Central and work committees meet for successful convening of Hluttaw sessions

NAY PYI TAW, 12 June—Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Shwe Mann on Friday refuted reports that journalists have been banned from covering stories from inside parliament.

The speaker made the comment at the work coordination meeting of the central committee and working committee for convening Hluttaw sessions in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

Gov’t must examine proposed changes to ceasefire deal: senior MPC adviser

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 12 June — The government must consider amendments to the draft national ceasefire accord proposed by ethnic armed groups at the recent Law Khee Lar summit, U Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser at the Myanmar Peace Centre, said Friday.

An MPC team led by U Hla Maung Shwe met Nai Hong Sa, Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win and other members of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team representing ethnic armed groups for informal talks in Chiang Mai on Thursday.

In proposing the amendments to the draft accord approved by the peace negotiating teams from the government and ethnic armed groups in late March, the leaders at Law Khee Lar agreed that any signing of a draft deal must be inclusive of all ethnic groups.

“My understanding is that it is the time for the (government’s) Union Peace-Making Central Committee and Union Peace-Making Work Committee to define and examine further amendments to the approved draft by the ethnic side,” U Hla Maung Shwe told The Global New Light of Myanmar shortly after his return from Thailand.

“As a working group, we were there to take the amended peace draft sent back by the ethnic side to the government and report to Union Minister U Aung Min-led peace negotiating team on what the NCCT said,” U Hla Maung Shwe recounted.

On the proposed amendments to the draft ceasefire coordination team, appointed by the ethnic armed groups at the Law Khee Lar summit, to finalize the draft text for the ceasefire with the government, U Hla Maung Shwe repeated that it is up to the UPWC to decide whether the meeting will take place.

Dr. Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser to the Myanmar Peace Centre, said Friday.

Donations fund cochlear implant surgery for children

By Khai ng Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 12 June—Two young children with congenital hearing loss are set to receive free cochlear implant surgery at Yangon’s Victoria Hospital under a programme funded by community donations, Prof Soe Tin, the hospital’s chief executive advisor, said Friday.

The operations will be conducted Saturday thanks to contributions of local well-wishers—families of Tat Lann Co., and Shwe Pyi Nan Group of Companies—t o the Victoria Health Support Foundation’s Cochlear Implant Programme.

The families donated US $17,000 for the cochlear implants, which are small electronic devices that can provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard of hearing.

(See page 3)

Financial institutions meet to deal with dollar exchange rate surge

NAY PYI TAW, 12 June—Economic and political instability can have harmful effects on national stability, Union Minister U Soe Thane told a meeting with financial institutions on Friday, describing the financial crisis as a sensitive issue.

The meeting sought ways to deal with the current surge in the U.S. dollar’s value against the Myanmar kyat.

This meeting was the second between the government and banks to discuss the matter, with the first taking place on 13 May.

Union Minister U Zeyar Aung, also Chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission, noted the flow of investments is steady, with a US $1.8 billion investment expected to come in soon. He urged the Central Bank of Myanmar to manage the situation and facilitate a rapid inflow of foreign investments.

Dealers of rice, beans and pulses, edible oil, fisheries and gold reported on difficulties they faced in business transactions.

(See page 2)

MRTV channels, radio to broadcast live semifinal
Myanmar-Vietnam semifinal football match

NAY PYI TAW, 11 June—MRTV News Channel, MRTV Entertainment channel and Myanmar Radio will broadcast live the semifinal match between Myanmar and Vietnam teams in the football tournament of the 28th SEA Games as of 12 pm Myanmar standard time on 13 June. —MNA
Pyithu Hluttaw raises questions on land disputes

Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Kyaw Nyunt. MNA  

NAY PYI TAW, 12 June — Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Kyaw Nyunt responded to questions on land disputes at the Pyithu Hluttaw session on Friday.

Representative U Khin Maung Nyo of Moemaung Constituency. MNA  

Maung Nyo of Moemaung Constituency raised questions on land confiscated for a factory of the Ministry of Defence. He requested the ministry pay decent compensation to land owners, relocate posts on the land, and allow farmers to grow crops on vacant land.

The deputy minister said that a total of 3,390 acres of land were confiscated for construction of a factory for defence industry in Pauk Township and compensation of K17.4 million was paid to land owners in 2011.

He also added that peasants are allowed to grow crops in places where security of the factory cannot be breached, while posts will not be relocated, as they have been erected in the correct places.

Representative U Zaw Tun of Moemaung Constituency asked whether the ministry has plans to release 67 acres of land owned by 12 farmers in his constituency.

The deputy minister said the land was confiscated for an artillery regiment and families of the regiment are working on the land at present. However, the land is too close to military facilities and cannot be returned to former land owners, the deputy minister added.

Representative U Ye Tun of Hpisaw Constituency raised a question about 40 acres of land confiscated by a battalion in his constituency. The deputy minister said the land will be released to the former owners. The Pyithu Hluttaw approved the bill for television and radio broadcasting sent back by the Amyotha Hluttaw.

— MNA

GMS Economic Corridors Forum eyes establishment of new special economic zones in Mekong

YANGON, 12 June 2015 — Ministers and senior officials attending the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Seventh Economic Corridors Forum Thursday agreed on measures to promote the development of economic corridors, facilitate cross-border transport and trade, and enhance cooperation and private sector participation.

The GMS includes the six countries sharing the Mekong River: Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

“GMS leaders strongly committed their countries to promoting trade, tourism, industrial development, and other economic activities along GMS economic corridors,” said Stephen Groff, Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

“The development of new special economic zones, support for e-commerce, and other activities that will be undertaken following today’s forum will have a transformative impact for businesses and communities in every GMS nation.”

In a joint statement, ministers and senior officials from the six GMS countries called for a Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Program to enhance the cross-border flow of goods and people, and for a coordinated approach to developing urban areas throughout the region.

They also endorsed the Framework on GMS Cross-border E-commerce Cooperation, which seeks to advance the development of cross-border e-commerce through shared consumer markets. The GMS representatives likewise emphasized the need to boost trade through further development of economic corridors, with a focus on developing specific sections. They noted the importance of involving local authorities and communities, as well as the private sector, in corridor development.

Also present at the forum were senior national and provincial government officials from the GMS countries, and representatives from the GMS Business Forum and development partner organizations.

The Seventh Economic Corridors Forum co-hosted by Yunnan Province, the Ministry of Commerce of PRC, and ADB took place during the GMS Economic Corridors Week in Kunming, the PRC. — GNLM

High-yield Palethwe paddy seeds planted in Nyaungshwe Tsp

NYAUNGSHWE, 12 June — High-yield Palethwe hybrid paddy is being grown on a 5-acre farm plot owned by U Win Shwe in Tilaw village-tract in Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State.

The Palethwe paddy is being cultivated with the aim of producing seeds for local farmers at a fair price.

A pollination ceremony for Palethwe paddy plantation was held at the farm on 11 June.

“The paddy strain will produce 780 kilos of seeds per acre,” Head of Township Agriculture Department U Zaw Win Tun said. “One acre of quality paddy strain can distribute its seeds to 120 acres of farmlands. Thus, five acres of farmland in the village is purposed for 600 acres of farmlands in the region. We expect to distribute Palethwe paddy seeds to local farmers in the coming season.”

The pollination ceremony was attended by Shan State Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding U Sai Has Lu, Inn Ethnic Affairs Minister U Win Myint, MPs, departmental officials and local farmers.

Nay Myo Thurein

Financial institutions meet to deal...

(from page 1) Union Minister U Soe Thane urged the Central Bank of Myanmar to pump its reserved sum into assistance necessary for local banks and merchants to cope with the hike in exchange rates. He also urged foreign banks with offices here to provide financial assistance to local banks.

Union Minister U Soe Thane speaking at meeting on financial institutions. MNA

Financial institutions meet to deal...

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw puts low-cost housing complex out to tender

YANGON, 12 June — Yangon City Development Committee on Friday invited registered local and foreign companies and joint-venture firms to submit tenders to build a low-cost housing complex.

The complex will be built on an 11-acre plot on Manikyawwa Road in Dagon Myothit East Township, according to YCDC.

The tender form is available at a cost of K50,000 per copy at the Engineering Department of YCDC.

YCDC said detailed information for the project is mentioned in the tender form and has urged those interested to make submissions to the department in Yangon by 2 pm, 30 June, 2015.

Those who submit the tender form to the department need to credit K50 million to Yangon City Bank’s account No. DY-9 as a guarantee for the tender submission. — GNLM

Joint Secretary-3 U Pyae Sone Oo and officials of Myanmar Youth Entrepreneurs Association seen at Yangon International Airport on 11 June before departure for Ho Chi Min City of Vietnam to attend Mekong Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Summit 2015.—MYEA
Central and work committees meet for successful...

(from page 1)

The meeting was convened to address the failures and weaknesses at Hluttaw sessions and security problems, which are important issues for the Hluttaw, the symbol of democracy.

He said the reports of a news ban were inaccurate, saying journalists are merely not allowed to cover news from the interpreter’s booth.

He added that the Hluttaw has never prohibited interviewing representatives, union ministers or deputy ministers, with the ban on journalists covering news from the interpreter’s booth imposed because a proper location and procedures for interviews are already in place.

In conclusion, the speaker urged all to cooperate in accordance with rules and regulations.

Speaker U Khin Aung Myint of the Amyotha Hluttaw later thanked the officials who help in Hluttaw sessions. Afterwards, members of the central committee and the work committee reported on progress of work.

MNA

### Union Industry Minister meets German delegation

**NAV PYI TAW, 12 June**—Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint held a talk with a delegation led by Process Engineer Mr Walter Florian of BOSCH Pharmatec GmbH in Germany at the ministry, here, on Thursday.

They discussed supply of high-tech machinery by Germany’s BOSCH Company to the Pharmaceutical Factory (Insein) for production of medicines.

Also present at the call were officials of the Ministry of Industry.

MNA

### CCDAC manages anti-drug campaign for Yinmar project

**NAV PYI TAW, 12 June**—The Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control implements the anti-drug special work plan (Yinmar) from May to 26 June.

In the second week of the project, Region and State DACs erected signboards on anti-drug campaign in 41 townships, organized anti-narcotic talks in 35 townships, and distributed seeds of seasonal crops in 8 townships, perennial saplings in five townships and opened training courses in six townships.

Livestock Breeding Group conducted training courses in seven townships, gave vaccinations in four places in two townships and provided medical treatment in four townships. The medical group admitted 43 new patients for treatment and performed medical check-up on more than 8,600 patients. The group counselled 10 patients to take ART drug and held educational talks in two townships.

The Rehabilitation group gave talks in two townships, disseminated knowledge about anti-drug campaign to five townships, held the ceremonies to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in three townships and organized article, essay, poem and poster contests on anti-drug campaign in 39 townships.

The Information group undertook mobile library activities in 45 townships, distributed pamphlets in 48 townships, showed wall magazines in 23 townships, photo shows in 21 townships and shared knowledge about anti-drug in five townships. The prohibited chemicals supervisory group made field trips to six townships for nine times and held meetings in eight townships.

MNA

### Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Chinese ambassador

**NAV PYI TAW, 12 June**—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hosted Chinese Ambassador Mr. Yang Houlan.

A medical team led by Malaysia’s Prof Prepageran Narayanan will conduct the surgery on two boys under six years old from Yangon and Shan State. Prof Narayanan has carried out many cochlear implant operations for Myanmar patients.

Donor U Kyaw Min of Shwe Pyi Nan Group of Companies said, “I decided to make a donation after seeing my colleague’s condition.”

MNA

### Donations fund cochlear implant...

(from page 1)

A medical team led by Malaysia’s Prof Prepageran Narayanan will conduct the surgery on two boys under six years old from Yangon and Shan State. Prof Narayanan has carried out many cochlear implant operations for Myanmar patients.

Five hearing-impaired children have undergone the surgery since the programme began in 2014.

The price for a pair of cochlear implant device is US $8,500 and the cost for the whole operation amounts to around K1 million.

Donor U Kyaw Min of Shwe Pyi Nan Group of Companies said, “I decided to make a donation after seeing my colleague’s condition.”

MNA

### Donor Shein Win of Japanese firm leads charity group to Myanmar

Donor Shein Win of Japanese firm led the charity group to Myanmar.

MNA

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MNA
Kyaukme Tsp honours basketball team

KYAUKME, 12 June — A ceremony to honour Kyaukme’s U-19 men’s basketball team was held at Myittamon Hall in Kyaukme in the northern Shan State on 10 June.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chairman of the Township Development Supporting Committee U Tin Win urged more local youths to participate in sports events.

The Kyaukme Township U-19 team finished second in this year’s Summer Invitational Basketball Tournament conducted by the Myanmar Basketball Federation.

Myint Aung (KaMa)

Betel plantations thriving in Pobbathiri Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 12 June — Betel plantations are thriving in villages of Thityagon village-tract in Pobbathiri Township.

Local farmers had been planting Shwedah and Yangon strains of betel but, after finding them unsuitable for the weather in the region, switched to the Monywa Muyin strain. The farmers spent about K2 million growing 1,000 betel plants per farm.

Thanks to their efforts, the betel farms produce more than 48 kilos of betel leaves, fetching K6,000 per 1.6 kilos.

Locally, farmers use natural fertilizers and cow manure for their farms, helping sellers of these products also earn an income.

Shwe Ye Yint

Engineers and skilled workers carry out substitution of 2500-KVA transformer in place of 1250-KVA transformer at sub-power station in Kyaunggon Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 10 June, under supervision of the Pathein District Electrical Engineer. DAVID (KYAUNGGON)

Pre-school students receive medical checkups

MCWA members and medical officer perform medical checkup on children from pre-primary school.

NAY PYI TAW, 12 June — Zabuthiri Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association and Public Health Department jointly provided health care services at the pre-primary school in Shwekyabin Ward, Zabuthiri Township, on Thursday.

Chairman of the township association Daw Maw Maw and Township Health Officer Dr Lei Myinzu gave educative talks on health knowledge.

Health staff performed medical checkups on 42 children and carried out preventive measures for dengue haemorrhagic fever at the school.

Min Min Latt (Physics)
South Korea seals off two MERS hospitals; worst may be over

SEOUL, 12 June — South Korea has sealed off two hospitals that treated people with a deadly respiratory disease, officials said on Friday, even as the outbreak that has been spreading through health facilities could have peaked.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) affects some 800 people worldwide.

The 68-year-old man who brought the virus back from the Middle East visited several health centres for treatment of a nagging cough and fever before he was diagnosed, leaving a trail of infection in his wake.

The danger of the virus in hospitals had led to two being sealed off with at least 133 people — patients and staff — inside. They would be sealed off for at least the next 11 days, given the incubation period of the virus, officials said.

“Any patients can get out of their rooms,” said a city government official in the capital, Seoul, who declined to be identified.

“Nurses in protective gear are giving them food. No one can get in from outside.”

All but one of South Korea’s cases have been confirmed as originating with the businessman who travelled to the Middle East and happening in health-care centres, and the last one is likely to be confirmed as such too, the health ministry said.

MERS is caused by a coronavirus from the same family as the one that caused SARS. It is more deadly than SARS but does not spread as easily, at least for now. There is no cure or vaccine.

World Health Organization (WHO) experts are in South Korea working with the government and a delegation of Saudi Arabian health officials is meeting authorities on Friday.

The health ministry reported four new cases on Friday, the lowest daily increase in 11 days, raising hope the worst might be over.

The number of people in quarantine, either at home or in medical facilities, also declined for the first time, by 125 to 3,680, the ministry said.

The incubation period for many people exposed to infected patients is ending, which should mean a decline in new cases, said infectious disease expert Jacob Lee.

“There may be a third wave from hospitals that MERS patients had stayed at but it won’t spread as much as it has,” Lee told Reuters.

The central bank cut interest rates on Thursday in the hope of softening the blow to an economy already beset by slack demand and plunging visitor arrivals.

Alarm has spread throughout the region even though only one case has been reported outside South Korea in this outbreak, that of a South Korean man who travelled to China via Hong Kong after defying a suggestion from health authorities that he stay in voluntary quarantine at home.

South Korea’s new cases bring the total number of MERS cases globally to 1,275, based on WHO data, with at least 450 related deaths.

Cambodia, Thailand join hands to promote “Two Kingdoms, One Destination” tourism

PHNOM PENH, 12 June — Cambodia and Thailand have joined hands to boost foreign and inter-ASEAN tourism under the “Two Kingdoms, One Destination” pact, local media reported on Friday.

Tith Chantha, secretary of state at Cambodia’s Ministry of Tourism, said Cambodia and Thailand have already created stop-off points for tourists looking to explore both countries in one trip.

“Now, we’re joining with Thailand to promote ‘Two Kingdoms, One Destination.’ It will make it much easier for tourists who don’t want to visit only one country during their trip,” he was quoted by the Phnom Penh Post newspaper as saying. “Thailand has a lot of airlines operating long-haul to Europe or the United States, we don’t have many of those long flights, so we will benefit from this once the campaign kicks in.”

Thailand’s Minister of Tourism and Sports, Kobkran Wattanavangkul, told the Bangkok Post that the campaign would run from 2015 to 2017.

“The collaboration looks forward to exchanging foreign travellers and facilitating travel across both countries. The plan also promotes intra-ASEAN tourism,” Kobkran was quoted as saying.

Ho Vandy, co-chair of the Government-Private Sector Working Group on Cambodian Tourism, welcomed the initiative. He said Cambodia had been cooperating with Thailand’s tourism association since 2008.

“Now that this is being done on a governmental level, it will be a big boost because it will share benefits with both countries,” he said, adding “We have observed that we got more than 30 percent of (Cambodia’s) tourists from Thailand since the promotion began.”

According to the Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia received some 1.3 million foreign tourists in the first quarter, a 3.1-percent increase from the 1.26 million tourists during the same period last year. —Xinhua

Malaysia Airlines makes emergency landing in Melbourne

SYDNEY, 12 June — A Malaysia Airlines flight returned safely to Melbourne on Friday, having turned back within minutes of take-off after an engine fire alert went off, Air Services Australia said.

“There was an emergency declared, there was an ‘engine fire’ alert in the cabin. The plane proceeded to dump the fuel and returned to land and it landed safely at the aviation rescue sites,” a spokeswoman at Airservices Australia told Reuters by phone.

Local media reported there were 300 people on board the Airbus A330 flight to Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia Airlines was involved in two air disasters in 2014 with MH370 disappearing over the southern Indian Ocean last March and MH17 being shot down over Ukraine a few months later.

The incident could further dent confidence in the “technically bankrupt” Malaysian carrier, whose decline began long before the tragic events of last year.

Gov’t plans to lift Fukushima evacuation orders by FY 2016

TOKYO, 12 June — The government decided on Friday on a plan to lift evacuation orders covering many of the areas affected by the Fukushima nuclear disaster by the end of fiscal 2016, despite strong public concerns over radiation contamination.

The revised guidelines also include enhanced support for local businesses damaged by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami that triggered the nuclear crisis.

The government now plans to lift the evacuation orders for areas around Tokyo Electric Power Co.’s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in which overnight stays are basically restricted, allowing some 54,800 residents, or roughly 70 percent of the total evacuees, to return.

The government will speed up work to realize the lifting of evacuation orders and “materialize the areas’ future vision,” Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a relevant task force’s meeting held at his office.

But whether the evacuees will actually return is uncertain amid strong concerns over radiation contamination and changes in living conditions.

The latest plan did not mention when the government would lift the remainder of the evacuation orders for areas with higher radiation levels.

The Cabinet decision also covered policies to provide intensive support for rebuilding businesses in the devastated areas for two years through fiscal 2016 ending in March 2017.

The support measures include setting up a public-private organization to provide consultation to some 8,000 businesses that have been forced to evacuate after the disaster and help them get back on their feet.

Tourists wearing masks to prevent contracting Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) look around Myeongdong shopping district in central Seoul, South Korea, on 11 June, 2015. —REUTERS

Virus patient in South Korea isolated in hospital

SEOUL, 12 June — A Malaysian tourist, diagnosed as the first MERS case in South Korea, has been isolated in a hospital, the health ministry said on Friday.

The 68-year-old man who brought the virus back from the Middle East visited several health centres for treatment of a nagging cough and fever before he was diagnosed, leaving a trail of infection in his wake.

The virus has infected 126 people worldwide, including 46 in South Korea, where the disease was first identified in humans in 2012, and has stirred fears in Asia of a repeat of a 2002-03 scare when Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) killed about 800 people worldwide.

The 68-year-old man who brought the virus back from the Middle East visited several health centres for treatment of a nagging cough and fever before he was diagnosed, leaving a trail of infection in his wake.

The danger of the virus in hospitals had led to two being sealed off with at least 133 people — patients and staff — inside. They would be sealed off for at least the next 11 days, given the incubation period of the virus, officials said.

“No patients can get out of their rooms,” said a city government official in the capital, Seoul, who declined to be identified.

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The central bank cut interest rates on Thursday in the hope of softening the blow to an economy already beset by slack demand and plunging visitor arrivals.

Alarm has spread throughout the region even though only one case has been reported outside South Korea in this outbreak, that of a South Korean man who travelled to China via Hong Kong after defying a suggestion from health authorities that he stay in voluntary quarantine at home.

South Korea’s new cases bring the total number of MERS cases globally to 1,275, based on WHO data, with at least 450 related deaths.
Australian PM’s attack on wind turbines provokes criticism

**Canberra, 12 June** — Australia’s Prime Minister Tony Abbott launched another attack on “ugly”, “noisy” wind turbines on Friday, prompting Labour’s environment spokesman saying the matter has become “more than a joke.”

“Tony Abbott is actively campaigning against an industry that employs thousands of Australians, attracts billions in investment and reduces Australia’s carbon pollution,” Labour’s environment spokesman Mark Butler told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on Friday. “No other world leader would show such recklessness towards one of their own industries.”

After describing wind turbines as “visually awful” on Thursday, Abbott said on Friday his government’s decision to reduce the Renewable Energy Target because, as things stood, there was going to be an explosion of these things right around our country.

“There will still be some growth, but it will be much less than it would otherwise have been thanks to measures that this government has taken,” Treasurer Joe Hockey last year described wind turbines as “utterly offensive.”

The Renewable Energy Target was reduced in May to 33,000 gigawatt hours after a decline in electricity use in Australia meant the original target based on 20 percent of 2020 levels had increased to 26 percent. Rottnest Island’s sole turbine produces 40 percent of the island’s electricity needs, saving 385,000 US dollars in fuel costs and the emission of 1,100 tonnes of greenhouse gas each year.

**Environment ministry opposes new coal plant over CO2 emissions**

**Tokyo, 12 June** — Japan’s Environment Ministry said on Friday it cannot approve the planned construction of a coal-fired thermal power plant in western Japan, as it could hamper the country’s efforts to cut carbon dioxide emissions to fight climate change.

Following the March 2011 nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi complex that eventually resulted in shutting down all of Japan’s nuclear reactors, utilities and oil companies are planning to build new coal power plants across Japan, but have shown less inclination to take measures against greenhouse gas emissions.

Based on the results of the environment assessment, the ministry submitted to the industry ministry, which oversees the power sector, a nonbinding written statement saying it “cannot approve the construction at this moment” of the large-scale, two-unit coal power plant. The plant construction is being planned jointly by Electricity Power Development Co., known as J-Power, Osaka Gas Co. and Ube Industries Ltd in Yamaguchi Prefecture. “If the construction of the coal power plant proceeds as planned, it will jeopardize achieving the reduction goal (of greenhouse gas emissions),” Environment Minister Yoshio Motomatsu told reporters.

The three companies are planning to begin building the 600,000-kilowatt units in 2017 and start commercial operation of the No 1 unit in 2023.

The government has set the goal of slashing greenhouse gas emissions by 26 percent by 2030 from 2013 levels prior to a UN climate change conference slated to start on 30 November in Paris for deciding on a post-2020 regime for greenhouse gas emission reduction.

But Japan plans to slightly increase the country’s dependence on coal down the road, due partly to uncertainties over the use of nuclear power following the 2011 Fukushima meltdowns. The Environment Ministry said that if all of the current plans to newly construct coal power plants in the country were approved, the combined installed capacity would increase to 53 million kw in fiscal 2030, up 13 million kw from fiscal 2013. If those coal power plants operate at 80 percent of capacity, output could exceed some 281 billion kilowatt-hours stipulated in the government’s long-term energy mix as electricity supply from coal in fiscal 2030.

Industry minister Yoshihide Suga, who is authorized to approve construction of coal power plants, told reporters he is aware of the Environment Ministry’s concern but believes the ministry “does not reject the implementation of the project.”

He added that coal features as one of the key energy sources in the government’s energy policy, and urged the nation’s power sector to accelerate efforts to set up a framework on reducing CO2 emissions.

J-Power declined to comment on the Environment Ministry’s move.

**China detains nine for spreading rumours about the military**

**Beijing, 12 June**— Chinese authorities have detained nine people for spreading rumours on the Internet that several military officers were involved in protests and for damaging the military’s image, the military’s official newspaper said on Friday.

The nine “fabricated and spread the rumours” on the Internet, the People’s Liberation Army Daily said. They used Chinese microblogs and mobile messaging apps to “spread military-related rumours, slander military cadres and falsely accuse troops of being involved in ‘mass incidents’,” the newspaper added. “Mass incidents” are a euphemism for protests.

Some of them also “denounced the military’s image”, said the newspaper. The People’s Liberation Army Daily said. They were sentenced to up to 15 days behind bars. They also had to undergo “education”. It had provided no further details. Last month, the defence ministry said authorities had detained 10 people for spreading rumours online damaging to the military’s image, including the presence of gangs and infighting.

The military has been one of the focuses of President Xi Jinping’s sweeping crackdown on deep-seated corruption, with several senior officers caught up.

The punishment for the rumour-spreading shows the Communist Party’s growing determination to control information about alleged official misbehaviour, to avert triggering public dissatisfaction.

**Photo taken on 12 June, 2015 shows the opening ceremony of the 3rd China-South Asia Exposition in Kunming, capital of southwest China’s Yunnan Province. The 3rd China-South Asia Exposition opened here on Friday. Xinhua**
Russia’s lower house passes bill banning drift-net fishing

MOSCOW, 12 June — Russia’s lower house State Duma on Wednesday passed a bill banning drift-net fishing of salmon in Russian waters starting in January, a move likely to impact Japanese fishermen who operate in such areas in line with bilateral arrangements.

The legislation on the ban in Russia aimed at so-called exclusive economic zones where Russian fishing boats also operate will be deliberated side by side by the general council. The measure, aimed at conserving natural resources, will take effect after the upper house’s approval and is subject to President Vladimir Putin’s signature.

If the envisaged ban is enforced unilaterally by Moscow, it could have ramifications on relations with Japan, which holds annual consultations with Russia to work out terms for Japanese fishing boats to undertake drift netting.

The Japanese government has expressed concerns through various channels about the potential impact the proposed ban would have under the legislation, which was prepared by Senator Valentina Matviyenko, a Putin ally, and other influential lawmakers.

Last year, a total of 38 Japanese fishing boats operated in Russia’s EEZ off the coast of Kamchatka in Russia’s Far East and elsewhere in exchange for fishery cooperation payments. Russia has jurisdiction over natural resources within its EEZ, which extends beyond its territorial waters.

Japanese fishermen mostly from the eastern part of the northernmost main island of Hokkaido have been drift netting salmon and trout for many years.

While Russian law makers have proposed prohibiting drift nets to protect marine resources, Japanese officials have argued that there is no scientific evidence to support such a ban, saying the waters hold an ample supply of salmon and trout.

On Wednesday, May–Shunsuke Hasegawa of the eastern Hokkaido city of Nemuro called on fishery minister Yoshimasa Hayashi at the ministry in Tokyo to enlist the national government’s support in pushing against the potential ban.

A total ban would result in several million dollars in losses for the eastern Hokkaido economy, according to one estimate.

Vucic faces difficult decisions

Vucic said that talks between strongest political parties in Macedonia about ways to overcome the current deadlock on the day before had failed and Europe- an Commissioner Johannes Hahn, with whom he had met the same day, had canceled his visit to Bos- nia-Herzegovina (as there was no agreement on the implementation of reforms at all levels of government). Great antagonism is showing in Bosnia-Herze- govina, and Croatia plans to celebrate victory in the 1995 Operation Storm (which resulted in a perce- sion of at least 230,000 Serbs) on 5 August, and Serbian prime minister told journal- ists in the Serbian parlia- ment.

The situation in the Western Balkans, he said, is further complicated by the regime’s problems with turmoil in Kosovo-Metohija and by local elections in Al- bania.

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Merkel stresses Germany wants good relations with Russia

BERLIN, 12 June — German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Friday that Berlin was keen to have good relations with Mos- cow and was striving for a political solution to the conflict in Ukraine.

“We want to have good relations with Russia, but we can’t accept breach- es of international law and we will only find a political

After IMF departure, EU puts ball back in Greece’s court

ATHENS/BRUSSELS, 11 June — European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said on Friday that stalled debt talks between Athens and its creditors would restart but put the ball firmly in the Greek government’s court to come up with an acceptable deal.

Both sides tried to keep hope alive on Friday. A senior minister and close adviser to Tsipras said he hoped for a deal on June 18, at a meeting of euro zone finance ministers. Juncker also stressed the process was not yet over. “Negotiations will start again, first at a technical level, then a political one,” he told French radio.

“A deal is necessary in the coming days,” adding, “The ball is in the Greek court.”

Greece needs a deal to unlock aid or loose curbs on how much it can borrow in short term debt before a 1.6 billion euro ($1.8 bil- lion) repayment to the IMF falls due by the end of this month.

Renewed uncertain- ty sent Greece’s top share index ATG down 4 per- cent on Friday morning. The German tabloid Bild reported that the German government was holding “concrete consultations”, including about reintroducing bank withdrawals in Greece and transfers abroad should the country go bust.

Tsipras faces major problems in meeting the promises he made before his election in January. He has vowed to end the waves of austerity imposed by previous governments at home and also he needs to keep the country in the euro zone: a poll this week showed an overwhelming 77.4 percent of Greeks want to stay in the euro.

But the creditors are demanding yet more aust- erity and refusing to re- lease any aid until Athens backs down, raising the risk of default and a euro zone exit. For all the warn- ings of dire consequenc- es, Tsipras put on a show of calm confidence at the evening concert outside the ERT headquarters in an Athens suburb.

Still in the blue suit he wore at the Brussels talks, he was mobbed by sup- porters as he arrived at the party. “It’s a celebration of democracy. It is not the government that repudiates ERT but the struggles of the Greek people. Today we should all be happy and look to the future with opti- mism,” he said.

Major sticking points in the talks remain. Athens has balked at further measures such as curbing pension benefits and raising val- ue-added tax, and pressed lenders for more help to attempt to reduce the debt burden. Its own delegation also flew home from Brus- sels on Thursday.

For a deal to work, EU officials said Tsipras’s gov- ernment needed to come up with new savings and tax measures to reassure that Athens finds its unacceptable. People familiar with the talks said the two sides have come closer to agree- ing a primary surplus target but cannot agree on how to achieve it.

Juncker said he had given up the set of possi- bilities in discussions on Thursday evening, but it was not immediately clear what he would re- spond, or whether it would send counter proposals to take the talks forward.

“Whatever we do, if we don’t start address- ing the debt issue, there is no chance that the Greek talks will kick off,” said Alexis Flabouraris, a state minister. “And if the Greek economy doesn’t kickstart, the resurgent public unem- ployment, shops will close down.”

Anger against the grilling, tough meas- ures imposed on Greece has simmered in the cap- ital Athens. A group of about 50 workers gathered outside deputy labour minister’s office on Friday, demanding jobs.

That followed a larg- er protest by the Commu- nist-affiliated trade union PAME on Thursday night, thousands of whom gath- ered to protest in a central square.

Asked about the up- coming IMF payment, Deputy Finance Minister Dimitris Nikolau told SKA radio: “It is our job to be paying our obligations at the time when they are due.”

MADRID, 12 June — Spain’s King Felipe VI has stripped the title of duchess from his sister, the palace said, heaping pressure on Cristina de Borbon to give up her Spanish royal rights as she prepares to stand trial on tax fraud charges.

The bold move by the 47-year-old king, crowned this month nearly a year ago after the abdication of his father Juan Carlos, is part of a bid to revive the image of a monarchy tarnished by scandals. Cristina is due to stand trial as soon as this year and will be the first Spanish royal to face prosecution. Graft investi- gations in Spain have ex- posed high-level corruption throughout society, damag- ing Spaniards’ faith in their institutions.

The title of Duchess of Palma de Mallorca was conferred on Cristina by her father on her marriage in 1982 to the then world classic Olympic handball player Inaki Uranga, who has been charged with fraud and tax evasion after public funds following a long-running investigation into his Noos Foundation charity.

Late last year, the cou- ple as well as 15 others were ordered to stand trial following the probe. No date has yet been set, al- though the case is expected to come to court in the sec- ond half of this year.

Both have denied any wrong-doing. — Reuters

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Vucic: Serbia faces difficult decisions

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Instability and poverty have hand in migration problem

By Kyaw Thura

Pressure from a certain global superpower on Myanmar to treat Bengalis as citizens has been a cause of anxiety for the country in recent weeks. The fear probably stems from the repercussions of communal violence which broke out in some parts of the country two or three years ago.

Earlier in June, United State Assistant Secretary of State Anne Richard called on our government to accept Bengalis as citizens so as to solve the root cause of the migratory crisis in Southeast Asia. Her words resembled those of U.S. President Barack Obama, who noted Bengalis have lived in Myanmar for generations and that they are as much citizens of Myanmar as anyone else.

Their comments prompted protests of Myanmar people from all walks of life, including monks, to take to street, carrying banners and wearing T-shirts emblazoned with slogans such as, “Boat people are not from Myanmar,” and “Myanmar should not take the blame for the problem of boat people.”

While influential political parties have kept silent on the issue, the government took a bold step to rebut the unjustified accusations of the West. The truth will always out. The boat people themselves have confessed that they belong to Bangladesh, whose authorities are as a result making arrangements to bring their citizens home in lots.

No country will ever turn a blind eye to the plight of its citizens languishing at sea or abroad. Naturally people from failed states tend to migrate to where the grass looks greener, but often at the risk of discrimination.

All things considered, migration problems go hand in hand with political instability, poverty, and racial discrimination.

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Let him go the way he is destined to

On one cool, fresh morning in the cold season, my father, sipping coffee at the coffee table, abruptly asked me “Son, what will you do for your living when you grow up?”.

At that time I was only a fifth standard student. I was vexed a little by this unexpected query for which I was not prepared at all. I scratched my head.

“Father, I want to be a teacher and writer both at the same time.”

In no time I saw a restless, anxious expression in his countenance. It is natural that every parent has expected to hear from the kid such encouraging words as “I want to be a politician or a great engineer”. But I had no desire to betray myself. I hate to hear hollow words, I must be honest with my father as true to my conscience. More importantly I must be not in the state of telling lies to my guardian spirit. So without a long thought I swiftly responded with what I have had on my mind.

“No damn good!”

“Why, father?”

“Don’t you have ear to hear that a teacher or a writer always cuts a sorry figure in our society?”

I bent my eyes to the floor. To exchange words with parent or teacher is against my traditional culture. I knew about it. But this time I gathered myself together and ventured to explain about my intention for life.

“That’s my lifelong dream, father. It’s part of me. My interest is in teaching and writing. I wish I were a Dr. Hnin Aung, Dr. Khan Maung Nyunt or Daw Khin Myo Chit. They are my idols. They are bilingual writers English and Myanmar. Besides these writers, there are world famous authors like Charles Dickens, Sir Rider Haggard, Pearl S. Buck, Leo Tolstoy, etc, who can be counted on one’s fingers and whom I have a great respect for. It is because I am fascinated with their works.”

“Don’t give me your lame excuses. Otherwise you have to be prepared to die of starvation. Mind my words! Have you ever heard that either a teacher or a writer is fully fed. Hem! Hem! Don’t be so stupid. I don’t want to hear any more. Later don’t say, “Sorry, father!”

A dialogue between father and son ended in fiasco. Some years elapsed. I graduated from the Yangon University. With a newspaper folded under his arm-pit, father gestured for me to come to him and said, “Public Service Commission announced that graduates are invited for the post of the Assistant Township Administrator! Go to Yangon, apply for the job. Finish all that’s needed to be done in a day.”

What could I do? Nothing but obeys him. I had to have verbal and written examination for the interview. For the written examination, I went to the Convocation Hall of Yangon University. I answered all questions in English. I got through. Next I had to take a verbal examination at a high building on the Strand Road. When I went in to the examination hall, I saw three interviewers sitting at a long table.

“I’ll tell you the names of rivers. They are really in Myanmar. Tell me in which part of the country the river, I have named, is flowing.”

He told me the name of a river I had never heard before. I was astonished by the unknown river which never existed in Myanmar. My intuition warned me that they would deliberately fail me. But I had to answer the question whether it was fair or unfair. Most of the rivers flow in the north of the country. I had to do a guesswork.

“It is flowing in the north.”

I bluffed.

The gentleman smiled a big smile and asked another question of the same type and my answer was identical to the first one.

“You are blufing. It is not in our country.”

The man with brazen face refused openly to accept my answer. I was encouraged by this unfair treatment to rebut the gentleman for his ungentleman question.

“Uncle said I’ll ask the names of rivers that are really in Myanmar. Now you said this, then you did that. O God save me!”

I hurled a few wailing words to the man. Anyhow, they deliberately failed me to my satisfaction but not to my father’s. I was not hurt. I was indifferent.

Back home when I happened to discuss about the interview with my father, he called me a dreamer as a joke. I felt nothing offended.

Without the knowledge of my father I sent my application in secret for post of teacher to the hierarchy. As the summer months quickly slipped by, my moves were uncertain but I never gave way to the hope that everything must come if I would only work and wait. God help those who help themselves. One day, an appointment order knocked at the door. It was a part of dream come true. Father said nothing but smiled broadly meaning that he agreed. Half the battle was won.

However, my lifelong childhood dream to be a come and established writer was still away. What should I do? I should go on writing and writing intensively and extensively. No short-cut to learning. I have to keep on writing till my head decays and my hair rockets.

I am convinced that my father is rich in understanding heart. Abundant in metta, he wished I were a high ranking official working at a mahogany table under a ceiling fan in a large room flanked by junior officers who have to be ove struck before me. In short, father had a great affection for his son that is me. He was anxious to see me riding elephant surrounded by horses.

He loved to see me as a mental worker, not a manual labourer. No doubt he hated to see me exhausted as weighed down by heavy work. I have to admit that I am a little different from father in outlook over the changing world.

It is a great thing to take pride in our work of any kind mental or physical. Anything that is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. Even in the humblest task we should be ambitious to do it as well as we can if possible better than anyone else. For example a cobbler should not think that because his job is a humble one, it can be scammed and done anyhow; he should be determined to make better shoes than any other cobbler; and a tinker should take pride in mending even and old kettle better than any other tinker can.

Rooted in agreement with the status quo, my old father persisted in acclimatizing modern pattern of life to his old outdated worn-out way of life, instead of acclimatizing his way of life to modern way of life. He disfavoured changes in the way of living. He refused to believe in the value of work especially of work by hand-manual labour. But I have to abhor what he abhorred because he is my father.

From my practical experience I suggest that you shouldn’t manipulate your child and bend him to your will for since birth he has been endowed by nature with capacity. If you try to squeeze what you want into the small head of your son, it could not accept all. Consequentially, the skull would crack, so to speak. It would be a great mistake to cast your child in your desired mould. Instead you should let him go the way he is destined to take.

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Satellite phones have just come, and the loans are in hand, so...
1,200 saplings planted in monsoon tree-growing ceremony

Mandalay, 12 June—Mandalay City Development Committee laid down plans for growing saplings in the raining season for the greening of the city.

On 11 June, MCDC organized a tree-growing ceremony from 62nd Street to the Yangon-Mandalay Highway junction in Pyigyidagun Township. Mandalay Mayor U Aung Maung, officials of the committee and workers participated in the tree-growing ceremony. Participants planted more than 1,200 saplings along both sides of the road.—Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Chinese Wushu master trains Myanmar students

Mandalay, 12 June—Chinese Wushu master Mr. Tu Jingli is conducting a training course for players in Mandalay until 5 July.

The course has been arranged as part of a sister city exchange between Mandalay and Kunming in China’s Yunnan Province. The master is coaching 33 trainees at the Institute of Sports and Physical Education, as well as 20 selected players of Mandalay Region Wushu team and 30 youth players at the Bahooy Gymnasium.—Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Local youths attend talks on maternal, child healthcare

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 June — Nay Pyi Taw Public Health Department Daw Hla Hla Kyi stressed the need for local people to consult community health workers and receive medical treatment at hospitals. A total of 60 youths from villages were divided into five groups for the discussions.

The youths together with officials of the department and members of social organizations discussed health care services for mothers and children, prevention of dysentery and dengue haemorrhagic fever.

Maung Kyaw Latt

Pinlebu TV begins digital broadcasting

Pinlebu, 12 June—Local people in Pinlebu Township, Sagaing Region can watch digital TV programming following the establishment of a DVB-T2 retransmission stations in the area.

Myanmar Radio and Television is overseeing the transition from analogue to digital TV broadcasting. It began digital broadcasting through the DVB-T2 system in 2013 in the first phase of the programme. MRTV has started the second phase at 22 re-transmission stations across the nation through the new digital system.

In fiscal 2014-15, MRTV will begin digital broadcasting through 69 re-transmission stations for the first phase.

Installation of the DVB-T2 transmitter and antenna at Pinlebu TV re-transmission was completed on 28 May.

Shwe Lin Pyae Sone

Ayeyawady Region Electrical Engineer U Aung Than inspects 2x1250KVA sub-power station, 33 KV and 11KV power lines in Kyaunggon Township on 11 June.—DAVID (KYAUNGGON)

As a gesture of the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and China, Monwun Bamar cultural troupe from Tamoenye region, northern Shan State, performs Kachin, Shan and Bamar traditional dances in Kunming, Yunnan Province of the People’s Republic of China.—THAN OO (LAYMYETHA)

Hinthada District’s deputy commissioner U San Htay and Chairperson Daw Maw Maw Than of Hinthada District Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee and family present soya milk to children at pre-primary school of MCWA in Hinthada on 11 June.—WIN BO (MYAUNGG)

Pinlebu TV begins digital broadcasting
UN envoy to meet Yemen’s warring sides separately at peace talks

Geneva, 12 June — A United Nations special envoy will hold separate “proximity” talks with Yemen’s two main warring parties in Geneva on Sunday, in the hope of bringing them to the same table eventually, a UN spokesman said on Friday.

Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who heads the talks, expected to last two or three days, to try to end more than two months of war between Iranian-backed Houthis and forces loyal to President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who has fled to Saudi Arabia.

The talks will start as proximity talks, which means the envoy will be shuttling between the two groups in the hope that he can bring them together during these consultations,” spokesman Ahmad Fawzi told a news briefing in Geneva.

At least six killed as Saudi-led air strikes hit ancient Sanaa

Sanaa, 12 June — Saudi-led coalition air strikes on Sanaa’s Old City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, left at least six dead and several others injured, Yemen’s state news agency Saba said on Friday.

The strikes, which started in the early hours of the morning, destroyed five houses and damaged several other buildings, the Houthis rebel-controlled agency said.

The Old City has been inhabited for nearly 3,000 years and has a high density of unique ochre and white, mud-brick, tower houses, labyrinthine souqs, mosques and hammams or bathhouses. For more than 11 weeks, an Arab military grouping led by Saudi Arabia has been bombarding the Houthis, now the dominant group in Yemen, in a bid to restore the exiled president to power and support local fighters in battlefields nationwide.

UN-sponsored talks are due to be held in Geneva on Sunday to try to find a solution to the crisis which has left 80 percent of the population needing some form of humanitarian aid.

Pakistan orders aid agency Save the Children to leave

Islamabad, 12 June — Pakistani authorities have given Save the Children 15 days to leave the country, officials said on Friday, accusing the aid agency of spying.

Police said the charity's office in the capital Islamabad late on Thursday and put up a notice saying the building was sealed.

“We strongly object to this action and are raising our serious concerns at the highest levels,” Save the Children said in a statement.

“All our work is designed and delivered in close collaboration with the government ministries across the country,” it added.

The charity, which has been in Pakistan for over 35 years, has had run-ins with the government since 2011, when it was linked to Shakil Afridi, a Pakistani doctor recruited by the CIA to help in the hunt that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad.

“Save the Children’s foreign staff members were expelled from Pakistan just after the accusations surfaced, but more than 1,000 local staff have continued to operate,” the charity said.

Police sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the aid agency was being shut down because it was involved in “anti-Pakistani projects”.

“We have been monitoring their calls and watching their offices and their activities are very suspicious,” a senior police official said in Islamabad.

An official at the charity said several staff members had been denied visas since 2012, and aid supplies had been blocked by Pakistani authorities.

“These restrictions have blocked aid to millions of children and their families,” the official said. “Hopefully better sense will prevail.”

Aid workers say Pakistan has toughened its policies towards both international and local groups, accusing them of using their work as a cover for espionage.

Thousands flee into Turkey from Syria as Kurds fight Islamic state

Akcakale, Turkey / Istanbul, 12 June — Thousands of people fled from Syria into Turkey on Wednesday as moderate rebels and Kurdish forces fought Islamic State insurgents holding the Syrian border town of Tel Abyad.

A Reuters photographer at the scene said the refugees had entered Turkey through a makeshift border crossing overseen by Turkish gendarmerie officers, and that many of them were women and children.

A Turkish official said 2,000 refugees were being registered on Wednesday after more than 6,800 were admitted in the area last week. He said they were fleeing advances by Kurdish YPG forces as well as airdrop bombardment by the United States and Arab allies trying to help the Kurds push back Islamic State. The northeastern corner of Syria is important to the radical Islamist group because it links areas under Islamic State control in Syria and Iraq.

The group last week launched an offensive on the provincial capital, the city of Hasaka, which is divided into zones run separately by the government of President Bashar al-Assad and a Kurdish administration. A Turkish official said 2,000 refugees were being registered on Wednesday after more than 6,800 were admitted in the area last week. He said they were fleeing advances by Kurdish YPG forces as well as airdrop bombardment by the United States and Arab allies trying to help the Kurds push back Islamic State.

A Syrian refugee woman is helped by a Turkish soldier after crossing into Turkey near Akcakale in Sanliurfa province. Turkey, on 10 June, 2015. — Reuters

Israel closes probe into killing of four boys on Gaza beach

Jerusalem, 12 June — Israel’s killing of four Palestinian boys in an air strike on a Gaza beach during the 2014 war was a case of mistaken identity that does not warrant criminal charges, the military says.

Witnessed by several foreign reporters, the 16 July attack fuelled censure abroad of Israel’s assault on the Hamas-run enclave. The Israelis have been conducting internal investigations of possible military misconduct while trying to fend off war-crimes allegations by various UN bodies.

Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Lerner, an Israeli military spokesman, said the air force fired on the four boys after failing to identify them as children and believing they were gammen running in an area “utilized exclusively by militants”.

Witnesses said the boys were playing football at the time.

“After reviewing the investigation’s findings, the Military Advocate General found that the attack process in question accorded with Israeli domestic law and international law requirements,” Lerner said on Facebook. He called the deaths “tragic”.

Launched after a surge of cross-border rocket fire by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, Isra- el’s two-month offensive forced 100,000 Palestinian civilians, mostly civilians. Sixty-seven Israeli soldiers and six civilians in Israel also died.

Israel says it tried to prevent civilian casualties and accuses Hamas of inviting these by operating inside urban areas. Israel’s critics accuse it of wanting tactics and impunity.

In a separate statement, the military said it was also closing the cases on 21 July and 29 July attacks on residential build- ings that killed 22 Palestinians. A 9 July attack on a Gaza cafe that killed 9 people was under criminal investigation, it said, as well allegations that troops abused a Palestinian detainee and illegally fired on a Gaza medical clinic.
Sydney house prices near one million Australian dollar average

Sydney, 12 June — Australia’s median house price has risen to almost 660,000 Australian dollars (509,919 US dollars), with Sydney leading housing market, according to Real Estate Institute data released on Friday.

The Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) figures show the median house price in Sydney has gained 4.9 percent in the March quarter to 929,842 Australian dollars (718,400 US dollars), significantly above next closest Melbourne at 688,000 Australian dollars (531,446 US dollars). REIA president Neville Sanders told local media the median house price has increased by almost 9 percent from the same period last year, and is expected to continue to rise over the rest of 2015.

“In 2015 we expect interest rates to stay low and growth in dwelling prices to continue, however changes to rules around foreign investment in Australian residential real estate may change the dynamic on the market,” Sanders said.

Housing affordability has been a significant issue in Australian media over the past fortnight when Australian Treasury secretary John Fraser told an Australian Senate committee hearing that property markets in Sydney and parts of Melbourne were unequivocally in a price bubble.

On Wednesday, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) governor Glenn Stevens raised housing prices in pockets of the Australian market as “crazy” and “acutely concerning for a host of reasons, many of which are away from doing monetary policy,”

Xinhua

US lawmakers to examine worst-ever bird flu outbreak

Chicago, 12 June — The US Senate Agriculture Committee is set to hold a hearing next month on the deadliest-ever outbreak of bird flu in US poultry amid mounting criticism from investors.

An egg-producing chicken farm run by Sunrise Farm is seen in Harris, Iowa on 23 April, 2015. Reuters

Sydney, 12 June — Asian shares have held a muted session on Friday as Greek debt talks took yet another confusing turn, while the dollar held firm in the wake of reassuringly upbeat US retail data.

Activity was sparse with MSCI’s index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan up 0.2 percent, but only just above three-month lows. Japan’s Nikkei barely budged, though it found some support in a dollar bounce against the yen.

China’s market built on its long bull run as the Shanghai index rose 0.8 percent to its loftiest level since early 2008, with property shares firmer on signs of a revival in real estate demand.

Wall Street had been tentative on Thursday with the Dow ending up 0.22 percent, while the S&P 500 added 0.17 percent and the Nasdaq 0.11 percent.

“With both the data and the market are on the right track,” The improving US data helped the dollar index up to 95.173, and away from a near one-month low of 94.322 set on Wednesday. Against the yen, the greenback bought 123.46 yen, well off this week’s tough of 122.46.

The euro had less luck as it ticked lower to $1.1232, from a high of $1.1387 set on Wednesday.

The dip followed the International Monetary Fund’s surprise decision to leave negotiations in Brussels and fly home because of major differences with Athens.

Malaysia to implement new biodiesel plan

Beijing, 12 June — Malaysian Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities will fully implement the B10 Bio-diesel Plan from October, which may raise the average extraction rate of oil from 20 to 25 percent in 2020.

The minister said, once B10 Bio-diesel Plan is fully implemented, Malaysian domestic palm oil consumption is expected to increase by one million tons, and B7 Bio-diesel be replaced.

B10 Bio-diesel policy is 10 per cent palm oil mixed with 90 percent diesel. This policy is expected to support Malaysian palm oil futures, according to the latest local media report. —Xinhua
Workers stand by the pipes as they flood the Panama Canal Expansion project on the outskirts of Colon City, Panama, on 11 June, 2015. Engineers began flooding a newly enlarged section of the Panama Canal on Thursday as authorities prepare to test a series of new locks that will allow the waterway to accommodate much bigger ships, affecting trade around the world.—Xinhua

JAL pilot suspended from duty over photos taken with crew in cockpit

TOKYO, 12 June — A male pilot of Japan Airlines Co was suspended from flight duty after taking photos with a female flight attendant in the cockpit amid growing concerns over misconduct by crew members in the wake of a German aircraft crash in March, the airline said on Friday.

The transport ministry issued a strict warning to JAL, saying the captain violated the aviation law by failing to keep guard while he took pictures with his smartphone after the co-pilot left the cockpit. The 47-year-old captain took photos of himself and a 28-year-old flight attendant roughly 10 minutes after the Boeing 737 operated by JAL left Sapporo in northern Japan for Osaka last Sunday morning, according to the company.

While the co-pilot temporarily left the cockpit to go to the restroom, the captain had the flight attendant sit in the seat vacated by the co-pilot and took some pictures although she refused several times to have her picture taken.

She entered the cockpit in accordance with an instruction by the transport ministry in April to always keep at least two crew members there after the Germanwings co-pilot was alleged to have locked out the captain and deliberately crashed the plane.

The JAL pilot brushed off the flight attendant’s rejection, saying, “It’s a good opportunity. How about trying for your memory?”

The attendant reported the matter to the company later in the day, resulting in the captain being suspended from flight duty from Monday.

“I didn’t take the matter seriously,” the pilot was quoted as saying by the airline.—Kyodo News

Serbia, EU work together to improve position of Roma

BELGRADE, 12 June — Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Zorana Miha- jlovic and Director for the Western Balkans of the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Negotiations for Enlargement of the European Commission Jean Eric Paquet said on Thursday that Serbia was working with the support of the European Union to improve the position of Roma.

After a meeting she had with Paquet in Belgrade today, Mihajlovic told reporters that it was necessary to accelerate the adoption of a legal framework vital to improving the Roma situation.

We will be working together to draft Roma settlement legalisation and eviction legislation over the summer to have them submitted to the parliament for approval in early 2016, Mihajlovic, who is the co-ordinator of activities to improve the situation of Roma in Serbia, said. Paquet said that Roma inclusion was a social priority for Serbia and an important element of cooperation between Serbia and the EU.

Accession negotiations are important with respect to assisting Serbia in developing policies for Roma inclusion, Paquet said. The European Union is working together with Serbia to prepare relevant public policies and achieve progress in this area and I hope that we will manage to step up their implementation, Paquet said.

China electricity giant starts building new hydropower stations

BEIJING, 12 June — Construction began on new hydropower plants with advanced electricity storage in central and east China on Friday, marking the country’s latest effort to promote clean energy.

State Grid Co, the world’s largest electric utility company, began building the three power stations, which can store hydropower to be used during periods of high demand, in Anhui, Shandong and Henan provinces.

China has been working to promote hydropower plants with another 12 planned or under construction in the country’s central and eastern areas. Total capacity is expected to reach 38 million kilowatts by 2020.

The projects will be a push for the national ambition to increase the share of non-fossil fuels in its power grid and gradually replace prevailing but heavily-polluting thermal power generated from coal.

Indian capital reels under massive garbage crisis

NEW DELHI, 12 June — The Indian capital has been reeling under a massive garbage crisis, with sanitation workers escalating their strike over non-payment of their salaries for the last two months.

Striking workers have strewn garbage on the road in many parts of the national capital, thus creating stink in the air and triggering traffic jams.

Political parties have also jumped into the fray trying to capitalize on the situation, blaming each other for the mess. While the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which controls three civic bodies in the Indian capital, has blamed Delhi’s government for not releasing money to pay salaries to the sanitation workers. The anti-corruption Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is in power in the national capital, on the other hand, has accused the three civic bodies of mishandling finances.

The country’s main opposition Congress party, which had ruled Delhi for 15 years before being decimated by AAP, has accused both the Delhi government and the central government for the mess. Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi Friday met civic body officials and posed for photos, and he also blamed both the BJP and the AAP for the situation.—Xinhua

Thai students detained in Pakistan have no Islamic State links — government

BANGKOK, 12 June — Five Thai students detained in Pakistan for trying to board a plane with a pistol and ammunition have no links to the Islamic State militant group or any criminal organization, a Thai government spokesman said on Friday.

The men, who had been studying at a religious school in Pakistan, were trying to catch a flight on Monday night when they were intercepted.

“We have no evidence that there are any links at all between the students and any criminal organization, so news that there is a link between ISIS and the students is not true,” Major General Sansern Kaewkamnerd, a deputy government spokesman, said.

On Friday, Thai newspaper the Bangkok Post reported that two of the five were suspected of having links to Islamic State, which is also known as ISIS. The report cited intelligence officials from Thailand’s embassy in Islamabad that had visited the students and an investigation by embassy officials was under way.

Some of the detained men are from Thailand’s south.

Two arrested over allegedly adding poppy seeds to restaurant dishes

WUHAN, 12 June — Two managers of a restaurant in central China’s Hubei Province have been arrested by police on suspicion of adding parts of the opium poppy plant to dishes, authorities said on Friday. According to the Procuratorate of Hanyang District, Wuhan City, the local food and drug administration detected main ingredients of poppy seeds including papaverine and narcotone from dishes of a restaurant during routine tests in March.

The two managers of this restaurant allegedly added poppy seeds to dressings of its stewed pots for the purpose of improving taste of dishes and keeping customers coming back for more, said police investigation.

Adding poppy seeds containing opium to food is prohibited by law. Doctors say they contain only a small amount of alkaloid, but long-term consumption will lead to addiction, damage to the nervous system and induce chronic intoxication.

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Popular Pyongyang tourist spot the Koryo Hotel catches fire

SEOUL, 12 June — A section of the Koryo Hotel, one of the oldest and best known hotels in Pyongyang, caught fire on Thursday, sources who witnessed the fire in the North Korean capital told Reuters.

Images obtained by Reuters showed plumes of black smoke billowing from the bridge connecting the two 43-storey towers of the 143-metre (469-feet) structure, which lies a short distance from Pyongyang’s bustling train station and the Taedong river that cuts through the city. The source in Pyongyang who witnessed the scene said swarms of police, paramilitary, ambulances and officials from North Korean state security were outside the landmark hotel.

“The several foreigners were apprehended for trying to take pictures of the scene,” the source, who declined to be identified, told Reuters. Troy Collings of Young Pioneer Tours said: “The fire was eventually put out, the building didn’t burn down, and our partners in Pyongyang reassured us that there were no casualties.”

Collings regularly takes foreign tourists to North Korea. It was not immediately clear if the hotel had been fully evacuated. The fire started at 6.15 pm local time and by 11.45 pm only thick plumes of black smoke were visible from the outside, the source said. North Koreans leaving the building said the inside was still burning, according to the source. A second source at the scene said a heavy downpour may have helped contain the blaze.

Both Seoul and Pyongyang were hit by seasonal heavy rains on Thursday night.

North Korea is one of the world’s most isolated and secretive countries, and there was still no mention of the fire in state media by about midday on Friday. In May last year, North Korean state media said the government had apologized to bereaved families after an apartment building collapse in Pyongyang, possibly killing hundreds. Unlike the pyramidal 105-storey pyramid-shaped Ryugyong Hotel, the plush Koryo Hotel has for years been the go-to place to stay for foreign tourists visiting North Korea. — Reuters

Teen arrested over bomb threat note at western Japan high school

OKAYAMA, (Japan), 12 June — A 15-year-old boy was arrested on Thursday for allegedly leaving a note threatening to bomb a high school in Bizen, Okayama Prefecture in western Japan earlier this week and causing an evacuation of all students, police said.

The teen is suspected of obstructing school administration by leaving a note saying “a bomb has been planted at school” in a shoe locker at the prefectural Bizen Ryukoku High School on Tuesday. The school alerted the police after the memo was found in the morning.

The school’s around 460 students all evacuated to the school ground and were sent home.

On Thursday morning, a letter encouraging the police to do their best to arrest the sender in handwriting similar to Monday’s note was also found at the school, the police said. The police said they questioned school officials and tracked down the teen, who admitted to the allegations, adding that they are investigating the case as a prank.

The teen is identified as a first-year high school student from the city but it has not been made clear if the boy goes to the school. He has not been named because he is a minor. — Kyodo News
Ian McKellen portrays elderly Sherlock in ‘Mr Holmes’

LONDON, 12 June — Sherlock Holmes hits British cinemas this week but not quite as many might imagine the legendary sleuth.

“Lord of the Rings” and “X-Men” star Ian McKellen portrays him as an elderly beekeeper, who at 93 has long retired from solving cases.

Living in an isolated Sussex farmhouse with his housekeeper Mrs Munro (Laura Linney) and her young son Roger (Milo Parker), he is unable to let go of his past as he tries to solve the case that ultimately led to his retirement.

McKellen, 76, said audiences would enjoy his Holmes more than the many others in recent years, including younger versions played by Benedict Cumberbatch and Robert Downey Jr, in television and film.

“This Holmes is... 93 years old when we first meet him at the end of a long life, of retirement and he’s trying to solve his last mystery, the one that he didn’t quite complete when he was in his heyday,” he said at the film’s premiere on Wednesday.

“So I get to play Holmes young and middle-aged so that makes it slightly superior to other versions.”

Joining him on the mock-up Baker Street setting for the premiere was McKellan’s “X-Men” co-star Patrick Stewart.

Adele’s ‘21’ named UK’s best-seller of the decade

LOS ANGELES, 12 June — British singer Adele’s “21” is the biggest-selling album of the decade till date in the UK.

“Rolling In The Deep” hitmaker’s all-conquering sophomore set has sold more than 4.75 million copies in her homeland to hold-off a challenge for copies in her homeland to sophomore set has sold hitmaker’s all-conquering date in the UK.

The album of the decade till 2014 is Adele list is Take That’s “Progress”. While Michael Buble’s yuletide-themed 2011 album “Christmas” is at number three.

In the lawsuits, the “Hangover” actor is also asking the magazine for 11,000 Euros or around USD 12,500 in damages, in addition to legal fees. The owner of the troubled magazine, Frederic Truskowski, maintained that the story was based on reality that Cooper and Shayk indeed frequently hang out together. Prior to Cooper, Leonardo DiCaprio filed a lawsuit against the same magazine for making a fake report claiming he shared a baby together with Rihanna.

Bradley Cooper sues French magazine

LOS ANGELES, 12 June — Actor Bradley Cooper is the latest celebrity to sue a French magazine for invasion of privacy following the publication of a story about his love life with Irina Shayk. The “American Sniper” star filed a lawsuit against “Oops!” reported Ace Showbiz.

According to a statement which Cooper, 40, filed with the help of French lawyer Vincent Toledano, the actor had never publicly addressed dating rumors with the Russian model. Under French law, the story clearly violated Cooper’s right to a private life as the country bans any publications form printing any information about celebrities’ personal lives.

In the lawsuit, the “Shake It Off” hitmaker went on to make corrections to Werch’s post.

“A fan told Taylor Swift that she might’ve forgotten to put an apostrophe in handwritten lyrics of her 1989 song “Wildest Dreams”.

In her response, Swift, 25, first defended herself, saying that she did put an apostrophe on the word “is”, but it “blended into the Y above it.” The “Shake It Off” hitmaker went on to make corrections to Werch’s post.

But if we’re being all fancy with grammar tonight, btw would’ve had a comma before it. And the “U” is ‘uh’ would’ve been capitalized. And there would’ve been some sort of punctuation at the end of the sentence.”
China steal late win, hosts Canada held

EDMONTON, 13 June — An injury-time goal earned China a dramatic victory, while hosts Canada and Germany and Norway all had to settle for draws on a competitive Thursday at the Women’s World Cup.

Wang Lisi scored in the final minute of injury time lifting China past the Netherlands in a 1-0 victory that kept both teams a point behind group leaders Canada, who have four.

Wang received a ball from team mate Tan Ruyin in the penalty box and tapped it in the far post to give her a team an exciting win that put them in the group mix.

It was much more of a slog for Canada who battled to a scoreless draw with New Zealand on a stormy, wet night.

The contest got off to a soggy start when play was suspended after five minutes due to severe weather forcing players off the pitch. Following a 30-minute delay, action resumed under sunny skies but the dreary play continued.

Canada’s scoring struggles continued after edging China on an injury-time goal from Christine Sinclair in the opener.

In Group B, top-ranked Germany had a win snatched from their grasp after Maren Mjelde scored on a free kick in the 61st minute to earn Norway a 1-1 draw.

The result left both teams tied on four points, though Germany lead on goal difference. Germany’s Anna Mittag netted the opener in the sixth minute.

Elsewhere, Thailand earned a historic 3-2 win against Ivory Coast in a victory that saw both teams score their first ever goals of the Women’s World Cup. Orahai Srimanee led the way with a pair of first-half goals for Thailand who close group play against Germany on Monday. Norway will face Ivory Coast.

David Guetta to produce UEFA EURO 2016 anthem

LONDON, 12 June — DJ and music producer David Guetta will write and produce the anthem for UEFA EURO 2016.

The 47-year-old star will perform during the opening ceremony of the football tournament at Stade de France in Paris on 10 June, 2016, reported Daily Mirror.

“Secrets out then. I am the musical ambassador for UEFA Euro 2016. Will uefaeuro bring it on?” Guetta posted on twitter.

“It is incredibly exciting … to be part of this huge football tournament in my home country. Music and football go hand in hand when it comes to celebration and enjoyment and I want to help to make this EURO the biggest and most memorable eventlifting China past the Netherlands in a 1-0 victory that kept both teams a point behind group leaders Canada, who have four.

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Gutta, who will also play a free concert at the Champ Mars in Paris on the eve of the tournament on 9 June, 2016, added, “We want the fans to be at the very heart of everything that we do.”

The acclaimed French DJ has collaborated with stars including Rihanna, Kelly Rowland and Sia during his career, although it is not yet known whether a vocalist will feature on the tournament’s anthem.—PTI

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Obama drops in at congressional ball game on eve of trade vote

WASHINGTON, 12 June — On the eve of a vote in Congress that could determine the fate of his Pacific Rim trade pact, President Barack Obama put in a surprise appearance on Thursday night at the annual congressional ball game between Republicans and Democrats.

Obama brought along beer to be awarded to the winning team and watched part of the contest on a muggy night at the ballpark that is home to Major League Baseball’s Washington Nationals. The president, who has sometimes been criticized for not reaching out to members of Congress, made no formal remarks but greeted players in both the Democratic and Republican dugouts. Fans cheered his appearance.

Obama may have brought some luck to fellow Democrats, who led 3-1 when he left the game and eventually won 5-2.

Democrats and Republicans have played each other once a year since 1909, with the two sides winning an equal share of games going into Thursday’s contest, according to the organizers’ website. In an age of partisan division when many lawmakers fly home every weekend, the game is one of the few congressional traditions left from years ago when lawmakers were a more social bunch.

“Everybody’s always running to an airport. There are so few opportunities where you’re able to just engage your colleagues with out suits on and debating,” Democratic Representative Mike Doyle of Pennsylvania said in a C-SPAN interview before the showdown.

In a city obsessed with massaging and spinning information, some tried to dampen expectations ahead of the game. “I haven’t played since grade school and I was terrible there,” said Republican Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina, who started playing softball two years ago. “I haven’t completely embarrassed myself yet.” —Reuters
Thai PM, Union Minister award champion Thai team in Sepak Takraw event

SINGAPORE, 12 June—Thai Sepak Takraw team emerged champion with a 2-1 win over Myanmar team in the final at Expo Hall-1 in Singapore Friday.

Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan together with Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha watched the final match of Sepak Takraw event. The Thai Prime Minister awarded individual gold medals to Thai players while the union minister gave commemorative gifts to them. They also presented the joint third prize to Indonesian and Singaporean teams.

—I N S T R U C T I O N S
   —S P E D

Spectators leave for Singapore to give cheers to Myanmar U-23 team

YANGON, 12 June—A 57-member team of Myanmar citizens left Yangon International Airport for Singapore on Thursday.

They will give rousing cheers together with Myanmar football fans from Singapore to Myanmar U-23 team that will play against Vietnam in the semifinal of the football tournament in the 28th SEA Games on 13 June.

The spectators were seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials of the Sports and Physical Education Department.—MYA

Myanmar athletes back from Singapore

YANGON, 12 June—A Myanmar sports team comprising four athletes from track and field event, 21 shooters and four swimmers arrived back Yangon International Airport Friday.

Among the, Swe Li Myint won one silver in the women’s 800-m race, Phyu Wai That two silver in the women’s 500-m and 1500-m races, Kyaw Nyi Nyi Hwe one bronze in javelin event. Lin Aung, Wai Yan Min Thu and Kaung Htak secured one bronze in the men’s 50-m rifle prone team.

They posed for documentary photo with prize winning teams.—S P E D

—MEDAL STANDINGS FOR 12 JUNE, 2015

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—FOOTBALL SEMIFINALS MATCH SCHEDULES FOR 13 JUNE 2015 (ALL TIMES LOCAL)

 Match 26 Myanmar - Vietnam 12:30 MST
 Match 27 Thailand - Indonesia 19:00 MST

—CHILE GIVE ECUADOR IN COPA AMERICA OPENER

SANTIAGO, 12 June — Arturo Vidal and Eduardo Vargas scored second-half goals as Chile defeated Ecuador 2-0 in the opening match of the Copa America here on Thursday.

Vidal converted a 67th-minute penalty before Vargas put the result beyond doubt six minutes from time after being set up by Alexis Sanchez.

Despite keeping the match on even terms for more than an hour, Ecuador rarely troubled Claudio Bravo’s goal. Chile, meanwhile, provided a constant threat and, if not for Ecuador goalkeeper Alexander Dominguez, could have had the match wrapped up by halftime.

The hosts’ attacking intent was evident from the outset in front of a partisan crowd at the Estadio Nacional. Veteran playmaker Jorge Valdivia put Sanchez through on goal in the second minute but the Arsenal man fired his shot wide with only the goalkeeper to beat. Sanchez had another chance moments later but his chipped effort was comfortably thwarted by Dominguez.

As expected, Jorge Sampaoli’s team controlled possession as Ecuador were content to sit back and wait for their opportunities on the counterattack.

Mauricio Isla, Vidal and Sanchez, in particular, caused constant problems for Ecuador on the right. But the hosts were unable to capitalize and they almost paid the price when Valdivia was dispossessed in his own area, allowing Fidel Martinez to unleash a thumping shot that was directed straight at Bravo.

Isla arguably had the best chance of the first half but the Queens Park Rangers winger-baund misdirected his shot after being set up by Sanchez.—Xinhua

—MYANMAR HAVE GOLD ON MINDS AHEAD OF SEMIFINAL CLASH WITH VIETNAM

YANGON, 12 June — Myanmar’s footballers are aiming to bring home the gold medal from the 28th SEA Games in Singapore, coach Kyi Lwin said Friday on the eve of the under-23 team’s semifinal showdown with Vietnam.

“We are confident of reaching the final and winning the gold medal,” the Myanmar coach told the media at Singapore’s Ramada Hotel. “I know their strong points and weak points.”

Myanmar will wear all-red kit while Vietnam will don white in the match which kicks off Saturday at 2pm local time (12:30 Myanmar Time) at the Singapore National Stadium.

Defender Ye Win Aung, who has two yellow cards from previous matches, and Win Zin Tun, who broke his leg in the match against host Singapore, will miss the game.

Myanmar advanced to the last four as the top-placed team in Group A after defeating Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines and drawing with Cambodia in the group stage.

Myanmar scored 14 goals in the four group matches, with seven different players finding their way onto the score sheet.—G N L M