Myanmar, Thailand ink MoU on energy, electric power cooperation

NAY PYI TAW, 15 June—Union Minister for Energy U Zeyar Aung and Thai counterpart Dr Narongchai Akrasamee signed a memorandum of understanding here Monday on cooperation in the energy sector in the presence of Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and Thai Deputy Prime Minister Mr Pridiyathorn Devakula.

Union Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe and Thai Minister of Energy Dr Narongchai Akrasamee also inked an MoU on cooperation in the electric power sector between the two countries. The vice president later had a luncheon together with the Thai Deputy Prime Minister and party.

The MoU will speed up the 26-year Myanmar-Thai oil and natural gas cooperation agreement. It will benefit energy sufficiency of the two countries, development of infrastructure, the cross-border energy sector and human resources development.

The MoU covers cooperation in import and distribution of liquefied natural gas and will ensure a greater level of supply. —MNA

Myanmar National Airlines receives new Boeing 737-800 NG

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 15 June—Flag carrier Myanmar National Airlines on Monday took delivery of the first of several new Boeing 737s ordered as part of an international fleet upgrade.

In a bid to become a competitive member of the global aviation market, the national carrier began upgrading both its domestic and international operations with new aircraft six months ago.

“We celebrate today an incredible achievement in the history of our airlines and our country by welcoming the first member of our brand new fleet,” MNA CEO Captain Than Tun said during a media briefing at Yangon International Airport.

The 164-seat aircraft, worth US $51 million, is one of six 737-800 and four 737-Max 8 Next Generation aircraft that MNA has ordered from Boeing. Further deliveries are scheduled to take place over the next five years.

The carrier is set to launch a Yangon-Singapore route this August, said the CEO, adding that four more destinations in the Asia-Pacific region will be added. The airline is scheduled to receive another six 737-800 NGs, as well as four 737-Max 8s, by 2018.

Services to four more destinations including Hong Kong and Taipei will be added in November, with two cities in China to be added next year.

The airline has also ordered six ATRs to boost its domestic fleet, which flies to 26 destinations.

According to MNA, the national carrier received more than 500,000 passengers last year, marking a 26 percent increase on the previous year. —GNLM

Yangon Region OKs controversial new town project

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 15 June —The Yangon Region parliament in a 100 to 10 vote Monday approved a town plan for a contentious development in southwestern Yangon that has been tied to money laundering and criticized for a lack of transparency.

The new town plan is one of seven modern housing projects of the Greater Yangon Development Strategic Plan 2040 designed by the Yangon Region Government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The seven modern housing projects will be established on more than 100,000 acres of land on the outskirts of Yangon and accommodate more than 10 million people.

The new town project approved by parliament Monday will be established on 11,716 acres between the Panhaing River and the Twantay-Yangon Canal and between the Hlaing River and Hlaingthaya-Twante Road in southwestern Yangon.

MP Dr Nyo Nyo Thin of Bahan Township Constituency during the debate in parliament said the project should not be implemented at present, as the country’s financial situation is not stable.

She said the project lacked transparency and noted that it was suspended (See page 9)
Homalin to get arts and science college when state and region university plan is drawn

NAY PYI TAW, 15 June — A college needs 2,000 students in minimum, buildings, faculty members, staff, teaching aid and furniture for its establishment, Deputy Minister for Education Dr Zaw Min Aung replied to the question of U Aung Chit Lwin of Sagaing Region Constituency No 11 on Monday department to draw the plan of cultivation for eight townships in the council area and lead the local farmers in growing monsoon paddy through good agricultural patterns. A similar meeting was held in Kyaukchet Village in Zeyathiri Township. Ko Aye Min Thein said.

Myanmar to begin sales of health insurance from 1 July

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 15 June — Health insurance policies will go on sale for the first time in Myanmar under a one-year trial as of 1 July, Deputy Finance Minister Dr Maung Maung Thein told media on Monday.

State-owned Myanmar Insurance and 11 private domestic companies will offer identical policies, with customers able to buy between one to five units of coverage, with a single unit providing the most basic level of coverage. “People can buy health insurance premiums worth K50,000 per unit,” said Dr Maung Maung Thein, who is also the chairman of the Insurance Business Regulatory Board. “Persons aged between 6 and 65 years will be eligible for health insurance.”

Myanmar citizens and foreigners residing in the country can buy the insurance when he/she was brought into Myanmar. When asked about travel permits of temporary resident card holders by MP U Ba Shein from Kyaukpyu constituency, the deputy minister also said as these persons have not been approved as citizens, they need travel permit in advance from the local officials in the registered areas.

He also denied such restriction is not meant to violate human rights, but to ensure security of temporary ID card holders and rule of law in the country. MNA

Parliament

Tuesday, 16 June — The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed on the appointment of H.E. Mr Pier Giorgio Federico Aliberti as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Italian Republic to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Yangon.

H.E. Mr. Pier Giorgio Federico Aliberti was born in Cuneo, Italy in 1965. He graduated from the University of “Luigi Bocconi” in Milan, Italy where he obtained the degree in Political Economy. In 1993, he joined to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He then served in his various capacities at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italian Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and in Copenhagen, Denmark and the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. From 1995 to 1997, he served at the Ecole Nationale d’Administration in Paris, France. In 2003, he was promoted to First Counsellor and served as the Head of EU Institutions Department of Directorate General for European Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has been serving as the First Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in Washington D.C., USA since 2010. MNA

Deputy Minister Dr Maung Maung Thein clarifies health insurance policies of Myanmar Insurance. PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

Agriculture Dept urged to lead farmers for cultivation of monsoon paddy

NAY PYI TAW, 15 June — A coordination meeting to speed up cultivation of Palethee hybrid monsoon paddy took place at the hall of Ottarathiri Township.

U Thit Linn Ohn presents Credentials to DPRK President

NAY PYI TAW, 16 June — U Thit Linn Ohn, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr Kim Yong Nam, President of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, on 3 June 2015 in Pyongyang. MNA

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

NAY PYI TAW, 15 June — The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed on the appointment of H.E. Mr Pier Giorgio Federico Aliberti as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Italian Republic to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Yangon. MNA

Deputy Minister Dr Zaw Min Aung. MNA

Deputy Minister for Culture U Than Swe. MNA

U Ba Shein from Kyaukpyu constituency.—MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Deputy Minister U Win Myint. MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

MNA

Coverage, with a single unit offer identical policies, with domestic companies will buy this insurance.”

If a single-unit policy holder is hospitalized, insurers will pay K15,000 a day. He or she may receive 30 days worth of hospitalization costs per year.

If a policy holder dies in hospital, their designated beneficiary will receive K1 million per unit of insurance in compensation.

Since May, 2014, a task force including the Ministry of Finance and related ministries and representatives from local private companies has worked to adopt the health insurance scheme, with consultation from foreign insurance companies with representative offices in the country. —GNLM

MNA
**Vice President**

U Nyan Tun leaves for Russian Federation

Nay Pyi Taw, 15 June—At the invitation of Mr. Nikolai P. Patrushev, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Vice President U Nyan Tun left Yangon International Airport for the Russian Federation via Singapore Monday.

The vice president will attend the St Petersburg International Economic Forum to be held in St Petersburg at the invitation of Mr. Sergei Prikhodko, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

The vice president, accompanied by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Wai Lwin and Dr Ko Ko Oo, Commander of Western Command May-Gen Aung Lin Dwe, deputy ministers Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun and U Thant Kyaw and officials, were seen off at the airport by Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe, Mayor U Hla Myint, and the Russian Ambassador to Myanmar.—MNA

**Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar**

Yangon, 15 June—Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thu Thura U Shwe Mann cordially shakes hands with Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Yang Houlan.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thu Thura U Shwe Mann meets Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar.

**Trainees of NPO Myanmar Egress visit Union Election Commission**

Nay Pyi Taw, 15 June—Some 48 trainees and representatives of non-profit organization Myanmar Egress visited the head office of Union Election Commission here on Monday.

U Hla Tun Khaing, leader of the visiting trainees, explained the objectives of Myanmar Egress, founded by Myanmar scholars and social workers who have been actively involved in various aspects of civil society.

UEC members including Dr Daw Myint Kyi explained activities of the body such as collection of voter lists.

In his concluding remark, UEC chairman U Tin Aye said the commission would ensure a free and fair election, and called for participation in the voter education process.

MNA

**Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin being welcomed by Russian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Vasil Pospelov at the reception to mark Day of Proclamation of the State Sovereignty of the Russian Federation at Sule Shangri-La Hotel on 15 June.**—MNA

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MNA
Ye Township to develop Phayataung Beach

Ye, 15 June — The Ye Township Development Affairs Committee has invited applications for construction of bungalows at Phayataung Beach, Mon State.

The committee will award a private developer the right to carry out works to upgrade facilities at the beach.

Any Myanmar citizen may apply until 20 June. The winning company must build the bungalows on schedule.

Ye Township in Mon State is located adjacent to the sea with many pleasant beaches.

Cooperative holds annual general meeting

KYAUKME, 15 June — Kyaukme Township’s No 2 Cooperative Ltd held its annual general meeting for fiscal 2014-15 at the town hall in Kyaukme, northern Shan State, on 14 June.

The ceremony was attended by more than 600 people including departmental officials, bus owners and workers, local ethnic groups and members of micro-finance societies.

Township Administrator U Aung Lwin and Staff Officer Daw San San Tint of Kyaukme Township Cooperative Department spoke on the occasion.

Officials submitted the report of the Board of Directors and financial statement for 2014-15 FY.

The cooperative Ltd donated K1.3 million to a township development fund.

Chin State publishes report on regional administration process

HAKA, 15 June — The Chin State government recently released a report on regional administration processes at the city hall in the state capital Haka.

Chief Minister of the state U Hong Ngai said the new government adopted the reform process for good governance.

He stressed the need for good regional administration and quality public services.

Miss Emilie Roell of the United Nations Development Program explained regional administration process while Chin State Commissioner U Maung Maung Hsan outlined other salient points.

Posters, signboards to raise public awareness for anti-drug campaign

MYAWADY, 15 June — Under the guidance of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, a special project for anti-drug activity is being implemented across the nation.

A ceremony to erect a signboard and poster promoting anti-drug activities was held at the corner of Padamya and Bogyoke streets in Ward 2, Myawady, Kayin State, on 14 June.

Head of No. 32 Anti-Drug Squad, Major Aung Si, and local authorities together with residents erected the signboard and poster.

Secretary of the United Nations Development Program explained regional administration process while Chin State Commissioner U Maung Maung Hsan outlined other salient points.

Construction of staff housing completed in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 15 June — Mandalay Region Minister for Finance Dr Myint Kyu on Sunday inspected progress of a housing complex for staff of Mandalay Sub-printing House under the News and Periodicals Enterprise of the Ministry of Information in Pale Ngweyaung Ward, Aungmyethazan Township.

Bronze Buddha image conveyed to Shwehsandaw Pagoda in Toungoo

Toungoo, 15 June — A bronze replica weighing about 1,200 viss of Mandalay’s Maha Muni Buddha Image was conveyed from Mandalay to Toungoo along Yangon-Mandalay express-way on Monday and is being kept at the Shwethaphu prayer hall of Shwehsandaw Pagoda in Toungoo.

A total of 100 Buddhist monks, religious associations, members of pagoda board of trustees and local residents conveyed the bronze Buddha image round the downtown Toungoo for public obeisance.

Chinese Wushu master trains Myanmar athletes

Mandalay, 15 June — Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing recently viewed training for athletes conducted by Wushu master Mr Tu Jingli from China’s Yunnan Province, at Bahtoo Gymnasium in Mandalay.

Deputy Director U Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Archaeological sites in ancient Inwa city attract visitors

Tada U, 15 June — Ancient Inwa city in Tada U Township attracts tourists from around Myanmar and abroad. Inwa Shwezigon Pagoda, Nammyint tower and the Maha Wayapalha brick street are among the most popular sites. Inwa Archaeological Museum is home to more than 400 artifacts from the first to fourth Inwa periods.

Tein Tunan

Irrigation dept demonstrates flood prevention

Myingyan, 15 June — Myingyan District deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung spoke about the environmental damage caused by plastic and polyethylene bags at a recent plastic-free campaign event.

Staff of Myingyan district and township departments, police, firefighters, Red Cross society, social organizations and local residents participated in sanitation along the road from Myingyan-Mandalay road to entrance to Myingyan.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Residents clear road to Myingyan in plastic-free campaign

Hinthada, 15 June — Hinthada District Irrigation Department in Ayeyawady Region recently held a demonstration on prevention of floods at Ayeyawady-Hinthada embankment 3/7 in Eikpyet village.

Assistant Director U Wai Lwin of Hinthada District Irrigation Department spoke about maintenance of embankments for prevention of floods, public awareness for flood prevention, and necessary equipment for disaster prevention.

Officials and staff of the department demonstrated repairing of damaged embankment and upgrading of embankment to prevent overflow of water.

Hinthada District IPRD

Firefighters demonstrate use of modern suits

Mandalay, 15 June — A firefighting and rescue course for firefighters concluded at the half of General Administration Department in Pyigyidagun Township on Sunday.

A total of 35 firefighters from Pyigyidagun Township and seven from Mingalar Mandalay Company attended the course.
**Schools reopen as South Korea seeks normality in MERS outbreak**

Suwon, (South Korea), 15 June — Hundreds of South Korean schools that were shut by worries over Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) reopened on Monday as the country sought to return to normal, nearly four weeks into an outbreak that showed signs of slowing.

Five new cases were reported by the Health Ministry on Monday, taking the total to 150, the largest outbreak outside of Saudi Arabia. The ministry also said another patient infected with the MERS virus had become the 16th fatality.

All the cases have been traced to healthcare facilities. Four hospitals have been shut down completely or partially closed in an effort to stop the spread of what the World Health Organization (WHO) has said was a “large and complex” outbreak.

At least 440 schools remained closed on Monday, compared with the 2,900 that were shut on March 11 for MERS. The trend is expected to continue through the summer, the culture ministry said.

**Indonesian court to decide on French death row convict’s appeal next week**

Jakarta, 15 June — An Indonesian court will rule next week on an appeal lodged by a Frenchman on death row who is challenging the president’s refusal to grant him clemency, a judge told a hearing on Monday.

Convicted drug trafficker Serge Atlaoui was due to face the firing squad with other convicts in April but was granted a last-minute reprieve to allow for the completion of his legal appeals.

“We have received the arguments of both the defence and prosecution and will deliver a verdict on 22 June,” said presiding judge Ujang Abdullah.

Indonesia drew international condemnation in April for executing a group of foreign drug traffickers, but Australia, Brazil, Nigeria, and Ghana have not been linked to the transmission of the MERS virus.

**Indian DM says Indian Army’s importance has diminished “without war”**

New Delhi, 15 June — Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has reportedly said the Indian Army’s importance has diminished because of lack of wars in the past 40 to 50 years.

“The minister said Indian soldiers have been facing immense difficulties because people’s respect for the Army has reduced in peacetime,” according to Xinhua.

**China-Vietnam cooperative meeting to be held**

Beijing, 15 June — The 8th meeting of the China-Vietnam steering committee on cooperation will be held in China this week, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Monday.

The meeting will be held during Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh’s visit to China from Wednesday to Friday, spokesman La Kang said in a statement.

Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi will co-chair the meeting with Pham Binh Minh, said Lu.

The 7th meeting of the China-Vietnam steering committee on cooperation was held in Hanoi in last October.

**Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi will co-chair the meeting with Pham Binh Minh, said Lu.**
New Zealand to become AIIB founding member

SYDNEY, 15 June — New Zealand has agreed to become a founding member of the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and will invest NZ$125 million (US$87.2 million) in capital over five years, the government announced on Monday.

The AIIB, aimed at addressing the infrastructure gap in Asia, will have initial capital of close to US$100 billion (NZ$139 billion) and New Zealand’s contribution is proportionate to its economic size.

“The increased infrastructure investment will enhance the Asian region’s growth and that will be good for New Zealand,” Finance Minister Bill English said in a joint statement with Foreign Minister Murray McCully.

“This new bank will be a welcome addition to existing institutions and it stands to make a significant contribution to infrastructure in the region,” he said.

The formal signing ceremony will take place in Beijing later in the month and the AIIB is expected to begin operating before the end of the year, according to McCully. —Kyodo News

7,000 residents near Fukushima seek compensation over nuclear crisis

Citizens (L side) representative of around 7,000 people living in Tochigi Prefecture, adjacent to Fukushima Prefecture, submit documents to the Nuclear Compensation Dispute Resolution Centre in Tokyo on 15 June, 2015, seeking compensation worth 1.85 billion yen ($15 million) through an out-of-court settlement with Tokyo Electric Power Co, the operator of the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

KYODO NEWS

N Korea informs overseas missions defence chief executed

SEOUL, 15 June — North Korea has confirmed to its overseas diplomatic missions that its defence minister, Gen Hyon Yong Chol, was executed, a Seoul daily reported on Monday, citing a source in Beijing. North Korea recently informed embassies in China and elsewhere of Hyon’s execution and listed several instances of his “disobedience,” the report in the Chosun Ilbo said.

The country’s leader Kim Jong Un “believes doing off or getting distracted in a meeting is worse than opposing his decisions,” the source was quoted as saying, backing up the speculation Hyon aroused Kim’s anger after being caught doing off in a meeting.

Hyon was reportedly unable to answer a question Kim asked in the meeting because he had been asleep and also disobeyed an order the leader gave, though what the order was is not known, the report said.

In May, South Korea’s intelligence organization told lawmakers that the reason for the purge was that Hyon, 66, had shown disrespect to Kim, including being caught doing off during a military meeting on 24-25 April and not implementing instructions from the leader.

In a move to secure his grip on power, Kim has purged a number of senior officials, including his uncle and de facto No 2 leader Jang Song Thaek and former general staff chief Ri Yong Ho, since taking control of the nation upon the death of his father Kim Jong Il in late 2011.

Kyodo News

CPC expels two former senior officials

BEIJING, 15 June — A former senior official and a former senior executive of a major state-owned enterprise have been expelled from the Communist Party of China (CPC) for “serious violations of discipline and the law,” said China’s top anti-graft body on Monday.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said in a statement that Sun Hongzhi, vice minister of the State Administration for Industry & Commerce, and Liao Yongyuan, former general manager with China National Petroleum Corporation, have been expelled from CPC following graft investigations.

It accused the two of accepting a huge amount of bribes, seeking profits for others and committing adultery. As senior leading cadres of the CPC, Sun and Liao seriously violated Party rules and organizational discipline, said the state administration.

While there have been cases of defec-tions from the North to the South by land and sea, they are rare.

Most North Koreans defecting to the South do so via third countries, first crossing into China and then travelling to Mongolia or countries in Southeast Asia.

More than 25,000 North Koreans have fled their homeland and sought asylum in South Korea and other countries since the end of the three-year Korean War in 1953. —Kyodo News

N Korean soldier defects to S Korea via land border

SEOUL, 15 June — A North Korean soldier defected to South Korea on Monday via the heavily fortified land border, a South Korean Defence Ministry official said.

The incident, which took place in Hwacheon, Gangwon Province, involved a soldier in his late teens, the official said.

While there have been cases of defections from the North to the South by land and sea, they are rare.

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More than 25,000 North Koreans have fled their homeland and sought asylum in South Korea and other countries since the end of the three-year Korean War in 1953. —Kyodo News
Elections are symbol of democracy

By Myint Win Thein

In accordance with the 2008 constitution, all of Myanmar's national representatives, save for 25 percent of defence services representatives, are directly chosen via general election. For instance, winning representatives in the upcoming general election, scheduled to be held in late October or early November, along with defence services representatives, will choose three presidential candidates, one of whom will become the president of the Union.

Therefore, the general election is more important for Myanmar than other countries where balance of power has been exercised for a long time. As history has shown, elections in Myanmar can mark the success of the legislative and administrative branch, as well as other branches including the judicial branch, and hinder the successful implementation of government policies.

The fewer the defectors there are in the general election, the better the government and the parliament can lead the people and country. As elections are also a symbol of democracy, nobody in Myanmar should allow any mistakes in the election process. Everyone should cooperate with election sub-commissions. Likewise, all election sub-commissions should welcome whoever renders a helping hand to correct errors. If they are not corrected as soon as they are found, people will suffer for five years.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit an editorial, analyses or reports please email wallace.tun@gmail.com with your name and title. Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Why no action against dangerous motor drivers?

I have read about Authorities warning motor drivers with noisy exhausts. But compared to more dangerous drivers mentioned below, at least they cause no fatalities apart from being a disturbance.

The really dangerous drivers who should be punished as Criminals are as follows: (Only priorities are mentioned.)

(a) Taking the wrong opposite lane while taking a Left Turn, near traffic lights;

(b) Changing lanes without warning;

(c) Driving at speed across pedestrian crossings;

(d) Changing lanes close to traffic lights;

(e) Trying to beat the Yellow Traffic Light by speeding;

(f) Breaking the Priority Rule at traffic circles.

The majority of these offenders are taxi and bus drivers, who seem to have nothing to lose in case of an accident, at least in Yangon, so far.

So, as a good citizen, although I have no power to say or suggest on the planning of importing vehicles into our country for which we all are suffering now, may I request the authorities to take some action basically to enforce traffic discipline and reduce accidents. Perhaps some of my ideas may work:

(a) Train and equip more Traffic Police. Present taxes should be enough for the purpose;

(b) Pay them enough to keep away from bribes and earn their dignity; Exemplary punishment for corruption;

(c) Station static and mobile Traffic Police to take immediate action either to impose immediate fine or criminal action; Fine-vouchers are necessary;

(d) Take action against such Owners of Vehicles also;

(e) Mark “Taxi-stands” and build proper recessed Bus-Stops, away from traffic lanes;

(f) Paint Lane Markers to be prominent day and night;

(g) Extend them from the traffic lights as necessary;

(h) Traffic lights need to be higher;

(i) Build over-head bridges where necessary, like congested crossing or schools;

(j) Plan more fly-overs and Rail passenger traffic.

Sincerely,

(A Patriot)

Books for Children

Maung Hlaing

The Global New Light of Myanmar of 10-6-2015 issue carried an interesting news story of publishing three illustrated books for children. According to the news, the books were prize winning books of Children’s Literature Competition jointly organized by Myanmar Writers Association and Shanti Volunteer Association of Japan. Besides, the books were printed on quality paper by the Printing and Publishing Enterprise. It is heartening to see such books which will be a cog in the wheel of the children’s literatry world.

Today, books on various subjects are coming out. And various book societies and public libraries sprout. Previously, we hardly had 20 kinds of reading materials including magazines and very few books for children but now nearly 200 kinds of magazines and journals are being published monthly. Writers who know how to uplift the quality of children come to write more books for them. However, quality books for children are still in need.

In order to meet the needs and to honour the outstanding writers, the highest national literary awards are conferred every year. The literary awards scheme has started since 1962 to encourage, propagate and perpetuate the most treasured national culture and traditions through promoting literary talents among the writers, poetry, drama, translation, non-fiction and many other in various genres including literature for children. The best works in each prescribed category published during the year are evaluated and scrutinized by the National Literary Awards Selection Committee and awards are conferred to the most deserving.

Initially, the awards were given to the published books only in accordance with the calendar year. However, to encourage wider participation and nurture potential talents, whose manuscripts could never see print due to various reasons, “Sarpay Belikman Manuscript Awards Scheme” has been supplemented since 1969. It is now gaining momentum. Writers both veteran and novice, who are interested in literature for children can take part in the scheme. (Later, Pa-kokku U Ohn Pe Manuscript Award Scheme was introduced in 1993.)

The two schemes of “National Literary Awards” and “Manuscript Award’s” can attract the writers who write fiction, non-fiction and poems for children because awards for these genres (fiction, non-fiction and poems) are included in both schemes. As progress is seen in all aspects in accordance with changes of political and economic systems, technical advancement can be vividly seen in the publishing business.

However, there are problems and issues concerning publishing books for children in developing countries including Myanmar. In those countries, publishing books is a very expensive task. Though there are some printers in the city, there are hardly any publishers who are interested in books for children only. In some countries there are many problems such as lack of reading habit, lack of publishing houses, poor literacy rate, lack of affordable prices, and etc. Moreover, on the part of the publishers, there are some problems on alluring use of topics and titles, layout and design, attractive use of illustrations (including photographs), marketing of the books, planning and editing, and so on.

Likewise, writers of children’s literature are complaining of acute shortage of (traditional) themes for books. Although he can have run out of themes, they turn to translated works for children. It is believed that translation could be one of the fastest methods of producing books for children. This is why, we can see so many books for children are translated from other land’s fairy tales, folk tales, myths, epics or epic poems (including long stories about legendary heroes), fables, fictions and non-fictions, fantasies, adventure stories, animal stories, mystery and detective stories, fables and science fiction.

Actually, children want to read the literary works of creation, innovation or re-make. Even a veteran writer who admits such a thought he can write so many books on fiction or non-fiction, he finds difficulties in creating literary works for children. As for the books on poems for children, they do not gain a foothold in the market.

I would like to introduce a true creative literary work for children from the book “Laughing together” (Asian/Pacific Copublication Programme Series Six) to readers. The title is “They Did Move Their House, But…” The story is as follows:-

On the right side of the house of a minister, there lived a blacksmith, and on the left side, a carpenter. The blacksmith and the carpenter made noise night and day and disturbed the minister. When he could not take it anymore, the minister called the two and demanded that they move their houses.

But strangely enough, the noise of sawing and hammering continued. The minister got upset and annoyed. He called his servants and ordered them to find out what was going on.

The servants came back with the news that the carpenter and the blacksmith did move houses as they had promised. The carpenter had moved to the blacksmith’s house and the blacksmith to the carpenter’s where they happily continued hammering and sawing night and day. (Republic of Korea).

According to the survey, most of the children like such creation of literature because they have sense of humour. By nature, young readers like to read stories with happy or funny endings but not tragedies. Myanmar writers can create such themes for children. The writers who write for children will have to avoid boring or preaching style which gives too much lessons.

Today, thousands and thousands of books are published all over the country. Unfortunately, we cannot say that the number of books for children has come out to meet the needs of present population of children. To make matters worse, producing a quality book for children is easier said than done.

In such a situation, the three quality books for children that have come out recently will make our dear master happy. That is why, my heartfelt thanks will go to Shanti Volunteer Association of Japan.

More books for children are welcome!!
Thilawa Special Economic Zone project attracts US$ 400 million in short span

Byline: Ye Khaung Nyunt; Photos: Po Htaung

YANGON, 15 June—
The Thilawa Special Economic Zone Project, located some 20 km from the former capital Yangon, has attracted about US $400 million worth of investment within five months, according to SEZ management committee chairman U Set Aung.

Thirty-six out of 40 companies have reached reservation agreements with the management committee and received investment permission. Operations of the SEZ are set to start in September, a little later than scheduled, according to the chairman.

However, the chairman is adamant that operations of the SEZ will begin this year. The committee has completed water and electricity supply tasks and implemented waste management systems which do not allow any waste to be dumped into the river. Decoration of offices and installation of sensors at the main gates of the SEZ have yet to be completed, the chairman added.

In addition, a computerized system of issuing investment permits not only allows the management committee to assess the standards of companies but also to monitor their business and investment activities. The chairman pointed out that other benefits of the SEZ include expansion of the export sector and human resources development as factories there will export 100 percent of their high-quality products which require highly skilled labour.

For human resource development of people around the SEZ, vocational training centres will be set up in the zone, according to the chairman. One of the professional vocational training centres was opened on 9 June by Fuji World Company and the management committee is arranging skill training courses for 40 local people who had to move to nearby place due to the project, according to the chairman.

Moreover, the electronic tax collection system to be applied by the SEZ allows the government to levy all kinds of taxes that would otherwise be lost outside the SEZ, including trading taxes, value taxes and council taxes. Companies prefer the system as it collects taxes more transparently and recognizes taxpayers, the chairman said.

Nobody will need to carry cash in the SEZ, including employees, as they can use mobile banking, online banking and ATM cards systems. Thilawa SEZ benefits not only the government but also members of the public who have bought shares.

Most shareholders are ordinary people like hawkers and will be able to enjoy benefits for about 75 years.

Yangon Region OKs controversial...

(last September after being tied to money laundering disclosed by the local media).

Mayor U Hla Myint said the project will ensure transparency and the Yangon Region government will invite tenders for its development.

As for local people who are affected by the project, the chairman said the management committee, developer companies, NGOs and civil society organizations have formed a group to manage the needs of the local people affected by the project, including seasonal floods and sewage systems which were built by local people by themselves.

The group is carrying out maintenance tasks for the sewage system and has completed electricity and water supply tasks. Other assistance for affected people includes free vocational training courses which even provide transportation fares, financial management courses for micro-finance and employment. There is also a complaint centre set up at the SEZ, according to the chairman.

The chairman added.

The site where new satellite town project will be implemented.
Greek Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said on Sunday that he expects the first chapters in the accession talks with the European Union to be opened soon, adding that this depends on the next round of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, scheduled for 23 June in Brussels.

We will soon have the opportunity to open the chapters — perhaps even sooner than many people expect, Vucic told reporters after attending the European Forum Wachau in Austria. Serbia will not accept pressure from the Pristina side in the dialogue in order to be able to open the first chapters in the accession talks as soon as possible, and Belgrade cannot accept Pristina’s proposals that are unacceptable to Kosovo-Metohija Serbs, Dacic said. Talks are ahead on four topics in the dialogue with Pristina.

Thorning-Schmidt’s campaign got off to a strong start as her ratings rose on the back of a raft of spending promises and her declarations that Denmark’s economic crisis was over, after months of trialling the opposition.

But analyses say Liberals leader Lars Lokke Rasmussen came out on top in last week’s debate on immigration and state spending, while Thorning-Schmidt had faced criticism, even from her allies, over what they say is her overly negative campaigning style.

Just one out of a series of recent polls, a survey conducted by Voxmeter, showed the ruling parties still ahead with 50.3 percent.

“Twenty percent of the voters don’t know who to vote for on Thursday. Of course, it goes a little bit up and a little bit down all the time — in fact, it’s 50-50,” said Camilla Fjeldsoe, head of Gallup’s political division in Denmark.

Greece said it was still ready to talk, but that EU and IMF officials would have to say ‘yes’ immediately to any such agreement with a debt restructuring and Greece would forego any further aid if the European Central Bank and the IMF and the European Union would offer a debt haircut.

On top of that Greece needs an “extension” of the terms. EU officials blamed the collapse of the talks on Athens, saying it had failed to offer anything new to secure the funding it needs to repay 1.6 billion euros to the IMF by the end of June.

Greece said it would not give in to demands for pension and wage cuts. “We don’t want a single cent for wages, pensions or debt repayment,” Varoufakis told Bild. He said that the Greek government wouldn’t want people collecting taxes if creditors forced it to raise them too high.

Athens has proposed VAT rates of 7, 14 and 22 percent in an effort to redistribute the tax impact and lighten the burden on lower income groups.

But lenders want rates of 11 and 23 percent and are pressing for an increase in VAT on energy to 23 percent.

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Greece is gambling too far and the patience of its creditors is running out, said a senior official in Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservative Christian Democrats on Monday. Julia Kloeckner, a member of the CDU party executive, told reporters on her way into a meeting in Berlin that Greece was “overplaying its hand” and that “the patience of creditors is running out” — Reuters.

No one else in Europe is carrying the responsibility for this except Greece itself.

“Not only Angela Merkel (wants to keep Greece in the euro), a lot of people want that... We’re saying Greece should remain. But it won’t work that Greece sets the terms and says ‘everyone else has to dance to our tune’, Greece needs to get back to reality.” — Reuters

Swedish prosecutors plan to question Assange in June or July

Stockholm, 15 June — Swedish prosecutors plan to question WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange at Ecuador’s embassy in London in June or July, the prosecutor said on Monday.

The prosecutors have submitted a request for legal assistance to the English authorities and a request to Ecuador for permission to interview Assange during those two months, the prosecutor said in a statement.

The 43-year-old Australian has been in the embassy building for almost two years, and analysts say the time is right for Sweden to make a decision on whether to seek Assange’s extradition.

Prosecutors first insisted Assange should travel to Sweden for questioning, but in a U-turn in March agreed to conduct the interview in London. — Reuters
Saudi planes strike Yemen’s capital ahead of talks

SANAA, 15 June — Warplanes from a Saudi-led coalition bombarded Yemen’s capital Sanaa overnight, a Reuters witness said, as the country’s warring factions prepared for talks due to start in Geneva on Monday.

Air strikes caused large explosions before dawn and hit locations south and west of the city as part of the coalition’s nearly 12-week campaign to target the Houthi militia and army forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The talks hosted by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon are aimed at finding a political solution to the fighting that has caused thousands of deaths in Yemen, but it was not clear if the opposing factions would meet each other.

Delegates will instead meet initially in separate rooms for talks with UN officials, who will try to bring them closer together with the ultimate aim of getting them around the same table.

There is little sign so far that either the Iran-aligned Houthis and Saleh, or the Riyadh-backed President Abdul-Rabbu Mansour Hadi are ready to compromise after fighting that has resulted in stalemate since Saudi strikes began on 26 March.

While Western countries largely backed Riyadh’s air campaign as a way of pushing the Houthis to the negotiating table, they have more recently started to press the kingdom to commence another humanitarian pause to allow aid in, and to negotiate.

An existing humanitarian crisis in Yemen was worsened by an air and sea blockade imposed to stop arms supplies to the Houthis and Saleh, but which also cut off access to food, medicine and fuel for many of the country’s citizens.

In recent weeks an “alarming” number of denunciations and cases have been reported in Yemen, contributing to a public health crisis, the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a note late on Sunday.

US airstrike in Libya likely kills man blamed for Algeria attack

CAIRO, 15 June — An Islamist militant who masterminded a deadly Algerian gas field attack in 2013 was likely killed in a US airstrike in Libya, the country’s government said on Sunday, according to US media.

While Washington has not confirmed the death of the Algerian man, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, Pentagon spokesman Col Steve Warren said the US military believed the airstrike was successful and hit the target on Saturday attack.

Belmokhtar was placed on a wanted list by the Japanese police on 1 June in connection with the 16 January, 2013, attack, in which Islamist militants took over a gas complex in southeastern Algeria, resulting in the death of at least 40 foreigners, including 10 of the 17 Japanese who were taken hostage.

US authorities had offered a $5 million reward for information leading to the arrest of Belmokhtar.

A Libyan government official reportedly said an airstrike in Ajdabiya on Saturday night hit a group believed to be affiliated with Ansar al-Shariah, killing several members.

There have been reports of Belmokhtar being killed before. But he was recently reported to be alive and active in Libya. In May, he issued a statement saying he supported al-Qaeda, not the Islamic State.

Libya has been divided between Islamist-led forces and liberal forces following the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. The latest airstrike was conducted after the United States consulted with the liberal forces, who are ready to compromise, said a US official.

While US and allied forces have conducted several air strikes in Libya, there is little sign so far that the fighting has brought the country’s citizens.

Kenya says kills al Shabaab commander and possibly militant Briton

Nairobi, 15 June — Kenya’s army said it killed a regional commander from Somalia’s al Shabaab group, and possibly also a Briton who joined the militants, in fighting over the weekend.

Elmi Somali militants and two Kenyan soldiers were killed when al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabaab fighters attacked a military base in Kenya’s northern coastal region of Lamu County, officials said.

Al Shabaab confirmed the weekend attack, saying “many Kenyan soldiers were killed”, without giving precise figures. It gave no details about any al Shabaab members killed. The group often cites a higher death toll than officials.

Among those killed was al Shabaab’s Luqman Osman Issa, also known as Sharwa, blamed for leading attacks on Kenya’s Mpeketoni area a year ago in which 65 people were killed, Kenya Defence Forces spokesman Colonel David Obonyo said on Monday.

This is a big victory for us and also a major setback for al Shabaab because now there is no mainstream commander in the Lamu area,” he told Reuters, adding Shura’s body was in a morgue in Mpeketoni.

He also said the dead may have included Thomas Evans, also known as dấu Hakim, a Briton in his mid-20s who had converted to Islam aged 19 and later joined al Shabaab. Obonyo said data about Evans and pictures publicly available “point at him”.

“But we cannot be certain because sometimes looks can be deceiving,” he said. The necessary forensic investigations are being done including a DNA test I understand recognized by the government of Libya by the international community.

Reuters

Three Tunisian police killed in clash with militants - TAP

TUNIS, 15 June— Three police officers were killed in clashes with Islamist militants at a checkpoint near Sidi Bouzid in central Tunisia, TAP state news agency reported on Monday.

Two police officers died in an attack on the checkpoint and another in a later clash. One Islamist fighter was killed and another captured, TAP said.

Tunisian forces have stepped up their campaign against jihadist groups since gunmen killed foreign tourists in an attack on the Bardo museum in the capital in March.

No group claimed the Sidi Bouzid attack, but several small brigades of Islamist armed groups are active in Tunisia, including Okba Ibn Nafaa, which operates along the border with Algeria. One of its Algerian commanders was blamed by Tunisian officials for orchestrating the Bardo assault.

US confirms militant Belmokhtar was target of Libyan air strike

WASHINGTON, 15 June — The US military confirmed on Sunday that Algerian militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar was the target of a US air strike in Libya but did not say if he had been killed.

“The strike was carried out by US aircraft. We are continuing to assess the results of the operation and will provide more details as appropriate,” Pentagon spokesman Colonel Steve Warren said in a statement.

Libya’s recognised government said earlier on Sunday that Belmokhtar, believed to be commanding an Algerian gas field attack and running smuggling routes across North Africa, had been killed in a US air strike inside Libya.

TAP

Islamic State teenager said to be UK’s youngest suicide bomber

LONDON, 15 June — A 17-year-old who left northern England to join Islamic State was reported to have become Britain’s youngest suicide bomber when he blew himself up in a car in northern Iraq, British media said after the militants posted pictures on social media.

The young man, who was named as Abu Yusuf al-Britani, was shown standing next to a black vehicle in photographs posted on Islamic State-affiliated social media accounts, the Guardian newspaper reported. The posts said he then took part in a suicide attack in Iraq’s Salahuddin province.

He is believed to be Talha Asmal, a teenager who left West Yorkshire in March, and was thought to have joined Islamic State, according to a statement from his family.

“Although the information within these reports has not been confirmed and the relevant UK authorities are working hard to verify the facts, we can confirm that the photographs shown of a youth purportedly named Abu Yusuf al-Britani appears to show our 17-year-old son Talha,” the family of Talha Asmal said in a statement issued by West Yorkshire police on Sunday.

“We are all naturally utterly devastated and heartbroken by the unspeakable tragedy that now appears to have befallen us.”

Security services have estimated that at least 600 Britons have gone to Syria or Iraq to join militant groups, including data on a youth known as “Ihadi John” who has appeared in several Islamic State beheading videos.

Hundreds of other Europeans have also joined the fight.

The family said Asmal came from a close knit, hard-working, peace loving and law abiding British Muslim family, and the entire family unreservedly condemned and abhorred all acts of violence wherever they were perpetrated.

West Yorkshire police said they were aware of the reports, but were unable to comment further as the person’s identity had not been confirmed.

According to media reports, Islamic State said ‘al-Britani’ was a suicide bomber — with the others said to be a German, a Kuwaiti and a Palestinian — who took part in the attack.

Islamic State controls swathes of territory in eastern Syria and northern Iraq where it has declared an Islamic caliphate.

Kyodo News

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Hahn: Serbia anchor of stability in region

The Western Balkans will be fully stabilised once all its countries become EU members, Hahn said, adding that this will take time as the countries must be brought closer to the Union. There are no obstacles in the enlargement process, and it must be understood as a process of those countries’ accession to the EU in the social, economic and legal sense, Hahn said. Commenting on Serbia’s non-participation in the EU sanctions against Russia, he said that he understands that a country that was bombed by the West 16 years ago has not gone that route. I have understanding for the fact that things in society are still not at that level and that the political elite must tread cautiously, Hahn said.—Tanjug

N Korean leader observes drill of firing anti-ship rockets

BEIJING, 15 June — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has observed a drill of test-firing “new type” anti-ship rockets, expressing satisfaction at improved capabilities to strike a specific target, state-run media said on Monday.

The announcement of the observation, carried out by the Korean Central News Agency, came a day after North Korea fired three short-range ship-to-ship missiles off its eastern coast into the Sea of Japan.

The KCNA report did not say when and where Kim watched the drill of firing anti-ship rockets “safely flew at the designated altitude, accurately detecting and hitting the ‘enemy’ warship.”

On Monday, KCNA also said in a separate report that Kim has attended an art performance of the Korean People’s Army, during which he was accompanied by a senior military figure believed to be the country’s new defence chief.

Pak Yong Sik was named after Hwang Pyong So, director of the General Political Bureau of the army who has been seen as the closest aide of Kim, in the list of top military officials who were present at the performance.

Pak’s name came before that of Ri Yong Gil, chief of the General Staff of the army, raising the possibility that he might have already replaced Gen Hyon Yong Chol as North Korea’s defence minister.

In mid-May, South Korea’s spy agency said North Korea had purged Hyon for treason and he may have even been executed.—Reuters

Vietnam Football Federation bigwigs face bribery scandal

Ho Chi Minh City, 15 June — Two top officials of the Vietnam Football Federation (VFF) have been accused of taking bribes from him only a few days after he was laid off in a major downsizing, local online newspaper Thanh Nien (Young People) News reported on Monday.

Nguyen Van Chuong, the former director of VFF’s Young Football Players Training Centre, was dismissed along with some other employees on 1 June under a lay-off plan. After that, Chuong revealed that VFF chairman Le Hung Dung and his deputy Tran Quoc Tuan had taken 100 million Vietnamese dong (4,587 US dollars) each from him.

Chuong said as soon as he heard about the lay-off plan, he asked to meet the two officials to offer them the bribes, but he still ended up being fired. In his complaint sent to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the General Department of Sports and Physical Training, and local press agencies, Chuong said he gave Tuan 100 million Vietnamese dong on 15 July, 2014, but in May this year Tuan gave him back the money, saying he could not help him because the money is not enough for him. Chuong said. Chuong said he met Dung at the latter’s house, giving him 100 million Vietnamese dong and other gifts on 28 August, 2014. Chuong told the media he hired a lawyer to represent him and is ready to provide evidence to support his accusation. Meanwhile, Dung denied taking any bribe.

Dung said Chuong accompanied Tran Duy Long, former chairman of the Ho Chi Minh City Football Federation, to his house on 28 August, 2014 after he returned from Singapore for medical treatment. Dung said he did not expect to see Chuong at his house. Dung said Chuong gave him a choker as a gift, but he refused to take it. Dung said Chuong tried to leave the clock at his house and left. Dung said there was no money involved. Dung said he would also hire a lawyer to represent him.

Nepal Bonaparte’s getway ship found in Australian waters

SYDNEY, 15 June — The ship French Emperor or Napoleon Bonaparte used to sneak back to France while in exile has been found in Australia, a Queensland shipwreck hunter has claimed in a separate report. Australian filmmaker and shipwreck hunter Ben Cropp, claiming that he’s found the final resting place of the 337-ton brig named L’Inconstant, later renamed the Swiftsure to retake his homeland, famously confirming the soldiers of King Louis XVIII and ultimately the monarch into exile.

England later seized the brig as a war prize after the battle of Waterloo, renamed her and used her on the England-Australia shipping route. The brig was believed to have sailed after striking a coral reef on the great barrier reef while en route from Sydney to Mauritius in 1829.

Cropp said it took years of meticulous research to narrow the search area, with the final line of debris he found during a scuba- dive corroborating reports in 1830 which noted wrecks stripping the vessel of its valuables.

Cropp said the discovery in November 2014, however kept it secret as plans were made to create a film of the discovery. Those plans were abandoned due to the site being highly decomposed and in crocodile infested waters.

Cropp counted six crocodile traces going into the water a mile away and that’s not funny. My dive there (in November 2014) was very brief,” Cropp said.—Xinhua

Reopens World Heritage sites 7 weeks after quake

BEIJING, 15 June — Nepal on Monday announced the reopening of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Kathmandu Valley, seven weeks after a deadly quake that killed 8,787 people and damaged hundreds of cultural monuments and key trekking trails in the country where tourism employs about a million people.

At a function organized at the historic Bhaktapur Durbar Square in Bhaktapur district neighbouring Kathmandu, Tourism Minister Kerendra Sherpa declared Kathmandu Valley, comprising of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts, open for tourists.

Kathmandu Valley boasts of seven World Heritage sites, of which all except the Changu Narayan temple in Bhaktapur were reopened Monday because many houses on the way to the temple are on the verge of collapse, said Bhesh Narayan Dahal, director general of the Archaeology Department.

The Archaeology Department’s Dahal said the quake damaged 741 cultural monuments across the country, of which 133 completely collapsed.

“As a safety measure, we can provide helmets to tourists visiting the World Heritage sites,” Dahal said. Japanese singer Yuki sang the Nepali song Resham Phirati and his own song, Arigato Ya, at the function.

“I came to Kathmandu on 13 June to see the impact of the earthquake,” Waki, 51, from Tokyo, told Kyodo News. “I am going back on Tuesday to hold a concert here to generate funds for children asking people to visit Nepal,” he said.

Waki, who visited Nepal 10 years ago, added that he held a concert in Tokyo after Nepal’s earthquake to generate funds for children orphaned by the quake. He plans to return here later to hold a concert here to generate additional funds for social causes.

Bhaktapur is a picturesque district of Kathmandu Valley’s world heritage sites, the other sites being Patan Durbar Square area, but officials insist that Monday marks a turning point in Nepal’s tourism that was badly shaken by the quake.

“At the function organized at the historic Bhaktapur Durbar Square in Bhaktapur district neighbouring Kathmandu, Tourism Minister Kerendra Sherpa declared Kathmandu Valley, comprising of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts, open for tourists. The Archaeology Department’s Dahal said the quake damaged 741 cultural monuments across the country, of which 133 completely collapsed.

Debris of collapsed monuments at the other sites has been cleared to welcome tourists, Dahal added.

Even as the announce-ment was made, no tourist was visible in Bhaktapur Durbar Square area, but officials insist that Monday marks a turning point in Nepal’s tourism that was badly shaken by the quake.

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Suspect in husband’s suicide may have been involved in fraud

SAITAMA, (Japan), 15 June — A woman already arrested for allegedly assisting in her husband’s suicide may have swindled acquaintances of a large sum of money by getting them to join a non-existent membership reserve fund service, police sources said on Monday.

Hiroko Morita, 51, of Saitama Prefecture, north of Tokyo, could have collected several hundreds of millions of yen in total from dozens of people by soliciting them to join the service supposedly offered by Tokyo-based department store operator Isetan Mitsukoshi Holdings Ltd, at which her husband was previously employed, they said. Police are set to serve a fresh arrest warrant on her on suspicion of fraud, according to the sources.

One person was quoted by the police as saying that Morita asked the person to sign up for the non-existent scheme by depositing 1 million yen ($8,100), saying the program would award a gift certificate worth 40,000 yen every six months.

Morita was arrested 26 May this year on suspicion of aiding her 55-year-old husband’s suicide on 20 April by buying charcoal that her husband burned inside a car to commit suicide. At the time, they were living separately, the police said.

Under the official Isetan Mitsukoshi department store membership reserve fund service, a member deposits between 5,000 yen to 50,000 yen a month for one year to get a bonus equivalent to the monthly deposit that must be used for shopping at its group stores.

There is also a six-month plan where a customer deposits 5,000 yen a month and receives a bonus gift certificate worth 2,000 yen.—Kyodo News

Chinese police bust teen drug trafficking ring

KUNMING, 15 June — An international gang of drug smugglers with over 50 juveniles used as drug mules has been bust in southwest China’s Yunnan Province. Of the 63 suspects arrested in the operation, more than 50 are aged between 15 and 25 years old. A total of 13.2 kg heroin was seized in the process.

Kunming railway police said 23 teenagers were detained in 10 days last August, all with drugs concealed inside their bodies. Another 32 were seized from September to January.

Investigators found all the teenagers were coerced by a gang mastered by a suspect from neighboring Sichuan Province. They were trained in Sichuan before going to border areas in Yunnan and taking drugs back to Sichuan by train.

According to the police, drug dealers have tended to recruit “cleaner” teenagers to traffick drugs in recent years. The Kunming police busted a similar gang in 2013. —Xinhua
Britain’s Muse score fifth number one album with ‘Drones’

LOndon, 15 June — British rock band Muse scored their fifth British number one album on Sunday when “Drones” went straight into the chart in the top spot, the Official Charts Company said. The cut, which features the singles “Dead Inside” and “Mercy,” sold almost 73,000 copies, pushing Florence & the Machine’s “How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful” down one place to number two, and Collabro’s “Act Two” to number three. Jason Derulo’s “Want To Want Me” was the top-selling single for the third consecutive week.

The track, which is Derulo’s fourth chart-topper following “In My Head” in 2010, “Don’t Wanna Go Home” in 2011 and “Talk Dirty” in 2013, ended the week with more than 11,000 sales over its nearest competitor, OMI’s “Cheerleader,” the Official Charts Company said.

Beyonce sued for USD 7 million

Los Angeles, 15 June — Pop sensation Beyonce is being sued by a backing singer for USD 7 million after it was claimed the star had plagiarised her music to write her hit song “XO.”

The 33-year-old singer and her company Parkwood Entertainment and Columbia Records have been taken to court over her hit “XO” after Ahmad Lane filed a federal lawsuit claiming she had stolen the music for the track, reported Radar online.

Ahmad alleged that Beyonce’s current backing singer Chrissy Collins gave her a copy of his song “XOXO” after he passed on the track to her when the pair were working together for another artist. However, the Grammy Award-winner has vehemently denied the claims in court documents.

“The two works at issue are entirely different songs that share no lyrical or musical similarity, other than perhaps the letters X and O,” the response read.

“The two songs are distinct from a thematic perspective. They have different melodic content and there is no meaningful similarity in pitch series, rhythm or rhythmic patterns, melodic development or structure.”

The “Crazy In Love” hitmaker also stated that Ahmad hadn’t filed a “copyright registration” for his track and asked for the USD 7 million payment to be dropped.

Chris Pratt to return for ‘Jurassic World’ sequel

Chris Pratt: I liked to entertain people and I liked comedy and I liked to escape with a movie now and then.

LOS ANGELES, 15 June — Actor Chris Pratt is expected to return for the second “Jurassic World” movie. The 35-year-old actor is currently starring in the film, which has topped this weekend box office, grossing an amazing USD 204.6 million on its debut weekend, reported Entertainment Weekly.

When asked if he will be back for the sequel, the actor replied, “I am,” before adding with his usual sense of humour, “They have me for I think 38 movies or something.” Pratt also talked about his childhood love for the franchise. “I was 13. It started when I saw the movie trailer on TV, I was like, ‘Oh my god, I have to see that!’ I saw it on opening weekend and I just captivated my imagination and swept me up. That’s why he said working with Steven Spielberg is a big deal for him. “Working with him and having him be a peer now is pretty remarkable. He’s a guy who’s an icon. I was never a film buff as a kid. I liked to entertain people and I liked comedy and I liked to escape with a movie now and then. And that’s the big event for me.”

Paul Walker’s estate sues his friend for stealing cars

LOS ANGELES, 15 June — Paul Walker’s estate is suing the deceased actor’s acquaintance, Richard Taylor, over missing cars.

In a lawsuit filed on Thursday, 11 June in Los Angeles Superior Court, the man is accused of holding on to some of the movie star’s car collection and trying to extort his family, reported Ace Showbiz.

Paul’s father William Walker, who is also the executor of his estate, stated in the suit that Richard used to help Paul with his extensive car collection. Richard was said to be keeping seven of the vehicles including a Porsche and multiple BMWs for his own.

According to the legal documents, Richard’s associates removed the vehicles from Paul’s Valencia warehouse where they were stored less than 24 hours following the actor’s fatal car crash. He has since been hiding the cars in an unknown location. While the property was regularly used by multiple companies and people, including Richard, the star’s family argued that the guy had no right over the cars. “Richard has intentionally and fraudulently concealed the existence and location of such vehicles from Plaintiffs in order to wrongfully convert such vehicles for his own benefit,” read a statement in the suit obtained by The Hollywood Reporter. The legal paper further claimed that Richard refused to give the vehicles back so that he could “extort money or other concessions” from the estate. In the suit, the family demanded Richard to return the cars and asked for some money for unspecified damages.—PTI

Taylor Swift hosts Jaime King’s baby shower

LOS ANGELES, 15 June — Pop star Taylor Swift threw a baby shower for her best friend Jaime King. The “Shake It Off” hitmaker took to Twitter and Instagram to share photos from the celebration. She brought her other friends, including Sarah Hyland, Gigi Hadid, Serayah, HAIM and Hailee Steinfeld, to the bash, reported Ace Showbiz.

Swift, 25, shared a photo collage of her, Jaime, Gigi and Alana Haim funny photos in a posing photo booth.—PTI

Manga “One Piece” sets Guinness record for No of published copies

Yoshitaka Heishi (4th from L), editor in chief of the Weekly Shonen Jump comic magazine, poses for photos with characters from the popular Japanese manga series “One Piece” in Tokyo on 15 June, 2015, after the series was officially recognized by Guinness World Records the same day as the comic series by a cartoonist with the largest number of copies published to date.

Shueisha Inc. had published roughly 320,866,000 copies of Eiichiro Oda’s cartoon in 77 volumes by the end of 2014.— Kyodo News

Tokyo, 15 June — The popular Japanese manga series “One Piece” was officially recognized by Guinness World Records on Monday as the comic series by a cartoonist with the largest number of copies published to date. Shueisha Inc. had published roughly 320,866,000 copies of Eiichiro Oda’s cartoon in 77 volumes at the end of last year. The series began in the publisher’s Weekly Shonen Jump comic magazine in 1997. At a ceremony in Tokyo, Yoshitaka Heishi, the magazine’s editor-in-chief, received the Guinness certificate on behalf of Oda. In a statement, the cartoonist said he hopes to continue producing a work that matches the significance of the record. The cartoon’s story centers on Monkey D. Luffy, its main character who dreams of being the king of pirates as he travels the seas with his buddies in search of the treasure called “One Piece.”—Kyodo News

Taylor Swift shared a photo collage of her, Jaime, Gigi and Alana Haim funny photos in a posing photo booth.

Taylor Swift hosts Jaime King’s baby shower
Sharp Nadal returns to form for Stuttgart title

Rafael Nadal of Spain returns the ball to Novak Djokovic of Serbia during their men’s quarter-final match at the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, France, on 3 June, 2015.— Reuters

STUTTGART, 15 June — Rafa Nadal claimed his first grasscourt title for five years when he beat Serbian Viktor Troicki 7-6(3), 6-3 to win the Mercedes Cup in Stuttgart on Sunday.

Disney’s powerful marketing force: social media moms

LOS ANGELES, 15 June — Wendy Wright is a home-schooling mother of two, a prolific blogger and a self-described “Disney Nut.” Her cats are named Mickey and Minnie, and her blog is filled with advice for visiting Disneyland, tips for holding Disney-themed parties and reviews of Disney movies.

Wright’s enthusiasm for all things Disney eventually drew the attention of the Walt Disney Co., which invited her to join a carefully vetted group of roughly 1,300 Disney Social Media Moms. The group of mothers — and a few fathers — are part of a Disney effort to incorporate the enthusiasm and influence of parents into its marketing efforts.

Wright isn’t sure why she was picked, but guesses her online postings about Disney, her self-described “Disney Nut.”

Disney moms are not paid, but they receive perks from the company for their efforts, including — for some — deeply discounted, four-day family trips to Walt Disney World for the Disney Social Media Moms Celebration, an event that is part vacation and part educational conference. Disney does not tell the mothers what to write or tweet about, and it doesn’t require them to post. Still, this year’s social media moms event in May generated 28,500 tweets, 4,000 Instagram photos and 88 blog posts full of rife reviews and videos of kids meeting Disney characters. And the moms’ postings are overwhelmingly positive.

The theory is that mothers with a large online presence have the ability to influence travel and entertainment planning of other mothers.

“With a large chunk of our guests, it’s the moms who are making [travel] decisions,” said Tom Staggs, Disney’s chief operating officer.

Wright said her enthusiasm and influence — as well as the $7.4 billion that the company’s theme parks, products and theme parks, radio, TV and YouTube platforms and are superfans who write primarily about the company’s products and theme parks, covering topics such as family life, parenting, cooking, travel and crafting in addition to their postings about Disney, and only a minority are fans who write primarily about the company’s products and theme parks.

It was only his second title of a disappointing year and Nadal looked delighted with his form after his early French Open exit.

“Since 2011, I didn’t play a final on grass, so finally to win a title again after five years on grass is very good news for my game, for my mentality too and at the same time is another title,” said Nadal, who now has 66 career titles.

“At this point of the season for me, every victory is important, every title means a lot to me. This is not con- fidence for Wimbledon, this is an important victory for me and I’m happy for that today.”

There was precious little between the players in the first set as eighth seed Troicki produced one, produced some sparkling tennis in the sunshine, serving solidly throughout and snatching the one break point that came his way in the second set.

But the invitation didn’t come free. Attendees get deep discounts, but they nevertheless pay for their packages, which include three nights at Disney’s Yacht Club Resort, theme park tickets, fast passes to theme parks and a beach-themed family party. Attendees also pay for their own transport.

To get on Disney’s radar, Rachel Pitzel, a mother of two who lives in Playa Vista, California, filled out an online application form, and was accepted to, a social media event the company held in Scottsdale, Arizona last June.

This year, she was thrilled to receive an invitation to the celebration in Orlando, Florida. “You feel like a kid again,” said Pitzel, CEO of Club MomMe, a social and educational group for parents.

But the invitation doesn’t come free. Attendees get deep discounts, but they nevertheless pay for their packages, which include three nights at Disney’s Yacht Club Resort, theme park tickets, fast passes to theme parks and a beach-themed family party. Attendees also pay for their own transport.

At the day-long conference, the moms attend motivational sessions and receive social media tips and Disney updates. This year, they learned how to use Pinterest data, heard from 11-year-old lemonade stand entrepreneur Vivienne Harr and listened to a Pixar producer talk about the Disney-owned animation studio.

Disney reminds attendees of government requirements that they disclose the benefits they received when writing about the event. The company declined to disclose how much it spends on the programme. — Reuters

Ibrahimovic double securDES

Sweden win over Montenegro

STOCKHOLM, 15 June — Zlatan Ibrahimovic’s strikes form part of a three-goal burst just before halftime that gave Sweden a 3-1 win over a feisty Montenegro in their Group G Euro 2016 qualifier at the Friends Arena on Sunday.

The result means Sweden stay second on 12 points, four points behind leaders Austria, who beat third-placed Russia 1-0 in Moscow. Montenegro lie fourth on five points.

The home side took the lead in the 38th minute after Ibrahimovic dribbled out to feed Sebastian Larsson, who set Albin Ekdal free down the wing and snatching the one break point that came his way in the second set.

Sweden’s Stefan Savić fights for the ball with Sweden’s Zlatan Ibrahimovic during the UEFA Euro 2016 Group G qualifying soccer match between Sweden and Montenegro at Friends Arena in Stockholm, Sweden on 14 June, 2015.— Reuters

Chief executive of California-based social and educational group for parents Club MomMe Rachel Pitzel poses for a picture at her home in Playa Vista, California, on 10 June, 2015.— Reuters

Ibrahimovic’s turn, collecting a throw-in on the left before cutting inside and thumping a shot from distance past Vukasin Poleksic, whose poorly-timed dive saw the ball squirm under his body.

Ibrahimovic netted his 56th goal for his country a minute before halftime, before the Serb did little wrong as he dropped back in his body and snatched the one break point that came his way in the second set.
President U Thein Sein praises Myanmar U-23 for their great efforts

NAY PYI TAW, 15 June — President U Thein Sein sent his congratulation to the Myanmar U-23 footballers who played against Thailand football team in the final match of SEA Games in Singapore on Monday.

The President in his phone conversation with Union Minister U Tint Hsan said he, on behalf more than 50 million Myanmar people, appreciated the efforts of Myanmar football players who have already won hearts of people. U Thein Sein also said Myanmar U-23 football team and responsible persons led by coach U Kyi Lwin are regarded as the Champions of Myanmar People.—MNA

Thailand win back to back SEA Games gold

SINGAPORE, 15 June — Thailand picked up their second football gold medal in two editions of the SEA Games when they beat Myanmar 3-0 in the final that was played tonight at the National Stadium.

Myanmar tried to put things together for a semblance of a chance at goal but Thura Shine and Naing Kaung Sat just could not be effective getting into the Thai box. However, if there is one person from the Myanmar camp who deserved applause, it would be goalkeeper Phyo Kyaw Zin, who frustrated Chananan Ponbupha and Chanathip Songkrasin on more than a few occasions.

Just nine minutes into the second half and Kyaw Zin’s goal was breached for the first time when Tanab oon Kesarat stabbed home following some poor clearance from the Myanmar defence. Ten minutes later, Thailand then doubled the advantage when Chanthip provided the cross for Chananan to slot the ball home. Substitute Pinyo Inpint then wrapped up the fabulous win for Thailand with the third goal of the game from the 78th minute as he beat his marker to roll the ball in past a static Kyaw Zin.—aseanfootball.org

Vice President U Nyan Tun encourages Myanmar U-23 footballers

SINGAPORE, 15 June — Vice President U Nyan Tun met Myanmar U-23 football players Monday prior to their final against Thailand at the 28th Southeast Asian Games.

The vice president encouraged Myanmar players at the Day’s Hotel, saying football fans at home and in Singapore would be applauding the Myanmar players and expecting gold medals.

He also urged the players to exhibit team spirit and help return Myanmar to the pinnacle of Southeast Asian football.

The vice president cordially greeted former Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong who watched the final match between Myanmar and Thai football teams. Myanmar were made to settle for silver after Thailand cruised to the gold medal with a 3-0 victory at Singapore’s National Stadium.—MNA

Park In-bee registers Women’s PGA triple treat

NEW YORK, 15 Jun — Park In-bee closed with a superbly solid 68 to win the KPMG Women’s PGA Championship by five shots on Sunday as her closest rival took a roller coaster ride at the undulating Westchester Country Club. Park was impeccable in claiming her sixth major, running a bogey-free streak to a remarkable 56 holes as she claimed the $525,000 (£337,422) prize.

“It feels amazing to win three times in a row,” Park said after finishing at a tournament record-matching 19 under par with a 273 total to beat fellow South Korean Kim Sei-young, who shot 71 for 278.

It was a triple treat for Park, who won the event for the third year in a row, reclaimed the world number one ranking and avenged a sudden-death defeat to Kim in April’s Lottie Championship in Hawaii, as she claimed the $525,000 (£337,422) prize.

“I feel extremely honoured, and I can’t believe that I just did it.” This is really a great accomplishment in my career. Obviously there’s a lot more things to do from now on but this is definitely one of the great accomplishments I’ve ever had.” The 26-year-old Park, winner of five of the last 12 women’s majors played since 2013, began the day with a two-shot lead over Kim, an LPGA Tour rookie who has won twice this season.

Large galleries followed the Korean duel through the hills of the Westchester layout to watch a to-and-fro tussle in which Park built a four-shot lead by the fourth hole that shrank to one after Kim ran off four birdies in a row from the fifth. But as she had done on Saturday with a four-putt bogey at the last hole, Kim imploded by taking four putts at the par-five ninth for a double bogey that dropped her four back as Park birdied. The ultra-steady Park was never again threatened.

“In-bee was very (solid) today, and I tried to find the chance to get close to her, but I didn’t have my A Game to get there today,” said Kim, who clipped in to force a playoff with Park in Hawaii two months ago and won it by holing out from 154 yards.

As a consolation, Kim also leapfrogged previous world number one New Zealander Lydia Ko into number two in the rankings.—Reuters

Brazil edge Peru to extend winning streak

TEMUCO, 15 June— An injury time goal from Douglas Costa gave Brazil a barely deserved 2-1 win over a plucky Peru side in the Copa America on Sunday.

Substitute Costa slapped the ball past the keeper from close range in the 48th minute of the second half to break the deadlock and extend Brazil’s winning run to 11 matches.

“I managed to control the ball from a perfect pass from Neymar and I scored,” Costa said in a pitchside interview.

Brazil have kept a perfect record under Dunga, who took over for a second stint as coach last year following the disastrous 7-1 loss to Germany in the semi-finals of their home World Cup.

Brazil have conceded just three goals under Dunga but looked vulnerable during a frantic opening few minutes against Peru, who got off to a dream start with an unexpected opener to Christian Cueva after just three minutes. David Luiz failed to clear a long ball and goalkeeper Jefferson passed the ball straight to Cueva who hammered it home from 10 yards out. However, Peru’s lead lasted just two minutes.

Dani Alves stroked a lovely cross into the box where an unmarked Neymar headed home his 44th international goal in 64 matches. The Barcelona striker was the stand-out player of the match. He had a shot saved off the line in the 13th minute and saw a long range strike crash off the underside of the bar eight minutes into the second half.

He was also booked moments before half-time for wiping away the referee’s spray before taking a free kick. “I just want to help my team with goals and passes,” he said afterwards.

“The win is what is important.” The results leaves Brazil joint top of Group C with three points, alongside Venezuela, who beat Colombia 1-0 earlier on Sunday.

Brazil play Colombia on Wednesday, while Peru play Venezuela the following day.

Vice President U Nyan Tun together with former Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong watch final football match between Myanmar and Thailand.—SPED

Inbee Park poses after winning the KPMG Women’s PGA Championship and holds up three fingers after winning her third consecutive Women’s PGA Championship at Westchester Country Club at Harrison, NY on 14 June, 2015. —Reuters

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