President U Thein Sein: smooth transition to democracy govt’s first priority

Myanmar approves investment worth $2.2 billion in April

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 23 May—Myanmar approved foreign direct investment worth US $2.23 billion in the first month of fiscal 2015-2016 in four sectors — oil and gas, manufacturing, hotel and tourism, and other services, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

Oil and gas received approved capital of $2.05 billion from 10 companies, followed by manufacturing with $116.84 million from nine companies, while the hotel and tourism sector drew $50.75 million and other services $13.19 million.

From fiscal 1988-89 to 30 April this fiscal year, the approved amount of foreign investment in Myanmar totaled $56.466 billion, coming from 915 permitted companies in 38 countries.

Oil and gas attracted $19.641 billion, accounting for 34.79 percent, from 151 permitted companies in the list of approved foreign investment by permitted enterprises.

(See page 3)

As Bangladesh is friendly neighbour of Myanmar, issue of boat people will be resolved amicably

NAY PYI TAW, 23 May — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 23-5-2015 issued a news release stating: A press release on Myanmar’s view and efforts on illegal migrants and boat people in the Andaman Sea and the Straits of Malacca was issued on 19 May 2015. As mentioned in the press release, Myanmar Navy and Air Force are regularly patrolling Myanmar Territorial water to provide humanitarian assistance to boat people adrift.

In this regard, U Tin Oo Lwin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, met the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar at 11:00 hrs on 23 May 2015 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yangon. At the meeting, the Deputy Minister informed him that, during its regular patrol mission, Myanmar Navy intercepted two suspected fishing trawlers off the western coast of Maung Taw Township, Rakhine State on 21 May 2015; one of the trawlers has (208) people onboard and the other one has no passenger; the two trawlers are now docking at the Annawaw port, a temporary camp has been set up at Ale Than Kyaw Village and they were provided with temporary shelter, food, health care and other humanitarian assistance; according to the joint verification by the officials from the Ministry of Immigration and Population and other departments concerned, it is found out that the said boat people are from Bangladesh. He has also encouraged members of the Bangladesh Consulate in Sittwe to seek consular access to see them and urged the Ambassador to immediately convey this message to the Government of Bangladesh for necessary action.

The Bangladeshi Ambassador replied that responsible officials from the Bangladesh Consulate in Sittwe already called on the Chief Minister of Rakhine State and that an official request for seeking consular access would be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As Bangladesh is friendly neighbour of Myanmar, Myanmar is confident that the issue of boat people will be resolved amicably.

Myanmar like other affected countries will be difficilest to continue receiving and temporarily sheltering more boat people. Rescue and providing temporary shelter and humanitarian assistance to the boat people is solely on the humanitarian ground.

Myanmar will continue to work hand in hand with other countries to address the issue of irregular movement at sea and boat people. A delegation of senior officials from Myanmar will be participating in the meeting on irregular migration in the Indian Ocean to be held on 29 May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand.—MNA
Dr Sai Mauk Kham makes inspection tours of housing projects in Lashio

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham arrives in Lashio to inspect two housing projects.—MNA

Boat people receive humanitarian assistance in western Myanmar

LAUNGTAW, 23 May—Rakhine State’s Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn on Saturday visited temporary camps for boat people in Ale Thanyaw village, Maungtaw Township, accompanied by United Nations officials and representatives of UN agencies.

The chief minister said Myanmar will abide by UN regulations regarding the treatment of boat people and pledged to provide humanitarian assistance.

Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Win Myint explained the plans for providing humanitarian assistance.

U Maung Maung Ohn and the UN officials then discussed the issue of boat people with local communities in Maungtaw Township. The temporary camps are now sheltering 200 people from Bangladesh and eight Bengalis from Kyauktaw Township.

The vice president gave instructions on arrangements for systematic dumping and sewage treatment. —MNA

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann honours wounded army members in Lashio

PYITHU, 23 May—Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, accompanied by chairmen and members of parliamentary committees, visited the military hospital in Lashio, Shan State, on Saturday.

The vice president and his entourage also visited a meditation centre, where he presented offerings in cash and kind to monks. In the afternoon, the vice president went on inspection tours of two housing projects, Htinshu Myaing and Cherry Myaing, where officials briefed on progress of construction works, water and electricity supplies, and construction of roads and buildings.

The vice president gave instructions on arrangements for systematic dumping and sewage treatment. —MNA

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann comforts wounded soldiers in Lashio military hospital.—MNA

‘Pleasant time of May’ welcomes advent of monsoon

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 23 May—A joint exhibition featuring diverse works by local artists, with the theme of welcoming the advent of the monsoon, opened Saturday at River Ayeyawady Gallery.

The exhibition brings together artists with a wide range of styles, organizer U Nay Min Latt from the gallery said.

Running until 27 May, the exhibition includes Buddhist culture, ethnic traditions of Myanmar, traditional arts and culture, seasonal fruits and landscapes.

“I feel very proud to have the opportunity to present my works together with Saya Win Pe and other well-known artists,” said artist Nyi Nyi, otherwise known as U Ah Lain Mar.

He created four watercolor paintings for the exhibition and said he is willing to negotiate prices with those who cannot purchase expensive works, as he hopes to encourage local people to begin collecting paintings.

“Some proceeds of the painting sold will be donated to orphans,” Nyi Nyi said. River Ayeyawady Gallery is situated on 35th Street (middle block) in Kyauktada Township in downtown Yangon.

GNLM

U Kyaw Ni Naing, an MP from Laukkai, said the Kokang insurgents are nearing the end as the army is accelerating its attacks. He said he had witnessed losses on both sides and the plight of innocent locals including young children. He urged all ethnic armed groups to exchange arms for peace as the general elections approach.

U Thein Zaw, chairman of the Internal Peace Building Committee, said the army’s strenuous effort has brought about stability in the Kokang area despite some sporadic outbreaks of conflict among local ethnic groups. He described some ethnic leaders’ craze for power as the reason for recent clashes in the Kokang area, adding negotiations are the best way to solve armed conflicts.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann presented assistance in kind for the army members shouldering military operations in Laukkai. Fuli Light company donated K10 million for army members in the line of duty in the area. Local people should help the army with regional stability and peace, with the speaker urging the army to improve itself and win public respect and support. He laid wreaths at the memorial to fallen heroes in Lashio and saluted them. —MNA

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President U Thein Sein: smooth transition to democracy...

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delicate, but he pledged to overcome all obstacles and reaffirmed there would be no regression.

A good administrative system entails transparency and accountability, the president noted, pointing out the need to build capacity for civil servants through a meritocratic system. Efforts are under way to enhance the caliber of local governments as part of the decentralization of power.

As for transparency in extractive industries, Myanmar is working to become a member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), with its ministries taking steps to release information.

The president called for collective efforts to undertake the process of administrative reforms, noting that it is impossible for a government to fulfill all public desires in a single tenure.

Union Minister U Hla Tun at the President Office said proper and systematic administration changes take time in the world, adding that the government is making efforts to ensure the quick wins and a good groundwork for the long term in addressing challenges in accordance with the laws and the wills of people.

He also noted that the workshop is aimed to lay a solid foundation for the betterment of the State in the future.

UNDP Country Director Toily Kurbanov said: Let us also remember that administrative reforms are not only about bureaucratic and procedural improvements. They are also, and most importantly, about who gets to make decisions; who has the resources; who has the authority. By promoting the administrative modernization the Government will not only accelerate the Third Wave of Reforms but also contribute to the comprehensive multi-dimensional agenda of the nation’s rejuvenation, across the entire reform package.

Topics discussed at the meeting were capacity building for public service, decentralization, transparency and accountability.

Dr Zaw Oo, adviser to the president, said the discussions were designed to sharpen the potential of government staff, while Prof Dr Aung Tun Thein stressed government employees should get themselves ready to serve the people.

The workshop will continue on 24 May.

In the afternoon, the president, accompanied by union ministers and deputy ministers, inspected the reclamation of Meiktila (North) Lake in Meiktila, Mandalay Region. The president and his entourage listened to the religious protection verses recited by members of the Sangha to ensure a safe reclamation of the lake. The president also presented offerings to the monks.

At a temporary briefing hall, Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing gave a progress report to the president, including the history of the lake.

The reclamation of the lake is expected to finish in two months with the use of heavy machinery. On completion, the lake will be able to irrigate 7,350 acres of paddy plantations.—MNA

Yangon, 23 May—
The Ministry of Cooperatives has provided a total of more than K224 billion in loans to over two million households in 307 townships and 23,000 villages across the country, according to the ministry.

The new loans were given out to the cooperatives in Yangon region on Saturday morning, witnessed by Vice President U Nyan Tun at the National Indoor Stadium (1) Thuwunna in Thingankyun Township. At the event, the vice president said Myanmar is creating laws and bylaws to promote the livelihoods of farmers through agricultural loans and modern technologies, markets for agricultural produce and input items.

He said the cooperative system is aimed at helping its members reduce their financial dependency on the state by developing their own capital.

The Ministry of Cooperatives U Kyaw Hsan also explained rural development activities, promoting socioeconomic development and poverty alleviation schemes of the ministry by implementing eight activities of the ministry across the country. Yangon Region’s Chief Minister U Myint Swe also clarified rural development programmes and promotion of the socio-economic lives of the people in the region.

The union minister and the chief minister then disbursed the loans to the cooperatives in Yangon region.

U Khin Maung Aye, the chairman of the Central Cooperative Society and the CB Bank, gave K6,530.926 million to the cooperatives to purchase 784 motorcycles, 77 trishaws, 1,751 sewing machines and 1,564 units of agricultural equipment.

Along with 150,000 members of cooperatives from four districts of Yangon Region, Vice President U Nyan Tun and officials viewed photos displayed to showcase the activities of the cooperative ministry and the agricultural equipment to be sold in installments.

MNA

Myanmar approves investment worth...

(from page 1)

At the end of the previous fiscal year, the power sector topped the list with more than K19.32 billion, accounting for 34.22 percent, followed by oil and gas with more than K17 billion.

Other sectors in the top five of Myanmar’s FDI are manufacturing with approved capital of K5.61 billion from 485 enterprises, transport and communication with K3.183 billion coming from 28 companies and mining with K2.686 billion from 70 companies.

At the last year’s ending, the approved amount of foreign investment in Myanmar reached a total of K5.423 billion, coming from 895 permitted companies from 38 countries.

DICA’s data showed approved foreign direct investment nearly doubled from K4.1 billion in fiscal 2013-2014 to K8.01 billion in 2014-2015. Myanmar expects to receive K6 billion in the current fiscal year.

China remains the top foreign investor, with K4.458 billion from 101 companies, while Japan and South Korea are in second and third places, with K1.8 billion from 90 firms and K1.25 billion from 29 companies, respectively.

Singapore is the second largest source of FDI in Myanmar with K9.89 billion in terms of foreign investment to the existing firms, while having the largest number of companies, 124, investing in the country, according to DICA statistics.—GNLM.
Diamond orb, umbrella to be reinstalled at Pahtodawgyi Pagoda in Amarapura

AMARAPURA, 23 May — Preparations are under way to reinstall an umbrella and diamond orb dislodged by powerful winds at Pahtodawgyi Pagoda in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region.

The religious objects were recovered after being blown away during the extreme weather on the night of 8 May.

Under the guidance of the Ovadacarya Sayadaws and permission of the region government, the umbrella and diamond orb will be hoisted atop the pagoda, according to the chairman of the pagoda board of trustees.

“The largest tier of the umbrella is 14.5 feet in diameter. The whole umbrella is 36.5 feet high. It was hoisted on 23 March, 2014,” he said. “We renovated all parts of the pagoda spending more than K200 million.”

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Police crack down on alcohol-related crime around moat

MANDALAY, 23 May — Police officers are on patrol around the Mandalay moat in the evening to prevent crime, according to the Mandalay District Police Force.

“Some people drink liquor on the pavement of the moat in the evening,” District Commander Lt-Col Sein Tun said. “Police educate them not to do so and order them to go home.”

While many people enjoy the scenic beauty of the moat, walking or exercising around it at sunset, some people have been drinking alcohol in the area and causing trouble, according to the police.

To prevent crime, officers from police stations Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5 are on patrol around the moat at night.

In 2014, police took action against people in 3,858 cases involving alcohol and public nuisance around the moat. From January to third week of May 2015, the police have taken action against lawbreakers in 949 cases.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay)

New bridge links villages in Hinthada Tsp

HINTHADA, 23 May — The Thazi-Thoungngu Bridge was commissioned into service in Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 19 May, with the aim of improving accessibility for local residents.

Abbot of Mokaung monastery Bhaddanta Sudhammacara-rabhivamsa, District Deputy Commissioner U San Htay and well-wisher U Win Zaw formally opened the bridge.

The newly opened bridge links Thazi and Pyakatat village-tracts in the township.

Well-wisher U Win Zaw, wife Daw San Shin and family donated K10 million toward construction of the bridge, in addition to K5 million from Hlut-taw representatives of Hinthada Township and K25 million from local residents.

Kyaw Kyaw (Hinthada)

Tree-planting project aims to increase shade in Mandalay

KYAUNGON, 23 May — Zartiman Youth Readers Association in Shwelaungnyunt Ward, Aungmyethazan Township, plans to plant shade trees in public places in Mandalay District as of 5 June, 2015.

“We set a goal of growing the shade trees to encourage local people to conserve the environment and reduce high temperature in Mandalay,” said an official of the association. “Our association has been growing trees since 2013 as part of efforts for environmental conservation. “We planted trees in the public places in Mandalay Region annually.

“We plan to cultivate more than 5,000 saplings of shade trees in the rainy season.”

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

New school buildings opened in Ayeyawady Region

KYAUNGON, 23 May — Japan-funded two new school buildings in Kyaunggon Township and one in Hinthada Township were opened on Thursday, in Ayeyawady Region, with aims to promote educational standards of rural schoolchildren.

The two one-storey RC buildings in Kyaunggon Township were constructed at a cost of US$112,859 financed by the Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme. Also under the same scheme, Thamine BEPS in Hinthada Township was built at a cost of US$ 118,122.

A 120’ x 30’ building is located in Byikegyi Village and a 70’ x 30’ building in Zeengu villages. All are equipped with six classrooms, toilet and full furniture each.

At the opening ceremony, Mr. Sachio Otaki, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan, handed over the documents relating to the new buildings to the Township Department of Education.

The government of Japan has assisted 726 various grassroots projects in Myanmar under the GGP scheme since 1993 with the aim of promoting relations between the two countries.

David (Kyaunggon) & GNLM
Xi calls for friendly cooperation at Sino-Japanese event

BEIJING, 23 May — Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday showed up at a ceremony aimed at expanding the countries’ people-to-people exchanges with Japan, calling for friendly cooperation between Asia’s two biggest economies.

Xi’s attendance at the ceremony in Beijing’s Great Hall of the People is the latest sign of thawing relations between Japan and China.

But at the event, in which senior Chinese officials and a Japanese delegation of about 3,000 people participated, Xi said at the same time that China will never accept words and actions by Japanese leaders that distort history.

Xi denounced Japan’s past militarism, as this year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Toshihiro Nikai, a 76-year-old lawmaker from Japan’s ruling party, mentioned in his speech joint activities by Japanese leaders and the Chinese President.

That is the order for a so-called ‘regional hub’ for climate change or disasters.” The two-day meeting, which brings together Japan and the 16-member Pacific Islands Forum, takes place amid an increase in China’s maritime assertiveness and economic clout in the re-source-rich region.

“What we should have are two-way relations that are...entirely free of threats using force or coercion. That is the order for a so-ciety of Pacific citizens,” Abe said in unveiling a new vision for Tokyo’s di-plomacy toward Pacific is-land states, apparently with China in mind.

To better tackle cli-mate change and natural calamities, Abe called for a “community committed to the equality of all be-fore the law, which places importance on democracy and has great regard for the human rights of each indi-vidual.”

It is a commitment to make our ocean a sea that...entirely free of threats using force or coercion. That is the order for a so-called ‘regional hub’ for climate change or disasters.”

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It is a commitment to make our ocean a sea that is both pacific and prosper-ous and a place that brings public diplomacy to work more effectively in the future. Affected by years of frosty government-to-government relations due to disagreements over terri-tory and wartime history, demand among Japanese citizens to travel to China has sagged since hitting a record 3.98 million visits in 2007.

In stark contrast, despite regional political tensions, Chinese visitors to Japan have reached all-time highs in recent months.

The number of Chinese visitors to Japan in the first four months of 2015 nearly doubled from a year earlier to 1.33 million, supported by the weakness of the Japanese yen and more relaxed visa regulations.

The data released by the Japan National Tourism Organization on Wednesday showed that Chinese traveler arrivals topped 400,000 in April, the first time to do so on a monthly basis since 2010.

During the talks, Abe and Xi agreed to prevent the disagreements from impar-ing the overall relationship between the two countries and to promote exchanges in various fields, according to Japanese government officials. — Kyodo News

Abe vows more than 55 bil yen to Pacific island nations over 3 yrs

Japan has hosted the summit with the Pacific nations once every three years since 1997.

In the latest summit at Spa, near two countries, the leaders of 14 Pa-cific island states and ministers from Australia and New Zealand are participat-ing.

The declaration sets out seven pillars of cooperation — disaster risk reduction, climate change, the envi-ronment, people-to-people exchanges, sustainable de-velopment in various fields, according to Japanese government officials.

Measures to help the Pacific island nations combat climate change include Japan’s establishment of the Pacific Climate Change Centre and disaster-resilient infrastructure building.

A new programme to train young leaders in the Pacific will also be launched, the declaration said. Japanese officials said the centre will help train people as a “regional hub” for climate change measures, while a new programme will see 100 young government officials from the Pacific island countries study at Japanese univer-sities.

The declaration noted that Japan and the Pacific island states have agreed to schedule meetings of the high-level summit, which was last held in 2012.

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Ranking female leftist rebel, five others nabbed in S Philippines

DAVAO CITY, (Philippines), 23 May — The mil-i tary on Saturday said it has arrested a ranking leftist rebel and five others in south-ern Philippines.

A female political in-structor of the New People’s Army (NPA) identified only as Carla, and five others were apprehended on Friday by soldiers from the army’s 28th Infantry Battalion at a hinterland community in Don Mariano village, Lopez township in Mindanao’s Davao Oriental province around 3 pm local time, said Eduardo Gutab, spokes- man of the military’s Eastern Mindanao Command.

The soldiers were on se-curity operations when they arrested the six people, and recovered from them im-provized bombs, a fragmen-tation grenade, two cal .45 pistols with ammunition and backpacks full of subversive documents.

“Our soldiers fired a warning shot and surrounded the suspects who did not re-sist,” said Benjamín Tiangco, a local army commander. Tiangco said the suspects were now at the custody of the local police for the filing of appropriate charges.

Since January, at least 36 NPA members have been arrested by police and mili-tary in Eastern Mindanao, the Eastmincom official said. The 4,000-strong NPA, armed wing of the Commu-nist Party of the Philippines, is fighting a leftist insurgen-cy in 60 Philippine provinc-es since 1969.

UN chief says to continue support Vietnam in fulfilling MDGs, SDGs

HANOI, 23 May — Vis-iting UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Friday said the UN will continue to support Vietnam in socio-econ- omic development, fulfilling Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 Sustainable De-velopment Goals (SDGs).

The UN chief made the visit, which marks meetings with General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong in Vietnam’s capital Hanoi on Friday. Speak-ing at the meeting, the UN chief praised Vietnam’s efforts in joining in UN’s activities, especially the
country’s participation in UN Peacekeeping mission, reported Vietnam’s state-run news agency VNA.

The Vietnamese par-ty chief, for his part, ex-pressed his gratitude for the UN’s supports in the country’s post-war reha-bilitation, financial aid, as well as financial, personnel and technical assistance in poverty reduction, hunger elimination and socio-econ- omic development.

The visit of Ban Ki-moon to the country plays an important role in boost-ing the cooperation be-tween Vietnam and the UN, Trong said, adding that Vietnam will continue to participate in UN’s activi-ties for peace, security and development in the region and the world. UN Secre-tary-General Ban Ki-moon is paying a visit to Vietnam on Friday and Saturday at the invitation of Vietnam’s President Tran Dai Quang. —Xinhua

Toshihiro Nikai (C), an influential Japanese lawmaker, visits the Palace Museum in Beijing on 23 May, 2015. He hopes to hand a personal letter from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Chinese President Xi Jinping during his trip through the following day as the two countries try to secure a broader thawing of relations. — Kyodo News

Nguyen Phu Trong (R), general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, meets with visiting UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Hanoi, Vietnam, on 22 May, 2015. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is on his 2-day official visit to Vietnam. — Xinhua
US, Cuba make progress on restoring ties but no deal yet

WASHINGTON, 23 May — Cuba and the United States reported making progress toward restoring diplomatic relations following two days of talks and pledged on Friday to continue informal negotiations in the coming weeks.

The chief US negotiator said the two sides may not need another formal round of talks to reach agreement, indicating major differences had been resolved.

“If the former Cold War rivals ultimately reach a deal to end more than half a century of estrangement, it would fulfill a pledge they made five months ago when US President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro announced the agreement.”

The so-called interests sections in Washington and Havana could be upgraded to embassies, and ambassadors could be named in place of the current chiefs of mission. Washington severed diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961, soon after Cuba’s revolution that steered the island into alliance with the Soviet Union and decades of hostility with its northern neighbour.

The chief US negotiator, Josefina Vidal, also reported progress had been made.

“The four-day talks focused on Security and Disarmament, Political Issues, Economic Affairs and Transportation,” said the US assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere Affairs, told reporters after two days of talks at the State Department.

Since Obama and Castro’s landmark announcement in December, the two sides have met twice in Havana and twice in Washington, and the two presidents have also met for talks during a regional summit in Panama in April.

The chief Cuban negotiator, Josefina Vidal, also reported progress had been made.

“The meetings were productive and the US and Cuba have agreed to continue working towards the restoration of diplomatic relations,” Vidal said.

One important Cuban demand was to be removed from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, a designation that imposed sanctions on some companies doing business with Cuba.

Obama announced on 14 April he would take Cuba off the list, subject to a congressional notification period that ends on 29 May.

That has allowed Cuba to once again find a bank to handle its accounts in the United States.

Citing “diverging expectations of state parties for a progressive outcome,” the Algerian ambassador said “it would be impossible for any single consensual document to possibly meet the highest aspirations of all parties.”

With the current meeting — held every five years — the first to close without adopting a final document, the conference’s effectiveness in promoting its agenda of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy may be thrown into question.

The New York Times reported progress had been made, but “the failure to produce an outline for actions for the next five years at the meeting, which took place in the 70th anniversary year of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, will likely raise concerns that efforts to advance disarmament toward a world free of nuclear arms will lose momentum.”

The conference president, Taisou Feroukhi, admitted a lack of consensus at a plenary meeting that was held after hours of delay. Citing “diverging expectations of state parties for a progressive outcome,” the Algerian ambassador said “it would be impossible for any single consensual document to possibly meet the highest aspirations of all parties.”

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WASHINGTON, 23 May — Top aides to former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton fretted over how she would be portrayed after the 2012 Benghazi attacks that killed the US ambassador to Libya and three other Americans, emails released on Friday showed.

The emails also showed Clinton and her top aides reviewing information on her personal email account about the Benghazi attacks that was classified “secret” by the FBI just prior to their release.

Clinton, the frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, has come under intense scrutiny for using a personal email account, hosted on a private server in her New York state home, instead of a government one for messages she sent and received as secretary of state.

The move by the FBI to classify some of the material could further fuel criticism that she handled sensitive information on her private email.

But State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told that the information classified by the FBI amounted to “less than two sentences.”

“The email and the information in this email ... was not classified at time it was sent,” Harf said.

The emails released on Friday did not appear to support for Republican accusations that Clinton was involved in efforts to downplay the role of Islamic militants in the attacks on a US diplomatic compound and CIA base in Benghazi. Nor did they indicate that Clinton was personally involved in decisions that resulted in weak security at the Benghazi outposts.

But the correspondence did offer a glimpse into how Clinton’s team was concerned about her image immediately afterward.

A senior adviser to Clinton, Jake Sullivan, forwarded an email to another State Department official about positive media coverage of a statement she gave on 12 September, 2012, the day after the killings.

“Really nice work guys,” State Department official Matthew Walsh wrote in an email to other staffers, which linked to a story on the Slate news site praising Clinton’s comments about Benghazi as “her most eloquent new conference as secretary of state.”

Sullivan, Clinton’s deputy chief of staff, passed the email on to her with the letter “FYI.”

In another email from September 2012, Sullivan assured the secretary of state that she had used the correct language to describe the lead-up to the Benghazi attacks.

US officials’ exact wording of the attackers’ motivation had become important because the Obama administration initially said the attacks were a spontaneous protest against an anti-Islamic film posted on the Internet.

The US ambassador to the United Nations at the time, Susan Rice, drew heavy criticism from Republicans for making this claim on several Sunday TV shows, even though intelligence indicated within hours after the attacks that they had been the carefully planned work of Islamist militia members.

Sullivan assured Clinton that her language when discussing the attacks in public had been correct.

“You never said spon- taneous or characterized the motives, in fact you were careful in your first statement to say we were assessing motive and method,” he wrote in an email.

A number of the emails to Clinton, some from high-ranking officials, are flattering to the former first lady.

After Clinton appeared on television the day after the Benghazi attack, a lawyer for Sherwood-Randall, a White House official, sent a mes- sage to her via Sullivan which described Clinton’s performance as “emphatic and unflinching and inspiring; she was wise and steady and strong. My 80 year old mother called from LA to say, ‘She was like our rock of Gibraltar.’”

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton talks to the media after a campaign appearance at the Smuttynose Brewery while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination in Hampton, New Hampshire on 22 May, 2015.—Reuters

Long a focus of Re- publican investigators in Congress, allegations that Clinton was negligent on Benghazi are putting her under more intense scrutiny now that she is running for the Democratic Party nomi- nation in the 2016 presiden- tial election.

Republicans say the Obama administration was lax about the security that un- solved questions and issues remain as it relates to Beng- hazi.

He also complained that there was a significant gap in the emails between late April and 4 July, 2012, a period when threats from militants in Benghazi were being regularly report- ed.—Reuters

Mexican gangfire kills 43 as government hits gang hard

ZAMORA, (Mexico), 23 May — Government security forces killed 42 suspected drug cartel henchmen and suffered one fatal- ity in a firefight in western Mexico on Friday, an official said, one of the bloodiest shootouts in a de- cade of gang violence wracking the country. National Security Commissioner Monte Alejandro Rubido said one federal policeman died and another was injured in the three hour battle on a ranch just inside the Michoacan state border with Jalisco, home of Guadalajara, Mexico’s second-biggest city.

The clash was one of the heaviest to hit Mexico since Pres- ident Enrique Pena Nieto took of- fice in December 2012 pledging to put an end to years ofgangland violence that have claimed more than 100,000 lives since 2007 alone. Government officials said the 42 killed by security forces near the town of Tanhuato were suspected members of the Jalisco New Generation (JNG) cartel, a gang based in the neighbouring state that has supposedly undermined Pena Nieto’s pledge.

The gunfight began after se- curity forces alerted to an “inva- sion” of the ranch approached the 112 hectare property and were fired upon by a group of armed men, Rubido said.

After calling in air and ground support, government forces ground down their opponents with the aid of a helicopter, in the end capturing three suspected gang members and seizing a grenade launcher and 39 guns of varying calibres, he added.

Earlier, a government official told Reuters that two federal po- lice had died in the exchanges near Tanhuato, where a week ago, fed- eral forces replaced local police af- ter the assassination of a candidate for mayor in a nearby town.

Rubido said officials from the national human rights com- mission (CNH) had been sent to the ranch, where the number of dead was the highest in any clash between the government and sus- pected gangsters since a controver- sial incident last June.

Then, the government first reported that 22 gang members

were killed in a shootout with sol- diers in central Mexico. However, subsequent investigations showed that more than half of the dead had been executed, embarrassing the government. Jalisco is one of the engines of the Mexican econo- my, but the state’s southern border turned into a battleground between the JNG and the Michoacan-based Knights Templars, a gang whose leadership has been shattered over the past 14 months.

Capitalizing on the Templars’ losses, the JNG has become the biggest threat to the government, killing at least 20 police since March. On 1 May, its gunmen shot down an army helicopter in south- western Jalisco, claiming the lives of six military personnel. —Reuters

APEC ministers seek to push new free trade area

BORACAY ISLAND, (Philippines), 23 May — Trade ministers from 21 Asia-Pacific economies kicked off a meeting in the Philip- pines on Saturday, seeking to ac- celerate efforts toward the creation of a region-wide free trade zone and boosting regional integration.

During the two-day confer- ence on the resort island of Bora- cay, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum ministers are expected to agree on details of how to proceed with a study that will look into the possibility of implementing a new trade scheme known as the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, according to a draft of their declaration, obtained by Kyodo News, which will be adopted on Sunday.

The APEC ministers are con- tinuing efforts toward crystallizing FTAAP following their leaders’ summit held in November in Bei- jing, where they affirmed commit- ment to realizing “as early as possible” and agreed to launch a “collective strategic study” whose results are expected to be reported by the end of 2016.

The meeting comes at a time when negotiations for a Trans-Pa- cific Partnership free trade initia- tive — which include the United States, Japan and 10 other coun- tries but not China — have stalled despite Washington striving to se- cure a deal by this summer.

Other agenda items include proposals for reducing tariffs, fighting protectionist movement in world trade, and building better infrastructure in the fast-growing region.

During the gathering, Japan is advocating an initiative to plan and build infrastructure based on considerations of safety, long-term durability and the environment, arguing that saving on initial costs for infrastructure develop- ment ten results in higher overall costs for maintenance, according to govern- ment officials.

The idea is strongly supported by the United States amid China’s growing influence in the region’s infrastructure development, under- scored by the establishment of the Beijing-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the officials said.

The 21st APEC Economic Forum, established in 1989, groups Aus- tralia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Chi- na, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Sin- gapore, Taipei, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.
Residents can play part in tackling seasonal floods

By Aung Khin

As the rain starts falling on Yangon, the city is experiencing floods that are fueling traffic congestion, despite the Yangon City Development Committee’s efforts to improve the drainage system, especially in six downtown areas.

The city of more than 6 million people is prone to flooding whenever heavy rains fall due to a drainage system that has been poorly maintained for many years.


"The Lehtunmalar pwé was held by the custom in fields under the Aungbinle Tank and after the founding of Mandalay it took place on a site east of the city on the road to Yankintaung. Starting from a point immediately west of the north end of Thatonlone Village a square plot was marked out approximately containing 5010. The plot was divided into 10 for the king and 10 for the queen. Bazarr stalls were erected along the road from the east gate [Utheik]. The king came out in royal state with the court and proceeded down the Nadi chaung to a place in the latter half of Nayon. King Mindon had three categories. Firstly, sacred images and statues he brought from Amarapura to his new capital city Ratanapony. Secondly, religious edifices and sacred images already located in Mandalay areas long before he moved there. Thirdly, monuments and images he built and made during his reign.

To begin with the first category, we have two sacred Buddha images brought from Amarapura and Anya Thahtaw pagoda on an island near Thabeik-kyun town north of Mandalay. The former was an iron image of a medium size and weight named "Sanda mani" and the latter was of Buddha carved out of a thrakhan wood, about 2½ inches. Each has its legend and story. Regarding the iron image it was cast by King Bodawpaya in 1802. While he was personally supervising the construction of a gigantic brick stupa at Mingun on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River, he was residing in a temporary palace on the island known now as Nantaw ya kyun [Palace Island]. There he cast an iron sitting Buddha Image of 11368 viss in weight, probably to be installed at the brick stupa. But the stupa was left unfinished. The iron image was taken to his capital city Amarapura. When his successor King Bagyidaw moved his capital to Irwaddy, the iron image was taken there. Then again when his successor King Thayawady moved back his capital city to Amarapura, the iron image was returned there. After King Mindon founded Ratanapony, he moved the iron image there in 1867, a year after the Palace Rebellion of 1866.

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The Glorious Spirit

By Kyi Mun

It is glorious to be fully alive. It is more glorious to serve the people fervently. It is most glorious to live and move and have our being in freedom.

Glorious means:
(1) Deserving or bringing great fame or success: a glorious victory or a glorious chapter in our country's history.
(2) Very beautiful and impressive; a glorious sunset.
(3) Extremely enjoyable: a glorious trip to Rome.
(4) Hot with the sun shining: they had three weeks of glorious sunshine.

Spirit means:
(1) The part of a person that includes their mind, feelings and character rather than their body: the power of the human spirit to overcome difficulties.
(2) Spirits: a person’s feelings or state of mind: to be in high/low spirit.
(3) Courage, determination or energy: Show a better fighting spirit.
(4) Attitude: a state of mind or mood: to be in high/low spirit.
(5) Loyalty feelings: Community spirit, team spirit.
(6) Attitude: a state of mind or mood: to approach the situation with the wrong spirit.

FOR:
- Love
- Pardon
- Joy
- Hope
- Faith
- Light
- Selflessness
- Think clearly
- Act purely
- Love dearly

AGAINST:
- Hatred
- Unforgiveness
- Sadness
- Despair
- Doubt
- Darkness
- Selfishness
- Think the most
- Feel the noblest, and
- Act the best

“Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, To all the people you can, As long as you can ever.”

Just as it was said by – John Wesley

It is tremendously glorious to:
- Love All
- Serve All
- Help Ever
- Hurt Never

It is immensely glorious to:
- Never Give Up
- Never Give In
- Stand Up To It, and
- Fight It Through To Victory
- Dare Nobly
- Will Strongly, and
- Never Fall In the Path of Duty

It is really glorious to:
- Make the most of your life,
- A superb character, and
- A masterpiece.

NOW, please let’s try to explore some more meanings of having a Glorious Spirit as follows:

FOR: Stainlessness (Morality) • Avarice
Letting Go/Flow (Concentration) • Delusion
Seeing Through (Wisdom) • Ill-will

G for Greatness of Spirit
L for Lofliness of Heart
O for Open-Big-Sky-Mind
R for Respectability
I for Integrity
O for Opulence of Wisdom
U for Unconquerable Spirit
S for Strength & Staying Power
S for Strategy
P for Purpose
I for Insight
R for Revolutionary Ideas
I for Invincible Mind
T for Tough-mindedness

Conclusion

It is really glorious to fully understand and consistently practice the following four greatest things in life:

- Health is the Greatest Gain
- Contentment is the Greatest Wealth (Contentment in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures)
- Affection is the Best Relative
- Purity of Mind is the Greatest Bliss

Ref : Dhammapada

The last old Myanmar capital city “Ratanapon” ...

(from page 8)

The second statue was a thanaka wood statue of 2½ inches, said to be one of the statues carved out of the Thiknet wood which King Alaungthib of Bagan dynasty received as a gift from Sakka deva, during his maritime journey along Myanmar sea coasts. It was enshrined in Anya Thiha taw pagoda on an island near Thabeikkyin town. This pagoda was the favourite place for pilgrimage by Myanmar kings not only because of the sublimity of the pagoda but also of the scenic beauty of the island. It was during his visit to this pagoda that King Singu was overthrown by his cousin Prince of Phaungka who took over the Inwa Palace with his armed followers. On rushing back to Inwa, King Singu met his untimely end by the sword of Bodawpuya.

Since then, Anya Thiha taw pagoda became associated with that tragic event. No later Myanmar king dared visit it for fear of losing throne and life. But when and why the little thanakha statue enshrined there, appeared in the shrine room of Mandalay palace. It may have been either King Mindon or one of his predecessors who brought the said statue to the palace to worship as he dared not risk losing life and throne like King Singu. When the British occupied Mandalay palace, after depositing and deporting King Thibaw and royal family to Ratanagiri, India, all treasures in the palace were looted including images and statues made of gold and precious stones.

The remains were collected and sent to Shwe Kyi Myint pagoda located in the south-west outside the palace city. The small statue is now on display in the sanctum of Shwe Kyi Myint temple.

(To be continued)
Suicide bomber kills 21 at Saudi Shi’ite mosque, Islamic State claims attack

**Dubai, 23 May** — A suicide bomber killed 21 worshippers on Friday in a packed Shi’ite mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia, residents and the health minister said, the first attack in the kingdom to be claimed by Islamic State militants.

It was one of the deadliest assaults in recent years in the largest Gulf Arab country, where sectarian tensions have been frayed by nearly two months of Saudi-led air strikes on Shi’ite Houthi rebels in neighbouring Yemen.

More than 150 people were praying when the huge explosion ripped through the Imam Ali mosque in the village of Qudeh, witnesses said.

A video posted online showed a hall filled with smoke and dust, with bloodied people moaning with pain as they lay on the floor littered with concrete and glass. More than 90 people were wounded, the Saudi health minister told state television.

“We were doing the first part of the prayers when we heard the blast,” worshipper Kamal Jaafar Hassan told Reuters by phone from the scene.

Islamic State said in a statement that one of its suicide bombers, identified as Abu Ammar al-Najdi, carried out the attack using an explosives-laden belt that killed or wounded 250 people. US-based monitoring group SITE said on its Twitter account.

It said it would not rest until Shi’ites, which the group views as heretics, were driven from the Arabian peninsula.

Saudi officials have said the group is trying hard to attack the kingdom, which as the world’s top oil exporter, birthplace of Islam and champion of conservative Sunni doctrine, represents an important ally for Western countries battling Islamic State and a symbolic target for the militant group itself.

In November the Sunni ni group’s leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called for attacks on the Sunni rulers of Saudi Arabia, which has declared Islamic State a terrorist organization, joined international air strikes against it, and mobilized top clergy to denounce it. Last week Baghdadi issued another speech laden with derogatory comments about the Saudi leadership and the country’s Shi’ite minority.

Friday’s bombing was the first attack targeting minority Shi’ites since November, when gunmen opened fire during a religious celebration in Al-Hasa, also in the east where most of the group live in predominantly Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia.

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**Iran’s Yemen-bound aid ship docks in Djibouti, WFP to deliver aid cargo**

**London, 23 May** — An Iranian aid ship docked on Friday in Djibouti, where its cargo will be inspected by the United Nations before being moved to conflict-torn Yemen, Iran’s semi-official Fars news agency reported.

“The ship docked a few minutes ago in Djibouti,” Fars said.

“The ship entered Djibouti waters yesterday and after inspection by the international organization will head towards Yemen.”

Teheran has rejected Saudi accusations it is arming Houthi fighters. The ship had originally been bound for Yemen’s Red Sea port of Hodeida, which is controlled by the Houthis, but its aid cargo will now be delivered by the World Food Programme, the UN agency said on Friday.

“The cargo of the ship will be handed over to WFP in Djibouti and will be transferred to WFP-chartered vessels for shipment to the Yemeni ports of Hodeida and/or (the southern port city of) Aden,” WFP spokeswoman Abeer Etefa said.

“It will be delivered to humanitarian partners on the ground for distribution,” Etefa said. The WFP had told the 2,500 tonne cargo included supplies of rice, flour, canned fish, medicine, water, tents and blankets.— Reuters

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**UN Security Council slams “violent seizure” of Syria’s ancient city**

**United Nations, 23 May** — The UN Security Council on Friday “strongly condemned the ongoing barbaric terrorist acts” by the Islamic State (IS) in Syria, including its violent takeover of Palmyra, an ancient city in Syria.

The members of the Security Council expressed “deep concern for the thousands of Palmyra residents inside the city, as well as for those displaced” as a result of IS’s advance, the 15-nation council said in a statement.

“The members of the Security Council call for the safe passage of civilians fleeing the violence, and reaffirm that the primary responsibility to protect its populations lies with the Syrian authorities,” said the statement.

The IS has consolidat- ed its grip on the historic city of Palmyra and other swaths of territory in eastern Syria, fresh from its decisive victory over forces loyal to the Syrian government.

IS militants in Syria have entered the World Heritage site of Palmyra after seizing the town next to the ancient ruins, reports said. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said its destruction would be “an enormous loss to humanity,” but no damage has been reported there yet.— CNN

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**Islamic State fighters press advance east of Iraqi town**

**Baghdad, 23 May** — Islamic State fighters pressed an advance east of Ramadi on Friday after breaching Iraqi defences outside the city the insurgents overran last weekend in a major defeat for the Baghdad government.

The fall of Ramadi is the most significant setback for IS forces in almost a year and has cast doubt on the effectiveness of US strategy in helping Iraq to fight Islamic State.

While pro-government forces are seeking to recapture the city, Islamic State fighters have been pushing forward in the direction of Fallujah in a bid to take more territory in Anbar Province that would bring them closer to the Iraqi capital. Amir al-Falih, a close leader of the pro-government Sunni tribal force in the area, said the militants were now around 5 km (3 miles) from the town of Khalidiya next to the Habbaniya military base where security forces and members of the Hashid Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation) Shi’ite militia are massing.

“We are running short of arms and ammunition and we appealed yesterday to the government for reinforcements,” al-Falih told Reuters.

Today we retreated to Siddiquiyah and I am not sure if my fighters will hold up for much longer: they are tired and broken”. Hundreds of people were fleeing as the militants advanced. Anbar provincial council member Azzal Obaid told Reuters.

Obaid said the insurgents were exploiting low morale among the security forces, and that the only way to stop them would be to deploy Shi’ite paramilitaries in large numbers.

Iraq’s top Shi’ite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, called for a plan to purge the country of Islamic State militants after they overran Ramadi.

In his first sermon since then, Sistani’s representative Sheikh Abdulmehdi al-Karbala did not refer explicitly to the city. But he said: “We must have a precise and wise plan drawn up professionally and patriotic figures ... to resolve the military and security issues and begin to purge Palmyra of all terrorists.”— Reuters

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**A car is engulfed by flames during clashes in the city of Ramadi on 16 May, 2015.**

**Reuters**
Scientists want you to know plankton is not just whale food

WASHINGTON, 23 May — Scientists on Thursday unveiled the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of the world’s ocean plankton, the tiny organisms that serve as food for marine creatures such as the blue whale, but also provide half the oxygen we breathe.

The researchers spent 3-1/2 years aboard the schooner Tara, taking 35,000 samples of plankton from 210 sites globally, determining the distribution of the organisms, tracking how they interact with one another and carrying out genetic analyses.

Plankton include microscopic plants and animals, fish larvae, bacteria, viruses and other microorganisms that drift in the oceans.

“Plankton are much more than just food for the whales,” said Chris Bowl"er, a research director at France’s National Centre for Scientific Research, and one of the scientists involved in the study published in the journal Science.

“Although tiny, these organisms are a vital part of the Earth’s life support system, providing half of the oxygen generated each year on Earth by photosynthesis and lying at the base of marine food chains on which all other ocean life depends.”

The scientists conducted the largest DNA sequencing effort ever done in ocean science, pinpointing around 40 million plankton genes, most previously unknown.

Much of the plankton was more genetically diverse than previously known. However, the genetic diversity of marine viruses was much lower than anticipated.

By removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and converting it into organic carbon via photosynthesis, plankton provide a buffer against the increased carbon dioxide being generated by the burning of fossil fuels, Bowl"er said.

Tara Expeditions Executive Director Romain Troublé said the schooner sailed about 87,000 miles (140,000 km) during the research voyage.

Those abound endured hardships such as being locked for 10 days in Arctic ice, storms in the Mediterranean Sea and in the Magellan Strait, and sailing through the Gulf of Aden with protection from the French navy against pirates.

The scientists found that most of the interactions between plankton organisms were parasitic. They also found evidence for widespread dispersal of viruses in the oceans.

“Since the most numerous members of the plankton are bacteria, the majority of viruses in the ocean are thought to infect bacteria,” University of Arizona oceanographer Jennifer Brum, another of the researchers, said.

A good way of thinking about this is that there are roughly 200 million viruses in every mouthful of seawater, and most of those viruses are infecting the roughly 20 million bacteria found in every mouthful of seawater.”

Scientists aboard the Tara Oceans vessel prepare to lower a CTD device into the ocean depths in this handout photo provided by the University of Arizona on 21 May, 2015.—Reuters

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Contest for Nokia’s HERE seen as a three-way race

NECKARWULM, Germany, 23 May — The contest for Nokia’s (NOK1V.HE) maps business has become a three-way race between German carmakers, a consortium including Uber and Baidu, and a third group including China’s Tencent and Navinfo, people familiar with the matter told Reuters on Friday.

The automakers have teamed up with private equity firm General Atlantic and Navinfo to bid for 3.3 million years, are much older than the current earliest known Homo fossils (2.8 million years old) and they are remarkably big.

On average, the cores stretch about six inches (15 cm) long and wide and weigh some 7 pounds (3.2 kg), according to the report made by Sonia Harmand and Jason Lewis of Stony Brook University in New York.

Scientists remain confused about the usage of the Kenyan tools. Harmand believed the purpose was to make sharp-edged flakes for cutting, but exactly how the tools were used is not known.

As to the question that who made the tools, candidates include some Homo species, the skeleton nicknamed Lucy and a creature called Kenyanthropus platyops, known from remains not far from the site of the stone tools.

It was long assumed that tools were only made by our genus, “Homo” members, but the new finding proves that tool-making may have begun with smaller-brained forerunners and the Kenyan tools may constitute a pre-Homo tool culture.—Xinhua

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Oldest stone tools known to date found in Kenya

BEIJING, 23 May — The oldest stone tools by far have been found on the western shore of Lake Turkana in Kenya. However, who made them or why are still not discovered.

The Kenyan tools, which have been existed for 3.3 million years, are much older than the current earliest known Homo fossils (2.8 million years old) and they are remarkably big.

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Chinese scientists develop world’s 1st oral HDAC inhibitor

Chinese scientists have teamed up with private equity firm General Atlantic to form a private equity firm General Atlantic to form what is being described as the “Industry consortium”, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters on Thursday.

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Activists damage habitat in Seattle bay during Shell oil protests

Environmental groups have vowed to disrupt the Anglo-Dutch oil company’s attempt to use Seattle’s port as a home base for two of its drilling rigs destined for the Chukchi Sea off Alaska, saying drilling in the remote Arctic waters could lead to an ecological catastrophe.

The solar-powered barge was used as a platform for speeches and a musical “jam session” over the weekend, said John Sellers, founder of the activist group Mosquito Fleet.

Sellers said he apologised for the damage, which was limited, and said crews have anchored the barge in a new area deemed by divers to be a less sensitive “underwater desert,” and materials used to moor the barge were left on the sea floor.

Activists will not face a fine, though they will have to pay for any cleanup costs, which have not yet been calculated, Smillie said, adding that activists have submitted an application for an extended-use permit for the barge from the state.

“Of course the last thing we wanted to do was to do any harm to the sea life,” said Bill Moyer, executive director of the Backbone Campaign. “If we could do damage by putting down an anchor, imagine how much damage an oil rig could do in the Arctic.” — Reuters

UN investigates reports of executions, abuses in Mali

BAMAKO, 23 May — The United Nations said on Friday it was investigating reports of serious human rights abuses, including the execution of civilians, in northern Mali following clashes this week between northern Tuareg separatist rebels and pro-government militia.

UN-brokered peace efforts in Mali’s north are in danger of unravelling because of repeated violations of a ceasefire between the Tuareg-led Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA) and the pro-government factions around the flashpoint northern town of Menaka.

The clashes on Thursday killed at least six civilians, including a Malian aid worker, rebels and a local source said.

The UN mission in Mali said on Friday it had sent a team of investigators to verify reports of serious abuses and the execution of civilians, possibly including an aid worker in Tim-Hamma, in Gao region.

“These abuses followed as a result of the clashes on 20 May between members of the Platform (pro-government militia) and the Coordination of Movements of Azawad,” the mission said.

The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, a member of the CMA coalition, said in a statement that nine people including two who worked for international aid agencies were arrested by pro-government militias and executed. It added that several others were missing.

“The execution took place in public, at the town’s cattle market and the bodies were still exposed in the public square as of 1500 GMT,” MNLA said in the statement, listing the names of the nine.

The Malian government rejected accusations that its troops were involved in the abuses. It said in a statement late on Friday that Malian soldiers had intervened in Tim-Hamma to drive out insurgents who had killed three civilians in the attack.

“The government is surprised by the allegations of abuses on the population attributed to the armed forces following the events in Tim-Hamma,” it said.

“The government rejects such accusations.”

The UN mission said it was concerned about an alarming escalation of fighting in several areas of northern Mali, which was in violation of the ceasefire and could jeopardise the peace deal.— Reuters

Japan, S Korea finance ministers agree to boost economic ties

TOKYO, 23 May — Japanese and South Korean finance ministers agreed on Sunday to boost momentum in financial and economic cooperation by resuming their regular bilateral talks after more than two years of hiatus amid strained diplomatic relations.

Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso and South Korean Strategy and Finance Minister Choi Kyung Hwan also agreed on the importance of responding to the rapidly increasing need for infrastructure investment in Asia, Aso said.

“We affirmed we would continue promoting multilateral and bilateral cooperation” after holding a “vigorous exchange of views” on various topics including global and regional economies as well as fiscal issues, Aso told a press conference after the meeting.

In their first meeting since November 2012, the two finance ministers also confirmed they would facilitate bilateral communication channels and explore ways to resume personnel exchanges between the two ministries after they were suspended in 2013.

Choi also said the two ministers were able to hold “meaningful discussions” on various matters including the two countries’ structural reforms, adding that the dialogue became “an opportunity to deepen cooperative ties” in infrastructure investments as well as the Chinese-led infrastructure investment bank.

Following their sixth meeting, the next regular bilateral dialogue is expected to be held in South Korea next year, the ministers said.— Kyodo News

US suspends Burundi peacekeeping training over protests

WASHINGTON, 23 May — The United States said on Friday it had suspended training of Burundi soldiers for African peacekeeping missions over concerns that political violence in the country would hamper their ability to participate in such operations.

A decision by Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza last month to stand for a third term has triggered violence protests, a failed coup and caused thousands of refugees to flee into neighbouring countries. “The US has temporarily halted peacekeeping training activities such as the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance programme,” State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told a daily briefing.

“Continued instability and violence in Burundi, and in particular the commission of human rights violations and abuses by security forces, could jeopardise Burundi’s ability to continue to contribute to the AMISOM peacekeeping mission,” she added.

Harf said, however, that Burundi’s military has largely acted “professionally and neutrally” during the protest, and some had lost their lives.— Reuters
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MERATUS GORGONALO VOY NO (102N)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORGONALO VOY NO (102N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Invitation for the Letter of Expression of Interest

Title: Joint Venture Project for the Construction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) terminal and Supply Chain of LPG Business (Importation, Storage, Distribution and Marketing)

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) hereby announces an invitation for the Letter of Expression of Interest to implement a joint venture project between MPE and international investors who shall be a consortium of a local company (or companies) and a foreign company (or companies) and shall have the ability in terms of worldwide experiences in LPG importation, storage, wholesale distribution, marketing and services, financial capability, reliability for long term cooperation.

The scope of the business shall include the construction of a new LPG terminal (i.e. storage tank(s), jetty, etc) on available land area in No. (1) Reiny Thaliny and the supply chain of LPG business of importation, storage, wholesale distribution and marketing.

Detailed information for LOEI submission and information related to the joint venture project are available in the Ministry of Energy’s website (www.energy.gov.mm/index.php/en/invitation) and the Facebook (www.facebook.com/MinistryOfEnergyMyanmar) as well as at the following address during office hour starting from 27.5.2015:

Planning Department
3rd Floor, Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Building No (44), Nay Pyi Taw
lpb burgevisy@gmail.com

Letter of Expression of Interest must be delivered together with all the necessary materials requested in the detailed information to the following address in person before 12:00 noon on 15.7.2015:

Managing Director
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Building No (44), Nay Pyi Taw
No telephone enquiries shall be facilitated.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV VEGA KAPPA VOY NO (1527)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV VEGA KAPPA VOY NO (1527) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Title: Invitation for Letter of Expression of Interest (LOEI) for Joint Venture Project of laboratory services which analyses the specification and qualification of the petroleum and petrochemical products and certificates or certificacies in accordance with the standard of International Organization of Standardization (ISO).

1. Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE), Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is planning to establish a Joint Venture Project of laboratory services which analyses the specification and qualification of the petroleum and petrochemical products and certificates or certificacies in accordance with the standard of International Organization of Standardization (ISO).

2. MPE hereby announces an invitation to submit the Letter of Expression of Interest (LOEI) for the Joint Venture Project of laboratory services between MPE and a company which shall have the accreditation of International Organization of Standardization (ISO) and also have experience(s) for the analysis of specification and qualification of the petroleum and petrochemical products.

3. The required data for LOEI submission and information related to the above Joint Venture Project are available in the Ministry of Energy website (http://www.energy.gov.mm/index.php/en/invitation) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/MinistryOfEnergyMyanmar) as well as at the following address during the office hours starting from 27.5.2015:

Director (Planning)
Fax: 067-411124
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Email: labvigp@vmail.com
Building No 44, Nay Pyi Taw

4. No telephone inquiries shall be facilitated.

5. LOEI shall be submitted to following address in person no later than 12:00 noon on 15.7.2015:

Managing Director
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Building No 44, Nay Pyi Taw

For inquiries to place an advertisement in the GNLM, please email waisaw.tun@gmail.com

Advertise with us!

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong to vigorous in the Andaman Sea, South Bay and East Central Bay and weather is partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 24th May, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagona, Mandalay and Magway Regions and Chin State, scattered in Upper Sagona Region, Kachin and Shan States, fairly widespread in Bago Region, Rakhine and Kayah States and widespread elsewhere in the remaining Regions and States with regional heavy falls in Mon State and isolated heavy falls in Bago, Ayeawady and Tanninhtayi Regions, Rakhine and Kayin States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) m.p.h to (40) m.p.h.

Sunday, 24 May, 2015

Eiffel Tower closes as staff strike over pickpockets

PARIS, 23 May — A strike closed the Eiffel Tower for most of Friday as staff demanded more help to deal with pickpockets operating around the Paris landmark, tower officials and unions said.

There have always been pickpockets at the Eiffel Tower, but we are now facing an organized network, said a union representative.

The strikers want additional police to be deployed.

The company said it was already cooperating with police to improve security at one of the world’s best known tourist draws. The site was closed from around 9.30 local time (0730 GMT) and reopened to visitors in the late afternoon.

The protest came a day after Paris authorities launched a drive to improve tourist safety and said theft around Paris’s main attractions was on the decline compared to last year.

The Louvre art museum closed for a day two years ago — also because of strikes related to aggressive pickpocketers that targeted both visitors and employees.

France is the most visited country in the world, welcoming almost 85 million foreigners a year, according to government figures. Paris had 47 million visitors in 2014, about half of them from abroad.

Reuters
Vienna shakes off fusty image as Eurovision carnival hits town

Vienna, 23 May — Vienna hopes the final of the Eurovision Song Contest will show a new liberal and light-hearted side to the opulent Austrian capital when the jamboree of glitter, capes and power ballads hits town this weekend.

Tourists associate Vienna with classic architecture, composers, traditional coffee houses and the Blue Danube Waltz, composed in 1866 — conservative images which the city is now trying to move beyond.

It has recently begun promoting its culture and imperial history to a wider audience including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) travellers with money to spend.

Hosting Eurovision, a kitsch contest popular with gay fans — and won last year by Austria’s bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst — should give that strategy a big boost.

Taylor Swift’s ‘Bad Blood’ breaks Vevo record

Los Angeles, 23 May — Taylor Swift’s latest single “Bad Blood” has garnered 20.1 million views in just 24 hours, setting a new Vevo record.

The action-packed music video, guest-starring A-listers Cindy Crawford, Ellen Pompeo, and Mariska Hargitay among others, dropped at the Billboard Music Awards following much social media hype, reported Entertainment Weekly. Vevo noted in a release that Swift’s collection of videos, which include hits like ‘You Belong With Me’, ‘Shake It Off’, and ‘Mean’, currently stand at five billion total views.

“People have been asking for a video like this for a while,” Swift said. “I love the idea of telling a story through a music video.”

Veteran actress Jane Fonda

London, 23 May — Veteran actress Jane Fonda feels frustrated by the sexism she sees around her.

“People are saying, ‘Oh, I love that you’re as sexy as you were 30 years ago.’ And I’m going, ‘No, I’m not!’” Fonda said. “I read ‘The Girls’ in high school, and I thought, ‘Oh God, I’m not going to be this, this, this.’ I think, ‘If I’m not, I can be. If I’m not, I can be.”

Loved having my kids on set: Arnold Schwarzenegger

London, 23 May — Actor and fitness-icon Arnold Schwarzenegger says he loved having his kids on set when they were younger as they saw watching him make action movies like “Christmas”.

Admitting that although being known as an action star can get frustrating, the 67-year-old “Terminator: Genisys” actor said he liked his children’s enthusiasm about seeing him at work, reported Femalefirst.

“People know me as kind of the action star, and how many actors or people have their own M47 tank? I used to drive an American tank when I was in the Austrian army and they handed it over when it was outdated. They wanted to destroy the tanks completely but they shipped this one over and I drive it around. It works 100 per cent! ‘My kids’ friends, every time we did an action scene, they said, ‘Make sure you’re gonna be on the set when your Daddy blows things up’. It was kind of Christmas for them, so I think people would enjoy driving around and crushing things in a tank,” said former Mr Olympia, Schwarzenegger said. — PTI

2015 Hong Kong Youth Music Festival to kick off next month

Hong Kong, 23 May — Hong Kong Youth Music Festival 2015 will kick off on 6 June at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, bringing the exhilarating singing and dancing performances to the city.

Not only the famous singers from Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the musicians and singers from South Korea will also join in the festival, such as popular artist Kim Jong Kook, the hosts of the festival told reporters on Wednesday.

Other performers scheduled to hit the stage are Hong Kong artist Kenny Bee, Adason Lo, Vincy Chan and so on. As the festival also wants to establish a platform for Asian youths to achieve their singing dreams, many young singers from Hong Kong and Chinese Mainland will be invited to take singing contest during the festival.

Upholding good reputation among all circles of society in Hong Kong, 2014 Hong Kong Youth Music Festival with a theme of “light young dreams in May” has attracted more than 10,000 audiences. Sponsored by Hong Kong-based Asia Pacific Daily and Hua Jing Society, this year’s festival will be free to audiences and it will be dedicated to culture interaction in Asia and spreading the optimism. — Xinhua
I would never choose to leave Chelsea, says Mourinho

London, 23 May — Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho would not choose to leave the club he has just steered to another Premier League title but he is prepared to manage another English team, the Portuguese coach has told the BBC.

Mourinho, 52, said in an interview with the Football Focus programme, to be shown on Saturday, that having come back to Stamford Bridge in 2013 for a second spell in charge he would only leave if owner Roman Abramovich did not want him.

“I see myself coaching another club, yes, but I love Chelsea and I am in Mr Abramovich’s hands and until then I’m here,” he said. “The day Mr Abramovich hands it over, I think that’s it.”

He said Chelsea had used his name as a “symbol of hope” when they were struggling and needed someone to help them win titles.

Mourinho said he would not want to return to manage another English team.

LOUIS, 23 May — Owners of an oil pipeline that burst in California this week must take numerous corrective measures, including an in-depth analysis of factors contributing to the spill and a plan to fix any flaws found, before they can restart the line, US safety officials said on Friday.

The corrective action order issued Thursday by the US Transportation Department’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration, or PHMSA, is not regarded as a disciplinary enforcement sanction against the company, Plains All American Pipeline LP (PAA.N), officials said.

But it requires a detailed and lengthy list of actions before the oil reservoir operations, starting with removal of the failed pipe for metallurgical and mechanical tests, purging the line of remaining petroleum and an independent review of inspection results, past and present.

It also mandates a “root-cause analysis” that explores not only the direct cause of the spill but “every contributing factor” that may have played a part, such as any safety compliance issues, said Linda Daugherty, a deputy associate administrator for the agency.

The order sets deadlines for some actions: 45 days to complete tests of the failed pipe segment, 60 days for the root-cause analysis and 90 days to submit a plan for remedying any problems.

No overall time frame was given for putting the pipeline back online, but Daugherty said she did “not anticipate a quick restart.”

Word of the action came as Santa Barbara County’s district attorney, Joyce Dudley, said she was consulting with federal and state prosecutors on the potential for bringing a criminal or civil case against the pipeline company. The company declined to comment. PHMSA generally issues corrective action orders for serious pipeline spills when there is no clear understanding of the cause, as is the case in California, Daugherty said.

According to the agency, an estimated 1,700 to 2,500 barrels of crude petroleum gushed onto San Refugio State Beach and into the Pacific Ocean about 20 miles (32 km) west of Santa Barbara when the underground pipeline, which runs along a coastal highway, ruptured on Tuesday. —Reuters

Koons sculpture raises 12 million euros at Cannes AIDS auction

CANNES, (France), 23 May — A huge sculpture called “Coloring Book” by American artist Jeff Koons sold for 12 million euros ($12 million) at a star-studded charity gala near Cannes that raised more than 33 million euros for AIDS research.

It was bidder Sienna Miller, Jake Gyllenhaal, Diane Kruger, Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard were among the celebrities and millionaires at the annual amfAR “Cinema Against AIDS” event on Thursday night at the luxury Hotel de Cap-Eden-Roc in Antibes.

At the gala, a highlight during the annual Cannes Film Festival, a work by British street artist Banksy, donated by artist Leonardo DiCaprio, fetched more than a signed Picasso.

“It’s wonderful that you can gather a bunch of talented people and a bunch of wealthy people with a huge sculpture of amazing artists and that they can come together and have fun and at the same time give back,” actress Michelle Rodriguez said on the red carpet.

“And now, we’re getting closer to a cure,” added Rodriguez, who stars in “The Fast and Furious” film franchise.

The Banksy work fetched 1 million euros, nearly double the closing bid for Picassos “L’Ereinte.” Singer Andrea Bocelli also donated a dinner for 12 people with him, complete with performance, which sold twice for 1 million euros each.

In addition to the auction, British singer/songwriter Charlie XCX, Bocelli and American singer Mary J Blige entertained guests at the gala, now in its 22nd year. —Reuters

Staff and volunteers work to clean a brown pelican at the International Bird Rescue centre in San Pedro, Los Angeles, California, United States, on 22 May, 2015.

REUTERS

Safety measures ordered for failed oil pipeline in California

LOS ANGELES, 23 May — Owners of an oil pipeline that burst in California this week must take numerous corrective measures, including an in-depth analysis of factors contributing to the spill and a plan to fix any flaws found, before they can restart the line, US safety officials said on Friday.

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French Open leading seeds warn against writing off Nadal

Barcelona, 23 May — Bar-celona coach Luis Enrique on Friday dismissed questions about whether he will stay on next sea-son, saying he will comment once the current campaign, when the Catalan giants could secure a treble of trophies, is over.

Coming to the end of his first term in charge at the Nou Camp, Luis Enrique has a con-tract until June 2016 but the club is due to hold elections for presi-dent over the summer and a new regime could decide fresh faces are needed.

Barca wrapped up a fifth La Liga title in seven years last weekend and are through to the King’s Cup final to play Athletic Bilbao on 30 May and face Ju-ventus in the Champions League final a week later.

They host Deportivo La Co-runa in their final La Liga match of the season on Saturday.

“I have nothing to say,” Luis Enrique told a news conference when asked about his future.

“I have three matches ahead of me and I will talk once the season is over,” added the former Barca and Spain midfielder.

He said he had not yet dis-cussed preparations for next term with the club’s technical commit-tee.

Luis Enrique said midfielder Xavi, who announced on Thurs-day he was leaving to join Qatari side Al Sadd, would start Sat-urday’s match against Deporti-vi, after which the club captain will present the La Liga trophy to fans. Defender Thomas Ver-maelen, who has yet to debut for Barca after joining from Arsenal in the close season due to inju-ry, would also feature, the coach added.

Asked about negotiations on extending the contract of Brazilian right back Dani Alves, whose deal expires at the end of the sea-son, Luis Enrique said the player and the club “have to talk”.

Luis Enrique dismisses questions on Barcelona future

Hull boss Bruce hoping for a favour in survival fight

Barcelona’s coach Luis Enrique smiles during a news conference after a training session at the Barcelona training grounds Ciutat Esportiva Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi near Barcelona, Spain, on 22 May, 2015. Reuters

Hull boss Bruce desperate for a favour in the fight for Premier League sur-vival but friend and West Ham United boss Sam Allardyce may not be the man to offer it in the final round of matches on Sunday.

Hull are 18th with 34 points and not only have to beat Man-chester United, having lost all their seven games against them in the Premier League, but must also hope 17th-placed Newcastle United fail to defeat West Ham.

Newcastle, who have 36 points, have picked up just one point from 10 matches but wel-come a West Ham side to St James’ Park that have been given most of the week off training by boss Allardyce.

“I speak to him (Allardyce) most weeks but not this one,” Bruce told a news conference on Friday. “It is Sam’s preroga-tive (giving his players time off), it can work for you and against you.

“What he does with his team is his business. I know it is the same for whoever they play that he wants to win the game.

“West Ham is a great club and have to believe we have a chance,” Bruce said.

“First of all we have to beat Manchester United which is ne-ver easy. But there have been some strange results this sea-son and we hope we can pull it off and get favour from else-where.

“We didn’t expect to be in this position but we are. Lets hope there is one final twist because not a lot has gone our way over the past couple of months.” — Reuters

Hull boss Bruce hoping for a favour in survival fight