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FOUR IN CUSTODY

Two more suspects arrested for a crime that has shocked the nation

Jessica Mudditt

POLICE arrested two men accused of the murder and gangrape of a couple in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning after they were turned in by family members.

Myanmar News Agency said that Zaw Lay, 22, and 16-year-old Maung Myo (alias Myo Zaw Win) are being held with the other two suspects at Zabuthiri Myoma Police Station in the capital's Zabu Thiri Township.

Aung Tin Myo (alias Aung Paing), 20, and Kyaw Maung (alias Zaw Zaw Aung), 19, were arrested on Wednesday.

The four men were under the influence of alcohol when they saw the victims, both 16, and demanded that they stop their motorbike outside Junction Centre, which is near Nay Pyi Taw's diplomatic neighbourhood.

After being held at knife-point, the male victim was stabbed and bludgeoned with a motorbike exhaust pipe and his fiancé was gang-raped at around 1am on 30 September in Dekkhinathiri Township.

The female victim, who like the deceased is not being named in the media, managed to escape and ran to a security guard for help, *The Irrawaddy* reported yesterday.

The couple lived in the village of Thabyaybin in neighboring Lewe Township and reportedly planned to marry in the near future.

Although Myanmar has the death penalty for first degree



The four suspects are pictured with the murder weapons at Zabuthiri Myoma Police Station in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

murder, in 2014 all death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment and there have been no known executions since 1989.

The suspects also face a 10-year sentence for rape.

Women's groups told *Reuters* in September 2014 that the colonial-era Penal Code needs to be updated to define crimes such as rape with greater precision. The drafting of the Anti-Violence

Against Women Law by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is near completion. The new law is widely supported by women's rights activists, as it is expected to lead

to more prosecutions in cases involving violence against women.

According to the Nay Pyi Taw Police Force, 470 rape cases were filed in the first half of 2014; more recent data is unavailable.

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Police rescue 406 human trafficking victims this year

MYANMAR'S Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division has investigated 89 human trafficking cases in the past nine months, arresting 172 traffickers. However, 88 suspects remained at large, according to police figures.

Between January and September this year, police also

rescued 406 victims of human trafficking. The victims had been sold in neighbouring countries, including China, Thailand and Malaysia to engage in forced labour, marriage and prostitution, a division spokesperson said.

According to figures released by the Anti-Trafficking

in Persons Division, Shan State tops the chart for human trafficking with 25 cases, followed by Mandalay Region with 15 cases, Kachin State with 12 cases and Yangon with 11 cases.

Bago, Sagaing, Magway and Ayeyawady regions and Kayin, Mon and Rakhine each

all had fewer than seven cases, and there have been no reports of human trafficking cases in Nay Pyi Taw and Taninthayri Region this year.

Last year, authorities investigated 124 cases, saving 309 victims and arresting 367 traffickers.—*Than Oo (Lay Myat Hnar)*

Senior General urges trainee officers to improve combat skills



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits air force unit in Hmawby. PHOTO: MNA

INDIVIDUAL members of defence forces are required to sharpen their capacity and efficiency to make the whole army more effective, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. He spoke in a meeting with military officers and other personnel at the Yemon base in Yangon Region yesterday morning.

The commander-in-chief of defence services urged officer

trainers to help trainees hone their combat skills, calling for stronger comradeship and better leadership. He added that military personnel are responsible to protect the interests of the public and help them with their difficulties.

After the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing toured the base's stadium and encouraged military sports persons to

practise harder and bring pride to their base.

After inspecting the construction of a sports ground and stadium, he urged officials to ensure high-quality construction and a timely completion.

In the afternoon, the senior general inspected the air base, the military pharmacy and the officer training school in Hmawbi.—*Myawady*

Medical Myanmar 2015 showcases top products at Tatmadaw Hall



Chief Minister U Myint Swe and dignitaries visit the Medical Myanmar 2015 in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

MEDICAL Myanmar 2015, a forum showcasing medical products, kicked off at the Tatmadaw Convention Hall in Yangon yesterday. It is being jointly organised by the Myanmar Pharmaceutical Traders'

Association and Singapore-based Fireworks Exhibitions and Conferences.

The fair showcases advanced medicines and medical equipment. Sixty companies from seven countries will pres-

ent their products at 70 booths from 8 to 10 October.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, Region Hluttaw Speaker U Sein Tin Win and other officials attended the opening ceremony.—*MNA*

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw announced tasks to be carried out in remaining term

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw announced tasks to be carried out during its remaining term on Thursday although Hluttaw sessions had stopped on 28 August to allow time for campaigns of elections on 8 November.

The tasks include the approval of union additional budget for 2015-16 fiscal year, amendment of constitution,

some bills, rules sent to Hluttaw and other works of Hluttaw, according to the announcement of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office on 8 October.

The Hluttaw has informed the union government, other organizations, representatives and the public of the tasks to be carried out in its remaining term.—*GNLM*

Myanmar, Russia discuss military ties

THE deputy commander-in-chief of defence services Vice Senior General Soe Win received a Russian naval delegation at his office in Nay Pyi Taw this morning. The general also serves as commander-in-chief of the army.

Vice Senior General Soe Win and Vice Admiral Oleg V. Burtsev of Russia discussed planning an exchange of visits, naval strategy and friendly relations between the two militaries.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Handbook for Media Access to the Courts issued

NAY PYI TAW — The Supreme Court of the Union has issued the **Handbook for Media Access to the Courts** in order to enhance the communication with the media and the public at different levels of the court through the public relation services.

The strategic objectives of the Judiciary Strategic Plan (2015-2017), relating to promote the public awareness, are to improve communication with the media and the public, and to implement court information initiatives.

To achieve these objectives, the Supreme Court of the Union has carried out the observation of the activities of courts at international countries in releasing court information and news of the cases after designing the Court Information Project; compilation of the guidelines to follow in obtaining information from the courts after conducting seminars and workshops with the court information experts from courts of international countries; presentation and discussion of those guidelines at the "Meeting of the Three Main Pillars and the Media" held on 4-5 October, 2014; establishment of the Public Information Boards and assignment of Court Information Officers at the courts of different levels; and conducting the Workshops on Judicial Public Information for the officials of

court information in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay. This Handbook for Media Access to the Courts, being the outcomes those mentioned activities, is one of the achievements in developing the court information services and the media skills.

The contents in the Handbook such as the Formation of the courts, Adjudication of the Cases, Obtaining Information of the Cases, Guidelines to Follow in Obtaining Information from the Court, Related Terminology of the Criminal Law, and Communication with Court Information Officers will be of an assistance for enhancing the communication between the court and the media, including obtaining information from the court, and for providing accurate information to the public.

In cooperation with the media, the Supreme Court of the Union is committed to providing court information services to the general public at different levels of the courts in accordance with the strategic objective to "Promote Public Awareness".

The Handbook for Media Access to the Courts is available at the official website of the Supreme Court of the Union: <http://www.unionsupremecourt.gov.mm>.

The Supreme Court of the Union
Nay Pyi Taw

Vice President U Nyan Tun meets Italian ambassador



Vice President U Nyan Tun welcomes Italian Ambassador Mr Pier Giorgio Aliberti along with Deputy Finance Minister Dr Lin Aung and Deputy-Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Set Aung. PHOTO: MNA

VICE President U Nyan Tun met the Italian ambassador to Myanmar Mr Pier Giorgio Aliberti at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi

Taw yesterday. They discussed promoting the two countries' bilateral relations and cooperation.

Also present at the meeting

were Deputy Finance Minister Dr Lin Aung and Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Set Aung.—*Myanmar News Agency*

UEC chairman visits Haka

UNION Election Commission chairman U Tin Aye travelled to Haka from Kalay yesterday to encourage election officials in Chin State to invest every effort into ensuring elections are free and fair.

Chin State suffered the most damage during recent floods and landslides, and many

public buildings in the state were destroyed.

The chairman met with members of election sub-commissions, political party officials, candidates, members of CSOs and local people at the meeting hall of the Chin State Government.

The chairman called for

cooperation between all of the participants to ensure a free and fair election and responded to questions raised by political parties.

Before returning to Kalay, the chairman inspected a local monastery that was damaged by the recent natural disasters.—

Myanmar News Agency



Homes destroyed by landslides in Haka due to torrential rain in July. PHOTO: MNA

President appoints new University of Pharmacy rector

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein has appointed Dr Sein Hla Htwe, formerly the pro-rector of the University of Pharmacy, Mandalay, to the position of rector of the same university on Thursday. He will begin the new post with a probation period.

Dr Sein Hla Htwe has published research on HIV and tuberculosis.—*GNLM*

Speaker meets legal affairs commission

LOWER house speaker Taw on Thursday.

Thura U Shwe Mann held a coordination meeting with members of the Commission on Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment at the Parliament Building in Nay Pyi

Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa also attended the meeting, with talks focusing on the work of the commission.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann discusses legal affairs with members of the Commission on Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment. PHOTO: MNA

World Sight Day observed in the capital



Union Minister for Health Dr Than Aung visits a booth displayed to mark World Sight Day celebration in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Health Dr Than Aung called for a joint effort from government and non-government organisations, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) in improving the treatment of eye conditions in Myanmar yesterday.

He made the remarks during the opening ceremony of an event to mark World Sight Day in Nay Pyi Taw.

The theme for World Sight Day this year is 'Universal Eye Health, Eye Care for All.'

Early tests and treatments, as well as lifestyle factors, play an important role in preventing many types of eye diseases, the minister said. He added that as much as 80 percent of the global cases of blindness are preventable or curable, but that greater efforts and funding must be invested.

Afterwards, Resident Representatives of WHO Dr J.M. Luna gave a speech at the ceremony, which was also attended by directors-generals from the Ministry of Health.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MCDC conducts surprise food inspection

OFFICIALS from the Mandalay City Development Committee conducted a surprise inspection of check foods and other goods in Mandalay markets on Wednesday. Members of the Consumer Protection Association also participated in the inspections. They team inspected foods, oils, cosmetics and other consumer goods that were unfit for consumption.—*Tin Maung*



Authorities have taken food safety measures in Mandalay. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG

NEWS IN BRIEF

Data for clean water usage collected in Myanaung

THE MYANAUNG Township Rural Development Department collected data on potable water usage in its 517 villages in September, according sources in the department.

The data collection was part of a project to connect water pipelines with usage gauges throughout the township.

Myanaung Township was severely affected by the recent floods.—*Win Bo (IPRD)*

Seinbangan village electrified

SEINBANGAN village in Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region, gained access to electricity on 5 October.

Many of the village's over 400 households will now enjoy electric power at home for the first time.

The village is the sixtieth to be electrified under the government's current electrification plan.

At a ceremony to celebrate the occasion, Myanmar's ministers for transportation and for rail transport encouraged the villagers to use their electric power to industrialise rather than just for light.—*Khin Zar Mon Myint*

Kyaukme issues ballot boxes

THE Kyaukme election sub-commission began setting up ballot boxes on 5 October.

According to the sub-commission's records, there are 109 polling booths in the township, which require a total of 906 ballot boxes.

The township sub-commission distributed ballot boxes and other equipment to be used in the polling booths to ward and village sub-commissions.—*U Myint Aung*

Poll officers trained in Ottara

POLLING station officers and their staffs were trained in ballot procedures from 5 to 7 October at the Ottara District Administration Office. They practised setting up polling stations, using equipment properly, and processing and counting votes.—*Shwe Ye Yint*



People advice to post CVs of candidates

CURRICULA vitae (CVs) of candidates should be posted in each constituency to better inform voters about whom they can choose, demanded residents on Wunnatheikdi ward on Wednesday.

Names and photos of can-

didates, the residents said, are not sufficient.

The ward's 115 residential buildings mostly house government staff, among whom are over 6,000 eligible voters.—*Ko Pauk-Okka Myey*

MCDC official meets Chanayethasan officials

MANDALAY City Development Committee member U Aung Htay met with officials and staff of the Chanayethasan Township Development Administration Office on 6 October. They discussed executing their work in accordance with the guidelines of the Mandalay Region Government and Mandalay City

Development Committee and City Development Law.

U Aung Htay urged the township officials to maintain good relations with the public. He also encouraged them to keep Chanayethasan Township clean and pleasant, as it is in the centre of Mandalay city.—*Thiha Ko Ko*



Farmers in Nyaungshwe receives informal training given by agricultural officials for systematic using of fertilizer. PHOTO: NE MYO THUREIN

Farmers fertilise fields in Nyaungshwe

FARMERS in Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State, dispersed fertiliser in their fields to increase their yields for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The farmers received the fertilisers from local officials on Wednesday.

Agriculturalists explained how to use fertilizers and pesticides. Inn National Affairs Minister U Win Myint and Region Hluttaw Representative U Tun Aung were also present at the ceremony where farmers were given fertilisers and pesticides.—*Ne Myo Thurein*

Harsh criticism for Thailand's plan for 'Great Firewall'

BANGKOK — A proposal by Thailand's junta for a single Internet gateway to allow authorities to monitor content would destroy competition and was reminiscent of the most authoritarian measures to stifle free speech, a former information minister said on Thursday.

The plan to create a single gateway for all Internet traffic was approved by the military government in August but details remain unclear.

Free-speech activists say the gateway, referred to as a China-style "Great Firewall", is the latest effort by the junta to smother dissent and monitor detractors.

"The junta wants to control various websites. This is similar to the control mechanisms of non-democratic countries."

Anudith Nakornthap
Former Information Minister

The plan has also triggered concern that Internet speeds would plummet, which would almost certainly hurt online business and anger Internet users.

"Once it becomes a single gateway there will be a problem with traffic speeds," said Anudith Nakornthap, a former information minister under the government of ousted Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

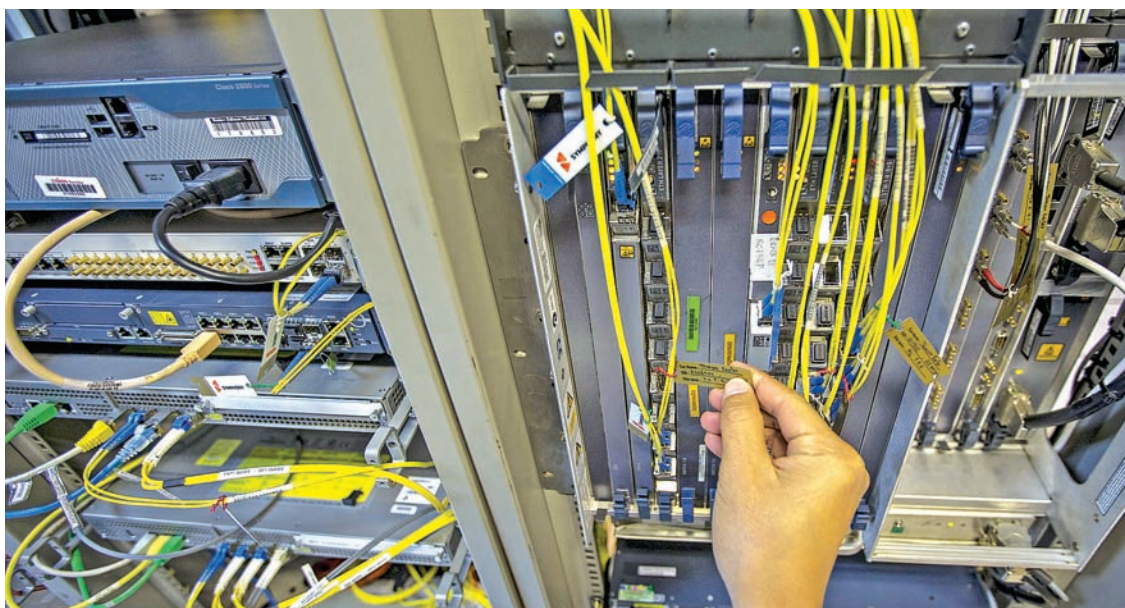
"The junta wants to control various websites. This is similar to the control mechanisms of non-democratic countries such as China and North Korea."

The junta has ruled Thailand since overthrowing Yingluck's government in May 2014.

Thai politics has been agitated for a decade by a confrontation between the Shinawatras, in particular Yingluck's brother, Thaksin Shinawatra, a populist premier who was himself ousted in a 2006 coup, and the royalist-military establishment, which sees him as a threat.

The military has ruled strictly since taking over, banning protests and not tolerating dissent, and has shut down thousands of websites.

Thailand has 10 Internet



A network room at a company in Bangkok, Thailand, on 8 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

gateways run by both private and state-owned companies. The plan would apparently entail merging traffic through one state-run firm.

Prasong Ruangsirikulchai, executive director of the Telecommunications Association of Thailand, said the government would meet fierce opposition from the private companies that would be forced to suspend their lines.

"If the government is not so

strong they cannot do that," Prasong said during a talk at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand on Wednesday.

"They would have a tough time to convince private companies to cut their lines."

The military has said the plan is necessary for national security but Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha told reporters on Thursday it would not go ahead if it violated rights.

"If it violates rights we can't do it," he said. Critics say the plan goes against a digital-economy master plan to encourage online business by attracting investment from companies like Facebook Inc, which opened its first Thai office last month. The government played down a coordinated attack last week on several state websites in a protest against the plan.—Reuters

Former Italian missionary kidnapped in Philippines

MANILA — An Italian man, who was a former missionary priest, has been abducted by armed men from his restaurant in the southern Philippines, security officials said on Thursday, the latest in a string of abductions targeting foreigners in the south.

Small Islamist and communist rebel factions, as well as criminal gangs, operate in the southern Mindanao region and often snatch people in the hope ransoms will be paid. Police said that was the most likely motive for the latest abduction.

Rolando del Torchio, 53, was taken at gunpoint after four men entered his pizzeria in Dipolog City in the restive southern region of Mindanao posing as

customers, police said. They were among a group of 10 abductors who dragged del Torchio into a getaway van that was later found abandoned.

It was believed del Torchio was then transferred to a motor boat that headed for southern coastal towns in Zamboanga del Norte province, according to a police report.

Del Torchio had previously been targeted by kidnappers when he spent five years in Sibuc town, south of Dipolog. He was a missionary priest with the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions there in the 1990s before he left the priesthood, said Dipolog City police chief Rannie Hachuela.

The Philippine navy and air force were trying to intercept the kidnappers, said Lieutenant Colonel Audie Mongao, an army public affairs officer.

Senior police superintendent Romulo Cleve Taboso said authorities were investigating whether the kidnappers belonged to the same group that kidnapped a town chief in the area in May. That group later turned their captive over to a bigger gang in southern Sulu Province.

Last month, gunmen kidnapped two Canadian tourists, a Norwegian resort manager and a Filipino woman at a resort on Simal island near Davao City, the largest city in Mindanao.—Reuters

Malaysia prosecutor gives clean chit to 1MDB officials

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia's attorney general said on Thursday it had reviewed the report of a central bank investigation of troubled state fund 1MDB and decided that fund officials had not committed any offence.

"No further action would be taken in the matter," the Attorney General's Chambers said in a statement. The decision had been communicated to the central bank in September, it added. The state prosecutor said a request for a further review of the decision by the central bank had also been rejected as no new evidence was made available.—Reuters

Indonesia asks four countries for help to fight fires

JAKARTA — Indonesia's president said on Thursday he had asked Singapore, Russia, Malaysia and Japan for help to put out fires that have sent choking smoke drifting across the region for weeks.

Indonesia had repeatedly declined offers of help from overseas to tackle the smoke, the main cause of which is companies using fire to clear land for palm oil and pulp wood plantations on Sumatra island and its part of Borneo island.

"We have asked for help and we have received help from Singapore," Widodo said in a state-

ment released on the Cabinet Secretary's Website, adding he also wanted help from Russia, Malaysia and Japan.

"We hope this will speed up the process because fires on peat land is different from regular forest fires," he said.

He did not say what help had come from Singapore but said he was seeking at least three aircraft from Singapore and Russia.

"What we need now are planes that can carry 12-15 tonnes of water, not like the 2-3 tonnes we have now," he said.

The fires are set to clear vegetation but often smolder for

weeks in underground peat deposits.

The smoke has pushed up pollution to dangerous levels across parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and southern Thailand, disrupted flights and closed schools on bad days.

Tourism operators are fretting and health authorities across the region warn people to avoid exercise when the smoke is heavy.

Indonesia routinely brushes off complaints while vowing to act to stop the burning but year after year, the problem reappears in the dry season.

It has been exacerbated this

year by the El Nino weather phenomenon which has brought unusually dry conditions.

Widodo did not elaborate on why Indonesia had now decided to seek foreign help. It had faced criticism for turning down offers from Singapore.

Indonesia's foreign minister, Retno Marsudi, is expected to meet her Malaysian counterpart on Friday to discuss cooperation on the problem. Indonesia's national disaster management agency said last week it was hoping for rain to help douse the fires by early November, when the northeast monsoon usually starts.—Reuters

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

UN examines donations from foundation tied to alleged bribe scheme

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations said on Wednesday it was examining how donations were used from a foundation linked to several of six people charged by US authorities in an alleged bribery scheme tied to a former president of the UN General Assembly.

US prosecutors filed a complaint in federal court in New York on Tuesday, outlining how more than \$1.3 million in bribes were received from Chinese businessmen, including billionaire Macau real estate developer Ng Lap Seng.

Prosecutors said some of the bribes were arranged through Sheri Yan, chief executive officer of a New York-based organisation, and Heidi Park, its finance director, who were also arrested. Central to the complaint was former president of the General Assembly John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda.

The organisation was not named, but the Global Sustainability Foundation website lists Yan and Park as holding those positions.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters that the

donations to the United Nations from the foundation were being scrutinized by the UN office for south-south cooperation, which he said was the recipient of the donations.

“They are taking a very close review at all of the relationships with this foundation,” he said. “They are taking an active look, and I think we’ll look as deeply as possible into the money, where it went and what it was used for.”

“We are continuing to study the complaint that was released yesterday,” he said, adding that he believed the UN office for south-south cooperation received about \$1.5 million from the foundation.

Dujarric said on Tuesday that U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was “shocked and deeply troubled” by the allegations. The UN had not previously been informed of the probe, he said, but would cooperate if contacted. Ashe, a former UN ambassador from Antigua and Barbuda who was general assembly president from 2013 to 2014, was among those charged and arrested in connection with the alleged bribery scheme.—*Reuters*

Vucic: I am not going to Elbasan



BELGRADE — Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic has said he will not attend the Albania-Serbia Euro 2016 qualifier in Elbasan Thursday because the match is being highly politicised, and he asked the Albanian government to ensure full security for all Serbian citizens attending the event before, during and after the match.

Vucic said in an open letter to the public that he had made the decision not to travel to Elbasan after several phone conversations with his Albanian counterpart Edi Rama, as he wanted to make sure that the spotlight is on the players in the match (and not someone else).

Vucic sharply condemned the attack by Albanian hooligans on Serbia’s football team that occurred while the team were on their way from the airport to a hotel in Tirana on Wednesday.

“I demand from the Albanian authorities to ensure full security for all Serbian citizens attending this sporting event before, during and after the match,” Vucic said in the letter, which was posted on the website of Belgrade-based daily *Blic*. Vucic stressed that during the previous year, Serbia and Albania had worked very hard to improve mutual understanding and establish regular contacts after decades of silence and frozen hostility.—*Tanjug*

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Men play chinlone, a sport similar to sepak takraw, in a village outside Mandalay, Myanmar, on 7 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Cambodia raises 2016 minimum wage

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia agreed on Thursday to raise the minimum wage for workers in its crucial textiles and footwear sector to \$140 per month from next year, short of the figures demanded by powerful trade unions long at odds with the government over pay.

The decision followed a vote

among representatives of the government, factories and unions, in which the majority supported a raise from the current \$128 to \$135, which the government then increased to \$140.

That fell short of the revised \$160 asked for by major unions in a sector that generates \$5 billion annually for Cambodia’s

fledgling economy. Unions complain their members struggle to make ends meet with that income.

The big unions had initially demanded \$177 and had threatened to hold strikes if they were not met. It was not immediately clear whether the unions would pursue any action.—*Reuters*

Protesters storm red-carpet premiere of UK women’s rights film ‘Suffragette’

LONDON — Protesters stormed the red carpet at the glitzy premiere of the film “Suffragette” on Wednesday that stars Meryl Streep as a leading British women’s rights activist a century ago, staging a lie-in and saying the fight for equality was not yet over.

The historical political drama is about the foot soldiers of the early feminist movement in London in 1912 and their campaign of militancy to fight for women to get the right to vote.

The story centres on Maud, played by Carey Mulligan, a working wife and mother, whose life is changed forever when she is secretly recruited to join the growing suffragette movement led by activist Emmeline Pankhurst, played by Streep.

But as the movie’s stars, including Helena Bonham Carter and Anne-Marie Duff, walked the red carpet at Leicester Square in central London, up to 100 mainly female protesters were on standby with about a dozen jumping over barricades and laying on the ground chanting slogans.

Security guards tried to remove the protesters who had signs pinned to their clothes reading “dead women don’t vote”, with some women escorted away as green and purple smoke bombs filled the air. The demonstrators moved on after about 10 minutes.

Shanice McBean, 22, was among the protesters who said the stunt was meant to re-ignite the feminist spirit of the movie by spotlighting violence against women. “We’re here to say to say that it’s great that women’s history is being shown in the film, but that the struggle is not over,” said McBean, from London, who is currently unemployed.

Emma Fischer, 27, a teacher from London, said the protesters organised by a group called Sisters Uncut condemned cuts by Britain’s conservative government to the budget for domestic violence services such as refuges for women. “With two women killed a week in the UK due to domestic violence cuts, there’s no way we can stop fighting,” she said.

No one from the film, that

opened the BFI London Film Festival and is set for a US release later this month, was immediately available to comment about the protest. The protest startled some of the film’s stars but others backed the demonstration that prompted police and extra barriers along the red carpet and delayed the screening by 15 minutes. Interviewed by Sky News at the premiere, Bonham Carter said the protest was the “perfect” response to the film.

“I’m glad our film has done something. That’s exactly what it’s there for,” said the actress who, ironically, is the great granddaughter of former Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith, a key target for the suffragettes at the time.

Oscar-winning Streep has said it is “infuriating” that the film-making industry continues to be male-dominated. The film shows how the authorities are shocked as the women’s civil disobedience rises and sparks debate across the country while the women involved risk their jobs, homes and children to fight for women’s right to vote.—*Reuters*

NATO ready to defend Turkey, send troops if needed: Stoltenberg



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during a media conference at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Tuesday on 6 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

BRUSSELS — NATO is ready to send troops to Turkey to defend its ally against threats on its southern flank, the head of the US-led alliance said on Thursday after violations of Turkish airspace by Russia jets conducting air strikes in Syria.

“NATO is ready and able to defend all allies, including Turkey against any threats,” Jens Stoltenberg told reporters before a meeting of NATO defence ministers in Brussels

that will be dominated by the Syria crisis.

“NATO has already responded by increasing our capacity, our ability, our preparedness to deploy forces including to the south, including in Turkey,” he said, noting that Russia’s air and cruise missile strikes were “reasons for concern”.

He also said no decision had been taken on NATO troop levels in Afghanistan.—Reuters

Merkel privately slams east Europeans on refugees

BRUSSELS — German Chancellor Angela Merkel roundly on east European governments that refuse to take in refugees, accusing them of yielding to prejudice and ignoring their own history, the Politico website reported on Thursday.

Merkel made the comments at a closed-door meeting with lawmakers of the centre-right European People’s Party before she and French President Francois Hollande jointly addressed the European Parliament on Wednesday, the news website said.

The conservative German leader assailed the response of Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and some Baltic leaders to Europe’s refugee crisis, without naming them, saying they should know better having lived behind a fence themselves.

“We eastern Europeans — I’m counting myself as an eastern European — we have seen that isolation doesn’t help,” Merkel, who grew up in communist East Germany, was quoted as saying.

“The refugees won’t be stopped if we just build fences ... and I’ve lived behind a fence for long enough.”

“Those who can consider themselves lucky that they have lived to see the end of the Cold War now think that one can completely stay out of certain developments of globalisation. It just strikes me as somehow very weird,” she said.

Conservative Hungarian leader Victor Orban and centre-left Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico have attacked Merkel for throwing open Germany’s borders



PHOTO: REUTERS

to Syrian refugees, saying she has triggered a surge of migrants that Europe cannot cope with and that threatens its “Christian values”.

The chancellor dismissed such arguments, saying: “It’s not acceptable that we have free movement of goods and of people, but that some countries say ‘this we can’t do, and that we can’t, and we can’t take in Syrians, because we’re not ready yet’.

“When someone says: ‘This is not my Europe, I won’t accept Muslims’ ... I have to say, this is not negotiable,” Politico quoted her as saying. “Who are we to defend Christians around the world if we say we won’t accept a Muslim or a mosque in our country? That won’t do.”

More than half a million migrants and refugees fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, have arrived in the European Union so far this year. Hungary has built a barbed wire fence along its border with Serbia to keep them out after tens

of thousands flooded in on their way to Germany. Merkel said east European EU countries could be given more time to adapt to taking their share of refugees, but to reject them as a matter of principle was a danger for Europe.

The Party of European Socialists is considering a proposal by the leader of the Socialist group in the European Parliament, Gianni Pitella, to suspend Fico’s Smer party over his comments on the refugee crisis.

The EPP, the largest political family in the EU legislature, has so far taken no disciplinary action against Orban’s Fidesz party, despite efforts by smaller groups in the parliament to launch proceedings to suspend Hungary’s EU membership over its record on fundamental rights.

Critics say the power-sharing arrangement between the EPP and the Socialists in the EU parliament affords those parties protection from European political censure.—Reuters

US says ready to defend against North Korean nuclear threat

WASHINGTON — The US government believes North Korea has the capability to launch a nuclear weapon against the US homeland and stands ready to defend against any such attacks, a high-level US military official said on Wednesday.

Admiral Bill Gortney, commander of US Northern Command and the North American Aerospace Defence Command, said he agreed with US intelligence assessments that North Korea had nuclear weapons, as well as the ability to miniaturize them and put them on a rocket that could reach the United States.

“We assess that they have the capability to reach the homeland with a nuclear weapon from a rocket,” Gortney told an event hosted by the Atlantic Council think tank.

Gortney said it was very difficult to predict the behavior of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un but the US military was prepared to respond if he were to use a nuclear weapon.

“We’re ready for him, and we’re ready 24 hours a day if he should be dumb enough to shoot something at us,” Gortney said.

“I’m pretty confident that we’re going to knock down the numbers that are going to be shot.”

North Korea’s space agency said last month Pyongyang was building a new satellite and readying it for launch, with any use of a long-range rocket suggesting that the secretive state has made advances developing a ballistic missile.

North Korea says its rocket launches are part of a legitimate space program aimed at putting satellites into orbit. It has in the past conducted missile tests in defiance of international warnings and sanctions.

The US Missile Defence Agency said in March North Korea could achieve the ability to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile this year.

On Wednesday, Gortney said the US military was investing to modernize its current mis-

sile defence system, add new sensors and radars to better identify potential missile launches, and drive down the cost of de-

fending against such attacks.

He warned that the failure of the US Congress to pass a budget for fiscal year 2016, or a re-

sumption of mandatory budget cuts, could jeopardize the funding needed for such efforts.—Reuters



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides artillery fire and landing exercises in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

PERSPECTIVES

Future first, egos second

Kyaw Thura

Humans can be funny sometimes. We speak about our love for peace and stability in one breath and then can go and do something that completely contradicts that the next. Strange as it may seem, violent films tend to bring in more money at the box office than those portraying love and romance. As Isaac Newton once said, “I can calculate the motion of heavily bodies but not the madness of people.”

Over the past six decades, there are people

in certain parts of Myanmar that never had so much as a taste of peace or stability. Their lives have been defined by armed conflict. These innocent victims, who belong to a number of ethnic groups, desperately want the army and ethnic armed groups to spare succeeding generations from the blight of internal strife. It causes nothing but anguish and as such, ought to exist no more.

The signing of the nationwide ceasefire accord, which is scheduled to take place on 15 October, will naturally be welcomed as a new dawn for Myanmar’s future. The restoration of peace will quicken our efforts to make progress in economic, education and society more broadly.

It is therefore vital that ethnic armed groups and the government exercise tolerance and live in harmony with one another: this is necessary for

the greater good of achieving national unity and peace.

The time is ripe for all stakeholders to respect the principles of equal rights and self-determination for ethnic groups and to make every effort to cement national unity. With this end in view, it is time for everyone to put our future before our egos.

Write for us

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

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

Fighting back against dolphin electrocutions

Aye Min Soe

AFTER spotting a rare baby dolphin in a protected area between Mandalay and Kyaukmyaung in September, dolphin conservationists are now preparing to conduct an annual survey of Irrawaddy dolphins in January or February next year.

“The number of dolphin births are on a par with births – and that’s not good,” said U Kyaw Hla Thein, the project manager of the dolphin conservation team of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) in Myanmar.

He added that his team spotted the baby dolphin while carrying out the conservation efforts in September. It was the first baby dolphin recorded in 2015.

The team also found three baby dolphins in December 2014.

The Irrawaddy dolphin is found near sea coasts and in estuaries and rivers around Southeast Asia, especially in Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.

WCS annual surveys have shown that the number of the dolphins has in-



An Irrawaddy Dolphin approaches fishermen near Mandalay. Photo: Fisheries Department

creased from 17 or 18 in 2005 to 24 in February last year in a 72 kilometre stretch of the Ayeyawady River between Mandalay and Kyaukmyaung.

The survey in February also found 58 dolphins between Mandalay and Bhamo, which is a drop from 72 in 2004.

Most of the dead dolphins were found near Bhamo and Katha and were

caused by illegal fishing, according to the fisheries department.

Illegal electric-shock fishing is blamed for killing some dolphins, while some were caught in fishing nets.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has warned that Irrawaddy dolphins are at risk of extinction. In Myanmar, Irrawaddy dolphins been known to drive fish

toward fishers using cast nets in return for some of the fishers’ catch.

However, now that many fishers on the Ayeyawady river use illegal battery-shock fishing techniques, the dolphins often also fall prey to electrocution.

Illegal battery-shock fishing is the greatest challenge for conservationists and local authorities in try-

ing to save the endangered species, according to Myanmar’s fisheries department.

The Myanmar government has banned electro-fishing nationwide, punishing violators with a three-year prison sentence and a K300,000 fine.

“Sometimes, we witness electroshock fishing in the river during our routine conservation trips. Once we

see them, they run away,” U Kyaw Hla Thein said.

To prevent electro fishing in the river, government authorities and conservationists held a workshop in Mandalay in September.

During the workshop, the attendees reached an agreement in principle to form a team comprised of representatives from the WCS, the Fisheries Department and the police force to patrol the river once every two months.

As it cruises up and down the river, the ‘educative patrol’, as the attendees chose to name it, will offer information about the ban on electrofishing and on the penalties violators face to fishermen.

“The fishermen who use electric shocks for fishing do not intend to kill dolphins. Unfortunately, the dolphins follow the fish and die when they are shocked or captured,” U Kyaw Hla Thein said. “We will step up our efforts to educate them.” Local fishermen also spotted an Irrawaddy dolphin in the country’s Ayeyawady delta in September.



An Irrawaddy dolphin drives fish toward fishermen near Mandalay. Photo: Fisheries Department



An Irrawaddy dolphin in Krati, Cambodia. Photo: Stefan Brending

INDIA-MYANMAR RELATIONS: CHANGING CONTOURS

Book Review

Sonu Trivedi

Shared frontiers of India and Myanmar have been a perennial source of study by the scholars and researchers of South Asia and Southeast Asia. But, given the way these shared frontiers have transformed these two countries as 'distant neighbours' has been a cause of concern for the scholars of Area studies programme in international relations. Though, it is worth lamenting lack of any serious Indian scholarship on Myanmar, this book is a timely and a treasured addition to the topical theme of 'Changing Contours' between India-Myanmar relations and unique in providing an Indian perspective on the country.

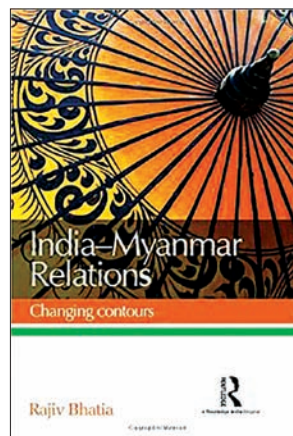
The lust and desire for the 'mystic' land of Myanmar arouses from the never-ending inter-connectedness that this exotic place has with the Indian subcontinent. The historical and cultural linkages abound our mythologies and contemporary literature. The

amazing zeal of the early Buddhists from India having laid the foundation for this inexhaustible association between the two countries is eternal. Besides the shared cultural and historical roots, the country has much to offer. In this scholarly book author probes into this rich cultural history and examines how the past has coloured our present perceptions. In this context, it would be apt to quote the author where he says, "Managers and well-wishers of India-Myanmar relations hoped that the saplings planted to strengthen cooperation in various fields would transform into fruit laden tree in the fullness of time" (p. 154).

This book provides a comprehensive evaluation of India's multi-faceted relations with Myanmar. It unravels the mysteries of the complex polity of Myanmar as it undergoes transition through democracy after long military rule. Based on meticulous research and understanding, the volume traces the trajectory of India-Myanmar associations from ancient times to the present

day, and offers a fascinating story in the backdrop of the region's geopolitics. This view echoes in the foreword of the book where Ambassador Shyam Saran values this well researched and comprehensive volume which "brings together the perspectives of a Diplomat and a Scholar to a subject of contemporary relevance" (p. xi).

The book is structured into eight chapters in a thematic manner. The introductory chapter evaluates the changing dynamics of India-Myanmar relations and spells out the implications of the recent reforms and opening up in Myanmar on the state of India's relations with the country in the past, present and future. The second chapter on 'Deciphering Myanmar' amply reflects the theme of the title wherein the author has made an attempt to provide an Indian Perspective on Myanmar's society, culture, its people, nation and the state structure. This chapter also provides an insight into the key institutions viz—military, political parties, econo-



my and its changing external affairs in recent years.

Thereafter, the book is followed by two subsequent chapters on a historical study about the evolution of the diverse and rich linkages between the two countries. These chapters focus on the relationship between India and Myanmar from 'antiquity to Raj' and the main trends of their relationship as it has traversed from independence to the military rule. In this section, the author relates his experiences as an ambassador serving the Indian Mission in Yangon through various anecdotes which provides an emotional connect to the close and friendly

relations between the two age old neighbours.

The next two chapters unfold the story of bilateral relations between India and Myanmar during the reform period and its present 'state of play'. From India's viewpoint, Myanmar is an immediate neighbour of vital importance for defense and internal security needs; stability and development of Northeastern Region; and expansion of its influence in the Bay of Bengal region and Southeast Asia. Infrastructural development and rail-road connectivity beginning from northeastern part of India running through Myanmar serves as a 'Gateway to Southeast Asia' and beyond.

According to the author, "Myanmar is not where only China and India 'meet', it is also the intersection between South Asia and Southeast Asia" (p. 102). The book also tries to unravel the India-Myanmar-China triangle. The author feels that "this triangle is a key to understanding the substance of Myanmar's Foreign Policy as well as India-Myanmar

relations" (p. 192). In the last leg of the book, the author rather like a scholar and unlike an astrologer attempts to imagine the future anchored in the in-depth examination of the 'past and the present'. He makes some substantive recommendations for India's Myanmar policy covering Government-to-Government, business-to-business and people-to-people engagement.

Describing various critical junctures and fault-lines in the political history of Myanmar and given the troika of challenges the country faces today—political reconciliation and reforms; religious and sectarian violence; and centre-periphery contestations—this book would be useful for researchers, scholars of international relations and area studies programme as well as to policy makers, strategic think tanks and for all Myanmar watchers in general. The book would also provide a point of reference for future scholarship and writings on India-Myanmar relations.

World Post Day 2015 Message from UPU Director General



Innovation, Integration and Inclusion are the key drivers for the future of the Post

As we celebrate World Post Day today, we can look back with satisfaction on a rich history of transformation in the Post, which has always been able to find its place in the world market. Indeed, the Post can pride itself on being the oldest medium of communication, one that still plays a key role in the sending of information and goods. From liberalization to privatization and the emergence of competition, the Post has faced many challenges to its survival, but none so daunting as the development of modern information technology. Today, the traditional postal business line – letter post – has been

greatly challenged by faster and more efficient ways of communication thanks to advancements in information and communications technologies. However, successful Posts have taken these challenges as opportunities to innovate and establish new market segments, understanding that a faster and more efficient communication medium is actually what the Post needs in order to build a new business value chain. The transformation has not come easily. Indeed, there are still many Posts that have yet to take full advantage of new technologies to improve their business performance.

Nevertheless, the message is loud and clear: the survival of the Post hinges on its ability to quickly change and innovate. Customer expectations, needs and tastes are changing, and the Post must change as well to meet these new demands. With that realization, the Universal Postal Union, in its draft World Postal Strategy for 2017–2020, has identified postal industry reform as the key driver for the future. In its blueprint, Vision 2020, the

UPU focuses on Innovation, Integration and Inclusion as the main factors that will drive postal business in the future.

The reality is that the future of the Post strongly depends on its ability to innovate and create new products and services. One of the keys to innovation will be the Post's capacity to embrace new technologies and transfer its trusted brands into the digital space. To achieve this, it will be critical for the Post to develop digital competencies, along with the relevant regulatory frameworks that will support the new environment. For successful integration, the Post will need to build a seamless network that is connected both virtually and physically, and that has a local and international presence. Full integration calls for the involvement of all key players in the postal supply chain, including customs and transport, and the facilitation of crossborder e-commerce.

With the United Nations' new Sustainable Development Goals, which have been embraced by world leaders, the Post today

has an even more relevant role to play as an infrastructure for development. Given its universal nature, the Post is best placed to drive the economic, social, financial and digital inclusion of all citizens of the world. Through its vast network, the Post should target micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as well as the unbanked population as a new business frontier and create appropriate products to support the market. Achieving success in this area is one of the best ways to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, for the benefit of the global community.

The future of the Post starts now. We must all work towards creating products and services that meet the needs of our current and future customers. Let us focus on innovation, integration and inclusion in our business to create a strong Post for the future. Only in doing so will the Post be able to achieve success and maintain its place in the world market, with a presence that continues to be visible and relevant.

I wish you a happy World Post Day.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Helicobacter pylori is a microbial pathogen responsible for the type B chronic gastritis that colonizes the lower gastric mucin layer of the human stomach; attaching to gastric epithelial cell receptors delivering several toxic metabolites resulting in severe tissue damages and inflammation. The bacteria can grow rapidly and cause severe damage even in the acidic environment of the stomach by synthesizing urease neutralizing the acidity. The pathogen causes severe destruction of the protective mucus layers resulting in the erosion of the stomach wall leading to peptic ulcers. The microbe targets cell surface glycoconjugates as receptor molecules for attachment purposes and to facilitate tissue colonization and invasion. Initial colonization of the pathogen occurs in the oral cavity following attachment to sialylated and sulphated oligosaccharides in the oral mucosa. Statistics reveal that ~15% of those infected develop ulcer and in more serious cases, stomach cancer. Several host factors are involved in this process some have been identified like the binding of the pathogen to extracellular matrix via sulphated glycosaminoglycan molecules. However, several non-identified and non-characterized host factors are also equally responsible in the bacterial pathogenesis that warrants further research. Till date, reliable therapeutic agents for combating the infection are inadequate. Furthermore, increasing reports of resistance of the pathogens against previously successful drugs is a serious global concern. The pathogen has been considered to be quite worrisome for the under developed and developing countries of Asia, Africa and Central and South America struggling to establish a potential health care system. For a developing nation like Myanmar, such bacterial infestations are a serious health hazard and must be looked upon by the health care agencies with utmost priority.

Sincerely yours
Saikat Kumar Basu

Syrian troops, Russian jets launch attack



People inspect a site hit by what residents said were airstrikes carried out by the Russian air force in the town of Darat Izza on 7 October. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIRUT — Syrian government troops and allied militia backed by Russian air strikes launched an offensive against rebels in the Ghab Plain in western Syria on Thursday, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and a rebel fighting there said.

Insurgents advanced into the area in July, building on gains that posed a threat to the coastal region vital to President Bashar al-Assad's control of western Syria and catalysing Russia's intervention on his side.

Rami Abdulrahman, director of the Observatory, told Reuters

that ground forces were targeting insurgent-held areas with heavy barrages of surface-to-surface missiles, as Russian jets bombed from above.

Abdulrahman, whose organisation uses sources on the ground to track the conflict, also said that an offensive launched

by the Syrian army and its foreign allies on Wednesday in nearby areas of Hama Province had failed to make significant gains.

"Thirteen regime forces were killed. There are only seven confirmed dead among the (rebel) fighters, but the number

is certainly more than seven," he said.

The Ghab Plain abuts a mountain range that forms the heartland of Assad's Alawite sect. An alliance of rebel groups including al Qaeda's Nusra Front thrust into the area in late July, forcing government forces to retreat. Syrian troops and militia backed by Russian warplanes mounted what appeared to be their first major coordinated assault on Syrian insurgents on Wednesday in nearby areas of Hama province.

Russian air strikes started last week and have mostly focused in areas of western Syria where Assad has sought to shore up his control after losing swathes of the rest of the country to insurgents including the Islamic State group. Russia says it is fighting Islamic State in Syria. But while Islamic State has been the target of some of its air strikes, it has no foothold in the areas of western Syria targeted in the attacks on Wednesday and Thursday. Abu al-Baraa al-Hamawi of the Afnan al-Sham insurgent group told Reuters that Russian jets had been bombing since dawn. It was not the first time the Russians had bombed the area, but this was their most ferocious attack, he said, speaking via an Internet messaging service.

"There is an attempt by the regime to advance but the situation is under our control," he said. —Reuters

Harsh reality: Egypt's stalled \$35 bn housing scheme

CAIRO — When Abu Dhabi-run contractor Arabtec signed a deal with the Egyptian government for a high-profile housing project it was seen as a sign of the Gulf Arab state's support for President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

But the project announced in March 2014 and a pillar of Sisi's election campaign, has stalled, possibly risking his reputation and highlighting Egypt's habit of promising grandiose ventures and then struggling to deliver.

Egyptians were promised one million homes by 2020 at a cost of about 280 billion Egyptian pounds (\$35.76 billion) and a raft of other projects to help the economy get back on its feet after the political upheaval that followed the 2011 uprising.

Sisi was counting on billions of dollars in pledges of help from Gulf Arab oil-producing allies, backers of the army's overthrow of President Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013.

Some of which this money has failed to materialise, and local banks are unable to finance the Arabtec project.

"Egyptians want these projects now but in fact they will take years to finish," said a Western diplomat in Cairo. Egypt signed a memorandum of understanding

for the project with Dubai-based Arabtec, which built the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa for Emaar Properties, but now it has ground to a halt.

A source familiar with the matter pointed to disagreements over the contract and funding difficulties. Work has not started and Arabtec has yet to submit a building plan.

Arabtec declined to comment, while Abu Dhabi officials could not be reached for comment.

Abu Dhabi, the dominant member of the United Arab Emirates and home to the country's federal government institutions, is the company's largest shareholder in Arabtec through

ment, Arabtec's then chief executive Hasan Ismaik said the project owed much to Abu Dhabi's crown prince "who has been very keen to mobilise all efforts to boost support to our brothers in Egypt through a multitude of humanitarian, economic and social initiatives".

The UAE is still deeply committed to Sisi but when it comes to commercial ventures it is paying closer attention to contract details for a good return on investment, Western diplomats say.

Sisi's success in cracking down on the Muslim Brotherhood — seen by Gulf allies as an existential threat — may mean the UAE has less reason to en-

last step in that process. His performance on the economy will come under greater scrutiny as political turmoil eases.

"At the moment, many ordinary Egyptians, due to the fear of political violence in the country, will be giving Sisi a lot of leeway — but eventually, the public will want to see results in economic terms," said HA Hellyer, nonresident fellow at the Brookings Centre for Middle East Policy.

"If the results are not sufficiently big or don't come quickly enough, be it on the Arabtec deal, the new administrative capital, or the Suez Canal expansion, Sisi's popularity could suffer quite substantially as a result."

At an investment conference in March, Sisi said UAE businessmen Mohamed Alabbar, through Abu Dhabi investment firm Capital City Partners, would lead the construction of a new administrative capital.

This would include an airport larger than London's Heathrow and a building taller than Paris's Eiffel Tower. —Reuters

"Egyptians want these projects now but in fact they will take years to finish."

Western diplomat in Cairo

state fund Aabar, which holds a 36.1 percent stake.

Abu Dhabi officials have been Arabtec's chairmen since mid-2012, with the current board all part of the emirate's government and business elite.

In the original announce-

ment, Arabtec's then chief executive Hasan Ismaik said the project owed much to Abu Dhabi's crown prince "who has been very keen to mobilise all efforts to boost support to our brothers in Egypt through a multitude of humanitarian, economic and social initiatives".

When, as army chief, Sisi toppled Mursi, he promised what he called a political roadmap to democracy. Parliamentary elections on 18-19 October mark the

At least ten Yemeni civilians killed in Dhamar Province home

ABU DHABI — At least ten Yemeni civilians were killed when a rocket hit a house in a village in the southwestern province of Dhamar on Thursday and was most likely to have been fired by Saudi-led coalition jets, residents said.

Arab coalition warplanes have been responsible for several mass killings of civilians in Yemen, including 131 people at a wedding party on 28 September.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack.

A coalition spokesman could not be reached for comment, but the Arab alliance says it does not target civilians. The Houthi-run Saba news agency reported that the home, in the village of Sanban, was hit by a Saudi air raid during a wedding celebration and that dozens of people were killed or wounded. It said the death toll could rise to more than 30.

The Arab coalition began air strikes against the Houthis and their allies, forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, in late March after a push from their northern stronghold towards the southern port of Aden. —Reuters

El Niño brings welcome rains to Chile's farmers, ski resorts



People spend their day at the 'Valle Nevado' ski center, east of Santiago, in the Los Andes mountain range.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SANTIAGO — After eight years of drought which left fields parched and ski resorts dry, a burst of wet weather, likely triggered by the El Niño phenomenon, has been welcomed in central Chile.

August and September in Chile have both seen higher amounts of rain than average for the Southern Hemisphere spring, with capital Santiago's normally blue skies replaced with a grey pall and brown lawns turning a vibrant green.

There is growing consensus among global weather forecasters that this year is seeing a strong El Niño, a warming of sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific that can lead to hot, dry weather in Asia and rains in South America.

While heavy downpours can trigger destructive flooding, El Niño can also be a positive phenomenon for top copper exporter Chile, bringing relief from usual-

ly dry conditions in much of the country.

"What is clear is that the central zone responds in a positive manner to a strong El Niño, with more rain in the spring, and that is exactly what has happened," Claudia Villarroel, a national weather service meteorologist, told Reuters.

That could give the country's economic growth a boost, as long as it remained a relatively moderate event, analysts at Credicorp said in a report.

"In Chile's case, El Niño has normally had a positive connotation, as greater rains and a warmer climate tend to benefit agriculture and energy generation," they said.

More snow in the Andes created a "natural reservoir" that was reassuring for farmers, said Juan Carlos Sepulveda, the head of fruit producer industry group Fedefruta. But he warned that if the rains continue beyond No-

vember, they may cause blooms on flowering fruit or affect harvests.

"In winter, the rain is welcome ... it is coming a little late," he said.

The bumper snowfalls have provided a late-season boon to ski resorts near Santiago, which suffered a delayed start due to scarce precipitation in June and July, but are seen operating well into October.

Further north, Chile's tourism sector could also benefit from the "flowering desert" phenomenon, with rains turning the normally arid Atacama into a carpet of colorful flowers — set to attract visitors into November.

Weather experts warn, however, the recent rains do not signal the end of Chile's drought. By the end of September, Santiago's total year-to-date rainfall was still some 40 percent below what it should be, Villarroel noted.—Reuters

Israeli team signs first launch deal in Google moon race

JERUSALEM — An Israeli team competing in a race to the moon sponsored by Google has signed a deal with California-based SpaceX for a rocket launch, putting it at the front of the pack and on target for blast-off in late 2017, officials said on Wednesday.

With the deadline to win a \$20 million first-place prize just two years off, pressure is mounting on the 16 rivals from around the world hoping to complete a privately funded moon landing.

Silicon Valley's Moon Express announced a week ago that it had signed a contract with Lockheed Martin-backed Rocket Lab. But Israel's SpaceIL is the first team to have a launch agreement reviewed, verified and accepted by XPRIZE, the group overseeing the contest.

"The magnitude of this achievement cannot be overstated," said XPRIZE President Bob Weiss. "This is the official milestone that the race is on ... They've lit the fuse, as it were, for their competitive effort."

The key hurdle was finding an affordable ride to outer space without government

funding, said Eran Privman, CEO of SpaceIL.

Because his team's spacecraft is much smaller than most competitors — it looks like a robotic, four-legged table, about 1.5 metres tall and wide — the SpaceX Falcon 9 launcher can carry 20 small satellites whose fares will help cover costs, Privman said.

"Other teams are trying to find such solutions," he said.

SpaceX is a private company owned and operated by technology entrepreneur Elon Musk.

Much work remains. SpaceIL must manufacture hardware to fit the rocket and only then can it be shipped to the United States, Privman said.

The mission is scheduled for late 2017, just before the contest deadline. Once exiting the rocket in space, the Israeli craft will make its journey to the moon.

To win, a privately funded team must place an unmanned spacecraft on the moon's surface that can explore 500 meters and transmit high-definition video and images back to earth.—Reuters



A model of an Israeli spacecraft is displayed on a podium before a meeting between Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and Israeli space team, SpaceIL, in Jerusalem on 7 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

US cancer doctors drop pricey drugs with little or no effect

LOS ANGELES — US oncologists, aware that patients are paying more of the costs of expensive cancer drugs, are increasingly declining to prescribe medicines that have scant or no effect, even as a last resort.

At least half a dozen drugs, including colon cancer treatments Cyramza, from Eli Lilly & Co, and Stivarga, sold by Bayer AG, aren't worth prices that can exceed \$100,000 a year, top cancer specialists said in interviews with Reuters.

If specialists do start considering a drug's cost in their prescribing habits, such decisions could dent the multibillion-dollar cancer drug business of companies from Roche

Holding AG to Celgene Corp. Worldwide spending on cancer medicines reached \$100 billion in 2014, a year-over-year jump of more than 10 percent.

Doctors are unimpressed with so-called "me too" drugs developed by companies looking to grab market share from a more established product. They are also less likely to use a drug outside of its approved indication for patients who have exhausted other types of treatment.

"There are drugs that don't make much sense given how much they cost, given their small benefits," said Dr Peter Bach, director of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Center for Health Policy and Outcomes in

New York. "There are drugs that can cost up to \$10,000 a month that provide, at the median, a few weeks or less than a month of additional life, but with substantial toxicity."

More than one-quarter of spending by Medicare, the federal health insurance plan for seniors, is for services provided to beneficiaries in their last year of life, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Doctors say that, even with harsh side effects, a few more weeks of life may be well worth the price to some patients. For others, the potential benefits may not outweigh the costs.

Lilly's Cyramza was approved by US regulators in April to treat advanced colorec-

tal cancer in combination with chemotherapy. It works similarly to Roche Holding AG's much older drug Avastin and to Sanofi SA's Zaltrap.

"Lilly got it on the market in stomach cancer (in 2014), which was a very nice strategy since it was one of the few indications where Avastin missed," said Dr Leonard Saltz, chief of gastrointestinal oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering. But when Lilly put it on the market for colon cancer, where it does compete with Avastin, they kept its price at double the rate of the Roche drug. "In colon cancer, I don't know anyone who is using it," Saltz said of Cyramza. Even Avastin, which extends colon cancer survival

by about 1.4 months compared to chemotherapy alone, is "massively overused and massively overpriced," he said.

Dr Lowell Schnipper, chief of haematology-oncology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Centre in Boston, also described Cyramza as providing limited benefit at a cost of \$7,000 to \$9,000 a month. Lilly said in an emailed statement that Cyramza addresses a high unmet medical need, while Bayer said that Stivarga is an important, and competitively priced, treatment option. Genentech, the US biotechnology unit of Roche, said it limits the annual cost of Avastin to about \$69,400 for its approved uses.—Reuters

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"DURGA PUJA INVITATION"

THE SARADIYA DURGA PUJA (Sandhi Mai Daw Puzaw Pwe) will be celebrated from Monday the 19th October 2015 to Thursday, the 22nd October, 2015 at Hindu temple Sri Sri Durga Bari No. 307, Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon.

All are Cordially invited to attend the Durga Puja Celebration with family and friends.

Durga Puja Celebration Committee 2015



The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Construction

ICB1-ED-KKR - ADDENDUM No 2

GMS EWEC Eindu to Kawkareik Road Improvement Project

06 October 2015

Invitation For Bids

The paragraph 7 has been modified and shall be read as:

7. **A site visit will be organised:**
Kayin State Director office, DOH, Ministry of Construction in HpaAn,
The 03 November 2015 at 09:00 am Myanmar local time

The Pre-Bidding meeting will be organised:
Kayin State Director office, DOH, Ministry of Construction in HpaAn,
The 04 November 2015 at 09:00 am Myanmar local time

Section 2 – Bid Data Sheet

The Clause ITB 7.4 has been modified and shall be read as:

A Pre-Bid meeting will take place at the following date, time and location:

Date:	04 November 2015
Time:	9:00 Hours, local Myanmar time
Location:	Kayin State Director Office, DOH, Ministry of Construction in HpaAn, Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Country:	Republic of the Union of Myanmar

A site visit conducted by the Employer will be organized on 03 November 2015

Meeting will take place at **Kayin State Director Office, DOH, HpaAn at 09:00 am local Myanmar time.**

THE OTHER SECTIONS CLAUSES AND PROVISIONS REMAIN UN-CHANGED

Ocean heat wave harming world's coral reefs this year

A view of over 800 school children, teachers and volunteers forming the shape of a fish with a sad expression, alongside Chinese characters that read "refrain" at Repulse Bay in Hong Kong. PHOTO: REUTERS

OSLO — Corals reefs are suffering a severe underwater heat wave this year for the third time on record, including a mysterious warm patch in the Pacific known as "The Blob", scientists said on Thursday.

The bout of record high temperatures in parts of the oceans, stoked by climate change, is expected to kill more than 12,000 sq kms (4,600 sq miles) of reefs, or about five percent of the global total, they said.

The experts, including the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), said similar alerts about damage to reefs had been issued only in 2010 and 1998, both extremely warm years.

Corals, tiny creatures which build stony skeletons, eject the colourful algae they live with when under stress. That bleaches the reefs — some corals can bounce back when temperatures fall but many die from long-lasting whitening.

Corals are nurseries for many species of fish and provide livelihoods for millions of people.

"This is the third time we've had a global bleaching event," Mark Eakin, coordinator at NOAA's Coral Reef Watch, told Reuters, saying experts would have spotted such wide damage to reefs even decades ago when monitoring was less thorough.

"2015 has now seen

coral bleaching occurring in reefs in the northern Pacific, Indian, equatorial Pacific, and western Atlantic Oceans," the alert said.

A vast mass of warm water known as "The Blob" in the north eastern Pacific has harmed corals, including in Hawaii, it said.

"It is not well understood how much of 'The Blob' is related to climate change ... It's still a bit of a mystery," Eakin said.

All three global alerts — in 1998, 2010 and 2015 — have coincided with El Nino events, which warm the eastern tropical Pacific and can disrupt weather worldwide, compounding the impact of climate change.

On land, the "equiva-

lent would be tropical forests turning white ... and then dying," said Richard Vevers, Executive Director of XL Catlin Seaview Survey which also contributed to the report.

"The last two events have gone virtually unnoticed," he told Reuters of the bleachings in 2010 and 1998.

The University of Queensland and Reef Check were also involved in the surveys.

Eakin said countries could help by reducing stresses on reefs such as over-fishing and pollution.

Nearly 200 governments will meet in Paris from 30 November to 11 December to address the wider problem of climate change.—Reuters

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (15:30)hrs M.S.T today, the low pressure area over North Bay of Bengal still persists. It may further intensify during next (24)hours. Monsoon is weak in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weather is partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 9th October, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region and Kayah State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Bago Regions, Shan, Kayin and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Upper Sagaing Region and Rakhine State and isolated heavy falls in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kachin and Chin States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in Sagaing Region, Shan, Chin and Rakhine States.

US chief knew VW could be breaking rules

BERLIN — Volkswagen's top US executive will tell a panel of US lawmakers on Thursday that he knew as long ago as the spring of 2014 that the German carmaker might be breaking rules on US diesel emissions tests.

In written testimony submitted to a congressional oversight panel a day ahead of Thursday's hearing, President and CEO of Volkswagen Group of America Michael Horn said: "In the spring of 2014 ... I was told that there was a possible emissions non-compliance that could be remedied.

"I was also informed that the company engineers would work with the agencies to resolve the issue," he said, without identifying the people providing him

with the information.

That is about 18 months before the company admitted to US regulators it used software to cheat tests, and is likely to add to criticism it has not acted swiftly enough to tackle its wrongdoing. Almost three weeks after it admitted publicly to rigging US emissions tests, Europe's largest carmaker is under huge pressure to identify those responsible, fix affected vehicles and clarify exactly how and where the cheating happened.

Germany's Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper reported on Thursday that Volkswagen's "cheat" software was switched on in Europe. The company has previously said that, while the software was installed in around 11 million

diesel vehicles worldwide, it was not active in the majority of them.

Volkswagen was not immediately available to comment on the Sueddeutsche report.

It was not until 3 September 2015, that Volkswagen told US regulators it had installed so-called "defeat devices" in some diesel engines to mask their true level of toxic emissions. US regulators made public the wrongdoing on 18 September. The biggest business crisis in Volkswagen's 78-year history has wiped more than a third off its share price, forced out its long-time chief executive and sent shockwaves through both the global car industry and the German establishment.

In the written testimo-

ny published on Wednesday, Horn said Volkswagen had withdrawn its US certification application for some model year 2016 vehicles over a software feature that should have been disclosed to regulators as an auxiliary emissions control device. Volkswagen has come under fire from authorities and analysts on both sides of the Atlantic for its handling of the crisis.

The company's new chairman said on Wednesday it would take "some time" to get to the bottom of the matter.

Volkswagen has suspended more than 10 senior managers, including three top engineers, as part of an internal investigation. It has also hired US law firm Jones Day to conduct an external inquiry.—Reuters

Massive California wildfire contained



Firefighters watch the Rocky Fire advance in Lake County, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO — A massive California wildfire that left four people dead and four firefighters injured was fully contained late on Wednesday, officials said, nearly a month after the destructive blaze broke out north of San Francisco.

The so-called Valley Fire destroyed nearly 2,000 homes and buildings as it ripped through drought-parched timber across Lake, Napa and Sonoma counties, some of California's famed wine-making regions, about 70 miles (110 km) north of San Francisco, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) said.

The Valley Fire broke out 12 September and intensified, becoming one of the two most destructive blazes in the state this year and among the most calamitous in California history.

The current fire season has been especially intense, as California struggles through its fourth year of a crippling drought that has left forestland exceedingly dry and easy kindling for a blaze.

Four people were killed in the Valley Fire, including an elderly disabled woman who was trapped in her

home, Cal Fire said. Four firefighters were injured in the early days of the blaze.

The fire, along with another conflagration nearby, the Butte Fire, together blackened more than 145,000 acres (58,000 hectares) while laying waste to thousands of homes and outbuildings and forcing the evacuation of some 20,000 people. Two people were killed in the Butte blaze, which was fully contained earlier this week.

By late Wednesday, containment of the Valley Fire, a measure of how much of its perimeter has been enclosed within buff-

er lines carved through vegetation by ground crews, was at 100 percent and Cal Fire had issued its "final" update on the blaze, the agency's website said.

"Helicopters may be operating over the fire area as part of the mop-up operation. Firefighters continue to improve existing lines and mopping up hot spots across the fire area," it said.

The Butte Fire was fully contained earlier this month.

US President Barack Obama signed a disaster declaration in September to make federal aid available to residents impacted by the blazes.—Reuters

UK think tank sees more poverty, countering Cameron's message

LONDON — Up to 200,000 households with people in work in Britain will be pushed into poverty by the government's latest welfare reforms, according to a report published a day after Prime Minister David Cameron promised an "all-out assault on poverty".

The Resolution Foundation, a think tank focusing on wages, said on Thursday an increase in the minimum wage would not offset the losses for many households caused by cuts to tax credits, which top up the earnings of the lowest paid, and other welfare supports.

The think tank specialises in issues affecting low-earning households, and its research work was cited by finance minister

George Osborne when he announced the new minimum wage in July.

The Resolution Foundation said the number of working households in poverty — those who receive less than 60 percent of median household income — will rise by 100,000 next year as a result of the changes announced in July.

A further 100,000 working households could fall below the poverty line by 2020 after a second phase of cuts, pushing the total number of poor households to around 2 million, it said.

A spokesman for Britain's finance ministry said the changes announced in July were fair and necessary and would only take

spending on tax credits back to 2008 levels. "The best route out of poverty is work, not benefits," he said.

Thursday's report will be uncomfortable reading for Osborne, the front-runner to take over from Cameron, who has said he will stand down before the next election in 2020.

Boris Johnson, London's mayor and another potential successor to Cameron, used a high-profile speech at the Conservative Party's annual conference this week to urge the government to protect the most vulnerable, lowest-paid workers.

In his speech to the conference on Wednesday, Cameron said the introduction in April of the

higher minimum wage was a "giant leap forward" in the push to help more people get out of poverty by working rather than relying on welfare.

But David Finch, senior economic analyst at the Resolution Foundation, said the government would make it harder for families to earn their way out of poverty by weakening work incentives in the benefits system.

An analyst at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development told Reuters on Wednesday that austerity programmes imposed in a number of countries since 2010 had exacerbated inequality and could harm long-term growth.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (134W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (134W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.10.2015 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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ORINET OVERSEAS
CONTAINER LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV E.R. TURKU VOY NO (082W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV E.R. TURKU VOY NO (082W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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 HANJIN SHIPPING LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF273R)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF273R) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.10.2015 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.

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Taylor loves that I act: Lady Gaga

LONDON — Pop star Lady Gaga says her fiancé Taylor Kinney is thrilled she's gone into acting.

The "Born This Way" singer joined the cast of Fox series "American Horror Story: Hotel" and the "Chicago Fire" actor, who she began dating in 2011 and got engaged to in February, has been "exponentially supportive" of her transition and even offered her advice, reported Female First.

"What guy in that scenario would be like, 'Sure, babe, do TV!?' He does TV, that's his thing. I do music, and you know, we're together. But I sort of was like, 'Is it cool if I do TV?,' And he was like, yeah!" she said.

"We can read scripts together, and we can talk about our characters together, and I can teach you how to be on set!"

The 29-year-old star said Kinney taught her to be available to other actors.

"He taught me all about etiquette and what actors would appreciate during their coverage. He taught me to make sure that I was always available fully to the actors when I was working so that when the coverage is on them that I don't drop my character, that I'm always in it for them, and you know, that's invaluable advice.—PTI



Cast member Lady Gaga poses at a premiere screening of "American Horror Story: Hotel" in Los Angeles, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

AR Rahman to receive Hridaynath Mangeshkar Award

MUMBAI — Academy Award-winning music composer AR Rahman will be honoured with the Hridaynath Mangeshkar Award here on 26 October.

The fifth Hridaynath Award will be conferred on Rahman by veteran filmmaker Subhash Ghai on the birth anniversary of Pandit Hridaynath Mangeshkar, the late younger brother of

legendary playback singers Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle.

The first Hridaynath award was given to Lata. Asha, megastar Amitabh Bachchan and actress Sulochana Tai have also been its recipients.

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan was feted with the fourth such honour and last year it was presented to legendary ac-

trix Sulochana Tai. In 2009, 48-year-old Rahman won the Oscar award for Best Original Score and Best Original Song, sharing with lyricist Gulzar, for his work in Danny Boyle's "Slumdog Millionaire".

The singer-composer has also won four National Awards in a career spanning over two decades.—PTI

Big B bats to save big cat population

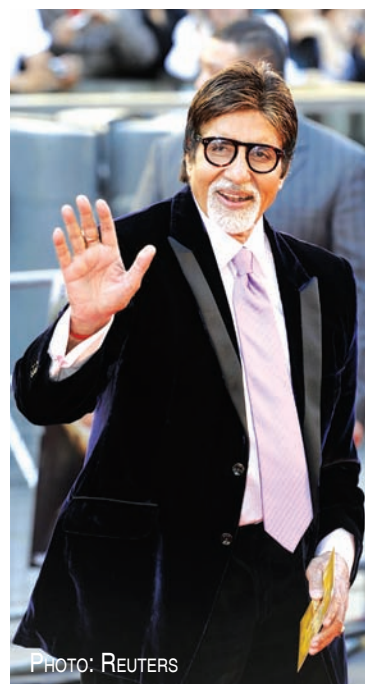


PHOTO: REUTERS

MUMBAI — Mega-star Amitabh Bachchan, who has been appointed as Maharashtra's brand ambassador for tigers, has appealed people to save the big cat's rapidly dwindling population.

Beginning the endeavor, the 72-year-old actor took a jungle safari in Sanjay Gandhi National Park in suburban Mumbai last evening along with ministers and politicians. "I will consider myself worthy as a brand ambassador when tiger preservation and securing their safety becomes successful. If my voice or face can provide anything good to this initiative, I will pledge myself for it," Bachchan told reporters here at the event.

The "Piku" star took jungle safari and he had a great time.

"I have been in Mumbai for

65 years. But the safari showed me images that I have never seen before. And these are the things that makes me work for it. What makes me proud is that in the middle of the city, there is a national park which is a miracle and we have to save it." Bachchan revealed Maharashtra is home to the largest number of tigers in India.

"When we were moving from 19th to 20th century, the tiger count was 40,000. In 2008, it reduced to 1411. The movement that started after that has made it reach 2226 in number," he said. On the occasion, Big B launched two Safari buses at the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. The event has been organised as a part of "Wildlife Week" celebrations and it was attended by Forest Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar.—PTI

Native Americans protest 'Maze Runner' actor's comments

LOS ANGELES — An offhand comment made by "Maze Runner" actor Dylan O'Brien about filching Native American artifacts from a New Mexico ranch where a movie was being filmed has stung advocates who have long struggled to protect tribal items and remains.

O'Brien, 24, said in a recent interview that he had fallen ill during the shoot for 20th Century Fox's "The Maze Runner: Scorch Trials" and implied that a Native American curse had taken revenge on cast members who took objects.

The remark has prompted an online petition with 47,000 people calling for the return of any stolen objects from the ranch where the film was shot last year.

"It brings to mind for me that our graves that were robbed for the objects that were in them. That kind of desecration and direct continuing today is not deniable or tolerable," Jacqueline Johnson Pata, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, told Reuters on Wednesday.

O'Brien's publicist did not return a request for comment.

In an interview last month on US syndicated morning talk show "Live with Kelly and Michael," O'Brien said he and fellow "Scorch Trials" cast members took items from the historic location where they filmed last winter.

"It was this ancient Indian burial ground, I guess," he said. "They were very strict about littering and don't take any artifacts like rocks, skulls — anything like that. And everyone just takes stuff, you know, obviously."

The site in question is the 22,000-acre Diamond Tail Ranch in the high desert between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. It is not home to any known Indian burial grounds, property manager Roch Hart told Reuters, and he has not been able to detect missing items.

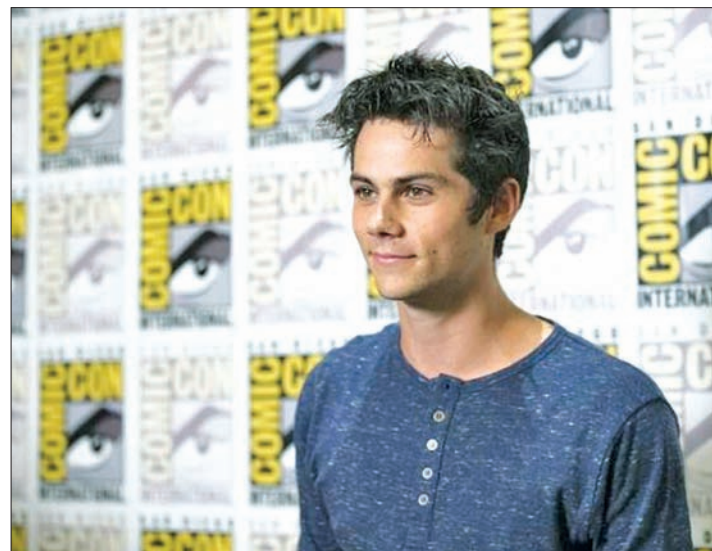
Hart said artifacts at Diamond Tail include pottery shards and chippings of rock tools. While he has not been able to pinpoint specific tribes as the owners, he estimates that items date from the years 800 to 1700.

"Whether it be a thousand-dollar pot that was found, or a pottery shard ... we consider it all sacred," he said.

The ranch has hosted about 10 films in the past three years, including "Frontera" starring Ed Harris. If the theft allegations prove true, Hart said he will rethink plans.

20th Century Fox said Wednesday it was doing a "thorough investigation."

"If any artifacts were mishandled or removed from the location, we will do everything to ensure they are restored," the studio said in a statement.—Reuters



Cast member Dylan O'Brien poses at a press line for "The Maze Runner" during the 2014 Comic-Con International Convention in San Diego, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jennifer Lopez to host American Music Awards

LOS ANGELES — Pop diva Jennifer Lopez will host and perform at the 2015 American Music Awards, which will take place on 22 November.

The ceremony will be broadcast live from LA's Microsoft Theater on ABC, said The Hollywood Reporter.

Lopez, 46, will also per-

form in support of her upcoming Las Vegas show "All I Have," which begins in January at the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino.

On 13 October, Joe Jonas and Charlie Puth will appear on "Good Morning America" to reveal the nominees for six categories of the annual awards ceremony.—PTI

Luxury jeweller shells out to restore Rome's Spanish Steps

ROME — Restoration work started on Wednesday at Rome's Spanish Steps, making the scene of one of cinema's most famous ice cream breaks the latest Italian landmark to undergo privately-funded repairs.

The travertine and marble staircase that rises from Piazza di Spagna to the Trinita dei Monti church in Rome's historic center will be cleaned and its surfaces repaired in a project due to be finished by late next spring.

Roman jeweler Bulgari has donated 1.5 million euros (\$1.7 million) to restore the site that provided the setting for a meeting between an ice cream-eating Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck in the 1953 film "Roman Holiday".

The constant flow of selfie-snapping tourists has added to the deterioration of the Steps, which were last fully restored in 1995, Rome's city government and Bulgari said in a statement.

Some of the steps are slipping

away, the stone surfaces are pockmarked with dark stains, and some areas are cracked and damaged by invasive plants.

The whole staircase will be closed until 7 December, before being partially opened to allow access to the hordes of tourists expected for a Catholic Holy Year beginning in December. Italian entrepreneurs have been stepping up to pay to restore historical sites and save some from likely collapse as a three-year recession strangled public funding for their upkeep.

Across town from the Piazza di Spagna, luxury shoemaker Tod's is paying to restore the Colosseum, while the holding company of Diesel jeans founder Renzo Rosso paid to spruce up the Rialto bridge in Venice.

The Spanish Steps, known in Italian as the Scalinata di Trinita dei Monti, first needed repairs just two years after their completion in 1726 after being damaged by heavy rain. —Reuters



People walk near a barrier that closes the entrance to the Spanish Steps in Rome, Italy, on 7 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Syrian journalist wins award for courageous reporting

LONDON — Despite living in hiding and fearing for her life, Syrian journalist Kholoud Waleed persists in reporting on the suffering and atrocities inflicted on her fellow countrymen in the long-running civil war.

The 31-year-old, who has been targeted by both government and militant forces, set up an underground newspaper in 2012 with a group of female friends, to report on what was happening in Syria.

On Wednesday she was awarded the annual Reach All Women in WAR (RAW in WAR) Anna Politkovskaya Award for her work in keeping people in Syria informed about the war, and for speaking out against the violence.

"The Syrian media always conveyed the same, that there was no conflict, no demonstrations, no shelling, no bombardment, nothing," Waleed (not her real name) said in an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"The message from the regime is 'the sun is shining, the birds are singing, nothing, nothing at all is happening in Syria,'" she added.

The group wanted to use their underground newspaper, "Enab Baladi" (Grapes of My Country), also to show the international community what was happening in Syria, and document crimes being committed there. Waleed now lives in hiding after some of her colleagues were detained and questioned by government security forces.

"We lost many friends,"

she said. Three have been killed, three are in detention, and others have been released from detention, she said.

"This is our responsibility, to tell our people and to tell the world that there are people who aspired for freedom but they were faced by all sorts of evil," Waleed said. Despite the dangers, she is determined to continue documenting atrocities committed by all sides, and the stories of civilians living with the daily reality of war.

"If we stop, no one is going to care about the little stories, about amazing people surviving the war."

She wants to record as many stories as she can, so that future generations can read about what happened during the war years.

"If we stop, no history will be recorded, and only the loud voices will be heard - the voices of the most powerful, whether it's the regime or the extremists."

"If we stop, no one is going to hear the voice of the vulnerable."

The award marks the ninth anniversary of the killing of Anna Politkovskaya, the Russian investigative reporter who uncovered state corruption and rights abuses, especially in Chechnya. She was shot dead in the lobby of her Moscow apartment block at the age of 48 on 7 October 2006. Elena Kudimova, sister of Politkovskaya and a member of the RAW in WAR nominations committee, said: "This brave woman ... is doing the same dangerous work as Anna did.—Reuters

Indonesian region sets curfew for lovers

JAKARTA — A regency on Indonesia's Java Island has issued a bylaw prohibiting unmarried lovers from being at each other's houses after 9 p.m. and forcing violators to get married, a leading daily newspaper reported Thursday.

Kompas newspaper reported that the bylaw, recently issued by the government of Purwakarta Regency in West Java Province, also bans teens under the age of 17

from engaging in amorous relationships. Those violating the bylaw will be forced to get married immediately.

Under the bylaw, Ipin, a 50-year-old widower of the village of Cisaat, was forced to get married recently after being seen of frequently visiting the house of his neighbor Teti, a 46-year-old widow with two children.

"They often had a dating until late at night so the local neigh-

bourhood head, local security apparatus and other residents forced them to get married," Kompas quoted local village chief Mohamad Toha as saying, adding that the couple had repeatedly ignored warnings. According to Purwakarta Regent Dedi Mulyadi, 70 percent of 193 villages and sub-districts under the regency have so far issued implementing regulations to support the bylaw.—Kyodo News

Japanese climber with no fingers abandons bid to scale Everest

NEW DELHI — A Japanese climber who lost all his fingertips to frostbite and was trying to become the first person to conquer Mount Everest since its worst disaster has abandoned his bid to reach the summit because of poor weather.

Nobukazu Kuriki, 33, gave up his attempt about 700 metres (2,300 feet) below the summit of the 8,850-metre (29,035-foot) mountain.

"I tried my best, but I judged that I would not be able to come back alive if I went any further given the strong winds and deep snow," Kuriki wrote on his Twitter account after descending some way on Thursday.

Climbers usually scale Everest and other Himalayan peaks in May, just before the rainy season sweeps in from the south bringing snow at high altitude.

But there is also a short climbing season in the autumn, after the summer rains ease.

Members of the climbing community in the Nepali capital of Kathmandu said Kuriki's summit attempt so late in the year was



Nobukazu Kuriki. PHOTO: REUTERS

too dangerous, with the increased risk of avalanches and high winds capable of blowing people off the mountain.

It was Kuriki's first attempt to climb Everest since losing all of his fingertips on the mountain three years ago after spending two days in a snow hole at 27,000 feet (8,230 metres) in temperatures below minus 20 Celsius.

Despite his disability, he can still grip an ice axe with one hand and pin it with the other.

"I am grateful to everyone's

support from the bottom of my heart," he said.

Kuriki had become an unlikely face of Nepal's efforts to revive its climbing industry after 18 mountaineers were killed in the Everest region in avalanches triggered by a big earthquake in April.

The earthquake in April, and a second big one in May, killed nearly 9,000 people across the poor Himalayan nation and the government has been trying to encourage a tourist revival.—Reuters

Boat race winners awarded

THE final boat races of the Shwekyetkya Pagoda festival in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region, were held on 5 October. Awards for the winners were presented the next day.

The pagoda festival's boat races are famous around upper Myanmar. This year's first prize went to the Ywathit crew, and the Shwelay crew was the first runner-up. The third prize went to the Shwelaung crew, which was the defending champion this year.—*Tin Maung*



Two boats compete during the Shwekyetkya Pagoda festival in Amarapura Township, Mandalay. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG

With Rooney injured, Walcott eyes England striker role

ARSENAL's Theo Walcott is hoping to lead the line for England if Wayne Rooney does not recover from an ankle injury in time to face Estonia at Wembley on Friday.

The Manchester United and England captain is a major doubt for the Euro 2016 qualifier after missing two training sessions, with England manager Roy Hodgson reportedly set to name Gary Cahill skipper if Rooney misses the game.

Hodgson has used Walcott mostly on the right for England, but the 26-year-old has impressed in a central role for his club this season and has admitted that is where he wants to play for the national team as well.

"I know everyone would like to see me up front," Walcott told reporters before the Estonia game.

"Playing there for England,

that's what I want to do."

England qualified for next year's finals in France with a 6-0 victory in San Marino on 5 September and have won all eight of their qualifiers so far.

Walcott, who grabbed a brace in the San Marino game and has 12 goals in his last 14 Premier League starts, revealed that his improved form was down to advice from Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger and former team mate Thierry Henry, who is back at the club in a coaching role.

"He (Wenger) asked if I could be more aggressive on the pitch," Walcott said.

"I actually said (to Wenger), 'Do you want me to start kicking people?' That was my first reaction. He said, 'No, I'm not saying that.'

"Again he wanted me to be more aggressive in terms of running at players, closing them



Theo Walcott. PHOTO: REUTERS

down, tracking back, being there and in their faces," Walcott added.

The striker also said Henry has been a key factor in his improvement.

"I have been chatting to him on a personal level behind the scenes as well to learn things

from him," Walcott said.

"It is a great tool to have in the locker ... I've had quite a few words with him about some of the games I've played.

"He has just given me his analysis and if I've needed to ask him some questions about it, he's always there," he added.—*Reuters*

Pacquiao likely to retire after one more fight next year

MANILA — Filipino boxing great Manny Pacquiao, a winner of world titles in eight different weight categories, said he is likely to retire from the sport after one more fight next year.

Pacquiao, 36, last fought in May when he lost to American Floyd Mayweather Junior in a long awaited bout between the sport's best two fighters, dubbed the Fight of the Century, that failed to match the hype.

Pacquiao underwent surgery to repair a torn rotator cuff after the fight and had been expected to retire with little left to prove after achieving his long-stated goal of getting in the ring with Mayweather.

"I think I'm ready. I've been in boxing for more than 20 years," he said in an interview with ABS-CBN on Wednesday.

The Filipino said he wanted one more bout but it is unlikely

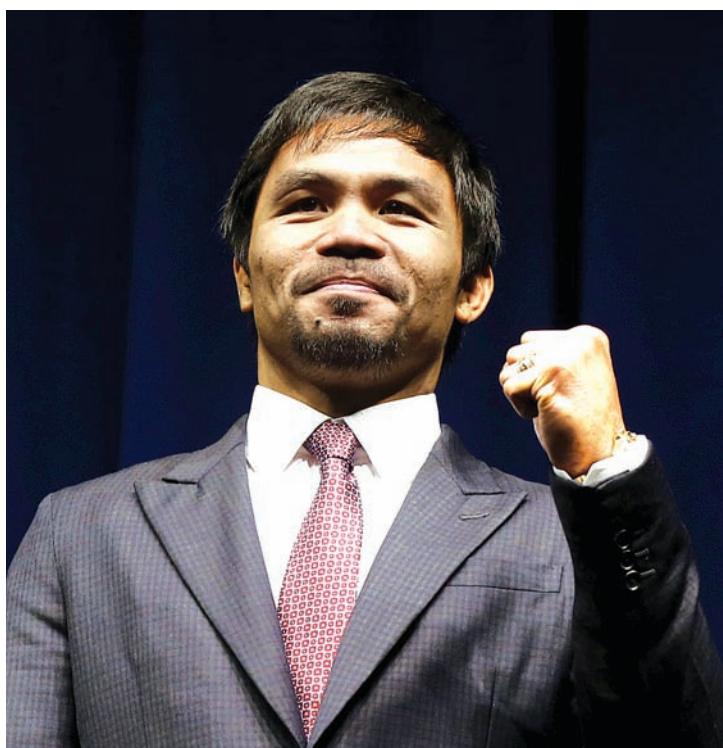
to be against Mayweather, who has announced plans to retire after beating Andre Berto in September to improve his record to 49 wins and no losses.

"We can not say if there is a rematch or not. It depends, it depends," Pacquiao said.

Pacquiao's long-term manager Bob Arum said last month he expected Pacquiao to fight again in February, with Briton Amir Khan and American Terence Crawford among the possible opponents.

The Filipino southpaw, who boasts a fight record of 57 wins, six losses and two draws, said he wanted to focus more on his political career.

Pacquiao is already a member of the country's lower house of representatives and announced plans on Monday to run for a seat in the senate next year.—*Reuters*



Filipino boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao. PHOTO: REUTERS

2018 FIFA World Cup qualification:
AFC Second Round
(8-10-2015)
Myanmar 0 - 2 Lebanon

Nadal, Radwanska into quarters at China Open

BEIJING — Former champions Rafael Nadal and Agnieszka Radwanska both moved into quarterfinals at the China Open on Wednesday.

Nadal, the 2005 champion here in Beijing, was made to work before beating Vasek Pospisil of Canada 7-6(3), 6-4 while 2011 champion Radwanska won her third round match easily after 14th seed Madison Keys of the United States retired citing an injury.

Both Nadal and Pospisil held serve in the opening set before the match was forced into a tiebreak. The Spaniard was much better on big points and won the tiebreak at 7-3.

In the second set, Nadal looked more convincing and broke once to win at 6-4.

The major upset in men's singles came from world number five and second seed Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic, who crashed out at the first hurdle falling 6-4, 6-4 to Uruguay's Pablo Cuevas.

Berdych, also a former winner in Beijing, was returning to the Chinese capital having won his first ATP World Tour title of the year in Shenzhen on Monday. Against World No 37 Cuevas, however, he was unable to back it up.—*Xinhua*