Application for utilization of farmland should benefit people

By Aung Khin

Locals from sub-urban areas in Yangon believe that land reform plans should benefit ordinary people in Myanmar, not privilege a handful of wealthy persons.

Myanmar enacted the Farmland Law in March 2012. Article 29 under Chapter 10 Utilization of Farmland under this law says: in the long-term national interest of the State, the respective implemented Ministry shall utilize the farmland for the project by the permission of the Cabinet of the Union Government after getting remarks from the Central Farmland Management Body.

A resident in Yangon region said: “Some paddy farms are being transferred into projects for petrol stations or factories. Businesspersons close to local authorities are applying for utilization of farmland in accordance with Article 30 (A) of the Farmland Law. However, they confiscate more land than required.”

A lawyer said: “Some wealthy farmers who own the farms beside the motorways apply for getting the Land Use Certificate to the Township Settlement and Land Records Department Office, passing it through the relevant Ward or Village-tract Farmland Management Body. To utilize paddy land for other purposes, the Central Farmland Management Body must give permission after the recommendation of the Region or State Farmland Management Body.”

He also said application for each case for land utilization costs from K2 million to K5 million as there are many processes to go through to get permission.

A farmer from Thongwa Township, Yangon Region, said: “Any law should be fair for every citizen. As the farmlands can be transformed into other projects, wealthy people pay high prices for the paddy lands and the land prices become unaffordable for many farmers who are actually working cultivation.”

A resident in Yangon said: “Some businessmen apply for construction of petrol stations, which are included under the title of long-term national interest of the State, but the distance from each station is not far. I suspect their plan. After changing from paddy land into project land with the help of close officials, no one can guarantee they will not sell the land at higher prices in the future. This is manipulating the land price.”

The law also says that the Central Farmland Management Body shall confiscate the farmland if the farmlands is being used within six months in the prescribed manner from the date of permission order in accordance with Article 30 of this law or not completed within the prescribed period.

A resident in Yangon said this paragraph cannot prevent manipulation of the property market, and that there needs to be a better law to control a land and property market boom.

CPAM Chief denies complaint against Health Ministry, FDA on food poisoning case in Toungoo’s Zeyathiri orphanage

By Ye Myint

U Ba Oak Khaing, chairman of Consumer Protection Association of Myanmar, denied at a press conference Saturday that the headline of The Street View Journal published on 26-5-2014 that read “Ministry of Health and FDA responsible for food poisoning from imported Deedo soft drinks” was contrary to what he said, saying that he did not say that in a telephone interview with the journal.

While meeting the media at the association’s office in Hline Township, Yangon, the CPAM chief told The New Light of Myanmar he just questioned who, the ministry or FDA or the company, would have a responsibility to take care of the case, saying that he was convinced that no test results had yet come out at that time.

On complaints against him by the Ministry of Health that called for measures to be taken against the association by the Ministry of Home Affairs, he said that he has not yet been questioned about the comment by the Home Affairs Ministry.

“The ministry should ask first the Journal and confirm whether I said this,” he added, saying that he had no contact with the Journal up to date, despite calling it several times.

According to a story published by The Standard Time, a local newspaper, on 20 June, Dr Tun Zaw, director of the Food and Drug Administration, was quoted as saying that “the ministry in early June informed the Ministry of Home Affairs that the association violated the rules and regulations of an association by making accusations against a government organization without having firm evidence.”

“Being a partner of government organizations, our association is working in line with rules and regulations and we have always focused on ensuring a greater public awareness of consumer protection only, not on other cases,” said U Ba Oak Khaing, one of the food-safety whistle-blowers in Myanmar.

Through state-owned newspapers, the Ministry of Health on 14 June issued a statement on the food poisoning case in the Zeyathiri female orphanage in Toungoo Township, Bago Region, on 19 May, insisting that the cause of the case in the orphanage was a contaminated rice noodle dish and not Deedo soft drinks.

A total 68 people suffered food poisoning after having rice noodles and Deedo soft drinks (pineapple and lychee) at the orphanage, the Ministry reported.

According to the statement based on the test results, the rice noodles contained a bacterium that caused the food poisoning and no bacteria were found in Deedo soft drinks, the water used in making the drinks or other things tested.

While talking about the case, the CPAM chairman pointed out that two other kinds of Deedo soft drinks, apart from lychee and pineapple, were also served at the orphanage on that day and samples of rice noodles were taken to a laboratory the following day.

Some people, including a 90-year-old nun who had rice noodles only, avoided food poisoning, he added.

The Consumer Protection Association of Myanmar was founded in 2012 and registered in 2014 and is a non-profit organization with a membership of about 300. It is working on activities heightening awareness of consumer rights among Myanmar people.
Parliamentary budgeting and transparency discussed

NAY PYI TAW, 21 June — Myanmar Pyidaungsu Hluttaw joined ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and the German Agency for International Cooperation or GIZ in hosting a workshop on ‘parliamentary budgeting and transparency’ at Hotel Royal Ace in Nay Pyi Taw on Saturday, officials said.

Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa delivered a welcoming speech, with AIPA Secretary-General Mr P.O. Ram and Ms Maureen Widjaja of GIZ addressing the workshop.

Some government bodies still hold conservative views of government machinery: Union Minister

YANGON, 21 June— Despite the president’s call for the realisation of ‘good governance and clean government’ to ensure better administrative machinery, some departments and some staff are found to remain conservative, Union Minister U Aung Kyi told a meeting at MRTV in Yangon on Saturday afternoon, officials said.

Tourism industry development discussed in Yangon

YANGON, 21 June— Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Hlay Aung met delegates from Swiss Contact on Saturday at Inya Lake Hotel in Yangon to hold a discussion on the tourism industry development.

The Union Minister focused on the promotion of the quality of service that plays a vital role for development of the industry. He also focused on the development of human resources under the strategic plan of Myanmar tourism industry.

During the meeting, the Union Minister said he welcomes the Swiss Contact’s assistance to conduct the HR development courses in Myanmar supported by Swiss Development Cooperation and he also believes the citizens in abroad will also participate in the courses.

Deputy Information Minister concludes official visit to China

NAY PYI TAW, 21 June— Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday after attending the workshop on information ministers from developing countries organized by State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of the People’s Republic of China from 11 to 20 June in PRC.

During the workshop, the participants discussed the media cooperation between China and the developing countries.

The Deputy Minister also discussed the reform process of Myanmar, the country’s media development, current activities on media cooperation with China, foreign direct investment in Myanmar and tourism industry.

During his visit, the Myanmar delegation made several media observations to China Central Television-CCTV, China Radio International-CRI and Beijing Television-BTV and met with the Chairman of Radio and Television in Yunnan Province to discuss media creation.

They also visited Hisense Electronic Company and International Horticultural Exposition 2014 on Thursday.

Awards presented to outstanding students in matriculation examination

NAY PYI TAW, 21 June— A ceremony to honour the outstanding students who have passed the matriculation examination for 2013-14 academic year was held at the hall of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee on Saturday.

Those students are offspring of staff from the President Office, the Union Government Office, the Nay Pyi Taw Council and the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee.

Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Sein presented prizes to six-distinction winner Maung Sa Sai Hein Htet Aung, four-distinction winner Ma Shwe Oo and three-distinction winner Ma Khin Yadana Nwe of the staff families.

Deputy ministers at the President Office and officials gave certificates and awards to the outstanding students.

A total of 10 of 15 students from the staff of President Office, six of 13 students from the Union Government office, seven of 20 students from Nay Pyi Taw Council, 18 of 44 students from Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee and three from Nay Pyi Taw Cetana Night School passed the examination.

Myanmar Golf Tour continues third round

MANDALAY, 21 June— Min Naing (Sirxon) went ahead on his opponents with 214 strokes in men’s professional division while Maung Maung Oo also stood first with 217 in men’s amateur division after the third round of Myanmar Golf Tour in Mandalay on Saturday.

The third leg of the tournament at Shwe Mann Taung Golf Club in Mandalay, Khin Mar Nwe won over her rivals with 162 while Ma Ngaing Khing stood second with 162 and Wint Phu Nadi Aung, third with 165 in women’s amateur level. The tournament is organized by the Myanmar Golf Federation and Myanmar PGA.
Solar panels, batteries provided to residents in Yinmabin Tsp

YINMABIN, 21 June—As the first priority, the solar panels and 12-V batteries were provided to the residents from Letpandaw and nearby villages in Yinmabin Township of Sagaing Region on Friday.

Chairman of Township Management Committee U Soe Min Htet and party handed over the equipment for electrification to the local people.

“These seven villages are provided with solar panels and batteries due to remote areas of their location. As such they may have easy access to electrification. Each village was issued two solar panels and 60 invertors and batteries. The ceremony, 14 solar panels and 420 12-V batteries and invertors were provided to residents for the first time,” said U Ko Ko Maung, deputy head of Township General Administration Department.

“Thanks to electrification, we are convenient in daily life. Students can learn education and study conveniently,” said Ohho village administrator U Maung Htwe.

Emergency traditional medicine kits issued to practitioners

YINMABIN, 21 June—A ceremony to distribute emergency traditional medicine kits was held at the hall of Township General Administration Department in Yinmabin Township of Sagaing Region on Friday.

Head of Township Traditional Medicine Department Daw Ngwe Aye explained use of traditional medicine kit and ways to provide health care to the patients. Officials presented 40 kits to 40 traditional medicine practitioners from wards and villages of the township.

“The kits comprise manuals for medical treatments and usage in addition to traditional medicines. The practitioners can use the kits for systematically providing health care to the local people,” said the head of the township traditional medicine department.

“I thank the authorities for distribution of traditional medicine kits. I will give health care to the villagers without any charge,” said Ma Yin Mar Swe of Kwaychaung Village.

New school buildings handed over in Patheingyi

BEMS No 75

PATHEINGYI, 21 June—The handing over of new school buildings was held at No 75 Basic Education Middle School in Nanda South Village in Patheingyi Township of Mandalay Region on Thursday.

At first, wellwishers and local authorities formally opened the school buildings.

The donors then handed over documents related to the education department.

Ngweyi Pale Co., donated 174 dozens of copy books, 350 pieces of ball-pens, 792 pieces of pencils, 350 campus boxes and 360 pieces of erasers to the headmistress.

MJA to pay respects to doyen journalists

YANGON, 21 June—The Myanmar Journalists Association will hold the first ceremony to pay respects to doyen journalists in Yangon in November 2014, said Chairman of MJA (Mandalay Region) U Ba Oo.

The veteran journalists must be editor, reporter and photournalist in their professions. They do not need to be members of the MJA. In their application forms, the doyen journalists must present the news agencies, newspapers and journals at which they had discharged duty. They have to send one copy of citizenship scrutiny card and two photos. The forms are to be sent to the organizing committee at MWJ (Central) at No 173/175 of room 603 on Pansodan Street in Kayu-tada Township, not later than 31 July.

For further information, call 09-73206988 of Aung Thu Myaung (atmyyn@gmail.com), 095000643 of Dr Zaw Than (zawthan53@gmail.com), 09-42010926 of U Thein Aye (favourite.khitmoe@gmail.com), 095403830 of U Kyaw Swa Min (dminkolatt@gmail.com) and 09420032123 of Daw Ei Ei Myat (auveremayat@gmail.com).—Kvemon-002
Bangkok, 21 June — Thailand is taking steps to combat human trafficking and regulate the employment of migrant workers including those from Cambodia, said military junta leader Gen Prayuth Chan-o-Cha on Friday.

In a nationwide televised speech, Gen Prayuth, head of the National Council for Peace and Order, the official name of the military junta who staged the 22 May coup, confirmed that the Thai authorities are currently taking measures not only to keep millions of migrant workers under control of the Thai law but to fight labour abuses by human traffickers and corrupt officials.

The army chief categorically dismissed criticisms that the ruling Thai military had planned to crack down on migrant workers only to see a huge number of Cambodians scrambling across the border to return home via Poipet border town in Banteay Meanchey province earlier this month.

According to Thai media report, there are an estimated 430,000 Cambodians currently employed in Thailand while some 200,000 others are believed to have been hired without official permission. Meanwhile, the Cambodian Minister of Labour Ith Samheng earlier said more than 200,000 Cambodian labourers, including 80,000 legal migrant workers, have been working in Thailand.

"A flurry of panic-stricken departures of a large number of migrant workers from Thailand was reported to have been designed by certain influential persons and corrupt officials. "They had deliberately fanned up rumours of a crackdown by the National Council for Peace and Order to scare away the migrant workers whom they may have planned to smuggle back into the country in exchange for payoffs," said Gen Prayuth.

The so-called Policy Committee on Foreign Workers, chaired by supreme commander Gen Thanask Kamapraporna, is yet to set policy toward legal employment of the migrant workers nationwide, including those who may have been earlier hired in illegal fashion, according to the army chief.

Instead of cracking down on migrant workers, the authorities will quickly quell human traffickers who might probably have conspired with corrupt officials preying on them, he said.

"We'll crack down on human traffickers who might extort money from migrant workers and plug up legal loopholes through which they might otherwise prey on the labours. "We are very promptly taking steps to regulate the employment of migrant workers to make it all legal and fair to the employees themselves," Gen Prayuth said.

The authorities will have all foreign workers documented and given proper lodging, health care and humanitarian aid while basic human rights will be observed, he said.

A centre for identifying and cross-border shutting of migrant workers will be set up in cooperation with the governments of their home countries in order to preclude the cross-border human trafficking, he added.

South Korea closes nets round family of most wanted man after ferry disaster

Seoul, 21 June — The wife of South Korea’s most wanted man, a businessman linked to a ferry disaster in which hundreds of school children drowned, was arrested on Saturday, prosecutors said, as the net tightened around the fugitive’s family. Police and prosecutors arrested Kwon Hoon-jung, 72, on Friday in suspicion of helping Yoo escape arrest.

Yoo was wanted on charges of embezzlement, negligence and tax evasion stemming from a web of business holdings centred on his company that ran the shipping company that sank off the southwest coast on 16 April 2014. He had hired some of the country’s biggest manhunt for more than a month. The husband of Yoo’s younger sister, a former ambassador to the Czech Republic, was arrested on Friday in suspicion of helping Yoo escape arrest.

Prosecutors and police are seeking Yoo Byung-un, 73, who has eluded one of the country’s biggest manhunts for more than a month. The husband of Yoo’s younger sister, a former ambassador to the Czech Republic, was arrested on Friday in suspicion of helping Yoo escape arrest. Yoo was wanted on charges of embezzlement, negligence and tax evasion stemming from a web of business holdings centred on the mainland to the southwestern island of Jeju.

Authorities suspect Kwon, who owns one of Yoo’s subsidiary companies that sells health supplements, poured funds into companies owned by her husband and son.

Reporters bombarded her with questions — "Are you in contact with your husband?" "Do you plead guilty to all charges?" "Why have you been hiding?" "Do you know where your husband is?"

She did not reply. The sinking of the Sewol was a disaster that prompted a national outcry and pouring of grief and anger, especially after some crew were caught on video abandoning ship while the children, following instructions, stayed in their cabins. Yoo’s elder brother, Yoo Byung-il, has been arrested on charges of embezzlement and violations of real estate laws. His daughter, Yoo Som-na, has been held in France after Interpol called for her arrest for fraud and embezzlement. — Reuters

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang addresses the China-Greece Maritime Cooperation Forum in Athens, capital of Greece, on 20 June, 2014.— Xinhua

China-Greece Marine Cooperation Forum, where he called for stronger marine cooperation between the two nations, and expounded China’s viewpoints on maritime affairs.

Pledging to jointly build a “sea of peace,” Li said China is committed to settling maritime disputes through dialogues and negotiations on the basis of respecting historical facts and international law, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said here on Friday. Li made the remarks as he addressed the jointy safeguard free and safe navigation, fight against piracy and maritime terrorism, respond to marine disasters and construct a marine order of peace and tranquillity, Li said.

He added that the country is resolute in safeguarding its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, which is conducive to safeguarding regional peace and order as well.

Proposing to build a “sea of cooperation,” Li said China is willing to work with maritime states to actively forge a marine cooperative partnership to build sea lanes, develop marine economy and use marine resources, among other endeavors. While proposing to build a “sea of harmony,” Li touched upon his vision in protecting the marine environment.

As to China-Greece cooperation, the Chinese premier said his country is glad to see Greece make achievements in the last years. "We will continue to adopt cooperative measures to support the southern European country in reviving its economy," Li said.

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Civilian killed in Afghan capital suicide bombing

Kabul, 21 June — At least one civilian was killed on Saturday morning as a suicide car bomb went off in the western part of the Afghan capital of Kabul, sources said.

The target of the attack was Mohammad Masoom Stanikzai, a member and secretary of the Afghan High Peace Council.

However, Stanikzai escaped the attack but several cars of the convoy were damaged in the blast, an official source said.

The explosion occurred at around 07:00 am in Charah-e Qamar vicinity in northern Kabul. The blast caused a pileup of gray smoke to rise above the scene as seen by a Xinhua reporter. Several ambulances and some police vehicles arrived in the area. No group claimed responsibility.

The government troops cordoned off the area shortly after the blast. — Xinhua

Photos of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang addresses the China-Greece Maritime Cooperation Forum in Athens, capital of Greece, on 20 June, 2014.— Xinhua

A girl looks at yellow ribbons dedicated to the missing and dead passengers of the sunken passenger ship Sewol, in front of Danwon high school in Ansan on 27 April, 2014. — Reuters
Ukraine’s Poroshenko declares week-long ceasefire, warns rebels

Kiev, 21 June — Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Friday ordered a seven-day ceasefire in the fight against pro-Russian separatists, but also warned them they could face death if they did not use the time to put down their guns.

In Moscow, the Kremlin, whose support Poroshenko needs for his plan to end the insurgency in the rebellious east, denounced the ceasefire as an ultimatum to separatists rather than a peace offering.

Poroshenko, installed only three weeks ago as president after seven months of turmoil in the ex-Soviet republic, ordered government forces to cease firing to allow his peace plan for the region to take root.

But after fierce fighting on Thursday about 100 km (60 miles) from the Russian border that apparently caused heavy losses for separatists and some deaths on the Ukrainian side, Poroshenko backed his declaration with a warning to the rebels. Interfax news agency quoted him as telling military officers in the east that the temporary ceasefire would give the rebels just one week to lay down their arms, after which “they will have to be eliminated.”

The ceasefire “does not mean that we will not fight back in the event of aggression towards our military. We will do everything we can to defend the territory of our state,” his website quoted him separately as saying.

The ceasefire will run from 10 pm on Friday until 10 am on 27 June, it said.

After announcement of the ceasefire, Poroshenko launched a 15-point peace plan to end the insurgency in the Russian-speaking east which erupted in April after street protests in the capital Kiev toppled the Moscow-backed Viktor Yanukovich.

Russia subsequently annexed Ukraine’s Crimea peninsula. Kiev’s new authorities quickly saw the hand of Moscow when separatist groups took control of strategic buildings and towns in the east, declaring “people’s republics” and declaring they wanted to join Russia.

In Donetsk, the main industrial hub in the region, the rebels remained unmoved by Poroshenko’s ceasefire gesture or the unveiling of a peace plan on Friday.

“What kind of reaction do you expect? When they (the Kiev side) pull out their army, then you will have our reaction,” a spokesperson for the self-styled Donetsk People’s Republic said.

The first soldiers for a people’s republic army would take oaths of allegiance on Donetsk’s Lenin Square on Saturday, she announced defiantly.

A spokesman for government forces said about 300 separatists was killed in fighting on Thursday in an eastern area about 100 km from the border and fighting continued there on Friday.

Ukrainian forces lost seven servicemen, he said. The rebel casualties could not be verified independently. Earlier on Friday, Kiev said government forces had regained control of the border with Russia and could now stop supplies being sent to arm pro-Russian separatists — something Poroshenko needed to hear before calling a ceasefire.

Poroshenko is now gearing up for a round of high diplomacy to sell his peace plan to allies and adversaries alike in a bid to end the insurgency that threatens the unity of the country.—Reuters

Ukraine’s crisis forces US to bolster Europe forces

WASHINGTON, 21 June — Only last year, the US European Command was facing some of the deepest cuts of any region in the US military. Now, after Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the Pentagon finds itself focusing on the continent in a way not seen in decades.

Earlier this month, US President Barack Obama said he would ask Congress for an additional $1 billion to increase Washington’s military commitment to the continent.

Last week, the US Air Force said it had deployed two B-2 stealth bombers to England, joining two B-2s sent earlier this month. The two aircraft are America’s premier nuclear bombers.

Washington has sent additional warships to the Black Sea and the Baltic, F-15, F-16 jets and early warning AWACS aircraft to join ramped up NATO patrols near Russian airspace and troops to train in Germany and Eastern Europe.

With fighting raging in eastern Ukraine between pro-Russian forces and troops loyal to Kiev, Washington says Russia has put large numbers of troops on the border and may be preparing to deliver tanks and artillery to the separatists.

At a time of budget cuts and when Obama would rather focus its strategic gaze on Asia and the Middle East, resources are limited and few expect America to rebuild the permanent garrison-type presence set up in Europe during the Cold War.

While more military supplies will be placed in the European region, US units will be largely rotated through from existing European bases and elsewhere.

Washington also wants European states to step up more. “Collective action doesn’t mean the United States puts skin in the game while others stand on the sidelines cheering,” US National Security adviser Susan Rice told the annual conference of the Centre for a New American Security.

Although the United States has pledged to strengthen the military capabilities of non-NATO states near Russia such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, officials say no decisions have been made on details and the real focus is on boosting NATO’s defences. —Reuters

Globe and Mail, Reuters, Xinhua
Three US troops killed by Afghanistan explosion

WASHINGTON, 21 June — Three US troops and a working dog were killed by a bomb blast on Friday in southern Afghanistan, a US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. No information was immediately available about the incident. The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, in Afghanistan said in a statement three service members died following an improvised explosive device attack. ISAF did not provide the nationality of the victims. The Taliban, ousted by US-backed forces in the aftermath of al-Qaeda’s 11 September, 2001 attacks on the United States, is engaged in a summer offensive ahead of the planned withdrawal of most foreign troops by the end of this year.

The United States plans to reduce its force in Afghanistan to less than 10,000 after 2014 and withdraw almost all of them by the end of 2016.

Hollande, Obama discuss Ukraine, Iraq crises over phone

PARIS, 21 June — French President Francois Hollande held telephone talks Friday with his US counterpart Barack Obama on Ukrainian crisis and on the situation in Iraq. According to a statement issued by the French presidency, the two leaders “agreed on the importance to quickly stabilize the security situation and reach accord to stop fighting in the east of (Ukraine).”

Hollande and Obama called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to urge Pro-Moscow separatists “to cease their military action, prevent the transfer of materials in Ukraine and strengthen the control of Russian-Ukrainian border,” to pave the way for a de-escalation and dialogue. They also warned Russia over new sanctions if it won’t contribute positively to end the standoff in Kiev, the communiqué said.

Two Iranians get jail terms on espionage charges

TEHERAN, 21 June — A court in Iran’s Kerman Province sentenced two Iranian suspects to prison terms on spying charges for Britain and Israel, Iran Daily paper reported on Saturday.

One of the suspects, who was arrested last year over spying for Britain’s MI6, was given a 10-year prison sentence. Kerman prosecutor Yadollah Movahed was quoted as saying. The convicted person “made 11 contacts with MI6 officers” in other countries to provide information to them, Movahed said.

Another person was sentenced to five years in prison for contacting intelligence officers at Israeli embassies in Turkey and Thailand, he added. Iran has accused some western intelligence services, including Mossad of Israel, of carrying out intelligence work inside the Islamic republic and even of being involved in the killing of Iranian nuclear scientists—Xinhua.

Central America presses Biden on migrant rights as US seeks aid

GUATEMALA CITY, 21 June — Central American leaders on Friday pressed visiting US Vice-President Joe Biden to improve migrant rights, even as the United States committed tens of millions of dollars in extra aid to the region in a bid to stem a surge of illegal immigration.

The White House said the United States would launch a $40 million programme to improve security in Guatemala to reduce pressures fueling migration to the United States and a $25 million programme to provide services to youth in El Salvador who are vulnerable to organized-crime pressure.

Responding to what President Barack Obama has called a humanitarian crisis, the US Congress on Tuesday advanced legislation boosting funds by as much as $2.28 billion to handle a surge of foreign children entering the country illegally. But underlying tensions continue to simmer.

Senator Robert Menendez and Democratic Representative Luis Gutierrez said US lawmakers in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on Wednesday held a “very testy meeting” with diplomats from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

“I proposed to the Vice President the possibility of considering temporary work programmes, which would allow (Guatemalans) to go for a time and return,” Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina said on Friday after meeting Biden, along with other Central American leaders, in Guatemala City.

US data show that between October and May more than 47,000 unaccompanied minors, mostly Central Americans, crossed into the United States, nearly double the number in the prior year.

“As long as (US) immigration reform is not approved, the exodus of children to the United States will continue,” Jorge Ramirez Hernandez, the senior representative of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez, said at the talks.

A partisan divide in the United States has stymied Obama’s efforts to reform immigration laws.

A further 10,000 immigrant children should be returned to their parents, Biden also said “immigration reform has died.”

El Salvador’s President Salvador Sanchez Ceren said this week he would press Biden for a reform to help reunite existing family members in the United States with more recent arrivals. After Friday’s talks, Sanchez said he intended to keep working for the rights of the affected children.

Two Canadians charged over temporary foreign worker programme

OTTAWA, 21 June — Canadian hotels, restaurants and retail stores will not be able to hire temporary foreign workers for low-wage and low-skill jobs in areas with high unemployment, the Canadian government said on Friday.

As part of an overhaul of the Temporary Foreign Worker Programme (TFWP), Canadian employers with 10 or more employees will be limited to having 30 percent of their workforce consisting of low-wage temporary foreign workers — a cap that will be reduced to 10 percent two years from now, could be further lowered in the future. Employers will also have to re-apply every year for approval to hire these workers as opposed to every two years.

“Canadians must be first in line for available jobs.” Canadian Employment Minister Jason Kenney told a news conference. He said the reforms restore the TFWP to its original purpose “as a last and limited resource for employers where there are no qualified Canadians to fill available jobs.”

He said employers wanting to hire temporary foreign workers would also have to inform the government how many Canadians applied and were interviewed for a position, and why they were not hired.

Companies that use the programme will now have to pay 1,000 Canadian dollars — or a 725-dollar increase — for every temporary foreign worker position requested.

One in four employers using temporary foreign workers will also face annual inspections, resulting from tips, employers being deemed high-risk and random audits, according to Employment and Social Development Canada that oversees the TFWP.

Serious allegations of abuse of the programme within the food-services sector, including three McDonald’s franchises, led to Ottawa imposing a moratorium on that industry’s access to the TFWP in April. On Friday, that suspension was lifted.

Still, employers found to have broken the rules will face fines of up to 100,000 Canadian dollars, starting this fall, and have their names and the amount of the fine publicly disclosed on an online blacklist. As part of the reforms unveiled on Friday, international mobility programmes for highly skilled and low-wage foreign workers will no longer fall under the TFWP and be subject to the new rules.

According to the Canadian government, 83,740 temporary foreign workers entered Canada last year —a number that represented 0.44 percent of the total Canadian labour force.

Xinhua
BERUIT, 21 June — A car bomb in Syria’s western Hama Province killed 34 and wounded more than 50, Syria’s state news agency SANA said on Friday, blaming the attack on rebels fighting forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad.

It was not immediately clear if the attack was in any way related to the militant Islamist State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is very active in Syria and has seized vast tracts of territory across the border in Iraq.

Nusra Front, which is linked to al-Qaeda and has been fighting rival group ISIL, is thought to have been behind several bomb attacks in Hama in recent months.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an anti-Assad monitoring group, said 38 were killed and more than 40 wounded in the blast which took place in Hurra, an Alawite village close to the city of Hama. Assad is from Syria’s Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shia Islam.

It said a suicide bomber in a truck had detonated himself, killing mainly civilians, including women and children. It said there were overnight clashes between government forces and Islamist fighters in the province, as well as bombings by the Syrian army.

SANA described the car bomb as a “terrorist” attack, wording it uses to refer to rebel fighters.

The agency said the Syrian army had also carried out a campaign to eliminate “terrorists” in a number of villages in the Homs Province to the south of Hama.

Syria’s conflict began in March 2011 as peaceful protests but has turned into a civil war, killing at least 160,000 people.

Rebels have been joined by hardline Islamists, some of them linked to al-Qaeda, who have become increasingly powerful among opposition forces.

In the northern city of Aleppo, Syrian air forces dropped two barrel bombs on the outskirts of the Ashrafieh neighbourhood, the Observatory said, adding that there were no details on casualties.

Reuters

EGYPT COURT Confirms death sentence on Brotherhood leader

CAIRO, 21 June — An Egyptian court confirmed on Saturday death sentences against the leader of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood and 196 of his supporters, Al Arabiya TV said quoting a lawyer involved in the case.

The court’s decision came two months after it referred the case against the Brotherhood’s general guide Mohamed Badie and hundreds of others to the state’s highest religious authority, the Mufti, the first step towards imposing a death sentence.

Badie faces a second death sentence in a separate case.—Reuters

IRAQI FORCES Ready push after Obama offers advisers

BAHRAID, 21 June — Iraqi forces were marching north of Baghdad on Friday, aiming to drive back Sunni Islamists whose drive toward the capital prompted the United States to send military advisers to stiffen government resistance.

Iraq’s senior Shia religious cleric issued a call for unity, saying Shi’ites and Sunnis should rally behind the authorities to prevent the Sunni militant Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant from destroying the country.

Already, ISIL has started to enact its puritanical vision of Islam in Mosul, which it captured 10 days ago as it swept across northern Iraq. Mosul residents said ISIL members had destroyed symbols of Iraq’s rich heritage, razing statues of cultural icons and the tomb of a Mediaeval philosopher.

President Barack Obama offered on Thursday up to 300 American special forces advisers to help the Iraqi government recapture territory across northern and western Iraq that ISIL and other Sunni armed groups have seized. But he held off granting a request for air strikes to protect the government and renewed a call for Iraq’s long-serving Shia prime minister Nuri al-Maliki to do more to overcome sectarian divisions that have fuelled resentment among the Sunni minority.

In office since 2006, Maliki has been spoken of as a more inclusive government in Baghdad, although he has stopped short of saying Maliki should be replaced. There has been speculation Maliki may also have lost the confidence of allies in Iran.

Teheran and Washington have been spoken of cooperating with each other after decades of mutual hostility to prevent anti-Western, anti-Sunni zealots controlling swathes of Iraq.

In the area around Sa’arra, on the main highway 90 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, which has become a frontline of the battle with the ISIL, the provincial governor, a rare Sunni supporter of Maliki, told cheering troops they would now force ISIL and its allies back.—Reuters

NIGERIA Wraps up kidnap investigation with 200 girls still missing

ABUJA, 21 June — Nigeria wrapped up its inquiry into the abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls by militants on Friday with little progress to show, reporting almost none had been freed after the initial kidnapping some girls escaped from.

Submitting the final report, Brigadier General Ibrahim Sabo said 219 girls remained at large, a total virtually unchanged since Boko Haram militants stormed their secondary school in northeast Borno state on 14 April to kidnap them. A total of 57 girls, almost all of whom escaped shortly after the abduction, have been reunited with their families, he added. The kidnapping of the teenage girls taking exams in Chibok village sparked global outrage for its sheer barbarity. The government’s failure to rescue the girls, or protect them before their abduction, has became a political liability for President Goodluck Jonathan ahead of elections next year. “We are... pained that the schoolgirls remain in captivity,” Sabo said in a statement. “The hostage situation that this represents is obviously delicate.”

The Chibok kidnapping and other increasingly bloody attacks by Boko Haram have underscored Abuja’s inability to stamp out the militant group, which aims to carve out a radical Islamist state in the mostly Muslim north.

A member of the #BringBackOurGirls Abuja campaign group addresses a sit-in protest at the Unity Fountain in Abuja on 18 June, 2014.—Reuters

People gather around a crater in Homs city on 20 June, 2014, in this picture released by Syria’s national news agency SANA.—Reuters

Members of the Iraqi security forces prepare to fire mortar bombs during clashes with Sunni militant group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Muqaddi-yah in Diyala Province on 19 June, 2014.—Reuters

A member of the #BringBackOurGirls Abuja campaign group addresses a sit-in protest at the Unity Fountain in Abuja on 18 June, 2014.—Reuters

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A member of the #BringBackOurGirls Abuja campaign group addresses a sit-in protest at the Unity Fountain in Abuja on 18 June, 2014.—Reuters
Displaced people are mounting up amidst unsolved political problems

By Aung Khin

Is life cheap for them? Many people had to abandon their homes, livelihoods and lands, facing starvation for many days. Parents cannot send their children to government schools, instead they are desperately seeking shelter from the conflict, with considerable uncertainties for the future of their offspring.

UNHCR reported on 20 June, World Refugee Day, that 51.2 million people were forcibly displaced at the end of 2013, fully 6 million more than the 45.2 million reported in 2012. In its annual Global Trends report, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres said: “Peace is today dangerously in deficit. Humanitarians can help as a palliative, but political solutions are vitally needed. Without this, the alarming levels of conflict and the mass suffering that is reflected in these figures will continue.”

This is the highest number for the first time in the post-World War II era, with an estimated 10.7 million individuals of newly displaced people due to conflicts or persecution in 2013.

In the report, the Asia and Pacific, by region, had the largest refugee population overall at 3.5 million people. Sub-Saharan Africa had 2.9 million people, while the Middle East and North Africa had 2.6 million. A record 25,300 asylum applications were from children who were separated from or unaccompanied by parents.

Experts analyse that there are three reasons for increasing number of displaced people or refugees: first is protracted conflicts, some of which are dragging on for decades, second is what the UN calls “the shrinking of humanitari-an space” resulting from conflicts waged by militias, insurgent groups and bands of religious fanatics and bandits, and third is asylum-seekers, including economic migrants and refugees.

However, displaced people may pose burdens for the respective countries in terms of health problems, lack of education and economic decline. The dutiful governments and the groups concerned should solve this problem without the slightest hesitation. Power struggles should be set aside on humanitarian grounds.

Life is not cheap, and war is not sweet.

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.

Agricultural loans disbursed to over 1,100 farmers in Natogyi Tsp

NATOGYI, 21 June—Township Agricultural Development Bank started disbursement of agricultural loans to the farmers for 2014 on 5 June in Natogyi of Mandalay Region.

Up to 19 June, the bank has delivered K171.5 million to 1,104 farmers from nine village-tracks. The bank plans to disburse the loans to the local farmers from remaining village-tracts in July.

Than Aung Zaw (Natogyi)

Truck dives as bridge breaks in South Dagon Tsp

YANGON, 21 June—A bridge was broken in Dagon Myothit (South) Township of Yangon on Thursday night due to a truck overloaded with cement bags passing over it, with a witness saying that the concrete bridge could not bear the combined weight of the truck and the bags. The twelve-wheel truck en route for Dagon Park ended up in the ditch, and the cement bags were manually removed from the truck.

Myint Thain (Oxygen)

GWOA, 21 June—The activities of preventing against dengue haemorrhagic fever were carried out in the township on Friday.

DHF preventive measures taken in Thandwe

THANDWÊ, 21 June—Officials of the Township Health Department and the Township Development Affairs Committee urged the local people to do preventive measures against DHF by systematically using the water in water tanks and containers, spraying the buildings and using fly-proof latrines, dredging drains for proper flow of water and receiving medical treatment for DHF from the hospital in time.—District IPRD

Youths join tests for Diploma in Teacher Education Competency

THANDWÊ, 21 June—The entrance test for Diploma in Teacher Education Competency-DTEC No 10/14 for 2014-15 academic year was held at No 1 Basic Education High School in Thandwe of Rathaine Township on Friday.

A total of 87 graduates in BSc degree and 316 BA degrees, totalling 403 from Thandwe District set for the tests, according to the Thandwe District Education Office.

GOLD PRICE, FE RATE (21-6-2014)

Yangon Gold Price

Buying K671,500 per tical: Selling K672,500

Mandalay Gold Price

Buying K671,500 per tical: Selling K672,500

FE RATE

USD Buying K974 - Selling K980

SGD Buying K777 - Selling K785

Euro Buying K1325 - Selling K1340

Mandalay Gold Price

Buying K671,500 per tical: Selling K672,500
Buddhist monks recite Parittas along Lashio-Hsipaw road

Hsipaw, 21 June—Members of the Sangha recited Parittas along the route of Lashio-Hsipaw road on Friday under the arrangement of Lashio All Bus-Line Control Committee and with the assistance of bus line owners.

A total of 11 members of the Sangha volunteered by the chairman of the bus line control committee and party recited Parittas by car along the road.

At the top of Dokhtawady Bridge in Hsipaw, officials welcomed the Buddhist monks and offered alms. At 4 pm, the members of the Sangha went back to Lashio.

Hsipaw Ko Latt

Passenger buses under checking for traffic safety in Bhamo

Bhamo, 21 June—The officials checked the buses for traffic safety at the exit of the bus terminal in Phankhagon ward of Bhamo in Kachin State on Thursday.

The combined team comprises Head of District Transport Department U San Lwin Oo and Head of District Directorate of Road Administration U Maung Maung Han and officials.

They inspected the passenger buses in line with the traffic rules and maintenance of the vehicles.

Bhamo District IPRD

Local youths waiting for result of daily wage PATs

Yangon, 21 June—Local youths who have already passed the daily wage assistant primary teachers test held on 15 May at Basic Education High School No 1 in Dagon Myothit (North) Township of Yangon are waiting for the announcement of the result up to now.

South Okkalapa, Dagon Myothit (East), Hline and Dagon Myothit (South) townships have appointed the new generation teachers and they are now discharging duties at respective schools.

About 80 candidates who have finished the viva test are still waiting for the result. They are eager to take out the duties of teachers at primary schools.

If not, they want to choose options for their life depending on the result.

Nay Win Tun

Passenger buses under checking for traffic safety in Bhamo

Holding Chinlone contests discussed in Mandalay

Mandalay, 21 June—A coordination meeting on holding the Mandalay Region Chief Minister’s Trophy Monsoon Chinlone Contest and Skills Demonstration Contest for 2014 was held at the Bahtoo Gymnasium in Mandalay on Thursday afternoon.

President of Myanmar Chinlone Federation President of Asian Chinlone Federation U Soe Naing made a speech. The participants discussed achievements for the Myanmar team in the international Chinlone contests, propagation of Chinlone sport to the world, preparations for formation of the national team that will bring honour to the State in the XXVIII SEA Games.

The contests in Mandalay will be organized by Ministry of Sports, Mandalay Region government and MCF.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Unlicensed motorcycles legalized in Natogyi

Natogyi, 21 June—Staff Officer U Lay Nai ng and staff of Myingyan Township Directorate of Road Administration issue licences to motorcycle owners through one-stop service at the gymnasium of Natogyi, Mandalay Region.

The motorbike owners are to carry put necessary tasks at the respective sections displayed at the gymnasium for receiving the licences.

So far, over 500 motorcycles have been legalized in Natogyi.

Than Aung Zaw (Natogyi)
Foreign investors extending bets on pure India plays

NEW YORK, 21 June — Women who become pregnant again within 18 months after having a baby are more likely to deliver early, according to a new study. Past reports have also linked having a short interpregnancy interval with a greater risk of preterm birth.

The new study “brings up the importance of adequate birth spacing as a potential modifiable way that women, especially high-risk women, can decrease their chance of having a preterm baby,” Emily DeFranco told Reuters Health. She worked on the study at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Ohio. “Women who have a height risk for preterm birth are those who have had a previous premature birth so (for those women it is) especially important to try to optimize their pregnancy timing,” DeFranco said.

The findings suggest a short interpregnancy interval is also linked to the risk of a baby being born a week or two early, though not technically premature. These early term births at 37 and 38 weeks of gestation (full term is 39 to 40 weeks) can have a negative impact on a newborn’s health, say the authors.

For their study, DeFranco and her colleagues analyzed information from Ohio birth records from 2006 to 2011. They were able to find the interpregnancy interval for about 450,000 babies born to mothers who had given birth previously. About 11% of the births occurred after an interpregnancy interval of 12 to 18 months and about 2% followed an interpregnancy interval of less than 12 months. The researchers found that 53% of women with interpregnancy intervals of less than 12 months gave birth before the 39th week of pregnancy, compared with about 38% of women who had normal interpregnancy intervals of at least 18 months.—Reuters

“If there is a positive structural change underway in the Indian economy, Indian financials and cyclical stocks look attractive,” said Gaurav Patankar, a fund manager in New York at The Boston Company Asset Management, which oversees $50 billion in assets.

Patankar, whose firm is overweight Indian stocks, was optimistic that the strong mandate given by voters to Modi would lead to better governance, and more focus on how state-owned enterprises are run, shrinking the valuation gap with private sector rivals. Reflecting the gap in valuations, the Bombay Stock Exchange public sector unit index, BSEPSU for state-run firms is trading at a price to earnings ratio of 11.9 times compared to 15.5 times for the benchmark BSE Sensex.

Investors’ rebalancing has moved funds away from exporters, large cap firms and companies that compete with state-owned companies.

Since Modi’s landslide victory on 16 May, the BSE midcap index .BSEMC has surged 15.9 percent, and the broader BSE sensex index .BSEPSU has added 11 percent, outperforming a Sensex that has gained 4.5 percent.

Fund managers think the economy has bottomed out after two disappointing years of below 3 percent growth — the worst slowdown in more than a quarter of a century.

And while the Sensex hit record highs on 11 June, its valuations at around 15.5 times forward earnings are still at par with its 10-year average.

India has received net foreign portfolio flows of $10 billion so far this year, more than other emerging markets in Asia, such as South Korea, which received $1.8 billion and Taiwan, which received $8.56 billion, according to Thomson Reuters data.

Foreign investors such as Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, and US-based GMO increased exposure to domestic-oriented stocks last month, even when the stocks they bought were trading near their record high levels.

Despite the heavy influx of overseas flows, Credit Suisse said last month that India is “still not a crowded play.”

The investment bank estimated that net foreign buying of Indian shares on a rolling 12-month basis as a percentage of market cap was running at 0.9 percent compared to its historical average of 1.2 percent.

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Great white shark baffles scientists tracking it off US coast

MIAMI, 21 June — A great white shark being tracked by marine researchers and weighing more than a ton is keeping scientists guessing after it has made its way from Massachusetts’ Cape Cod to the northeastern Gulf of Mexico this week.

Tagged in 2013 with a satellite tracking device, the great white known as Katharine is charting a groundbreaking map of the shark highway as scientists seek to discover its seasonal feeding grounds. Katherine, was most recently spotted on Wednesday morning about 52 miles (84 kilometers) south of Cape San Blas in the Florida Panhandle.

But where it is headed next is unclear, according to the team of scientists tracking her. “We just don’t know. She could either turn west towards Texas or she could turn back and go out into deeper water,” said Bob Hueter, part of the scientific team monitoring the movements of Katharine as well as Betsy, another great white who was last spotted in the Gulf about 140 miles (225 kilometers) west of Sanibel island, south Florida on 5 June.

The sharks already have defied expectations by staying in the warming summer waters of the Gulf, rather than heading back to the cooler seas off Cape Cod, as many had predicted, said Hueter, director of the Center for Shark Research at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, on Florida’s southwest coast. Scientists have tracked the great white before in the Pacific and off Australia and South Africa, but never off the US Atlantic coast, Hueter said.

Scientists knew that great whites came to Florida and frequented the Gulf of Mexico, but exactly how they got there was a mystery until Katharine, a young 14.5-foot (4.4-meter) and 2,300-pound (1,040 kilograms) shark, showed the way. She can be tracked when she comes to the surface so far as the device in her dorsal fin pings data points to the researchers, though those moments are unpredictable as sharks spend most of the time underwater. —Reuters

Apple’s iWatch may sport multiple designs

SAN FRANCISCO, 21 June — Apple Inc plans to launch smartwatches with multiple screen sizes and designs this fall, the Wall Street Journal on Friday cited a person familiar with the matter told Reuters on Thursday.

Taiwan’s Quanta will begin mass production of Apple’s first smartwatch from July, in time for an October launch, several sources familiar with the matter told Reuters on Thursday.

The Wall Street Journal on Friday also cited sources saying Quanta would manufacture the device.

One of the sources told Reuters on Thursday that Apple expects to ship 50 million units of the so-called iWatch within the first year of the product’s release, although these types of initial estimates can be subject to change.

The smartwatch will come with a slightly rectangular display that likely measures 2.5 inches diagonally, the source added. The watch-face will protrude slightly from the band, creating an arched rear, and feature a touch interface and wireless charging capabilities, according to the source.

Another source told Reuters that LG Display Co Ltd is the exclusive supplier of the screen for the gadget’s initial batch of production.

The iWatch will also contain a sensor that monitors a user’s pulse. Singapore-based imaging and sensor maker Heptagon is on the supplier list for that feature, two sources said on Thursday.

Apple’s smartwatch will follow similar devices by Samsung, Sony Corp, Motorola and LG Electronics Inc—gadgets that tech watchers say have not been appealing or user-friendly enough for mass adoption. —Reuters

SpaceX postpone rocket launch due to technical glitch

CAPE CANAVERAL, 21 June — Space Exploration Technologies postponed on Friday’s planned launch of a Falcon 9 rocket, which is slated to put six small satellites into orbit for Orbcomm Inc, which provides machine-to-machine communication services.

The rocket was on track for a 6:08 p.m. EDT (2208 GMT) liftoff from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida when engineers detected a possible problem with its upper-stage engine. Falcon 9 product director John Insprucker said during a launch broadcast.

Flight directors reset countdown clocks to the end of a 53-minute launch opportunity, but ran out of time to assess the problem. The next launch window opens at 5:46 p.m. EDT (2146 GMT) on Saturday.

“Clock just running out of time to give the team enough minutes to evaluate the data we’ve been looking at for the last hour,” Insprucker said. The launch, which would be SpaceX’s 10th Falcon 9 mission, is intended to put six of Orbcomm’s 17 next-generation satellites into orbits about 500 miles (800 km) above Earth. The new satellites, built by privately owned Sierra Nevada Corp and Boeing Co, will join Orbcomm’s existing 25-member network.

“We help commercial companies monitor their assets,” Orbcomm Chief Executive Marc Eisenberg said in an interview.—Reuters
Wrongly jailed US man to get $1.2 million, 21 years after his release

TALLAHASSEE, ( Fla) , 21 June — A man who was released in 1989 after he was wrongly convicted of fatally poisoning his seven children will be paid $1.2 million for the 21 years he spent in prison under legislation signed into law on Friday by Governor Rick Scott.

A bill unanimously passed by the state legislature in its 2014 session will compensate James Richardson for the time he served, including four years on death row. Richardson, now 78 and living in Kansas, was sentenced in 1968 after his conviction for the deaths of his children in Arcadia, near Florida's southwest coast.

A former babysitter later admitted that she had laced the children's food with an insecticide called parathion. Richardson had been sentenced to death, but that punishment was commuted to life in prison when the US Supreme Court threw out capital punishment nationwide in 1972.

He was released in 1989 but was not eligible for the state's standard wrongful-incarceration compensation law, which did not pass until 2008. In this year's session, legislators approved a narrowly tailored bill that applies only to Richardson.

Former Governor Bob Martinez ordered a review of the case after the babysitter admitted the poisoning in 1988.

Janet Reno, who was then Miami-Dade County's state attorney and later rose to US Attorney General, concluded that Richardson was wrongly convicted and that the state had relied on perjury at Richardson's trial and failed to investigate evidence implicating the babysitter.

Reuters

Africa’s major new displacement in CAR, South Sudan: UNHCR

Africa’s major new displacement in CAR

BEIJING, 21 June — Rainstorms and floods have continued to ravage the eastern province of Jiangxi and central Hunan Province, forcing authorities to initiate a grade IV emergency response on Saturday.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and the China National Commission for Disaster Reduction have dispatched emergency response teams to the regions.

Jiangxi’s local bureau of civil affairs reported that at least five people had died across eight cities and 43 counties in the province as of 10 am on Saturday. Downpours have swept the province since Wednesday. About 789,000 people were affected and 123,000 have been relocated.

The rainstorms, which have caused the collapse of or substantial damage to 4,000 houses and affected 63,100 hectares of crops, have led to direct economic losses of 530 million yuan (84.85 million US dollars) in Jiangxi.

According to the civil affairs authority in Hunan Province, flooding had left seven people dead and four missing across ten cities and 47 counties. About 2.08 million people in Hunan were affected and 171,000 have been relocated. —Xinhua
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV NOBLE BREEZE VOY NO (047)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV NOBLE BREEZE VOY NO (047) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.6.2014 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: MS INTERASIA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MARATUS GORONTALO VOY NO ( )
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MARATUS GORONTALO VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.6.2014 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: MS YANG MING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(13/2014)

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

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<th>Sr.No</th>
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<td>IFB-043(14-15)</td>
<td>1500 Series Well head Equipment &amp; Accessories (5) Sets</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<td>(2)</td>
<td>IFB-044(14-15)</td>
<td>2900 Series Well head Equipment &amp; Accessories (4) Sets</td>
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<td>900 Series Well head Equipment &amp; Accessories (11) Sets</td>
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<td>55 Ton Hydraulic Crawler Crane (1) Unit</td>
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<td>Spare Parts for Mud Pump Engine hydraulic Power Pack Ex HDD Rig (11) Items</td>
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<td>Telephone Cable (No. 24 AWG 100 Pair, 50 Pair, 20 Pair &amp; 10 Pair) (4) Items</td>
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<td>DMP/L-011(14-15)</td>
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Tender Closing Date & Time - 16-7-2014, 16:30 Hr.

Father charged with murder after toddler left in car for hours

ATLANTA, 21 June — A suburban Atlanta man has been charged with felony murder and child cruelty after his 22-month-old son died after being left unattended in a car for seven hours in the heat, police said on Thursday.

Justin Ross Harris, 33, of Marietta, was supposed to drop his son at a day care center on Wednesday morning on his way to work, Cobb County Police spokesman Dana Pierce said. Harris instead went to his office and the child spent the day in his car seat, the spokesman said.

Temperatures in the Atlanta area reached 92 degrees F (33 C) on Wednesday, according to the National Weather Service.

The child was discovered in a shopping centre parking lot, where Harris had gone after leaving work, authorities said.

Police patrolling the area on Wednesday afternoon approached a crowd gathered around Harris’ car and discovered the child, police said in a statement.

“As officers began to render medical treatment to the 22-month old male child, it was discovered that he was deceased after apparently being left unattended in his car seat inside the vehicle,” the statement said.—Reuters
Bob Dylan manuscripts seen top items in NY rock and roll auction

New York, 21 June — Bob Dylan’s lyrics for “Like a Rolling Stone” and “A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall” are expected to be the highlights of Sotheby’s rock and roll auction next week, which will include memorabilia from the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Elvis Presley.

The handwritten, annotated manuscript for “Like a Rolling Stone,” considered one of the most influential songs in postwar music, could sell for as much as $52 million, while the lyrics for “A Hard Rain” have a pre-sale estimate of $400,000 to $600,000.

Other top items in the 24 June sale in New York include one of Presley’s flamboyant jumpsuits from his days performing in Las Vegas, a piano played by singers David Bowie, Elton John, John Lennon and Aerosmith, and an infamous contract signed by Jimi Hendrix.

“A lot of this material is the soundtrack for a generation,” Richard Austin, Sotheby’s head of books and manuscripts, said about its first dedicated music history sale in more than a decade.—Reuters

Lady Gaga’s raunchy ‘Do What U Want’ video leaks online

Los Angeles, 21 June — Pop sensation Lady Gaga’s duet video with R Kelly ‘Do What U Want’ has been leaked online. Gaga, 28, filmed the music video for the single before eventually shelving it, reported Ace Showbiz.

The 33-second semi-NSFW clip opens with the singer lying on a hospital bed with only a white sheet covering her body. Kelly, who spits some verses in the track also makes an appearance as a doctor.

Earlier this year, Gaga took to her website to explain why the video was being delayed for so long. “It is late because, just like with the Applause video unfortunately, I was given a week to plan and execute it. It is very devastating for someone like me, I devote every moment of my life to creating fantasies for you. All my most successful videos were planned over a period of time when I was rested and my creativity was hon- ored,” she had said.—PTI

Lindsay Lohan to make her West End debut

London, 21 June — Troubled star Lindsay Lohan is set to make her West End debut in David Mamet’s ‘Speed-the-Plow’.

The 27-year-old ‘Mean Girls’ star will be playing the role of Karen, which was played by Madonna in the show’s 1988 Broadway premiere and recently by Elisabeth Moss in a 2008 revival, reported Femalefirst.

“It’s the first time I’ve done a stage play or anything like that. I’m nervous but I’m excited,” said Lohan. The production is a satirical take on the dreams and strategies of Hollywood executives.—Reuters

Pop sensation Lady Gaga

PTI

Rihanna shares her frustration after England loses match

London, 21 June — R&B star Rihanna cheered for England in their World Cup match against Urugu- uay and shared her frustration on Twitter when they lost.

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Batman solo film with Ben Affleck in the offing

Los Angeles, 21 June — Ben Affleck will get to wear his cape again amid buzz that there will be a stand alone movie on Batman following ‘Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice’.

The movie will focus on the Dark Knight and is reportedly planned under the working title ‘The Batman’ though Warner Bros has made no official announcement regarding it.

Affleck will return as Batman for a film due in 2019.—Reuters

PTI

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‘Do What U Want’ video leaks online

Other top items in the 24 June sale in New York include one of Presley’s flamboyant jumpsuits from his days performing in Las Vegas, a piano played by singers David Bowie, Elton John, John Lennon and Aerosmith, and an infamous contract signed by Jimi Hendrix.

“A lot of this material is the soundtrack for a generation,” Richard Austin, Sotheby’s head of books and manuscripts, said about its first dedicated music history sale in more than a decade.—Reuters

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PTI
World Cup television coverage breaks viewing records: FIFA

SÃO PAULO, 21 June — Japan’s clash against Ivory Coast was one of the most viewed games of the 2014 World Cup so far as television coverage shattered a host of records during the first round of group matches, FIFA said on Friday.

As many as 34.1 million viewers in Japan watched the team’s 2-1 defeat by the Ivorians on the NHK channel at 10 am local time, while 42.9 million in Brazil saw the hosts beat Croatia 3-1 in the tournament’s opener on TV Globo. The match between the US and Ghana was watched by 11.1 million on ESPN in the United States, setting a new record for ESPN coverage of a men’s World Cup match.

“These record-breaking figures show just how popular football and the FIFA World Cup is across the world, from Japan to Argentina,” said FIFA TV director Niclas Ericson. “We are seeing high interest in markets such as the United States and Australia, Asia and elsewhere in the world.”

Hong Kong, 21 June — Macau police have busted a bookmaking racket that allegedly took HK$5 billion ($645 million) in illegal bets — including a single HK$40 million bet — on World Cup football matches in a week, the South China Morning Post reported on Saturday.

Police have arrested 22 suspects from what they said is the biggest illegal soccer-betting ring uncovered in the gambling haven following a raid of a hotel on Thursday, the newspaper said.

The syndicate, operating out of three rooms in the hotel, took online bets and telephone orders from around the world, the report said.

Initial investigations showed that about HK$5 billion in World Cup bets had been taken and officers had found evidence of a single HK$40 million bet on one match, it cited Macau police spokesman Suen Kam-fai as saying.

Investigators seized more than HK$52 million in cash, along with 17 computers as well as more than 10 mobile phones and betting slips from the rooms, the paper said.

Authorities in Macau, the world’s largest casino market, Hong Kong and the neighbouring province of Guangdong have been collaborating to crack down on illegal soccer betting in southern China since the World Cup kicked off in Brazil last week.

Hong Kong police have set up a task force to fight illegal soccer betting in the neighbouring province of Guangdong as well as working with Interpol across eight Asian countries to fight illegal betting during the World Cup, it said.

Over the past week, Hong Kong police have arrested 39 suspected illegal bookmakers and confiscated betting slips worth nearly HK$85 million, the report said. In the first four months of the year, records seized during raids on illegal bookies showed they had taken HK$54.2 million worth of bets on soccer.

A shopper (L) looks at Sony Corp’s Bravia television sets screening a soccer match at an electronics retail store in Tokyo on 10 June, 2014. — Reuters

Police smash major World Cup betting ring in Macau

Argentina,” said England’s 2-1 defeat by Italy in the Amazon city of Manaus attracted 14.2 million on BBC 1 in the UK and 12.8 million on RAI 1, the highest TV audiences in both countries in 2014.

Germany’s ARD channel had 26.4 million watching the country’s 4-0 win over Portugal.— Reuters

World News

Monday, 22 June, 2014

Wie surges three clear after second straight 68

Michelle Wie lines up a putt during the second round of the US Women’s Open at the Pinehurst Resort and Country Club-2 Course. — Reuters

PINEHURST, (N Caro-

lia), 21 June — Michelle Wie stamped her authority on the US Women’s Open at the halfway stage when she raced into a three-shot lead over fellow American Lexi Thompson after the second round in Pinehurst, North Carolina on Friday.

On a day when 11-year-old Lucy Li played respectfully but missed the cut, former child prodigy Wie birdied her final two holes, rolling in a curling 15-footer at the last with her stooped cross-handed putting style for a second consecutive two-under-par 68 at Pinehurst No. 2 Course.

She posted a four-under 66 total, while Thompson also shot 68 to end the day the only other player under par, setting the stage for a possible battle with Wie for the second successive major.

Thompson won the Kraft Nabisco Championship in April, while Wie finished second after the pair started the final round tied for the lead.

First round leader, American Stacy Lewis is, carded 73 to slip four strokes behind with South Korean Yang Amy (69) and Australian amateur Minjee Lee (71).

Yesterday I was thinking if I just did this again, that would be nice,” Wie told reporters.

“It’s a grind out there. (I’m) really grateful for the par puts that I made and some of the birdie puts that I made.”

Wie, 24, has been playing in the US Open since 2003, so she understands that the halfway lead does guarantee anything.

“The feeling is that I’m in contention, but at the same time I don’t think I’m really in contention out about the bad shots, just went to the next one.”

“I have been on fire the last three rounds, I learned from the PGA money list thanks to a victory and a bunch of top 10 finishes. Long-hitting Thompson reeled off three successive birdies on her back nine to vault up the leaderboard.

“Today went very well for me,” Thompson said. “I didn’t really get stressed

Sunday, 22 June, 2014

MYANMAR TV

(22-6-2014, Sunday)

6:00 am * Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw
6:25 am * Physical Exercises
7:00 am * News / Weather Report
7:20 am * MRTV’s Youth Programme
8:00 am * News / International News
8:30 am * Amazing World
9:00 am * News / International News
9:30 am * Beautiful ASEAN
10:00 am * News
10:45 am * Teleplay (Health)
12:00 pm * News / International News / Weather Report
12:35 pm * Myanmar Movie
2:30 pm * Documentary
3:00 pm * News
3:30 pm * FIFA World Cup (2014) (Nigeria & Bosnia)
5:15 pm * Sing & Enjoy
6:00 pm * News / Weather Report
6:35 pm * Cartoon Series
7:00 pm * News
8:35 pm * Documentary
9:00 pm * News
9:15 pm * Tapayetnhar
9:30 pm * New Melody

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(22-6-14 07:00am – 23-6-14 07:00am) MST
* Local News
* Tapestry-A Unique Combination Of Painting and Craftsmanship
* World News
* A Traditional Doctor
* Local News
* The Man and The Elephant
* World News
* The Photographer: Kyaw Kyaw Winn
* Local News
* A Dream A Destination (Hpa An)
* World News
* Graffiti: Character Art
* Local News
* A Person with Faith
* World News
* Exquisite Myanmar Silk
* Local News
* The Prayer Halls And Buddhism
* World News
* Great Minds of Myanmar (Anthropologist U Kyaw Win)
* Local News
* A Novitation Ceremony in a Rural Township -1
* World News
* * A Girl Guide
* Local News
* Hair Designer
* World News
* Made in Myanmar ‘Mixxo’
* Local News
* Enchanting Rakhine Land
* World News
* Creations of a Designer: Fashion
Costa Rica stun Italy, France crush Switzerland

SÃO PAULO, 21 June — Another European soccer heavyweight fell to Latin American opposition on Friday as Costa Rica shocked Italy 1-0, putting the four-times champions qualification in doubt, but France thumped Switzerland 5-2 in an imperious World Cup display.

After yet another upset in Brazil, Costa Rica’s win put them top of Group D and eliminated England, while Italy and Uruguay must now fight it out for the other qualification spot when they meet in Natal on Tuesday.

In the Friday’s third game, goals in each half from striker Enner Valencia gave Ecuador a 2-1 win over Honduras in World Cup Group E to boost their hopes of making the last 16.

France top the group with six points, while Ecuador and Switzerland each have three. Honduras have now lost twice and are facing likely elimination.

Uruguay received a boost on Friday, after it was confirmed that Luis Suárez would be fit to face Italy in a game the South Americans must win to qualify. The forward scored both goals in the 2-1 victory over England on Thursday. That will add to concerns for Italy after they were humbled by Costa Rica with the central Americans putting in another impressive performance after earlier defeating Uruguay 3-1.

Bryan Ruiz’s header in the first half separated the sides, leaving delirious Costa Rica fans dancing in the sunshine at Recife’s Pernambuco arena after a second successive win.

“We kept our heads. It was a beautiful match... The people of Costa Rica deserve this. They supported the team and me. This was for them,” said ecstatic coach Jorge Luis Pinto.

Italian coach Cesare Prandelli sought to stay positive ahead of the Uruguay clash, with his side needing a draw to qualify due to superior goal difference.

“Right now I don’t think we need to be negative, we need to think about recovering our energies because we have another game in a few days’ time, we play against Uruguay and whether we qualify depends on that,” Prandelli told reporters.

He also refused to blame the midday tropical heat in Recife for the defeat.

“We know about the calendar, we’ve known it for some time,” Prandelli said. “It’s useless to try and find excuses, we’re not looking for excuses, we have to be ready at the kickoff.”

A Brazilian judge on Friday ordered FIFA to follow its own guidelines and stop play at all World Cup games every 30 minutes for a water break if the temperature is 32 degrees Celsius (90 Fahrenheit) or higher.

FIFA played down the significance of the decision.

“We did not reach or exceed 32 degrees at any moment in any game so far,” FIFA spokeswoman Delia Fischer said.

“The court is only ordering us to follow our own procedures which we have always planned to do.”

There was no upset in the second match, with France beating Switzerland 5-2 in Salvador in an entertaining, end-to-end game fuelled by chances that made great viewing for the neutral.—Reuters

Ronaldo key to Portugal recovery as US challenge looms

MANAUS, (BRAZIL), 21 June — A wounded Portugal, still smarting from a 4-0 defeat by Germany, are fervently hoping that talisman forward Cristiano Ronaldo is fit when they take on the United States in their second World Cup Group G game on Sunday.

The thrashing was the biggest ever loss the Portuguese have suffered at a World Cup and their misery deepened as central defender Pepe was sent off while Ronaldo struggled for form as he battled a knee injury.

The world player of the year will need to be back to his best for the clash with the Americans, who surprisingly beat Ghana 2-1 in their opening game.

Rumours about Ronaldo’s condition have been swirling across the internet and officials were forced to deny reports that his personal doctor had advised him to quit the tournament.

A few days’ rest seem to have helped and his team mate Miguel Veloso said the player appeared to be in good shape.

“I’m not a doctor but from what I see, Ronaldo is fine,” Veloso told reporters after a training session in Manaus. “He is training, he is jumping and he is shooting. There is not much else to say.”—Reuters

2014 FIFA World Cup Groupstage Standing

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</table>

Portugal’s Cristiano Ronaldo runs during a training session in preparation for their next soccer match of the 2014 World Cup in Campinas, on 19 June, 2014. —Reuters

World Cup 2014 Brazil

| Match 30 | Belgium | 22:30 MST (22.6.2014) |
| Match 31 | Korea Republic | 01:00 MST (23.6.2014) |
| Match 32 | USA | 04:00 MST (23.6.2014) |

World Cup 2014 Results

| Match 24 | Italy | 0-1 | Costa Rica |
| Match 25 | Switzerland | 2-5 | France |
| Match 26 | Honduras | 1-2 | Ecuador |