THE two houses separately voted to confirm U Htin Kyaw and U Henry Van Thio as candidates for the presidency and vice presidency yesterday while a group of military representatives put forth Lt-Gen Myint Swe, a former Lt-Gen, as its nominee for vice presidency.

Following election of the candidates, a body for scrutinising presidential qualifications is working out whether or not the vice-presidential candidates possess the qualifications prescribed for the position.

The 7-member body comprising the speakers and deputy speakers of the Amyotha Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw, representatives from the two houses and military representatives is expected to announce their findings on 14 March, said an MP.

When voting at the second day meeting of the Pyithu Hluttaw’s presidential electoral college, 274 of 317 representatives voted for U Htin Kyaw while votes of 29 representatives went for Dr Sai Mauk Kham. Of 317 votes, 14 were deemed invalid.

Likewise, the Amyotha Hluttaw’s presidential electoral college voted on a vice-president. U Henry Van Thiao received 148 votes while U Khin Aung Myint won 13 votes. Of 167 votes, six were deemed invalid.

A group of the presidential electoral college formed with Defence Services personnel Hluttaw representatives have also approved Lt-Gen Myint Swe (Retired) for the vice-president.

According to the law, rules and regulations of the election of the President and Vice-Presidents, a list of the names of vice-presidents elected by three groups of the Presidential Electoral College will be put forward to the Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw.

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U Htin Kyaw, Pyithu Hluttaw’s presidential candidate

He is the son of late famous poet Min Thu Wun. Born on 20 February 1946 in Kunchangon, Yangon Region, he attended the University of Economics in 1962, receiving a B.Econ in 1967 and a M.Econ in 1968. He left for Britain for further studies. He now acts as an EC member of Daw Khin Kyi Foundation. His wife is Daw Su Su Lwin, MP of Pyithu Hluttaw.

U Henry Van Thio, Amyotha Hluttaw’s presidential candidate

A Chin national, his parents are U Hlyan Talon and Daw Ngun Pearl. Born on 9 August 1958 in Thantlang township, Chin State, he studied at Yangon University and Mandalay University, and graduated in law. He used to be an army officer before he was transferred to Ministry of Industry-1. He is married with two sons and one daughter. His wife is Dr Sve Lwam.

Former Lt-Gen Myint Swe, presidential candidate elected by the group of military representatives

He is the son of U Kyi Maung and Daw Kyi. Born in Mandalay on 24 June 1951, he attended the 15th Intake of the Defence Services Academy and retired as lieutenant general in 2010. Currently, he holds the post of chief minister of Yangon Region. He is married with one son and one daughter.

Local fishermen entreat Mon State Hluttaw to solve destruction of Attaran river by coal tankers

LOCAL fishermen have entreated the Mon State Hluttaw to resolve the destruction to the Attaran river and the frequent sinking of motorised fishing vessels due to the plying along the river by large container ships and coal tankers servicing the concrete factory in Kyaiarmaraw township.

“If this problem can’t be resolved this time then us fishermen will have to take some kind of action ourselves in relation to the MCL [factory],” U Aung Thin Oo, chair of the Kyaiarmaraw township fishermen group.

The entreaty was sent on Thursday. It is known that between 2014-15 similar letters of request were sent four times to the Mawlamyine Cement Limited (MCL) factory, the Department of Fisheries for Mawlamyine, the Kyaiarmaraw general administrators office and the Mon State government, but any of these efforts had come to no avail.

“Two hundred feet long ships come and go from the MCL [concrete] factory in Kyaiarmaraw four or five times a day. When one of these ships sails along the river it creates waves taller than a man. Our fishing boats can’t withstand damage from these waves. They sink. And if they don’t sink then our engines do or all our fishing lines are broken off.

See page 3 >>
Top priority given to Mt. Khakaborazi for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

AMONG Myanmar’s bid for seven places to be inscribed on the list of World Heritage Site, Mount Khakaborazi is given top priority to win UNESCO’s recognition, according to the UNESCO’s national project co-ordinator.

The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry is conducting surveys on the biodiversity of Mt. Khakaborazi and its adjacent areas in cooperation with UNESCO, said Daw Ohnmar Myo, national project co-ordinator of UNESCO.

Located in Putao of Kachin State, Mount Khakaborazi is the highest peak in Southeast Asia with estimated 19,296 feet in height. The mountain was first ascended in 1996 by Takashi Oza-kik, a Japanese mountaineer, and Nyama Gyaltsen, a local.

A team of mountaineers from Nature’s Call Foundation, University Hiking and Mountaineering Association scaled the mountain and the two climbers conquered Mt. Khakaborazi.

Six others in the world heritage tentative list are Meimahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary, Ayeyawady Dolphin, Nat Ma Taung (Mt. Victoria), Taninthayi nature reserve, Inndawgyi Lake and Myeik Archipelago.

The national project co-ordinator stressed the need for cooperation between officials concerned and local people to ensure the seven nominations qualified for inclusion on the list of world heritage.

In Myanmar, three ancient cities—Thayekhittaya near Pyay, Beikthano near Taungdwingyi and Hanlin near Shwebo—had been designated as world heritage sites.

The Ministry of Culture and organisations concerned are trying to get the Bagan archaeological area and monuments to be listed as a World Heritage site.—Ko Moe

Scrubtinity board formed for assessment of presidential eligibility

A SEVEN member scrutiny board was formed and tasked with a special assignment to assess the elected vice presidential candidates for their validity and eligibility for presidency and vice-presidency, the Office of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw said in its announcement signed by its Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than on Thursday.

The members of the board are Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Pyithu Hluttaw representative Dr Myo Aung of East Dagon Myothit constituency, Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Ba Myo Thein of the Yangon Region constituency, and military representative Maj-Gen Than Soe.—Myanmar News Agency

Mandalay cork factory damaged in blaze

A FIRE occurred at a cork factory in Pyigyidagun Township, Mandalay Region yesterday, causing a loss of K3.8 million in the accident.

The Mandalay Region Fire Services Department said that the friction of rolls of cork is believed to have started fire that had caused extensive damage to the Kaung Hein San cork factory. While responding to the fire, three firemen including a member of an auxiliary fire unit suffered suffocation while one fire fighter got a cut on his right leg, according to the department.—Aung Thant Khaing

Some firemen got injuries as they tried to control the fire at cork factory in Mandalay on 11 March, 2016. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

Onion prices fall as numerous onion supplies arrive in Bayintnaung Brokerage

WITH the constant flow of onions into the Bayintnaung wholesale market in Yangon, the onion market is currently depressed.

“Though onion prices rose until the third week of February, it began to drop from last week. I guess the main reason for fall in onion price is the low demand”, said U Zin Oo, an onion trader.

In one week, more than 30 to 40 vehicle loads of onions supplies are flowing to Bayint-naung market from different regions which has caused a cooling in the onion market and low demand.—ML (Union Daily)

New Ngamoeyeik bridge to allow traffic flow soon

MOTORISTS will be allowed to use the Bohmu Bahtoo Bridge being built across Ngamoeyeik creek by the end of this month as construction of the bridge linking Dagon Myothit (North) and North Okkala Township had reached 80 per cent completion according to the Yangon City Development Committee.

The aim of building the new bridge parallel to the old one is to ease traffic congestion caused by a line of vehicles crossing the old bridge, said an official of the YCDC.

On completion of the new bridge with a two-lane motorway, traffic woes of motorists will be relieved to a certain extent, added the official.

The new reinforced-concrete bridge is 185.5 meters in length and 10.35 meters in width and the bridge’s clearance above water is 11 feet and two inches at the maximum water level.

Bridge construction began on 1 July 2015, with the manpower of more than 150 including engineers and workers.—Soe Win-MLA

Construction workers are seen on Bohmu Bahtoo Bridge which is under construction. PHOTO: SOE WIN-MLA
President inspects flood control measures in Zalun, visits Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute in Yangon

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein inspected works being carried out for river bank protection and flood control in Zalun Township, Ayeyawady Region and visited Singapore-Myanmar vocational training institute in Bahan Township, Yangon yesterday.

On his inspection tour of the flood control and river bank protection works in Zalun the President heard reports on work progress in construction of a drain to divert water from Ayeyawady River and prevent flooding.

Next, the President and party observed the worksite where the project of building a 5.5-mile drain and other structures including construction of the Maydon dyke is being implemented. The works are currently at 38 per cent completion.

As compensations for crops and lands, payments of K700 million had been fully made, sources said.

Then, the President and party visited the Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute in Yangon. In his address at the meeting the President elaborated on the government’s efforts to establish vocational training schools across the country and called on trainees to strive to ensure national development through the knowledge they have gained in school.

The SMVTL established on 16 October, 2015 is offering six-month full-time training courses to Myanmar youth. The Institute can allow 800 trainees a year to take courses and is set to be officially opened in the middle of this year in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Myanmar-Singapore Diplomatic Ties.—Myanmar News Agency

Local fishermen entreat . . .

>> From page 1

The fishermen are not drowned because they can swim. I want to say, please solve these problems for us.” said U Maung Maung Gyi, secretary of the Kyakmaraw fishermen group.

It is known that the majority of fishermen have suffered because of the large ships which ply the waters, while the fishing boats and fishing equipment of roughly twelve fishermen have been sunk or destroyed, with total damages amounting approximately K5 million.

Fishermen have voiced their desire for negotiations with responsible personnel from the MCL concrete factory to discuss the reduction in speed of shipping vessels when entering and leaving the factory waters and for financial reimbursement to those who have suffered monetary losses because of the ships in question.

Construction began on the MCL concrete factory in Kyakmaraw township in February 2014, before being completed during February this year. It is known that the factory produces around 5,000 tonnes of concrete a day.—Myitmaukha News Agency

Bomb blast in Sittwe

A BOMB blast occurred in Sittwe, Rakhine State, on Thursday, with no injuries reported, according to local police.

At 11:30pm on Thursday an explosion was heard inside a house in Danyawady ward in Sittwe, Police Lt-Col Win Naung said.

Despite an ongoing investigation into the blast the cause remained unclear, the police officer said, promising detailed investigation into the cause of the blast in a bid to wipe out public panic.

Local residents speculated that the explosion was an intentional act of arousing unrest at a time when students were taking their matriculation exams.—Man Kyaw (Shwewamwmyer)

THE Myanmar Association Thai-land will lend assistance in the obtaining of compensation for the family of a deceased Myanmar employee who was killed at his worksite.

Thai police, the company chief and the car driver who killed the Myanmar man promised that they would compensate the man’s family. It was further promised that the compensation would be provided to the family within 45 days of the accident.

However, the company chief delayed the compensation for the deceased Soe Min Naung, 21, without making any contact.

“The company proprietor is not willing to meet me and disappeared when I went to see him. He rejected my appointment”, said Ma Moe San Dar Win, a member of the deceased’s family.

Sae Min Naung, 21, was knocked off by a twelve-wheel vehicle and succumbed to his injuries while on a worksite in Thailand on 15 January. He was from ShweLOungtin village, Yathetaung Township, Rakhine State.

The MAT organisation will provide help as best they can, according to the source.—Soe Win

MAT to assist deceased family to receive compensation

THE condition of newly born babies which suffered side effects after being injected with a hepatitis B vaccine at Bago General Hospital is stable, not getting worse, said Prof Dr Myint Han, a director-general of the Ministry of Health.

Officials of the ministry gave a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, clarifying the situations of the babies receiving intensive care around the clock at Yankin Children Hospital, saying that the authorities are carrying out an investigation into the case to determine whether or not there is a link between symptoms of found in the babies and the vaccine; that currently, they have prohibited the sales of the vaccines as the medicine is put for laboratory tests.

The investigation came after deaths of two infants after receiving hepatitis B vaccine in Bago where 28 babies were given the vaccines, Engerix B and Hepavax B, bought from a pharmacy shop at Bago General Hospital.

Of 28 infants, two who are among 14 discharged from the hospital died at their homes. The 12 infants were brought back to the hospital following the incident, and ten are being given intensive care at the hospital while the remaining two are being monitored at their homes.

Meanwhile, the officials disclosed that seven children aged from five to nine suffered from encephalitis in Thazi, confirming that four died of the disease.

Currently, the authorities from the Ministry of Health are investigating the case and took preventive measures against the disease.

They are monitoring the villages where the outbreak of the infectious disease happened, said Prof Dr Soe Lwin Nyin, Director-General of the Public Health Department.—Myanmar News Agency

Fatal vaccine are undergoing laboratory tests: MoH

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Government, NLD meet for fourth time to discuss handover of duties of the Head of State

THE fourth coordination meeting between the governments’ supporting committee for the handover of the duties of the Head of State and the transition team of the National League for Democracy was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, both sides discussed a handover ceremony of the duties of the Head of State, ongoing works and procedures to establish strategic framework for national-level administrative reform and presentations by permanent secretaries on Union ministries.

The two sides agreed to hold the fifth meeting in the middle of this month. Present at the meeting were Union Minister U Hla Tun, chairman of the government’s supporting committee, Deputy Director-General U Maung Maung Ohn of the Ministry of Construction, Deputy Director-General U Zaw Htay of the President’s Office, NLD CEC member U Win Htein, Dr Myo Aung and Dr Aung Thu.—Myanmar News Agency

Meeting between the government’s supporting committee and the transition team of the National League for Democracy. Photo: MNA

PHOTO: MNA
Martial arts training offers traditional self-defence techniques of Bando

A PHOTO exhibition is being conducted at Yangon gallery with a focus on showcasing both colourful and black and white photographs depicting natural landscapes, the beauty of wild animals and ethnic diversity.

The Myanmar Photographic Society organised the exhibition in order to show younger generations the photographic industry.

During the three-day event, works by winners of its 52nd annual photo contest plus 50 creations by its members are being displayed at the gallery. The majority of photographs feature lifestyles and traditional customs of ethnic people.

The organiser is inviting enthusiasts to come to the event and attend the seminar entitled Japanese Rail Road by a Japanese photographer Tokashi Koike.

Mr Robert Collins, a British photographer, will share his knowledge and experience with local photographers. There are 30 enthusiasts registered to attend the seminar.

The Yangon Gallery is located within the compound of People’s Park near Planetarium on Alone Road.— Kyaw Daing Aung

Two missing following capsizing of motored sampan

A MOTORED sampan with eleven green grocers on board sank into the Yangon river on Thursday when it crashed into the No.2 buoy because of thick fog. A fishing vessel nearby saved nine passengers but two passengers are still missing. According to a police investigation the vessel, named Aung Naing Lwin, was being driven by one San Nyunt alias Kyet Tet, 36, from Dala. The victims have been identified as Daw Ye San, 62, from 2nd street and U Tin Win, 56, from 9th street, Boyan Pay ward in Dala.— Than Htay (Dala)

Man arrested for robbery

A MOPED issued in Dala being driven by one Thet Swe, 39, from 9th street, Boyan, Taninthayi region was found abandoned in Dala township. The ownership of the two-wheeler was registered to a man. Police have filed charges against him. He is being held at the Dala Police Station.— Than Htay (Dala)

Crime

Passenger vehicle plunges into ravine

A MINIBUS leaving Kawthaung for Myeik being driven by one Shwe Tasokie, 36, plunged between mileposts 31 and 32, Kawthaung-Myeik road, Myeik township, Taninthayi region on Thursday when the driver lost control of the vehicle.

The accident killed Daw Aye Kyi, 41, while seven other passengers sustained serious injuries. They are now receiving medical care at Myeik general hospital. Police have filed charges against Shwe Tasoke.— Myint Oo (Myeik)

A photo highlighting the lifestyle of Padaungs. PHOTO: KYAW DAING AUNG

Photo exhibition highlights lifestyles of ethnic nationalities

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Jovago signs deal with top Myanmar hotel operators

The French hotels and tourism booking website Jovago signed an agreement with three of Myanmar’s top hotel operators at the beginning of March to provide hotel bookings services through their website, according to Jovago Myanmar.

The three hotel operators are the Amata Hotel Group, Kandawgyi Palace, the Aureum Palace and Resort and Myanmar Treasure Resort Enterprise.

Jovago also announced that it will sign a renewal contract with Amazing Holidays Hotel and Resort Enterprise.

“It is not possible to make a connection with three hotel operators in this way as reliable clients go to show how the Myanmar hotels and tourism industry has changed for the better. Connecting with Jovago takes the confusion out of travel. Whatever the location and wherever one wants to go, one can compare rates and services of hotels within minutes, giving one the ability to choose the hotel one likes,” said Hugo Schleicher, managing director for Jovago Myanmar.

The Amata Hotel Group operates hotels and resorts in both Thailand and Myanmar, while Kandawgyi Palace is regarded as one of Yangon’s top hotels. — Myitmakha News Agency

Monywa farmers see good price for mutton

Farmers in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region are seeing a high price for mutton this year, selling at K750 ($0.62) per pound, locals say.

The price is higher compared with late 2015 when the farmers received K550 ($0.45) per pound.

Currently, local farmers are monitoring the development of the market to sell the lambs at a high price.

There are over 24 locals who operate a commercial sheep farming business even only in Phankhaki village.

They normally sell their farm animals to brokers from Monywa, Mandalay and the upper part of Chindwin.

U Zaw Win, a local farmer, said: “The breeding of sheep in the region can reduce expenses for food than other farm animals such as cows, pigs and goats.”

“The farmers need to wash them at least one time per week in the summer. To protect them from infectious disease, farmers need to inject the necessary vaccinations every four week,” he suggested.

People from villages located in the northern part of Monywa Township are mainly engaged in agriculture and livestock breeding tasks.

After harvesting crops, local farmers focus on the breeding of farm animals on a man-made scale. The rural areas in the township is plentiful of pastureland for them. — CNH/ Union Daily

Cross-border trade with Thailand declining

The Ministry of Commerce figures up until 26 February this year show the border trade volume at the Tachileik border trade camp totalled US$80 million over the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

According to the ministry, the current trade volume with Thailand is lower than that of the volume during the same period last fiscal year. These figures were over K98 million in the 2014-2015 FY.

During this FY, the export volume of the trade zone amounted to over 9 million dollars while the imports amounted to over 571 million.

Tachileik border trade camp is one of the border trade camps being opened along the Myanmar-Thailand border area.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products including rice and other commodities to Thailand, and imports cement, fuel, food and beverages, construction materials and other products.

Myanmar’s Ministry of Commerce has granted Individual Trading Cards (ITCs) since 2013, with the aim of promoting trading relations with Thailand. — MDM/Union Daily

Japanese rice to be grown in Myanmar farms

In cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, local farmers plan to cultivate four different kinds of Japanese rice during the coming rainy season in Nay Pyi Taw, Hmawbi in Yangon Region, Pyay in Bago Region and Heho in Shan State, growers say.

The pilot project is aimed at importing rice to Japan as some Japanese traders only buy Japanese rice. The production process will be carried out by the Myanmar Agri-business Public Corporation Ltd (MAPCO).

Japanese native rice plantations can produce about 90 baskets per acre, trading at around US$1.00 per tonne, which is higher than other imported rice varieties.

“We received the invitation from foreign traders to buy Japanese rice. The buying price for the Japanese rice is approximately at K7,000 ($5.75) per basket,” said farmer U Ngwe Toe.

Local farmers are now developing plantations for Japanese rice by under a government-to-government programme and are planning to establish commercial plantations in future, an agriculture department official said. — Zar Ni
‘Hearts are in pieces’ five years after tsunami hits Japan

RIKUZENTAKATA (Japan) — Japan mourned yesterday the thousands who lost their lives in a massive earthquake and tsunami five years ago that turned towns to matchwood and triggered the world’s worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986.

The nine-magnitude quake struck offshore on a chilly Friday, sparking huge black waves along a vast swath of coastline and killing nearly 16,000 people.

The tsunami crippled the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant, where meltdown in three reactors spewed radioactivity across a wide area of the countryside, contaminating water, food and air.

Naoto Kan, the prime minister at the time, has said he feared for the Japanese capital Tokyo and that Japan’s very existence could have been in peril.

More than 160,000 people were evacuated from nearby towns and some 10 per cent still live in temporary housing across Fukushima prefecture. Most have settled outside their hometowns and have begun new lives.

Some areas remain no-go zones due to high radiation. Demolition efforts to clear vast swaths of plant opera

tor Tokyo Electric Power Co (Tepco) bore signs saying, “Give me back my hometown!”

At cemeteries along the devastated coastline, in front of buildings hollowed out by the wave, and on beaches, families gathered to offer flowers and incense, bowing their heads and wiping away tears. Flags at central government buildings were at half-mast, some draped in black. In coastal Rikuzentakata, which was flattened by a tsunami, the mayor spoke of the scars here, and there are still many struggling to restart their lives,” said 65-year-old Yasushi Yanashita, a retired city hall worker.

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Flags at central government buildings were at half-mast, some draped in black. In coastal Rikuzentakata, which was flattened by a tsunami, the mayor spoke of the scars here, and there are still many struggling to restart their lives.” — Reuters

Lanterns from northern Japanese city Natori are illuminated during an event to pray for the reconstruction of the pair of matching teacups and saucers, nothing remained except earth to protect them from future waves. The area is now radia

tion-contaminated land, but much remains to be done for thousands still languishing in barracks-like temporary housing. The prime minister feels that the number of people who don’t know what to do, who aren’t even trying, is increasing,” said Kazuo Sato, a former fisherman from Rikuzentakata. “Their hearts are in pieces.” — Reuters

Asia-Pacific remains ‘most disaster-prone region’ in world in 2015, UN reports

UNITED NATIONS — The Asia-Pacific region “continues to be the most disaster prone part of the world in 2015” and needs a risk-sensitive development approach, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said here Thursday.

More than half of the world’s 344 disasters in 2015, resulting in more than 16,000 deaths and affecting some 59 million people, occurred in Asia-Pacific, Dujarric said, quoting a new report by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), which was released earlier Thursday.

The report was entitled “Disasters in Asia and the Pacific: 2015 in Review.”

The cost of economic damage to countries in the region was more than 45 billion US dollars, although that figure would be much higher if indirect losses were included,” he said.

South Asia was the hardest hit, recording 52 disasters and more than 14,000 deaths, with most deaths attributed to the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit Nepal in April 2015, the spokesman noted.

Meanwhile, the report warned that the region’s burgeoning cities may not be adequately equipped to tackle urban disasters that occur more frequently and with greater intensi

ty. More than 700 million people in the region live in cities at “extreme” or “high” disaster risk, and by 2030 this number could reach one billion, according to the report.

In many big cities in Asia-Pacific, much of the infrastructure is outdated and built without adequate attention to disaster resilience, the report noted.

Last year, the urban centres of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Japan were affected by severe floods, while Nepal’s capital city, Kathmandu, bore the brunt of the economic damage from the April earthquake. Widespread floods in Chennai, India in December 2015 illustrate the common challenges faced by many big cities. With the ecological buffers depleted over time by rapid, unplanned urbanisation, the floods inundated critical infrastructure, disrupted power networks and waterlogged major city roads.

Economic damage and loss from the floods have been estimated at more than 10 billion US dollars, the report said.

A prolonged El Niño phenomenon last year drew attention to neglected and often forgotten slow-onset disasters by severely exacerbating effects of heat waves, forest fires, haze, and droughts.

El Niño — which means the Little Boy in Spanish — and its sister La Niña — the Little Girl — are weather events, which contribute to changes in climate and weather.

Last year was the hottest on record, with Pakistan and India reporting more than 3,400 fatalities from a searing heatwave.

Drought caused serious water and food shortages in much of South and Southeast Asia and several fatalities in the Pacific. Rather than dealing with the drought only when it becomes an emergency, it should be addressed from a long-term perspective to protect livelihoods, said the report.

To build a resilient Asia-Pacific, the report further called for increased focus on risk-sensitive development, and stronger regional cooperation for managing trans-boundary disasters. It advocated capitalism on emerging technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles for disaster management but stresses the need to establish regulatory standards for effective use of these technologies. The report, commending the “Zero Casualty” policy implemented in the Philippines as a regional good practice, concluded that disaster risk reduction cannot be achieved without political will and effective leadership at all levels of government. — Xinhua

Kim Jong Un orders nuclear strike means to be ready for action

PYONGYANG — Top leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un has ordered all nuclear strike means to be ready for action when he watched a firing drill of ballistic missiles and confirmed that the “super-large multiple rocket system” in utmost emergency scenarios can be mobilised.

The DPRK’s official KCNA news agency reported yesterday.

Kim ordered all nuclear strike means of the military strategic force to “always be ready for action and fight a decisive battle, the report said.

Kim underscored the need to “put greater spur to developing nuclear weapons,” which is a new goal set by the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, and to “dynamically push forward diversification of means for delivering nuclear warheads.”

Emphasising the need to strengthen cooperation between nuke research and rocket research, he instructed conduction of more tests to estimate the ultimate power of newly produced warheads and bolster nuclear attack capability. Kim ordered the military to ensure “a prompt and safe operation of nuclear attack system in utmost emergency scenario and a unitary system of command and control over nuclear force.” — Xinhua

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Kim ordered all nuclear strike means of the military strategic force to “always be ready for action and fight a decisive battle, the report said.

Kim underscored the need to “put greater spur to developing nuclear weapons,” which is a new goal set by the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, and to “dynamically push forward diversification of means for delivering nuclear warheads.”

Emphasising the need to strengthen cooperation between nuke research and rocket research, he instructed conduction of more tests to estimate the ultimate power of newly produced warheads and bolster nuclear attack capability. Kim ordered the military to ensure “a prompt and safe operation of nuclear attack system in utmost emergency scenario and a unitary system of command and control over nuclear force.” — Xinhua

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htay Kyar Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00005 and Publishing Permit No. 000629.
China premier urges more efforts in restive Uighur heartland

BEIJING — China’s violence-prone western region of Xinjiang needs to make more efforts at development in its ethnic Uighur heartland to ensure young people there have “something to do and money to earn”, Premier Li Keqiang told its top officials.

Speaking to Xinjiang delegates at China’s annual meeting of parliament, including the region’s Communist Party chief and governor, Li said Xinjiang occupied an “especially important strategic position” and the official Xinhua Daily said yesterday.

“Xinjiang’s development and stability ... have bearing on national and ethnic unity and national security,” Li said, adding he thought Xinjiang was “generally stable” at present.

Turning to the topic of the heavily Uighur southern part of Xinjiang, where much of the unrest has occurred in recent years, Li said companies which “suit actual local conditions and are good for the environment” needed to be “guided” to set up there.

“Let the people, especially the young, have something to do and money to earn,” he said.

Recognising the economic roots of some of the violence and frustration of many young Uighurs at missing out on China’s economic boom, Beijing has increased its focus on southern Xinjiang, pumping in money and encouraging development.

China’s fourth-ranked leader, Yu Zhengsheng, called southern Xinjiang the “main battle ground in the anti-separatist struggle” during a visit last September. Li said education was also an important part of development and stability.

“You must pay attention to education work, especially in southern Xinjiang, send educators to southern Xinjiang, nurture well the next generation.”

He did not elaborate, but China has been enforcing in Xinjiang more teaching in Mandarin, the national tongue, rather than the Uighur’s own Turkic language, hoping to better integrate Uighurs into the Chinese society.

Some Uighurs have seen that as another way for China to repress their culture.

China strongly denies any repression or human rights abuses in Xinjiang.—Reuters
Looking 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from Human Rights Perspective

Dr. Khine Khine Win

On September 2000, during the Millennium Summit, UN member States adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It comprises 8 goals with 18 targets to address poverty and other socio-economic deprivations. It has provided an important framework for worldwide development and a lot of progress has been made on MDGs but that's not good enough, MDGs have not adequately aligned with Human Rights and did not give sufficient attention to discrimination and marginalization. In 2015, the Heads of State and Government and the General Assembly (UN) have adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replacing the MDGs as MDGs expired at the end of 2015 offici ally.

In September 2015, the Heads of State and Government and the General Assembly (UN) gathered at New York to attend the UN Sustainable Development Summit where they have taken a bold step to embark on the 2030 Development Agenda. This important document entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. It is a new compact for people and planet anchored in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 associated targets which are integrated and indivisible. They are to replace the MDGs as MDGs expired at the end of 2015. This 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was officially adopted by UN General Assembly with the resolution number A/RES/70/1 by UN member States.

Short form of 17 Sustainable Development Goals are (1) no poverty (2) zero hunger (3) good health and well-being (4) quality education (5) gender equality (6) clean water and sanitation (7) affordable and clean energy (8) decent work and economic growth (9) industry, innovation and infrastructure (10) reduced inequalities (11) sustainable cities and communities (12) responsible consumption and production (13) climate action (14) life below water (15) life on land (16) peace, justice and strong institutions (17) partnership for the goals. All goals cover almost all areas that matter for the wellbeing of people everywhere. If all the issues are effectively addressed, the world would be a different place where people are living healthy, prosperous and peaceful lives. In order to get these 17 goals, the United Nations has conducted the largest consultation program in its history to gauge opinion on the SDGs should include.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said this new agenda encompasses a universal, transformative and integrated agenda that heralds an historic turning point for our world and also this is the People’s Agenda, a plan of action for ending poverty in all its dimension, irreversibly, everywhere and leaving no one behind.

Preamble of the new agenda states that SDGs seeks to build on the MDGs and complete what they did not achieve. And also the preamble open with a reference to strengthening peace in larger freedom and then seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The commitment to leave no one behind has been the key features of SDGs. The idea is that no goal should be met unless it is met for everyone, whenever they live, whatever they do or whoever they are.

As I mentioned before, though MDG process led to significant progress in certain economic and social rights, it failed to adopt a human-rights based approach. Human rights were, therefore, not considered in a consistent or comprehensive manner when State to sought to achieve the MDGs. This resulted in uneven progress across regions and countries exacerbated by conflict, gender inequality, poverty and environmental threats. However, the new 2030 Agenda marks an important paradigm shift towards an equitable and sustainable world that is human rights - based. It is explicitly grounded in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments and including the Declaration on the right to development and UN guiding principles on Business and Human Rights.

It is worth noting that there are 12 times “human rights” word expression in the 2030 agenda. It means that UN and all member states acknowledge the important role of human rights in the empowerment of all women and girls. The commitment to leave no one behind has been the key features of SDGs. The idea is that no goal should be met unless it is met for everyone, whenever they live, whatever they do or whoever they are.

At the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) yesterday, U Htin Kyaw won the vote against incumbent Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham of the Lashio constituency, nominated by the Union Solidarity and Development Party. Of 317 votes, there were 274 votes for and 29 against his election, with 14 ineligible votes.

The Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) chose U Henry Van Thio of the Chin State constituency as its presidential contender by 14 votes to 13, with six ineligible votes. His contender was USDP’s nominee U Khin Aung Myint of the Mandalay Region constituency 8, former Amyotha Hluttaw speaker.

The military nominated for former Lt-Gen Myint Swe, who is also incumbent Yangon Region Chief Minister, as one of the three vice-presidential contestants. The final three vice presidents will run for presidency, presumably on Tuesday, with the one with overwhelming votes will be elevated to presidency, whereas the remaining two will act as the first and second vice presidents.

Nevertheless, one thing we can be sure of is that the presidential race is on in a matter of days. We should keep in mind that there are times when we have to hope against hope that unexpected things in life tend to happen at any unexpected time.
Pakokku waterway micro-project to be completed by June

A PAKOKKU waterway development micro-project will be carried out between March and June this year, according to the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of Water Systems.

The aim of the micro-project is to improve the flow of water along the stretch of waterways connecting Pakkokku with Nyaung Oo. The directorate announced the project at a press conference at Yangon’s Central Hotel on 8 March.

“Pakkokku and Nyaung Oo are places most affected by problems along the stretch of the Ayeyawady River between Mandalay and Nyaung Oo,” said U Win Hlaing, director of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of Water Systems. Digging will be carried out by dredgers at low-tide hours between March and June this year.

The directorate also announced that the project is being carried out because the waterways could be destroyed if it is not completed this year.

If we do not dig these water channels then water could flow into other water routes, such as the wharf in Nyaung Oo. This project will provide assistance with supporting the wharf in Nyaung Oo. We will open up the mouth of the lower sandbank.

The project is part of a larger Ayeyawady River management project that started in the 2015-16 fiscal year with an interest-free loan from the World Bank of $100 million, which will continue until 2020.—Myanmar News Agency

Golden deer in Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary faces water shortage

GOLDEN deer in Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary are facing a water shortage during the hot season, according to a spokesperson of its administration office.

With the assistance of local well-wishers, members of the Shwesettaw administration office have filled the six reservoirs within the sanctuary with drinking water with plans to fill more water every ten days.

To solve the water scarcity problems in summer, the local authorities are planning to reconstruct an old lake located in the sanctuary to store rainwater.

The Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary has been running since 1985 in order to protect and conserve the endemic Shwethamin (Cervus eldihemani) deer of Myanmar, conserve the “Than-dahat” forest which is part of the Dry Zone Ecosystem and natural habitat of Shwethamin and sustain the environs of the cherished Shwesettaw Buddhist heritage.

Around 1,600 golden deer are conserved within the sanctuary.—Myawady

Harsh paddies seeing lower export prices

THE US dollar and China Yuan are currently dropping causing a decrease in the price of low quality rice exports.

The rice which is mainly exported to China are Eehmathah, Zayya and Ngasein at a price of around K500 to K1,000 per bag.

“However, the price of the fine rice consumed by most people in the country is stable at a high price and it is expected not to go much higher than that”, said U Min Min, a rice trader.

A lack of Pawsan paddy supplies is also one of the reasons for the increase in fine paddy prices. Currently Pawsan paddy is priced K40,000 per bag.—ML (Union Daily)

OVER 9,000 eligible government staffers have sent their applications to the Mandalay City Development Committee to buy low-cost apartments, according to the MCDC.

The Public Works implemented a low-cost housing project in Myayeenanda Ward in Chammyathazi of Mandalay Region.

The project produced 400 apartments with 650 square feet each, planning to sell out the property for K16.5 million (US$13,590) for ground floor apartments, K15.5m ($12,767) for the second floor and K13.5m ($11,119) for the third floor.

Residents with above 25 years service, who currently serve as government staff at any department in the region, may apply for the low-cost apartment at the MCDC.

The MCDC sold application forms between 26 and 4 March.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)
German anti-immigrant party set for strong showing in Sunday votes

BERLIN — The anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) is set to storm into three state parliaments by winning up to 18 per cent in Sunday’s regional elections, a poll showed, in what would be a big setback for Chancellor Angela Merkel and her open-door refugee policy. The elections in the states of Saxony-Anhalt, Baden-Wuerttemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate are the first in Germany since the refugee crisis began and will give voters a chance to punish or reward parties for their role in or response to the influx of more than a million migrants last year.

The poll for broadcaster ZDF showed the AfD would probably win 16 per cent of the vote in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, up one point from the same survey last week, putting it on course to be the third biggest political force there after Merkel’s Christian Democrats (CDU) and the far-left Linke.

Eleven per cent of voters in the industrial heartland region of Baden-Wuerttemberg are poised to vote for the right-wing AfD while the Greens are set to be the strongest performer there with 32 per cent, followed by the CDU on 29 per cent — down one point compared with the same poll last week.

In the wine-growing region of Rhineland-Palatinate 9 per cent are set to give their vote to the AfD in a move that would make it the third biggest party there.

The Social Democrats (SPD) — the junior coalition partner to Merkel’s CDU at the federal level — are set to remain the biggest party by Rhine- land-Palatinate with 36 per cent, with the CDU close on its heels at 35 per cent.

The AfD is already represented in five of Germany’s 16 regional parliaments but the party, which was originally founded as an anti-euro party in 2013, is not yet present in any of the state assemblies that will be elected on Sunday.

The three states have a combined population of some 17 million, around a fifth of Germany’s 81 million.

The AfD, which has used slogans such as “Secure the borders! Stop the asylum chaos!” to stir up concern among Germans about migrant numbers and the country’s ability to integrate vast numbers of people with different cultures.

The party, whose leader stirred controversy by suggesting that migrants trying to enter Germany illegally should be shot if necessary, has eaten away at support for the established parties in Germany and could make it harder for them to form stable coalition governments.

—Reuters

Migrants scramble for food, firewood at Greek tent city

Migrants try to get products from a truck at a makeshift camp on the Greek-Macedonian border near the village of Idomeni, Greece on 10 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

IDOMENI, (Greece) — Scores of migrants stranded on Greece’s northern border scavenged for free food and water on Thursday, struggling to seize eggs and bread thrown from a truck at the muddy tent city which has become their temporary home.

There were among thousands of people, many fleeing war-torn countries in the Middle East and Africa, braving rain, wind and cold to get what little food and water they could.

The camp near the town of Idomeni, hoping border shutdowns throughout the Balkans will be lifted.

No one has crossed into Macedonia this week, Greek authorities say, and at least 12,000 people are stranded in squalid conditions in the camp — nearly eight times its capacity.

More than 40 per cent of those are children, and groups on the ground estimate. Babies some just weeks old, lie down on cardboard boxes. Scores suffer from respiratory conditions.

“My daughter and my wife are crying all the time for two days,” said 42-year-old Magar Asfour, who fled fighting in the Syrian city of Aleppo. “Our tent is wet. We can’t sleep last night. It flooded.”

After two days of rainfall, their skimpy tent summer, like others pitched beside them, is soaked through. Nearby, men try, unsuccessfully, to light fires using anything dry — from plastic bags to old, worn-out clothes and nappies.

“Carrying wood in the morning and my wife is waiting two hours in the rain to get a couple of sandwiches and an orange for my child,” Asfour said.

It is a frequent sight across the camp: A young migrant boy trailing through the thick mud, dragging a blanket full of wet firewood to get him and others through the night.

Others are pushing cartfuls of logs to their family’s tent, and men stagger wearily along muddy pools of water, weighed down by heavy tree trunks on their shoulders.

Conditions show little sign of improving. Dozens flocked for supplies this week when a shipment of firewood ordered by non-governmental organisations arrived at the camp.

On Thursday, they climbed onto a truck packed with free supplies — rice, pasta, water, diapers and tossed eggs and bags of food to fellow migrants.

By the latest count, there were more 41,000 refugees and migrants stranded in Greece on 12 March. As a day after Macedonia sealed its razor-wired fence border with Greece to “illegal migrants” after Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia announced tight new restrictions on migrant entry.

More than 130,000 people have reached Europe from Turkey this year and despite the Balkan route being closed, arrivals to Greece continued unabated on Thursday, with more than 2,300 arrivals to its eastern Aegean islands by early morning. —Reuters

UN chief calls on North Korea to stop ‘destabilising’ missile tests

BELGRADE — The Serbian government declared on Thursday a nationwide state of emergency due to severe flooding, on the proposal of the national emergency situations headquarters.

The decision was made as a preventive measure to facilitate and speed up the activities of all national bodies, in their effort to save lives, ensure the security of citizens and their property and repair the flood damage.

The Serbian government will hold daily meetings of the national emergency situations headquarters, closely watch the situation on the ground and inform citizens about the latest developments, the government’s press office said in a release.

The Serbian government urges all citizens to comply with its decisions and do everything in their power to prevent major damage during the critical period of torrential rains expected to last until Tuesday.

India, Middle East countries in talks on oil-for-food scheme

NEW DELHI — India is in talks with countries in the Middle East for a scheme under which they can exchange crude oil for food.

India oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan said yesterday that the country is in talks with the UAE and a few more countries for an oil-for-food programme.

He said discussions between these countries are being held at the leadership level.

India, which is the third biggest crude oil consumer in the world, imports almost 80 per cent of its crude oil requirement from overseas, a majority of which is met through shipments from the Middle East nations. —Reuters
WASHINGTON — The US-led fight against the Islamic State militant group was “not quite yet at an inflection point” because of the militant groups remaining resilience and ability to adapt to losses, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Paul Selva said on Thursday.

“I think the attributes we have to remember about ISIL are they are an incredibly flexible opponent. They are highly decentralized and incredibly resilient,” said Selva, using an acronym for Islamic State. He was speaking at a conference hosted by Credit Suisse and McAlееse & Associates in Washington.

Selva’s comments came after the Pentagon recently announced a number of successes against Islamic State leadership.

On Thursday, the Pentagon said it had captured the Islamic State’s chemical weapons chief in February from Iraq.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also said this week that Islamic State’s military commander had been badly wounded but still alive.

US officials had said that Abu Omar al-Shishani, also known as Omar the Chechen and described by the Pentagon as the group’s “minister of war,” was targeted near the town of al-Shadadi in Syria.

Selva said that while Islamic State leadership was being hit, it was difficult to predict where the next leaders would emerge from.

“It is not unreasonable to expect that as you break down the leadership of the organization … juniors will step up,” Selva said.

While declining to give a timeline to retake the northern Iraqi city of Mosul from the Islamic State, Selva said the conditions existed to isolate and take Mosul.

Earlier this year, Iraqi Defence Minister Khaled al-Obaidi said Iraq would launch the Mosul operation in the first half of 2016 and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has said 2016 would see the “final victory” against the militant group.—Reuters

Iraqi security forces work on lowering the Islamic State flag, west of Hamadi, on 9 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIRUT — Russian warplanes were said to have launched heavy strikes on the Islamic State-held city of Palmyra on Thursday in what may be a prelude to a Syrian government bid to recapture the historic site lost to the jihadi group last May.

Dozens of Islamic State fighters were killed or wounded in the strikes that followed similarly heavy air raids in the Palmyra area on Wednesday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group reported.

The attacks add to the pressure on a group that is losing ground to a separate, US-backed campaign by Syrian militia in the north-east, and whose military commander was declared probably dead by US officials on Tuesday.

The group’s tactics in Syria appear to reflect the strains, as it turns to suicide missions seemingly aimed at causing maximum casualties rather than maintaining sustainable territorial gains.

Islamic State is not included in a cessation of hostilities agreement that has brought about a lull in the war raging in western Syria between rebels aiming to topple President Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian army backed by Russian air force. Military operations against Islamic State in central and eastern Syria are continuing as both Damascus and its allies on one hand, and the United States and its allies on the other, seek to degrade Islamic State’s self-declared “province” that stretches into Iraq.

The Observatory said Russian warplanes carried out 150 raids in the Palmyra area on Wednesday, followed by further attacks on Thursday. “If they take Tadmur (Palmyra) and Quaryatan, the regime would have taken back a big geographic area of Syria,” said Observatory Director Rami Abdulrahman.

The loss of Quaryatan and Palmyra and the surrounding desert would reduce Islamic State’s hold to about 20 per cent of Syria.

Quaryatan is 100 km (60 miles) southwest of Palmyra. After capturing Palmyra, Islamic State blew up some of its ancient monuments in what the US cultural agency UNESCO called a war crime. Islamic State however appears well-entrenched in Palmyra, and while recovering the city would be a big boost for Damascus, its priority may be elsewhere for now, including the border with Turkey where it has been fighting rebels despite the truce.

The momentum has turned against Islamic State since its rapid advances two years ago following the capture of the Iraqi city of Mosul. Its finances are also under strain, with fighters’ pay cut by up to a half. In what would be another major blow to Islamic State, US officials said on Tuesday that its “minister of war”, Abu Omar al-Shishani, was likely killed in a US air strike near the town of al-Shadadi in northeastern Syria.

The militant, also known as Omar the Chechen, had a reputation as a close military adviser to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Pentagon believes Shishani was sent to bolster Islamic State troops after they suffered setbacks at the hands of US-allied militiamen including the Kurdish YPG.

The Observatory, which says it gathers its information from sources on all sides of the war, said on Thursday that Shishani was badly wounded but still alive and being treated somewhere in the group’s Syrian stronghold of Raqqa province. Recent Islamic State attacks have included suicide car bombings in the government-held cities of Damascus and Homs, and a determined but ultimately unsuccessful effort to sever the government’s only land supply route to Aleppo.

Dozens of its fighters were also killed in a 27 February attack on the YPG-held town of Tel Abyad at the Turkish border. A YPG official said it gathered its information from the “information we learned from this individual.”

Al Bakkar, also known as Abu Dawud, was transferred to Iraqi custody by the Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a statement.

“We believe that the information we’ve been able to obtain will allow us to conduct additional operations,” Cook said at a news briefing on Thursday.

Cook said the intelligence came from “the information we learned from this individual.”

Abu Bakkar, also known as Abu Dawud, was transferred to Iraqi custody by the Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a statement.

He gave details about Islamic State’s chemical weapons facilities and production and the people involved, Cook said.

He said the United States does not believe it has been able to altogether eliminate Islamic State’s chemical weapons capability.—Reuters

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

**MV DA QIANG VOY NO (132)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DA QIANG VOY NO (132) are hereby notified that the vessel will arrive on 13.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s 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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No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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Peru’s Guzman seeks foreign allies in fight for presidential ticket

LIMA — Julio Guzman said on Thursday he was rallying international support for his bid to be reinstated as a candidate for Peru’s presidency after the electoral board excluded him from the presidential elections, in Lima, on 10 March.

“My candidacy has been rejected in part because I’m the new kid on the block,” Guzman said.

The electoral board’s 3-2 decision to bar Guzman from the 10 April election because his party did not follow electoral procedures is expected to head with Fujimori in an economist, was running head right front-runner Keiko Fujimori’s chances of winning.

Guzman’s allegations of wrongdoing has raised questions over what he did wrong, started after his surprise surge to second place in opinion polls. Fujimori, 45, told Reuters in an interview he had one month before the election.

“As a lawyer and the Organization of American States, Mr. Guzman expressed optimism the board might backtrack, pointing to electoral rules he alleged other parties also broke — raising the spectre of six candidates being tossed from the race.

“If they let them take part and not us, then the elected authorities, from my point of view, would lack legitimacy,” he said.

Peru’s presidential candidate Julio Guzman gestures during a news conference after Peru’s electoral board excluded him from the presidential elections, in Lima, on 10 March.

PHOTO: REUTERS

A-bomb survivors demand court shut western Japan nuclear plant

HIROSHIMA — Plaintiffs including survivors of the 1945 US atomic bombings filed a lawsuit yesterday with a court demanding a halt to operation of Shikoku Electric Power Co.’s Ikata nuclear plant in western Japan.

They brought the suit to the Hiroshima District Court, arguing that the environment would be devastated and their health affected if an accident similar to the 2011 Fukushima disaster takes place at the plant in Ehime Prefecture, their lawyers said.

Friday is the fifth anniversary of a major earthquake and tsunami that triggered the accident at the Fukushima Daichi plant of Tokyo Electric Power Co.

The three reactors at the Ikata plant are currently off-line but Shikoku Electric envisions re-starting the No.3 unit in the spring or later. The reactor cleared a safety screening last July.

The plaintiffs are a group of 67 people, including 18 survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and one Fukushim evictee living in Hiroshima Prefecture.

CARACAS — Venezuela’s President Nicolas Maduro insisted on Thursday his opponents would fail in a new push to oust him this year and end 17 years of socialist rule in the OPEC nation.

Holding control of the National Assembly in a vote at the end of 2015, the energized opposition alliance has launched a multi-pronged campaign to remove Maduro via street rallies, a recall referendum and a constitutional amendment.

The first protest march is planned for Saturday in Caracas.

Speaking on state TV, the 53-year-old president mocked his foes as divided and corrupt, and insisted he was the man to steer Venezuela out of its current economic crisis.

“We are here to work undisturbed in the great objectives of the economic recovery,” he said at a meeting with businessmen and senior government officials. “And from there, they will not get rid of me, nor should they get rid of anyone.”

Critics blame Maduro for Venezuela’s deep recession, triple-digit inflation and depressing shortages of basics, saying he has stuck stubbornly to the statist economic policies of his predecessor Hugo Chavez when reforms were needed.

But Maduro points to the global oil price collapse as the main source of Venezuela’s woes. The nation depends on crude for more than 90 per cent of its export revenues.

The price of Venezuela’s oil has, at least, crept up in recent days to about $31 per barrel, Maduro said, but revenues were minimal compared to the days of $100-plus crude.

With investors fretting over Venezuela’s ability to pay foreign debt obligations later this year, Maduro said the government was seeking assistance from major lender and ally China.

“We’ve reached a big agreement with China,” he said, without giving any more details. Beijing has lent some $50 billion since 2007 to Venezuela, which repays with oil shipments.

Earlier, Miguel Perez, the vice president for economy, told Reuters a delegation had taken a proposal to China last week seeking better financing terms.

“They took a proposal, I cannot reveal it today,” he said.

“When you have a creditor and partner, you seek to improve the conditions of the relationship,” — Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (107N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (107N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s 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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MV SINAR BIAK VOY NO (459N)

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

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Drenched US South facing more heavy rain after flood deaths

DALLAS — A slow-moving storm dumped more rain on the waterlogged US South on Thursday after heavy downpours killed at least four people this week, prompting evacuations and rescues from inundated areas.

Three people died over the past two days in north-central Louisiana and one with some of the heaviest rainfall. Two men and a 6-year-old child were killed after either ignoring flood warnings or entering treacherous areas without signs, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals said.

A 30-year-old man drowned on Tuesday as he tried to drive across a flooded area in southeastern Oklahoma, the National Weather Service said. Forecasts at the NWS received reports of 10 to 15 inches (25-38 cm) of rain in northeastern Texas, parts of Arkansas and Louisiana over a day and a half.

Particularly hard hit was Monroe, Louisiana, with more than 17 inches (43 cm). Some forecasters lead forecaster with the NWS Weather Prediction Centre.

As the system moves east, flooding is a concern in areas of Mississippi, western Tennessee and Alabama, as well as Louisiana, he said.

“It’s going to continue to be a pretty high-impact storm,” Oravec said, noting that rains could linger into Saturday. Videos on social media showed fish swimming on flooded sidewalks near the University of Louisiana-Monroe campus.

The Louisiana National Guard soldiers said it had helped rescue more than 360 people stranded in their homes and on roads by high waters since Wednesday. The guard also said it retrieved 70 dogs, 16 chickens and a guinea pig.

The governors of Louisiana and Mississippi declared a state of emergency in affected regions, and many schools and state government offices were set to be closed through Friday.

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson declared 11 counties as disaster areas.

China seeks investment from Japan firms in tourism, other sectors

TOKYO — As Cuba seeks foreign direct investment to bolster its economy, expectations are growing that Japanese companies will invest in selected sectors such as tourism, an official with the Chamber of Commerce in Cuba said.

“We are willing to have them (Japanese companies) as investors in our country,” Mirtha Rippes Aller, head of the foreign investment promotion group at the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Cuba, said in a recent interview in Tokyo.

“Tourism is a big industry and also a priority for us to attract foreign investment,” Rippes said, adding that building high-quality hotels is one possibility.

Transportation, energy and agro-food are also among sectors seeking foreign money. Rippes said Japanese business people are “cautious” about investing in Cuba as they spend time doing market research and are also waiting for the lifting of the long-held embargo imposed by the United States.

“We hope that in the future we will have some investments from Japan and we will be able to...enhance our trade relationship,” she added. For Cuba, China is the largest trading partner in Asia. Japan’s trade with Cuba stood at around 6.2 billion yen ($54 million) in 2014, according to Japanese government data. Since the United States and Cuba fully restored diplomatic ties last July for the first time in more than half a century, the risk of investing in the Caribbean island nation appears to be waning. President Barack Obama is scheduled to visit Cuba later in March as the first sitting US president to go to the country since 1928.—Kyodo News

China outdoing developed nations in controlling pollution

BEIJING — China, often hit by choking smog that blankets the populous east and north, is doing a better job at controlling pollution than developed countries at similar stages of development, the environment minister said yesterday.

China has been under increasing pressure to halt pollution of its air, soil and water caused by more than three decades of economic growth, and at this year’s full session of parliament, it promised to cap energy use and draft new laws to decontaminate its soil.

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Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt move to London

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood’s power couple Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have moved to London with their kids Maddox, Pax, Zahara, Shiloh and twins Knox and Vivienne.

The duo settled into an eight-bedroom, USD 21,000-a-month rental at the end of last month, reported US magazine.

The couple and their kids will stay at the “beautiful, White House-style home,” for at least six months, a source said.

Situated on the River Thames in the London suburb Surrey, the mansion has an indoor pool and gym. It is just 40 minutes from friend George Clooney’s home.

During their stay in the city Pitt, 52, will be busy with filming of 2017’s “World War Z 2” and the Goodwill Ambassador, 40 will focus on her political projects.—PTI

Spider-Man swings his way into ‘Civil War’

LOS ANGELES — Iconic Marvel Comics character Spider-Man has made his first appearance in the larger Marvel comic book universe in the second trailer for the upcoming “Captain America: Civil War”.

In February 2015, Sony Pictures, who hold the cinema rights to the web-slinging superhero, and Marvel Studios reached an agreement for the character to appear in the Walt Disney Avengers franchise as well as a 2017 stand-alone movie under Sony.

Then, in June of 2015, Marvel Studios announced that little known English actor Tom Holland had been picked to play the alter ego of Peter Parker, who has previously been brought to life by actors Andrew Garfield and Tobey Maguire.

The character appears at the end of the trailer released on Thursday wrenching Captain America’s shield off him and then saying “Hey, everyone.”

Spider-Man isn’t the only new Marvel Comics’ character to make a prominent appearance in the trailer.

As seen in action are Black Panther (Chadwick Boseman) and Crossbones (Frank Grillo) as well as recently introduced Avengers Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen), Ant-Man (Paul Rudd) and Vision (Paul Bettany).

“Captain America: Civil War” sees fellow Avengers Captain America (Chris Evans) and Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) turn against each other which will in turn see the ever-increasing number of Avengers choose sides between the two of them.

The film is scheduled for release on 6 May in North America.—Reuters

I trust Rita Ora like a sister: Lindsay Lohan

LONDON — “Mean Girls” star Lindsay Lohan says Rita Ora is one of her “close” friends who she trusts like a sister.

The 29-year-old actress, who is currently living in London, said she always turns to Ora, 25, for advice when she needs it, reported Daily Mirror.

“Rita Ora is one of my close friends — I love her. She is like a second sister. I have a nice friendship with Rita where if someone just needs to talk, you just trust the person. I can call her like that and she can call me like that,” Lohan said.

Lohan believes she and Ora get on well because they have very similar careers with both stars acting and singing.—PTI

Joe Jonas returns to music scene with new band DNCE

LONDON — Joe Jonas, formerly of the Jonas Brothers, is back with new band DNCE, whose adult lyrics and funk-pop tunes are a far cry from his teen boy band days in the Disney Channel pop rock trio.

DNCE is made up of Jonas as lead singer, guitarist JinJoo Lee, bassist and keyboardist Cole Whittle and drummer Jack Lawless who worked with the Jonas Brothers.

“Our sound is definitely different from anything I think we’ve all done before,” Jonas said in an interview with the band. “We’ve all really kind of agreed upon funk, dance and kind of rock music and that’s where we pull our biggest inspiration.”

DNCE’s debut single “Cake By The Ocean” reached No 9 in the Billboard Hot 100 chart and the band is now working on an album.

“The record is going to be... a handful of 10, 12, 13 snapshots of just ... what the DNCE world is,” Whittle said.

“It’s romantic, it’s fun, it’s messy, it’s party, it’s sexual, it’s ‘Animal House’ the band,” he said, referring to the comedy film.

The Jonas Brothers, Kevin, Joe and Nick, formed in 2005 and quickly rose to fame with their upbeat pop rock songs. They split in 2013.

Nick has since launched a solo career and stars in drama “Goat”, which screened at Berlin’s film festival last month.

“It’s very difficult to ... reinvent yourself or come back with new music in this music industry,” Joe Jonas said. “So the fact we’ve got our own audiences and fans and we both have our own things going for ourselves, we definitely feel proud.”

Asked if a potential Jonas brothers reunion may be on the cards eventually, he said: “I think if the time found itself in a creative way, maybe.”

“I don’t think you can say never because you never know. I think we’re both so focused on our individual paths and DNCE is just getting started... we have a long road ahead of us.”

—Reuters
TOKYO — A record 2,232,000 foreigners were registered as living in Japan as of the end of last year, up 110,000 from a year earlier, the Justice Ministry said yesterday.

The ministry attributed the increase chiefly to rises in the numbers of foreigners who were staying on student and trainee visas, both up by 15 per cent.

Among foreign nationals who were in Japan either as permanent residents or on visas of more than three months' duration, Chinese accounted for the largest number at 666,000, followed by South Koreans at 458,000 and Filipinos at 230,000.

Vietnamese increased by 47 per cent to 147,000 apparently due to a growing number of students from the Southeast Asian country following a rise in investment by Japanese companies in Viet Nam, an official said.

The number of foreigners who were illegally staying in Japan was 63,000 as of 1 January, of whom 13,400 were from South Korea.

—Kyodo News

See now, buy when? Catwalk-to-shop retail model divides brands

MILAN/LONDON — With minutes until show time, a group of seamstresses are adding the final touches to designer Ermanno Scervino’s latest creations to be unveiled on the catwalk. Embellished coats, mosaic print suits and lace dresses are among the outfits the Italian designer is presenting at Milan Fashion Week. It will be months before they hit the shops.

With the amount of craftsmanship involved, Scervino says his clothes take time to make and he has no plans to follow other labels selling their items immediately on sale straight off the catwalk, effectively bridging the way-to-retail gap. "I think that it is not for me, it is not for (products of) excellence,” Scervino told Reuters. “We have long planning and preparing collections, preparing themselves, and maybe we can’t expect a customer today, but I think we’re trying to see something new.”

"Buyers are welcoming the fast fashion move, namely when brands have customers in different climates. "I think the changes have been a long time coming," Ed Burstell, managing director of Liberty store in London, said.

"No one can understand now when they see something ‘why do I have to wait six months to buy it?’" However, opposition remains from those who say preparing collections is a lengthy process.

“When you want to make a collection, you need the time, you need to see the fabrics, specific research,” Carlo Capasa, head of Italy’s national chamber of fashion, said.

In Paris, label Dior echoed that.—Reuters
LONDON — Liverpool handed their fiercest rivals a painful lesson on Thursday with a dominant 2-0 win over Manchester United in the first leg of a Europa League last-16 clash.

As the two sides took their bitter domestic rivalry on to the European stage for the first time, a penalty from Daniel Sturridge and a second-half effort from Roberto Firmino gave Liverpool a commanding advantage to take into next week’s return leg. 

Juergen Klopp’s team are well placed to progress along with the German coach’s former club Borussia Dortmund who underlined their status as favourites with a masterclass show against Tottenham Hotspur.

Dortmund’s Marco Reus scored twice in the second half, after Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang had given them a 30th-minute lead, in a classy 3-0 victory over a Spurs side who rested a number of players with one eye on their Premier League title challenge.

Shakhtar Donetsk will also take a good lead into the second leg with Anderlecht after a 3-1 home victory, as will Villarreal who beat Bayer Leverkusen 2-0 thanks to a double strike from Cedric Bakambu.

Sevilla’s Steven N’Zonzi was sent off with three minutes to go as the holders, bidding for a third straight trophy, drew 0-0 at home against Russian rivals Zenit St Petersburg.

The 27-year-old also became the first player to win the award since Tim Krul of Newcastle United in 2012.

Pochettino, Forster pick up monthly Premier League awards

LONDON — Tottenham Hotspur’s Mauricio Pochettino has been named Premier League manager of the month for February, while Southampton goalkeeper Fraser Forster picked up the players’ award.

Pochettino’s men won all four of their Premier League games in February, beating relegation rivals Norwich City and Swansea City, 13th-placed Watford and fellow title contenders Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium.

Spurs’ impressive run saw them climb up the table from fourth to second, where they are currently five points behind Leicester City with nine games remaining.

Forster, who beat Wilian, Harry Kane and Jamie Vardy to win the award, kept three clean sheets during last month, shutting out Arsenal, West Ham United and Swansea.

The 27-year-old also became the first goalkeeper to win the award since Tim Krul did so with Newcastle United in November 2013.

“It’s obviously fantastic to win the award, but it’s just another incentive to keep working hard and work as hard as I can until the end of the season,” Forster, who returned from a long-term injury in January, told the club’s website (www.saintsfc.co.uk).

“For the first time in almost a year, we’ve been able to keep a clean sheet on a consistent basis in the Premier League. That’s something we’ve worked on throughout the season, and it’s nice to see it paying off. We’ve had some good performances as a team with a good run of clean sheets. If you’re doing that then it’s easier to win games.”

PALM SPRINGS — World number two Andy Murray says Maria Sharapova should be banned after her positive test for meldonium and questioned the Russian’s use of the drug for medical purposes.

The Briton also chided his own racket manufacturer Head after the company said it would continue to support Sharapova in the wake of her admission that she had taken the banned substance.

“It’s not up to me to decide the punishment, but if you’re taking performance enhancing drugs and you fail a drugs test, you have to get suspended,” Murray told reporters at the Indian Wells tournament in Palm Springs on Thursday.

“If you’re taking a prescription drug and you’re not using it for what that drug was meant for, then you don’t need it, so you’re just using it for the performance enhancing benefits that drug is giving you. And I don’t think that that’s right.”

The drug, produced in Latvia but unavailable for purchase in the United States where Sharapova is based, was only added to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) list of banned substances in January, shortly before her positive test at the Australian Open. Manufactured for people suffering from heart problems, it can also increase blood flow and improve exercise capacity.

Sharapova, who will be provisionally suspended by the International Tennis Federation from this weekend and faces up to a four-year ban, told a news conference in Los Angeles on Monday that she had been taking the drug for 10 years.

She said she was first given it by a family doctor after she suffered from heart problems, it can also increase blood flow and improve exercise capacity.

Sharapova, who has scored 22 times in the Bundesliga this season, lived up to his billing.

He had a goal disallowed for offside before breaking the deadlock by heading a Marcel Schmelzer cross accurately past keeper Hugo Lloris and into the bottom corner.

It was largely one-way traffic but Spurs stayed resolute at the back until Reus scored twice in nine minutes after the break.

His first came from a corner when he lashed the ball into the net on the volley at the far post while the second was a sidefoot finish from close range after a perfectly-weighted pass from Gonzalo Castro.

“Tottenham boss Thomas Tuchel.

In the Ukraine, goals from Brazilian Taison and Oleksandr Kucher gave Shakhtar 2-0 lead before Anderlecht hit back through Frank Acheampong.

The result then headed home from a corner in the 79th minute to make it 3-1.

Fenerbahce’s tie against Braza also belonged to their visiting team as they curled in a superb effort from the edge of the area with eight minutes remaining to secure a 1-0 win.

Sparta Prague took the lead against Lazio through Martin Frydek but the Italians replied through Marco Parolo to grab a 1-1 draw in Poland.

The highest-paid woman in sports, Sharapova has already lost support from some sponsors, with Swiss watchmaker TAG Heuer cutting ties this week, while Nike and Porsche have distanced themselves from her.

"It’s not up to me to decide the punishment, but if you’re taking performance enhancing drugs and you fail a drugs test, you have to get suspended." — Murray