries. Ko Maung Gyi, who was uninjured, went back to the village to report the news.

The Myittamon Social Association in Monyin rushed the women to hospital.

On Tuesday, Brigadier Thet Lwin, the commander of the local artillery headquarters, presented K50,000 to each of the injured women, and other local authorities and an ethnic organisations also provided cash assistance.

During and deaths caused by landmines are on the rise in Kachin State. Victims are often civilians searching for jade, gold, timber or vegetables.—GNLM



An injured woman undergoing treatment in Monyin Township hospital. PHOTO: GNLM

Health course held in Mandalay



Dr Tun Shwe from Mandalay General Hospital gives talks on health at Sedona Hotel in Mandalay. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

MANDALAY residents attended educational health talks at the Sedona Hotel on 5 October.

Social organisations and health enthusiasts came to the event. Retired cardiology professor Dr Tun Shwe from Mandalay General Hospital opened the event with a discussion on habits to promote health and longevity.

Other prominent doctors, including one health and fitness specialist, said it is never too early or late to be conscious of one's health, even for busy people.

The educators encouraged the attendees to stay healthy through regular exercise.—Thiha Ko Ko

Officials inspect Kanna Lake maintenance

MYINGYAN District Commissioner U Myint Thin Aung and township officials inspected maintenance work on Kanna Lake in Nahtogyi Township on 6 October. They inspected the parapet wall being built around the lake and the construction of the crest drain and guard posts.

The water intake of the lake is 4,658 acre-feet, which can irrigate 2,720 acres of farmland.

Since Mandalay Region got little rain this year, a villager said the lake would fill after only one or two nights of rainfall. — U Zaw Min Naing



Authorities inspect Kanna Lake. PHOTO: U ZAW MIN NAING

Roads and bridges repaired in Kawlin

ROADS and bridges damaged by floods are undergoing repairs in Kawlin Township in Sagaing Region. A total of 52 bridges have been repaired.

The repairs are being implemented by the district administration committee and township administration committee at the instruction of regional authorities.

Nine bridges were repaired in Kyauk Pyin Thar village tract, eight in Thabay Ai village tract, 10 in Inpinthar and Taung Bot Hla village tracts, eight in Nyaung Won and Taung Kyar village tracts, six in Say To and Ouminkone village tracts, four in Padonmar and Inpinhla village tracts and several other bridges throughout Kawlin Township. Some of the bridges are between 15 and 30 metres long.

The repairs aim to allow smooth transportation across the township.—Shwe Lin Pyi Sone



A vendor sells toddy palm-fier baskets in Taungtha. PHOTO: TIN SOE LWIN IPRD

Making toddy mobile oils business in Mandalay

The traditional toddy palm-fiber baskets in Taungtha Township,

Mandalay Region, are convenient containers for mobile commodity

vendors in rural areas. The baskets can be placed on bicycles, motorcycles, and three wheeled cycles as containers for the various commodities, which are then sold throughout rural communities.

Weaving baskets is also profitable for villagers looking to earn extra income. The prices of the baskets varies from K1500 to K3000, according to size and the average number of baskets sold is 20, according to a shop owner.—*Tin Soe Lwin IPRD*

Drugs seized in Kawlin Township

A CACHE of illegal drugs was seized in Lay Yin Tay village, Kawlin Township, on 4 October.

Police officer Zaw Win and his party searched the home of U Sein Shaung with a warrant and discovered narcotic drugs and K1 million (US\$773) in cash.

U Sein Shaung's wife was also arrested and Kawlin police station is taking action against the couple under the relevant drug laws.—*Shwe Lin Pyi Sone*

Human rights film fair held in Mandalay

THE Human Rights and Integrity International Tourism

Movie Fair took place on 3 October in Chanmyathasi Township's JCGV Cineplex in Mandalay. Another show was shown the next day at Chanayethasan Township's Community Center.

Director Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi introduced his film before

its screening and held a pop quiz on human rights. The movie focused on issues surrounding human trafficking and children who are too poor to attend school. The film will next be screened in Sagaing Region on 5 October. The free event is being sponsored by the British Embassy in Yangon and Swedish organizations.—*Maung Pyay Thu*

Nyaungpin Zauk village gets electricity

A SELF reliant 24-hour electricity cable was installed at Nyaungpin Zauk village in Nahtogyi Township, Mandalay Region, on 5 October. The village has more than 60 households.

The occasion was attended by Union Minister for

Transport and Railways U Nyan Tun Aung, who said he hoped for more development activities to take place in the township.

To electrify the whole Nahtogyi Township, the union minister has donated 53 transformers.—*Htay Myint Maung*

Myanmar and Mongolia consult bilateral air services Oct 1st, Yangon



Officials exchange notes at Myanmar-Mongolia Air Service Consultations meeting. PHOTO: MNA

CONSULTATIONS for conclusion of a bilateral Air Services Agreement between Myanmar and 1.4yonmor were held of the Department of Civil Aviation, here on Sep 31st and Oct 1st, 2015.

The Myanmar delegation was headed by U Min Lwin,

Acting Director General of the Department of Civil Aviation of the Ministry of Transport while the Mongolian delegation was headed by Mrs. MUNKH-TUYA, Chief Officer, Strategic Planning and Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Rood and Transport.

In the consultations, the two delegations negotiated and agreed on the final draft of Air Services Agreement, and also agreed to take measures for the formal signing of the Agreement. The two delegations further agreed on traffic rights for airlines from both countries.



Authorities clarify about land leases to local villagers in Theegone Village in Meiktila Township.

PHOTO: U CHAN THA

Land leases presented to Theegone villagers

OFFICIAL land leases from the government were presented to 43 families of Theegone village in Meiktila Township in Mandalay Region on 5 October.

District Commissioner U Tint Wai Thon presented the leases and said that the remaining 68 families of the village will soon receive leases.

He explained the benefits of owning their lands with legal papers from the government and

said that it will greatly improve socioeconomic conditions.

The leases were distributed as follows: 111 families in Theegone village in Meikhtila

Township, 136 families of Kugyi village in Mahline Township, 110 families in Saegy-ta village of Thasi Township and 99 families in Kyaungkone village of Wantwin Township in Meiktila District.—*U Chan Tha*

Malaysia's rulers call for quick action on scandal dogging state fund

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia's royal rulers have called for a quick, transparent investigation into troubled state-fund 1MDB, in rare comments from the monarchy that presents a new challenge to Prime Minister Najib Razak as he fends off corruption allegations.

1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), whose advisory board is chaired by the prime minister, has amassed debt of more than \$11 billion and is at the centre of a political storm after allegations of graft and mismanagement.

1MDB has denied wrongdoing. Investigations being conducted by Malaysia's anti-graft agency and other organisations have dragged on with no conclusion in sight.

In a statement issued late on Wednesday, the sultans of nine states and governors of the remaining four said the government's failure to give convincing answers on 1MDB may have resulted in a "crisis of confidence".

"The findings of the investi-

gation must be reported comprehensively and in a transparent manner so that the people will be convinced of the sincerity of the government which shall not at all conceal facts and the truth," the rulers said, according to a report in the Bernama state news agency.

The comments, which come ahead of a two-day gathering of the Conference of Rulers starting on Wednesday, are unprecedented as the sultans assume a non-political role in Malaysia and rarely speak on the functioning of the state.

The remarks add to pressure on Najib, who is facing calls to step down over his alleged involvement in the 1MDB scandal from opposition parties and some establishment figures, including former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

In July, the Wall Street Journal reported that investigators looking into 1MDB had identified a payment of nearly \$700 million into a bank account under Najib's name.

Reuters has not independently verified the report.

Najib has denied taking any money for personal gain and the government has said the deposit was a private donation.

In the weeks that followed, the government replaced the attorney general, who had led investigations into 1MDB, and a parliamentary committee inquiry has stalled.

The royals said they were worried that if the matter dragged on it could jeopardise the economy. The controversy has battered Malaysian markets with the ringgit losing a quarter of its value to become Asia's worst-performing currency and Malaysian bonds also down.

"To ensure that the government enjoys the people's trust, that leaders are respected, that political stability is guaranteed and that the economy continues to grow, all leaders must constantly ensure that justice is meted out equitably and transparently based on the law," the rulers said.—Reuters

Thailand denies labour abuses after complaint

BANGKOK — Thailand's military government on Wednesday defended its labour record after a global labour union with 50 million members filed a complaint against the country.

The complaint by the union IndustriALL was filed at the International Labour Organization in Geneva on Tuesday, with details of 18 cases of worker and labour abuses. It also accused the Thai government of failing to protect its workforce of 39 million people.

Sansern Kaewkamnerd, a spokesman for the prime minister's office, said the complaint was not true.

"The Thai government has always given importance to the country's workforce. We've organised the foreign and local workforce to ensure equal rights so that there are no abuses," Sansern told Reuters.

"The complaint by IndustriALL is not true," he added.

"This government is very serious about not abusing the

workforce especially in terms of the fisheries industry."

Labour abuses in the Thai fishing industry are well-documented. Since 2014, the United States has put Thailand on the bottom-ranked Tier 3 in its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. The US State Department said in its 2015 TIP report some Thai and migrant workers were subjected to forced labour on Thai fishing boats with some remaining at sea for several years or paid very little, or they were threatened or beaten.

The environmental group Greenpeace on Monday urged Thai Union Group Pcl, the world's largest manufacturer of canned tuna, to rid its supply chains of destructive fishing practices.

More than 200 people submitted a letter to Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha outside his Bangkok offices on Wednesday demanding stricter labour laws and better compensation.—Reuters

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Imelda Marcos disappointed her son only aiming for Vice Presidency

MANILA — Former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos is disappointed that her son has set his sights on winning the vice presidency in a May election, wishing instead he would follow his late father's footsteps into the presidential palace.

Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the only son of the late dictator with the same name who ruled in the Philippines for almost two decades, said this week he would run for vice president, though he has yet to find a running mate.

"As to my mother, yes, she was disappointed," Marcos, 58, widely known by his nickname "Bongbong", told reporters on Wednesday.

"She's wanted me to become president since I was three years old. Imagine how disappointed she is."

The elder Ferdinand Marcos was forced from power by a "people power" uprising in 1986 and died in exile in 1989. His wife, Imelda, famous for her shoe collection, is an 86-year-old congresswoman.

Imelda Marcos was not immediately available for comment. She has spoken of her pride in her son and how she would be even more proud if he sought the highest position in the land.

More than 54 million Filipinos will vote for a new presi-

dent, vice president, and about 18,000 lawmakers and local government officials in the May elections.

Investors are closely watching the succession in one of Asia's fastest growing economies, hoping nothing will derail gains made during President Benigno Aquino's rule.

Presidents are limited to one term in the Philippines.

The British-educated younger Marcos, who has been a legislator and a local government executive for nearly half his life, said whatever office he gained was a "question of destiny".

"The time was just not right to run for president," he said.

But with ratings in the single digits, his decision not to run for the top job was also perhaps a realistic one.

Politics in the Philippines has long been dominated by families and clans, as well as film and sports stars.

Marcos said historians would judge his father's rule and voters today wanted good public servants. He also said he stood to benefit from his famous name.

"Being a Marcos has only given me an advantage I wouldn't have if I wasn't a Marcos," he said. "In politics, it is very clear, of course, name recognition is important."—Reuters



Philippine Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr, son of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, holds a piece of bread while visiting a bakery in Metro Manila on 7 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

DNA research deployed in war on cancer scoops Nobel prize



Professors Sara Snogerup Linse, Goran K Hansson and Claes Gustafsson, members of the Nobel Assembly, talk to the media at a news conference at the Royal Swedish Academy in Stockholm on 7 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

STOCKHOLM — Three scientists from Sweden, the United States and Turkey won the 2015 Nobel Prize for Chemistry on Wednesday for working out how cells repair damaged DNA, providing new ammunition in the war on cancer.

Detailed understanding of DNA damage has helped drive a revolution in cancer treatment as researchers develop new drugs

that target specific molecular pathways used by tumour cells to proliferate. Tomas Lindahl, Paul Modrich and Aziz Sancar won the prize for “mechanistic studies of DNA repair”. Their work mapped how cells repair deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) to prevent damaging errors from appearing in genetic information. In many forms of cancer, one of more of these repair systems is damaged.

“Their work has provided fundamental knowledge of how a living cell functions and is, for instance, used for the development of new cancer treatments,” the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

Thousands of alterations to a cell’s genome occur every day due to spontaneous changes and damage by radiation, free radicals and carcinogenic substances — yet

DNA remains astonishingly intact.

To keep genetic materials from disintegrating, a range of molecular systems monitor and repair DNA, in processes that the three award-winning scientists helped map out.

“It’s important for cancer prevention and cancer treatment. That is what I received it for,” Sancar, who has US and Turkish citizenship and is a professor at the University of North Carolina, told Reuters by telephone from his home. “I’ve done significant work to deserve the prize but I was not expecting it this year. I wasn’t even aware that I was nominated.”

Sancar, who said he had been inundated by calls, added that his immediate plans were to shower, shave and go to his lab.

Lindahl, who works at Britain’s Francis Crick Institute and Clare Hall Laboratory, said he was surprised by the news, although he knew he had been considered for a prize over the years, along with “hundreds of other people”.

He said DNA repair played a vital role in human health and the

work by Nobel trio over the years was important in pointing the way to better disease treatments, especially for cancer.

“We have to understand the mechanisms, so we can selectively provide good therapy,” he told the Nobel news conference by telephone from London. “We can’t avoid DNA damage. We live in a world where we get exposed to DNA damaging agents all the time.”

Modrich, the third winner, is a researcher at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Duke University School of Medicine in the United States. Chemistry was the third of this year’s Nobel prizes. The prize is named after dynamite inventor Alfred Nobel and has been awarded since 1901 for achievements in science, literature and peace in accordance with his will. The prize for medicine was awarded on Monday for work in developing drugs to fight parasitic diseases, while the physics prize went to researchers investigating ghostly sub-atomic particles known as neutrinos.—Reuters

“Their work has provided fundamental knowledge of how a living cell functions and is ... used for the development of new cancer treatments.”

Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

Australian police arrest 4 over suspected ‘terrorism’ murder

SYDNEY — Australian counter terrorism police investigating the shooting death of a police accountant are questioning four people arrested on Wednesday in raids in Sydney.

New South Wales police said they believe the detained boys and men, aged from 16 to 22, were involved in planning the murder of Curtis Cheng as he left police headquarters in west Sydney on Friday. The teenage attacker, Farhad Khalil Mohammad Jabar, who was born in Iran and came from an Iraqi-Kurdish background, was shot and killed by police at the scene.

Investigators have also enlisted Turkish police to search for the 15-year-old shooter’s sister, who left Australia the day before the attack.

The incident has raised concern about disaffected youth becoming radicalised as Australia focuses on security rather than social cohesion and inclusion.

“We suspect that a terrorism event has occurred and we suspect that they may have some knowledge,” New South Wales Police Deputy Commissioner Catherine Burn told reporters of the four people detained in Australia’s biggest anti-terrorism operation in more than a year.

“What we would suggest and we suspect is that there was some influence, whether it was ideologically, religious or politically motivated, that determined and influenced the 15-year-old to go and commit this horrendous act of violence.”

Jabar was not under surveillance and was not considered a threat but some of the targets of Wednesday’s raid were the focus of anti-terrorism raids a year ago, Burn said. Seventeen people were detained in that action, which police said prevented a beheading plot. The latest raids came a day after police arrested a 17-year-old boy on his way to the school where Jabar was a pupil, charging him with offences related to the use of social media to harass and intimidate.

Police have also visited a mosque attended by some of the raid targets, but Burn said no substantive link had been made between the mosque and the attack. Police said there was nothing to suggest Jabar’s sister was involved in the attack, but they were keen to speak to her.

A staunch ally of the United States and its battle against Islamist militants, Australia has been on heightened alert for attacks by home-grown radicals.—Reuters

Death toll from China typhoon rises to 19

SHANGHAI, — The death toll from a typhoon that struck China on the weekend has risen to 19, with four people missing, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday.

Seven people were killed in typhoon-triggered tornados in the southern province of Guangdong while seven died in landslides, Xinhua said citing the provincial civil affairs department.

Three fishermen died in

boat accidents at sea while one person was found dead in the debris of a house that collapsed during the storm. Four fishermen were missing, Xinhua said.

The storm made landfall in the southern province of Guangdong on Sunday, triggering widespread blackouts, state media said.

Winds knocked out power grids along the coast and authorities cancelled dozens of flights and suspended high-speed trains.

Guangdong’s civil affairs department said the province suffered 23.24 billion yuan (\$3.66 billion) in losses from the storm, which affected 3.5 million people and damaged 282,700 hectares of cropland.

One person was also killed by a falling tree in the neighbouring province of Guangxi, Xinhua reported. Nearly 1.9 million people in Guangxi suffered losses and 417 homes were destroyed, it said.—Reuters



Trees are blown by Typhoon Mujigae on a street in Zhanjiang, Guangdong province on 4 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

PERSPECTIVES

A problem in the agricultural sector is a problem for all

Myint Win Thein

The agriculture sector plays an important role in Myanmar. More than two-thirds of the country's population is reliant on it for a livelihood and it contributes the same amount to national earnings, according to the World Bank. It is important not only for the country's economy as well as for political stabil-

ity. Any disruption to the sector has a direct impact on millions of Myanmar people. When a large majority of the population is facing economic troubles, it is difficult to maintain political stability.

For example, farm labourers who lose their jobs may be forced to migrate to towns and cities in search of work. Myanmar's economic hubs quickly become overpopulated and lack the infrastructure to cope with the sudden influx of people. And if the former labourers cannot find housing or employment, they may turn to petty crime to get by. Some even get involved in the dirty trade of human trafficking.

Neglecting the agriculture sector has a number of very serious knock-on effects for society,

which is why more attention and funds should be devoted to it. Farmlands should also be developed so that yields are the highest possible, which will ensure that the greatest number of people benefit from the fruits of their labour.

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A Heartfelt Search of a Good Teacher

Sry Gemini

A teacher is often likened to a gardener. It is quite similar, of course. A gardener grows plants and flowers by doing many works: sowing, growing, watering and protecting insects and so on till the time when they are enough to be in use. Thus a gardener builds a garden full of colourful plants, flowers and trees, which make an environment beautiful. And a gardener is a leader of a garden. Similarly, a teacher has to teach students, sometimes blaming and sometimes praising them. Sometimes he has to be tolerant and sometimes ignorant. In this way he educates the students. Therefore he is one who bears the educated and also makes the world beautiful. Really, he deserves the title of 'leader' of students. He can also steer the life-boats of his students straightly to a good destination. In my life, I met three teachers who impalpably gave me a strong inner impetus to do my best in the field of education. It would be impossible even to earn this low academic standard that I have now if I was not their pupil. Of course, a good teacher has skills, abilities

and techniques that even they themselves do not perceive, to raise their brainy students as the successful in life. They may possess different skills, abilities and techniques because they have different mind and belong to different areas of subjects. In this short article I would like to discuss the general qualities possessed by good teachers from my perspective stemming from my experiences, regardless of explanation of teacher qualities proposed by world scholars. It is more true to say that this article is about my sincere feeling of what kind of person a good teacher is. Below are the qualities drawn by mere reflection of my teachers' attributes and life style.

Teaching hobby

This quality is very fundamental to be a good teacher. One with this quality tends to succeed in a teacher life. In every job, hobby is an essential requirement to be satisfied and successful in one's job. Without hobby and satisfaction, it will be difficult for a person to even remain existent. A teacher with no hobby will exert no proper effort in teacher job. He will do teaching only as an inevitable duty. Reversely,

a teacher whose hobby is teaching job is just pleased with teaching, irrespective of his tiredness, gains and pains.

Honesty

Honesty is a treasure that is highly required everywhere on earth. Without it one cannot have even one's identity in the human society. Manners of a dishonest teacher disgrace the dishonest teacher himself. It suffices to be shameful for a teacher to pretend without knowing and being skillful in something. Oppositely, a good teacher can be found possessing such lovely quality. He is honest enough to express his profound feelings and knowledge in front of his students as opposed to keeping secret something more valuable and important. He gives his students all he has learned and known as much as possible.

Reading habit

Reading habit is an innate nature of a good teacher. My good teachers would be seen reading a book almost all the time in a day unless they have other tasks. It is admitted that before starting reading, they could not enjoy reading. After knowing what reading gives, they cannot help reading. Gradually, they become book-worms.

The great knowledge gained from books helps them to be successful teachers in teaching. They seem to have lots of remarkable words to choose and many surprising examples or similes to extract out of their heart until comprehension of the lesson comes to students. Such words and examples or similes are sufficient to hearten the students and attract their great attentions. Some teachers believe that reading other books apart from the specialized subject is unnecessary. It is unwise for them to say so because the terms within the specialized field are too narrow to explain with and cannot clarify some lessons.

Inspiration of students

A good teacher inspires students. As said above, a good teacher is honest and therefore he is not such a jealous man to his students. Instead he has a strong preference or belief that "A student must excel his teacher". Due to this noble belief he inspires his students to work harder than ever. The smarter his students are than him, the happier, the more pleased and the more proud of he is. His words used while teaching have energy to make his

students active. Not only his words but also his manners touch his students' lethargic hearts so that they come to have energy and eagerness to do something, especially education persistently.

Possessing creative idea

Most successful teachers are found endowed with creative idea. I believe that the creative idea can be either inborn one or result obtained through reading habit. The inborn creative idea can be called as talent, which the ordinary teachers cannot possess. The other is possible to be developed through reading and studying. With this idea they invent new, easy and acceptable ways or methods aiming at understanding by his students.

Neglecting gains, ranks and powers

The teacher endowed with the foresaid qualities neglects gains, ranks and powers. He does not care these so called unreal attributes. He is satisfied enough with what he has possessed. He lives with joy (pōti) earned from teaching and learning, highly speaking from literature concerned. So he can be named in Pæ'i "Pōtibhakkha", one who consumes joy. He is not materialist; he values

good mentality more than material properties. Although penniless, he has many, which are not material but pupils (တစ်ပြားမရှိ၊ တပည့်များ): The qualities mentioned are just out of my feeling and experiences got through reflection of the attributes of my respected teachers. This article is written with three reasons: for the people to have high awareness of The World Teachers' Day, to notice necessarily and fundamentally required qualities of a teacher and to make a positive suggestion to those who assign teachers for teacher job in Myanmar. Here I do not put the quality of education level on purpose with the view that a teacher-job applicant has already reached a specified level of education concerned. And another reason is that an applicant, if greatly interested in and devoted to teaching, will surely enhance his qualities in various ways. At the start of doing something, no one can be perfect and later on, he may become gradually qualified in his field to some extent. For these reasons, the quality of education level is left unmentioned here.

May the world students have good teachers.

KOICA Vice President to visit Myanmar



KOICA Vice President For Projects & Regional Coordination, Mr. Choi Sung-ho.

KOICA Vice President For Projects & Regional Coordination, Mr. Choi Sung-ho will make three-day visit to Myanmar from October 12 to 14 to strengthen South Korea's development assistance to Myanmar over the years to come.

During his visit, Mr. Choi is scheduled to present at the opening ceremony of the Saemaul Training Center in Hlegu Kha-Yaung village, one of the villages for the

Follow-up project of the Hlegu Rural Development in Yangon. After that, he will visit the Saemaul pilot villages in Nay Pyi Taw where the largest number of pilot villages is located.

He is also planning to hold talks with U Tun Tun Naing, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development (MNPED) and visit the KOICA's project sites of Myanmar Development Institute (MDI).

Since its establishment in 1991, KOICA, a Korea government agency, has worked on different projects and various cooperation programs in Myanmar.

In particular, KOICA is implementing two flagship projects named Saemaul Undong project with 22 million US dollars budgets and Myanmar Development Institute (MDI) project with 20 million US dollars in Myanmar.—GNLM



From ambassador to author

Jessica Mudditt

*MR Rajib Bhatia's career as a top level diplomat spanned more than three decades and nine different countries, including Myanmar, where he served as India's ambassador between 2002 and 2005. Since retiring from the Indian Foreign Service in 2009, Mr Bhatia has written more than 150 articles on foreign affairs. On Monday his new book, *India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours*, was released in Yangon. He talks to *The Global New Light of Myanmar* about what his research unearthed and some of his career highlights – such as taking Senior General Than Shwe to the Taj Mahal.*

Your book covers a topic of vast proportions – how did you go about it and how would you describe the finished product?

Indeed, I've covered the whole period of India and Myanmar's relations, from ancient times to the present. It took me four years to research, with my research beginning in 2011 when Myanmar's reform period began. And I did of course draw on my four years of experiences as an ambassador.

One aspect of my book that I'm very candid about talking about is one of the most talked-about dimensions of the relationship: China. I devoted a separate chapter to what I call the 'India-China-Myanmar triangle.' The other feature is that my book presents an Indian perspective on Myanmar polity, society, culture, foreign policy and economy. Although my book's title is *India-Myanmar: Changing Contours*, it's about much more than that: it's about the surrounding region as well. I can also say that while I have tried to be objective, I did have an agenda. That

agenda was to try to contribute to strengthening of relations between India and Myanmar.

As India already has so many trade partners, is the benefit you refer to Myanmar's alone?

No, it's a shared interest. First of all we are immediate neighbours. We've become close through history and we also share common challenges: both Myanmar and India want this region to be one of peace and harmony. Neither wants a single country to dominate the region. Both want to see a strong ASEAN. When I say 'strengthen,' it means a shared interest between India and Myanmar, and also for the region's interests.

How would you describe the dynamics between India, Myanmar and China?

One of my central questions was to find out what Myanmar wants, because it's a country in the middle of two big giants and it's being wooed by both.

China has a legitimate reason to have good relations with Myanmar – after all they share borders and history. And similarly, the fact that India wants to have good relations with Myanmar also makes sense. One of my central questions was to find out what Myanmar wants, because it's a country in the middle of two big giants and it's being wooed by both. My own reading is that Myanmar does not want to choose one country over the other. Myanmar wants to have a cooperative relationship with both. It does not want either country to compete, much less confront one another over it. If we understand that, it becomes clear that all three countries should work for the harmonisation of interests

in such a fashion that the stability and progress of Myanmar is assured.

Would you agree that in comparison with China, India has been less actively engaged with Myanmar?

I must first say that China's economy is about five times bigger than India's. So if you were to just calculate the dollars and cents, then the answer is yes – China's economic stakes are much bigger in Myanmar. But if you take a larger and deeper view, the bond between India and Myanmar is very, very close. Buddhism came from India, which defines Myanmar. There are cultural influences that came from India that remain today. During the British Raj, for five or six decades, Myanmar



Former ambassador and author Mr Rajib Bhatia. PHOTO: JESSICA MUDDITT

an perspective.' The first is that I have used a lot of Indian sources and views of Indian scholars to illustrate my points. I feel that – with due respect – if Australian, French and Norwegian scholars etcetera can hold forth on Myanmar – well, we are next door and would like to do so also. My idea was to put across Indian voices and views onto the international stage, which I believe I will succeed in doing because my book is published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

The second thing is that there is vast knowledge in India about Myanmar – it's scattered, but it's definitely there. From the north-east we have Myanmar next door, as we do from West Bengal and from the Bay of Bengal. So the knowledge is there and what I am arguing is that we must recreate the sense of proximity between Myanmar and India.

What was it like being an ambassador in Myanmar, back when it was truly a different place than it is today?

I had a very rich and varied experience. Of the nine countries I served around the world, which included Africa, Central America, North America and other parts of Asia, it was Myanmar that had the deepest impact on me. It's very close to my heart.

The high point of my career in Myanmar was accompanying Senior General Than Shwe, who was then the head of state, to India on a four-day state visit. I acted as his personal guide to some of India's highlights and we had an excellent relationship. I took he and his wife to the Taj Majal, as well as to Kolkata, Bangalore and Delhi. He was mesmerised by India's diversity.

What do you believe Myanmar can learn from India in terms of celebrating diversity?

India certainly learned the hard way since the time it was partitioned with Pakistan, that religion and politics have to be separated. Religion is between an individual and their god but politics is

about the peoples' wishes. So the two must be separated.

While Myanmar and India are close, how does your book address the waves of anti-Indian sentiment that have arisen from time to time?

History is history: it cannot be changed. It is a fact that large numbers of Indians left when World War II began, when U Nu made legal changes and when Ne Win was in power. All those periods are there. But we should learn from history. Indian people are not against Myanmar – they are very friendly towards them. And those of Indian origin living in Myanmar have contributed in important ways to the country. I would strongly recommend, as I argue in the book, that two things are very important. The first is to expand economic cooperation and the second is to develop a close and more diversified relationship between the people of India and Myanmar.

In a practical sense, how can this be achieved?

One idea I have is to set up an India-Myanmar cultural foundation, which could be funded through the business communities and governments of both countries. The funds could be placed at the disposal of the ambassadors in Yangon and Delhi. This would free up the ambassadors from bureaucratic interference and would allow them to truly contribute to small programmes bringing in tourists, media, university students and so forth. Bringing these types of people together more often could prove enormously beneficial.

In the last chapter of my book, I also suggest that a strategic partnership should be set up to hold annual meetings and such things. It's among a specific list of recommendations I make in the final chapter of my book.

India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours is published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group and the Institute of South-east Asian Studies, Singapore.



The Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, which was the capital of the British Indian empire until 1911.

PHOTO: JESSICA MUDDITT

MSF calls for independent inquiry into US attack on Afghan hospital



Francoise Saulnier, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) legal counsel gestures next to Joanne Liu, President of MSF International, during a news conference in Geneva, Switzerland on 7 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

GENEVA — Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) called on Wednesday for an independent international fact-finding commission to be established to investigate the US bombing of its hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, which it deems a war crime.

The medical charity said that the commission, which can be set up at the request of a single state under the Geneva Convention, would gather facts and evidence from the United States, NATO and Afghanistan.

Only then would MSF decide whether to bring criminal charges for loss of life and damage, it said.

“If we let this go, we are basically giving a blank check to any countries at war,” MSF International President Joanne Liu told a news briefing in Geneva. “There is no commitment to an independent investigation yet.”

The US military took responsibility on Tuesday for the air strike on a hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz, that killed 22 people, calling it a mistake and vow-

ing to bring the perpetrators to account.

MSF said it sent a letter on Tuesday to the 76 countries who signed up to the additional protocol of the Geneva Convention that set up the standing commission in 1991.

Neither the United States nor Afghanistan are signatories and Francoise Saulnier, MSF lead counsel MSF, said that the consent of the states involved is necessary.

MSF is in talks with Switzerland about convoking the international commission of independent experts. “Today we say enough, even war has rules,” Liu said.

“We cannot rely on internal investigations by US, NATO and Afghan forces.”—Reuters

“If we let this go, we are basically giving a blank check to any countries at war.”

President Joanne Liu
MSF International

Merkel bloc loses support to German right-wing party on refugee crisis

BERLIN — Support for German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservatives has slipped to its lowest since May on worries about the refugee crisis, a poll showed on Wednesday, while backing for an anti-immigrant party has risen sharply.

The Forsa poll put the conservative bloc on 39 percent, one percentage point down from last week, and 2.5 points below its score at the last federal election two years ago. By contrast, the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) gained two points in the past week, hitting 7 percent for the first time this year. German authorities are struggling to cope with the roughly 10,000 refugees arriving every day, many fleeing conflict in the Middle East.

The government expects 800,000 or more people to arrive this year and media say it could be up to 1.5 million.

Forsa chief Manfred Guellner said Merkel’s Christian Democrats (CDU) were losing most support in eastern Germany and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), was also down sharply. “The attacks by Bavaria state premier Horst Seehofer on the chancellor are driving voters on the right wing of the CSU to the AfD,” said Guellner.

The Social Democrats



German Chancellor Angela Merkel
PHOTO: REUTERS

(SPD), who share power with Merkel, gained one point to 25 percent.

The opposition Greens and radical Left party were down one point each at 9 percent and the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) were unchanged on 5 percent.

Merkel, who has been chancellor for almost 10 years, is seeing a decline in her own popularity over her handling of the crisis and is under increasing criticism for throwing open Germany’s borders to Syrian refugees.

The poll showed Merkel’s own popularity down 2 points at 47 percent, her lowest this year, compared with 15 points for SPD chairman Sigmar Gabriel.

Guellner noted that although she had lost 9 points in the last 10 weeks, she was still way ahead of other former chancellors, including Helmut Kohl who led the country to reunification 25 years ago.—Reuters

Fifteen dead as South Carolina gripped by historic flooding

CONWAY — Carolina grappled with the damage wrought by record rainfall, as the death toll from widespread flooding rose to 15 on Tuesday and residents braced for more evacuations in

areas near dams and swollen waterways across the state.

Predictions of sunny skies in coming days provided only small comfort. More than 800 people were living in shelters after

floodwater forced them from their homes, and officials said new evacuations were likely as several rivers remained above flood stage and dams were being monitored for breaches.

“We are still in the mode that the next 36 to 48 hours will be volatile,” Governor Nikki Haley told a news conference. “Don’t let the sunshine fool you.”

Officials said about 300 state-maintained roads and 160 bridges remained closed. Eleven dams in the southeastern state have failed, the state Emergency Management Division said.

Haley said she could not yet estimate the cost of the devastation but noted “the damage is going to be heartbreaking for a lot of people.”

More than 2 feet (60 cm) of rain have fallen since Friday in parts of South Carolina. The state avoided a hit from Hurricane Joaquin but experienced historic rainfall and flooding due to a combination of weather mostly unrelated to that storm.

Of the 15 people who died, nine drowned and six were killed in weather-related car crashes, the emergency agency said. The extended rainstorm also was

blamed for two deaths in North Carolina.

In the South Carolina capital of Columbia, which experienced its wettest days on record over the weekend, the University of South Carolina canceled classes through Friday.

Though floodwater was receding in some places, officials warned people to remain vigilant. Early on Tuesday, emergency responders in Orangeburg County pulled three people to safety in a boat after they were surrounded by rushing water from the North Edisto River, the State newspaper reported.

The highest recorded amount of rain in South Carolina was 26.8 inches (68 cm), which fell over several days in an area just east of Charleston, National Weather Service meteorologist Carl Barnes said.

“The worst has passed us, in terms of rainfall,” he said. “We’ll definitely have sun and some very welcome drying out for the rest of the week.”—Reuters



David Carroll of Waccamaw Lake Drive pulls a boat carrying neighbours Rick Woodward, Miki Woodward and Matt Desjardins in Conway, South Carolina on 6 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

After Bangladesh, India wants anti-trafficking pacts with Nepal, Gulf states

NEW DELHI — India wants to sign agreements with countries like Nepal and the United Arab Emirates to curb human trafficking and improve the rescue and repatriation of victims, a senior home ministry official said on Wednesday.

Kumar Alok, joint secretary at the ministry of home affairs, told an anti-trafficking conference that India and neighbouring Bangladesh had signed an anti-trafficking pact in June and New Delhi was keen to do the same with other nations.

“The MoU (memorandum of understanding) with Bangladesh is for prevention of all forms of trafficking and there is a task-force made up of officials from both countries which has been set up to look into this,” Alok told delegates.

“We are also planning to have similar kind of MoUs with other countries, especially with neighbouring countries like Nepal and Gulf countries because

we find the Gulf is being used as a destination,” he said, adding that talks with the United Arab Emirates were likely “very soon.”

South Asia, with India at its centre, is the fastest-growing and second-largest region for human trafficking in the world, after Southeast Asia, according to the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

More than 150,000 people are known to be trafficked within South Asia every year, but the trade is underground and the real number is likely to be much higher. Traffickers or “agents” often take advantage of poor communities, luring victims from villages with promises of good jobs and a better life in the cities.

But the reality is very different. Thousands of women and girls are trafficked in India alone, many of them from Nepal and Bangladesh, and sold into forced marriage or used for bonded work as prostitutes or maids. Some end up in Gulf nations.—Reuters

IN PICTURE



A fisherman inspects traps at fish pens to be dismantled to make way for an expressway at Laguna de Bay in Muntinlupa, Metro Manila, on 7 October 2015. The government will start soon the proposed 47-kilometre (29 miles) Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike, which aims to create an alternative route between Metro Manila and Laguna, and mitigate flooding in the western coastal communities along Laguna Lake. PHOTO: REUTERS

Ex-Yemen president's party says accepts peace terms

SANAA — The party of Yemen's former president, a main player in the messy, months-old civil war, said in an emailed statement that it accepts a peace plan brokered by the United Nations in talks in Oman.

The General People's Congress (GPC) is the party of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, to whom many of the army units fighting alongside the northern Houthi militia against forces backed by Gulf states remain loyal.

“An official source at the General People's Congress reiterated the party's fast position on ending hostilities and raising the blockade and on a peaceful solution to Yemen's crisis,” the party said in the statement.

President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, supported by a Saudi-led military coalition and allied to local militias, has ruled out an agreement until the Houthis and Saleh's forces implement a UN resolution by quitting cities and surrendering arms.

However, he has also said his government would join the UN-sponsored talks if the Houthis publicly accepted the resolution.

The GPC said in its statement that any implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2216 must take place “in accordance with operational mechanisms agreed upon by all parties”, implying that a wider agreement should come first.

The Gulf-backed forces have

in recent weeks pushed the Houthis and Saleh's forces out of Yemen's second city Aden, retaken swathes of the south and mounted an offensive in the Marib area east of the capital Sanaa. The Gulf countries and Hadi have repeatedly said they do not trust Saleh or the Houthis to implement peace agreements because they believe them to have reneged on previous political deals since the start of a 2012 transition from Saleh's rule.

International aid agencies and the UN have raised alarm over the humanitarian cost of Yemen's civil war, both from fighting that has killed more than 5,000 people, and from a coalition blockade they say has brought the country close to famine.—Reuters

Kurdish militants ram car bomb into Turkish gendarmes post

DIYARBAKIR — Three Kurdish militants rammed a vehicle loaded with explosives into a gendarmes post in Turkey's southeast Van province late on Tuesday, then died in a gun battle, the military said.

Fourteen soldiers were wounded in the clash in the region hit by months of violence after the collapse of a 2-1/2-year ceasefire between the government and fighters from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

On the same night in nearby Diyarbakir province, securi-

ty forces hunting bank robbers killed another four suspected Kurdish militants, the governor's office said.

Suspected militants raided an armoured truck carrying money belonging to a state-run bank in the town of Bismil, and got away with 110,000 Turkish lira (\$37,000) and two guns, the office said in a statement.

Security forces sent out to catch them clashed with suspected militants late on Tuesday and killed four, it added, without saying whether they were the robbers.—Reuters

Somali militants vow to welcome British peacekeepers 'with fire'

MOGADISHU — Somalia's militant Islamist group al Shabaab pledged on Tuesday to greet British troops “with fire” when they arrive to provide support to a peacekeeping force in the conflict-ravaged country.

Last week Prime Minister David Cameron announced plans to deploy up to 70 troops and experts to provide logistical, medical and engineering support to the African Union-led peacekeeping force in Somalia, which is struggling to emerge from two decades of chaos and is also battling the Islamist insurgency of the al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab.

Like other Western powers, Britain has long avoided the Horn of Africa country, which

until recently was widely viewed as a failed state, but it has made some progress in restoring order and setting up a functioning government.

“We hope we shall see the beheaded bodies of whites,” Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, al Shabaab's spokesman, said in a radio broadcast.

The statement branded Britain “an enemy to Muslims” and accused the country of trying to colonise Somalia.

“We shall welcome British forces with fire and you will see their dead bodies displayed on the web pages,” he said. A spokesperson for the British High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya, declined to comment.—Reuters



A Houthi militant stands outside al-Nour mosque in Yemen's capital Sanaa on 7 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Singapore asks Indonesia to name firms related to haze-causing fires

SINGAPORE — Singapore's Foreign Ministry has sent a formal request for the names of companies suspected of contributing to haze pollution to the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore, the ministry said on Wednesday.

The move was in response to a request by the Indonesian Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar, who had said that if Singapore wanted the names of these companies to be officially sent to it, then this had to be done through the government-to-government channel.

"We look forward to an early response from the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on our requests so that we can take the necessary action against those who are responsible for the haze,"

the ministry said, adding that Singapore has also reiterated its haze assistance offer to Indonesia in the same note.

The offer includes one C-130 aircraft for cloud seeding operations, up to two C-130 aircraft to ferry a fire-fighting assistance team, high resolution satellite pictures and hotspot coordinates as well as one Chinook helicopter with one heli-bucket under-slung.

"Singapore stands ready to assist Indonesia in its haze combating and fire-fighting efforts," the ministry said.

Indonesia has launched a massive air operation, involving helicopters, planes and thousands of soldiers, to fight forest fire that has spread haze to Singapore and Malaysia.—*Xinhua*



A boat passes a dockyard shrouded in haze in Klang, Malaysia on 7 October 2015. The thick so-called "haze," caused by slash-and-burn clearances on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo, has pushed air quality to unhealthy levels in Malaysia and neighbouring Singapore. PHOTO: REUTERS

US judge: lethal injection drug violates law

MONTANA — A Montana judge ruled on Tuesday that one of the drugs planned for use in a lethal injection mix violates state law, effectively putting a hold on executions in the state, which has only two inmates on death row.

Montana law stipulates that one of the drugs in its lethal injection mix must be an "ultra fast-acting barbiturate" and the current drug intended to play that role, pentobarbital, does not meet that criteria, District Court Judge Jeffrey Sherlock said in his ruling.

The decision is unlikely to have any immediate impact in Montana, which has no executions planned and has conducted only three since 1976, when the US Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty. The last one was in 2006.

"The State of Montana is hereby enjoined from using the drug pentobarbital in its lethal injection protocol unless and until the statute authorizing lethal injection is modified in conformance with this decision," the judge wrote.

The Montana Attorney General's office was studying the decision and would not comment on the ruling, a spokeswoman said.

Montana's three-drug lethal injection procedure was struck down about three years ago by a state court judge for differing from a two-drug protocol spelled out in law in the state.

"The state has had multiple opportunities to correct the problems with the death penalty protocol. And each time they came up with a new flawed procedure," said Jim Taylor, legal

director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana, which has been fighting the execution protocol.

Fourteen states have used pentobarbital in executions, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, which monitors capital punishment in the United States.

Pentobarbital, a barbiturate that is often the drug of choice for physician-assisted suicide in Europe, is also used to euthanize animals.

Citing ethical reasons, drug-makers, mostly from Europe, began about four years ago banning sales of drugs for use in executions. States were forced to find new combinations and turned to lightly regulated compounding pharmacies, which can mix chemicals, for their execution drugs.—*Reuters*

UN chief 'shocked' by charges against ex-General Assembly president

UNITED NATIONS — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was shocked by allegations that John Ashe, a former president of the United Nations General Assembly, took more than \$1.3 million in bribes, Ban's spokesman said on Tuesday.

"The secretary-general was shocked and deeply troubled to learn this morning of the allegations against John Ashe, the former president of the General Assembly, which go to the heart of the integrity of the United Nations," Stephane Dujarric told reporters.

"Corruption is not business as usual at the UN," he said, adding that if the UN secretariat is contacted by US authorities, it will cooperate with them. Ashe, the former UN ambassador from Antigua and Barbuda, was assembly president in 2013-2014.—*Reuters*

Supreme leader bans talks with US

DUBAI — Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei on Wednesday banned any further negotiations between Iran and the United States, less than three months after Iran signed a nuclear deal with the West as a result of years of US-led talks.

the agreement. In an address to Revolutionary Guards Navy commanders, Khamenei said talks with the United States brought only disadvantages to Iran.

"Negotiations with the United States open gates to their economic, cultural, political and security influence. Even during the nuclear negotiations they tried to harm our national interests whenever they had a chance," Khamenei was quoted as saying on his website.

Khamenei has not publicly endorsed the deal reached with world powers in July, which was a political victory for the moderates led by President Hassan Rouhani. Hardliners inside Iran are still trying to put breaks on

Khamenei's comments put him at directly at odds with Rouhani, who is hopeful of normalising relations with the West and who has repeatedly said his government is ready to negotiate "with anyone" to resolve regional issues.

The July deal curbs Iran's nuclear programme in return for sanctions being lifted.

The West feared Tehran was seeking to develop a nuclear weapon, suspicions Iran has denied.—*Reuters*

Maldives boat blast was attempt on president's life

COLOMBO — An explosion on a speedboat carrying Maldives President Abudullah Yameen was an assassination attempt, the minister at his office told Reuters on Tuesday, citing the findings of international investigators.

Two military officials have been arrested over the incident, Mohamed Hussain Shareef said.

Yameen was unhurt in the 28 September blast on board the presidential launch as it approached the capital Male, but his wife and two aides were injured. Initially the government said it could be due to mechanical failure.

Shareef said that theory had been ruled out by investigators from the US FBI, Saudi Arabia, Australia, and Sri Lanka.

"They are now telling me that they have enough evidence to believe that it is likely to have been an attempt on the president's life," he said by telephone from Male. "Authorities have arrested two people... in line of command who had access to the vessel." Yameen, 59, took power after a bitterly contested pres-

idential election in 2013.

The leader he defeated, Mohamed Nasheed, was jailed this year after a rapid trial on terrorism charges in a case that has drawn international criticism. A team of international human right lawyers are pressing for travel bans and targeted sanctions against top Maldivian officials.

The foreign ministry on Tuesday said "the wholly inappropriate" sanctions threat appeared to have been widened to include a suggested tourism boycott.

A broader crackdown against political dissent belies the popular image of the Maldives, an island chain with a population of 400,000, as a holiday paradise, with radicalised youths enlisting in significant numbers to fight for Islamic State militants in the Middle East.

Local investigations into the explosion on the Maldives National Defence Force launch are continuing, and security for Yameen has been beefed up, Shareef added.—*Reuters*

UK PM Cameron says will fight hard in EU renegotiation

MANCHESTER — The European Union is "too big, too bossy and too interfering" and Britain will fight hard to renegotiate its relationship with the bloc, Prime Minister David Cameron said on Wednesday.

Cameron, whose Conservative Party won a majority at an election in May, has promised to reform Britain's relationship with the EU before a membership referendum due by the end of 2017.

"We don't duck fights. We get stuck in. We fix problems," he told the Conservative Party annual conference in the north-

ern English city of Manchester.

"Believe me, I have no romantic attachment to the European Union and its institutions. I'm only interested in two things: Britain's prosperity and Britain's influence. That's why I'm going to fight so hard in this renegotiation, so we can get a better deal and the best of both worlds."

Cameron also said Britain must play its part in defeating Islamic State militants in Syria, and that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must go to achieve peace in the country.—*Reuters*

Texas executes man who killed Mexican, robbed him of \$8

AUSTIN — Texas on Tuesday executed a 35-year-old man convicted of fatally shooting a recently arrived Mexican immigrant in the head and robbing him of \$8.

Juan Garcia was pronounced dead from a lethal injection at 6:26 pm at the state's execution chamber in Huntsville, a prisons official said. The execution was the 529th in Texas since the US Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976 — the most of any state.

Garcia, then 18, was found guilty of killing Hugo Solano, 32, in a 1998 robbery in Houston. Garcia and three accomplices had launched a violent crime spree in the Houston area, which included the robbery, the Texas Attorney General's Office said.

"When Solano refused to hand over any money, Garcia shot him four times in the head and neck, killing him," it said.

In his statement, Gar-

cia sought forgiveness from Solano's family.

"While I am still alive I bring suffering to you all. The harm that I did to your dad and husband, I hope this brings you closure to all of you. I never wanted to hurt any of you all," he was quoted as saying by prisons officials.

This month, the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles recommended that the execution go ahead. None of Garcia's three co-defendants were sentenced to death.

"I never intended to kill him," Garcia told the Houston Chronicle a few days before the execution. He added he did not rob Solano of \$8 - the aggravating factor that made the crime a capital offense, the paper reported.

Prosecutors said he stole the money. "I never intended it to happen the way it happened. I didn't mean to kill. I had no reason to," Garcia was quoted as saying by the paper.—Reuters

PICTURE OF THE DAY



People cross U Bein bridge over Tuangthaman Lake in Mandalay, Myanmar on 6 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Malaysian banks race to pin down fleeing deposits

KUALA LUMPUR — Bank deposits in Malaysia are growing at their slowest pace in more than a decade as retail funds flee to higher-yielding avenues, weakening banks' buffers against any unforeseen funding needs at a time when the economy is losing steam.

Total deposits at com-

mercial banks rose 4.8 percent in July, the least since September 2002, according to the latest central bank data. Growth is expected to slacken further, with banks offering unattractive interest rates of 3.1 to 4.0 percent per annum.

Those rates are barely above the inflation rate of

around 3.0. Most Malaysians still prefer property, equities and other investments than deposits, say analysts.

As deposits slow, banks' loans-to-deposits ratio — a measure of their liquidity — crept to a record 89.3 percent at the end of July. Some of the bigger

lenders such as Malayan Banking Bhd are currently operating at loan-to-deposit ratios above 85-90 percent, according to analysts. They expect the sector-wide ratio to rise further and liquidity to tighten, even as loan growth in the Southeast Asian country slows due to a weaker economy.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BAO JI VOY NO (1506)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BAO JI VOY NO (1506) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL
SHIPPING LTD.

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV LUNA BLUE VOY NO (106)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV LUNA BLUE VOY NO (106) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S TOKO KAIUN KAISHA
LTD.

Phone No: 2301191/2301178

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SILVER FERN VOY NO (0017S)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SILVER FERN VOY NO (0017S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (13:30) hrs M.S.T today, a low pressure area has formed over North Bay of Bengal. It may further intensify during next (24) hours. Monsoon is weak in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weather is cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 8th October, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region, Kayah and Kayin States, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Region, Shan and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Rakhine State and isolated heavy falls in Sagaing, Magway, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Kachin and Chin States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35) mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of increase of rain in Sagaing Region, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine States.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC HA LONG VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC HA LONG VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (420N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (420N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

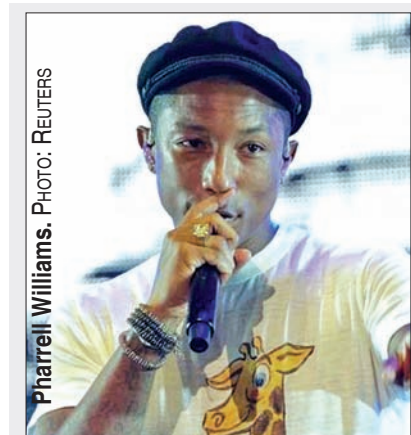
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

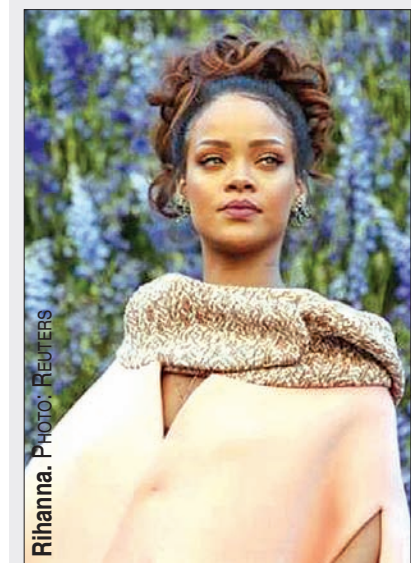
SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN
SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Beyonce, Rihanna, others sue Paris firm over clothing knockoffs



Pharrell Williams. PHOTO: REUTERS



Rihanna. PHOTO: REUTERS



Beyonce. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Beyonce, Jay Z, Kanye West, Pharrell Williams and Rihanna have teamed up to sue a Paris clothing retailer they say has been “brazenly” selling shirts, hats, backpacks, cellphone cases, and other items featuring their likenesses without permission.

The complaint filed on Tuesday in federal court in New York said ElevenParis has ignored the singers’ warnings to stop the sales, including in a store in Manhattan’s Soho district, and on its website.

The artists accused ElevenParis and its affiliates of being “habitual, willful intellectual property infringers that, without authorisation, usurp the trademarks, copyrights and other rights of A-list celebrities.”

ElevenParis did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The challenged products include clothing bearing the singers’ faces, phrases such as “Kanye is my Homie” and “Pharrell is my Brotha,” and Beyonce and Rihanna song lyrics. —Reuters

‘Pan’ taps origins of Peter Pan’s 100-year pop culture adventure

NEW YORK — In the century since Scottish author JM Barrie created Peter Pan for a stage play then a book, the Neverland universe has inspired movies, books, TV shows, plays, videogames and even a pop psychology syndrome describing emotionally immature men.

For the latest iteration of the classic story involving Tinkerbell, Captain Hook and the Darlings, the focus is on the origins of the boy who famously wouldn’t grow up.

Warner Bros’ “Pan” arrives in US movie theaters on Friday, a live-action 3D feature aimed at children that imagines the beginnings of Peter’s story: how he got to Neverland and learned to fly.

“I think Peter Pan has taken on a life of its own in the same way that Sherlock Holmes has,” said director Joe Wright, referring to Arthur Conan Doyle’s crime-solving British literary phenomenon.

“Peter has incredible courage and fun and so I think that reminds us of childhood in an honest and beautiful way. It’s no surprise that Barrie was writing at the same time as Freud. His story is somehow deeply psychologically accurate and acute,” Wright said.

For Wright, the appeal of Peter Pan had little to do with a reluctance to grow up — a complex embodied by the late singer Michael Jackson and his Neverland ranch in California with its carousel, animals and Peter Pan references.

“I always wanted to grow up. I hated childhood. I found it a really difficult period of life. I was bullied and I was quite scared a lot of the time. So Peter Pan offered an escape from all of that,” he said.

The theme of “Pan” is of a boy with a powerful imagination who is looking for the mother who abandoned him at birth just before World War Two. He discovers his identity and confidence along the way.

Newcomer Levi Miller stars as young Peter, with Hugh Jackman as wicked pirate Blackbeard, Garrett Hedlund as (at this stage) friendly James Hook and Rooney Mara as a controversially white warrior princess Tiger Lily.

Underneath the video-game inspired pirate battles, multi-coloured tree villagers and cavernous pixie dust mines, Wright says he wanted make a movie that “reconnected and validated the 11-year-old boy in myself.” —Reuters

Stallone’s film props could fetch millions at auction

LONDON — Action star Sylvester Stallone is putting up for sale props from his “Rocky” and “Rambo” movies in an auction organizers say could fetch up to \$6 million.

Fans will have the chance to bid on more than 1,400 personal items, props and costumes used in the Hollywood star’s films including the black leather jacket Stallone wore as Rocky Balboa and the bandana used by his character John Rambo.

The memorabilia will be auctioned in Los Angeles in December but a selection was shown to media in London on Tuesday.

“I’m not sure where the estimates are going to end up at, but probably somewhere between 4 to 6 million dollars,” Heritage Auctions consignment director Mike

Gutierrez said when asked how much the auction could fetch.

“It’s going to be hard to really say because he’s never sold any of his memorabilia before so there’s no comparables.”

Gutierrez said Stallone’s direct involvement in the sale could raise the prices. “He’s going to be involved with the promotion of the auction. I believe that he’ll show up to it,” he said.

“There’ll be letters of provenance by Mr Stallone. These are all added pieces to the puzzle that could take a grey value and make it a lot more than the estimated value.” While he may be selling the memorabilia, Stallone is continuing the “Rocky” series, which began in 1976, with upcoming film “Creed” set for release next month. —Reuters



Actor Sylvester Stallone waves at the premiere of “Terminator Genisys” in Hollywood, California on 28 June 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Taylor Swift, Kim Kardashian lead most-followed Instagram accounts

LOS ANGELES — The ladies of US pop music and pop culture are commanding the most followers among the 400 million-plus global users of Instagram, the photo-sharing app said Tuesday as it celebrated its fifth birthday.

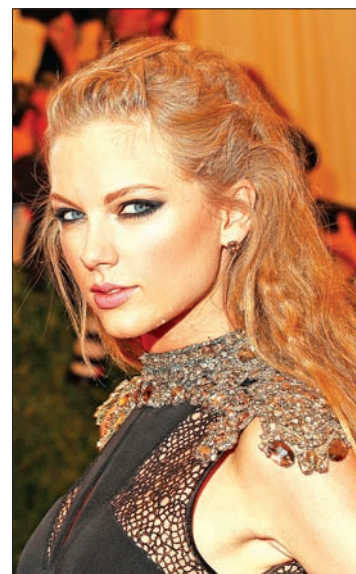
Facebook Inc.-owned Instagram confirmed its top five accounts for the first time, with 25-year-old pop singer Taylor Swift leading the pack with 49.6 million users.

Reality star Kim Kardashian, 34, boasts 48.1 million followers and R&B singer Beyonce, also 34, commands 47.2 million fans. Pop singers Selena Gomez, 23, and Ariana Grande, 22, have garnered 45.9 million and 44.6 million fans respectively.

“The type of content we see from these people is authentic and often times really fun,” said Charles Porch, head of global creative programs at Instagram, citing Swift’s penchant for cat videos and Beyonce’s recent glimpse into her vacation.

“It’s a view people haven’t really had before, especially in real time,” he said.

To compare, US president Barack Obama has 4.7 million Instagram followers. Instagram discounted its own account, which is followed by 103 million users.



Taylor Swift. PHOTO: REUTERS

Instagram has racked up more than 400 million global users as it turns five, with 75 percent coming from outside the United States, the company said last month. The average time a user spends on the app is 21 minutes a day. The top five ladies of Instagram are mostly popular with a younger audience, with 85 percent of each of their fanbases aged under 34, the audience coveted by advertisers which Instagram hopes to draw more of by the end of the year.

Singer and actress Gomez, who often comments on posts and responds to fans directly, has the most engaged account, Instagram said. —Reuters

Yangon's South Korean community came together for some kimchi and glutenous rice cakes to celebrate National Day and Armed Forces Day at Novotel Yangon on 1 October.



Mrs Kim Jung rocks out for the troops.

Yangon's North Korean community commemorated the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Worker's Party of Korea at Pyongyang Koryo Restaurant.



Dignified guests at the event in Yangon.

The Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw threw a raging pool party on Saturday, just like they do every Saturday. Except this time, there were people there to prove it. Admission to the pool party costs \$20 and includes free-flow beer and mojitos. Make sure you go with friends.

PHOTO: KELLY MARIE TUPPEN



Ambassador H.E. Christian-Ludwing Weber-Lortsch and his beautiful friends.



A beautiful Bavarian dress.

The German Embassy in Yangon celebrated German Unity Day at the Chatrium Hotel on 2 October. A little over 25 years ago, the Germany we know today didn't exist. But in 1990, east and west finally reunited. Since then, the country has been famous for fast cars, efficiency and great beer.

Bale named Welsh player of year for record fifth time

LONDON — Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale has been named Welsh player of the year for a record fifth time by the Football Association of Wales.

Bale, who has 52 caps for his country, scored the only goal in Wales' 1-0 win over Belgium in Cardiff in June and scored another winner to secure a 1-0 victory in Cyprus in September in the European Championship qualifiers.

The wins have put Wales on the brink of their first major finals in over 50 years.

The 26-year-old had a stellar debut campaign at Real Madrid, as he scored the winner in the King's Cup final and also the Champions League final.

However, Bale had a difficult second season in Spain as Madrid lost their Champions League crown to bitter rivals Barcelona and has often been jeered by the supporters at Santiago Bernabeu.

"Look at the last year and he's scored some incredible goals for us," Wales manager Chris Coleman was quoted as saying by the British media.

"All the players have done fantastic, but in my book he deserves it because of what he's done in this campaign," he added.

Wales currently sit eighth in the FIFA world rankings, their highest-ever position. Coleman, though, was not amused with their failure to attract top teams to play in international friendlies despite the rise.

"I don't know, maybe," Coleman said, when asked whether teams were scared to face Wales. "Look at the friendly games and the big boys keep it among themselves, and that's disappointing."

"We kind of thought that we might be able to tempt a Spain or a Germany and find out how good we are but there's been no interest".—Reuters

De Bruyne to be given lead role for Belgium

BRUSSELS — Belgium will change their formation for Saturday's Euro 2016 qualifier away to minnows Andorra in order to hand Manchester City's Kevin de Bruyne a playmaker role, coach Marc Wilmots said on Tuesday.

Belgium will book their place in next year's finals in France with victory over Andorra in what is expected to be a routine assignment.

Wilmots said he would set his side up differently to normal and dispense with a defensive midfielder, putting De Bruyne behind the attack, supported by two other English-based play-

ers, Tottenham Hotspur's Nacer Chadli and Chelsea's Eden Hazard. "Kevin can accelerate the play, he can score and he can set up goals for others. I'll have two midfielders playing in support of De Bruyne," he said.

"I've told my players we are not going to play the long ball like we did against Cyprus (last month in a 1-0 away win). "I want short passes over the field, that will be our approach to the game."

Belgium are currently second in Group B, one point behind leaders Wales. Their final game is at home to Israel next Tuesday.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS



PHOTO: REUTERS

Spieth, Johnson paired for Presidents Cup foursomes

DANNY Lee and Marc Leishman received the golfing equivalent of a 'hospital pass' on Wednesday after the International duo were served up to America's world number one Jordan Spieth and big-hitting Dustin Johnson for the Presidents Cup foursomes.

Thursday's opening foursomes, where players hit alternate shots with the same ball, also sees the Internationals' 2013 pairing of Adam Scott and Hideki Matsuyama reunited to face Bubba Watson and JB Holmes.

South Africans Louis Oosthuizen and Branden Grace are up against Matt Kuchar and Patrick Reed and Asian pair Anirban Lahiri and Thongchai Jaidee play Rickie Fowler and Jimmy Walker. Australian duo Jason Day and Steven Bowditch will take on Phil Mickelson and Zach Johnson.

The Presidents Cup, which is played for every two years by the United States and a team of international players minus Europeans, continues on Friday and Saturday with foursome and four ball fixtures before 12 singles matches on Sunday.

The United States have been the dominant force in the Cup, winning eight of the 10

previous editions with one tie. Their only defeat came in 1998 at Royal Melbourne.

After US captain Jay Haas and his International counterpart Nick Price decided the matchups, it was the pairing of Spieth and Johnson that had the media buzzing at the Jack Nicklaus Golf Club Korea.

Spieth, a captain's pick two years ago, has blossomed into the world's best player this year, claiming two majors among his five wins and ending the year with a flourish with victory at the Tour Championship last month.

Dustin Johnson returned to the Tour after taking time off in 2014 for personal reasons and had three top 10 finishes in the majors, including a heartbreaking near miss at the US Open when a missed three-foot putt handed the title to Spieth.

Haas confirmed the pair had asked to be put together and shed some light on Spieth's huge influence on the game.

"Jordan and Dustin, they

have been wanting this for a while, wanting this pairing. And what Jordan wants, Jordan gets right now," said Haas, adding that Reed had also been

keen to partner up with Spieth.

"Patrick loves the match-play aspect of it and certainly wants Jordan at some time during the course of the matches. But again, we wanted to get Jordan what he wanted here early on and maybe that can happen down the road."

Spieth, however, rejected the suggestion he had picked his playing partner.

"I didn't pick DJ. I think Jay may have been joking earlier when I heard the quote that 'whatever Jordan wants, he gets'."

"He was obviously joking. I certainly hope so, because I'd feel like a brat if that's not the case."

Spieth said he hoped his partnership with Johnson would extend throughout the event.

"I think everybody wants to play with DJ."

He's a fantastic player. He has as much talent as anybody in the game.

"I think our plan between he and I is to go out and take care of business tomorrow and then just ride that pairing."

If we feel like there's a need for a change, there are a few guys that we've been playing with who are both very comfortable if we need to split up.

"But ideally we just keep that team."

Their opponents on Thursday, Lee and Leishman, have their work cut out for them.

Lee is ranked 36th in the world and has made the cut only once at a major, while Leishman, a spot below in the rankings, came close at the British Open this year, finishing tied for second behind Zach Johnson.

Lee, who was born in Korea but moved to New Zealand as a youngster, did not seem overly worried about playing in his first Presidents Cup with the world's best player on the opposite team.

"It's going to be fun. We played quite a bunch during this year," he said of Spieth.

"But it's a team game, not a single game this week. I'm going to do my best to help the team."—Reuters



US team member Dustin Johnson tees off on the fifth hole during the practice round for the 2015 Presidents Cup golf tournament.

PHOTO: REUTERS