KAREN IN CAPITAL
KNU delegation in Nay Pyi Taw to sign NCA

According to the Myanmar News Agency, a delegation led by Saw Mutu Saepo, chairman of the Karen National Union, arrived in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. The agreement is slated to be signed on 15 October.

The delegation includes 16 members, including the chairman and Saw Jonny. They are staying at the Horizon Hotel in the capital.—GNLM

KNU, ABSDF, RCSS/SSA-S removed from list of unlawful associations

According to an announcement signed by Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Ko Ko on 12 October, President U Thein Sein has removed the Kayin National Union (KNU), the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) and the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS)/Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) from the list of Unlawful Association.

They had previously been added to the list under the Unlawful Association Act. These groups previously all agreed to sign the nationwide ceasefire accord with the Myanmar government.—GNLM

ABSDF, RCSS/SSA-S removed from list of terrorist groups

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein has removed the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) and Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS)/Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) from the Terrorist List announced on 12 October. The groups had previously been added to the list in accordance with the Anti-Terrorist Law.

The announcement was signed by Lt-General Ko Ko, the Minister for Home Affairs. Both groups previously agreed to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement with the Myanmar government.—GNLM

Excess water from Thaphanseik Dam poses no threat to local people

Landslide kills 17, six feared dead in Hpa-saung Township

ANALYSIS
Not all change is alike
Excess water from Thaphanlseik Dam poses no threat to local people

People living near Thaphanlseik Dam have been told not to worry about flooding, as the Irrigation Department is monitoring the situation closely, according to a source close to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

The water level in Thaphanlseik Dam recently exceeded its capacity of 2,880,000 acre-feet, reaching 3,191,614 acre-feet, but the excess water flowed into the dam’s spillways. The water level rise was caused by heavy rainfall.

Authorities had to release excess water through spillways until 2pm on Monday.

The water level in the dam receded to 3,156,674 acre-feet after irrigation authorities released excess water.—MNA

Elections cancelled in some village-tracts

THE Union Election Commission on Monday announced the areas where it is impossible to hold elections.

The commission said in its statement that it had to cancel the elections in the areas as it is impossible to hold elections in a free and fair manner.

The areas include 212 village-tracts in Kachin State, 94 village-tracts in Kayin State, 41 village-tracts in Bago Region, one village-tract in Mon State and 56 village-tracts in Shan State.

Areas where elections are cancelled are also posted on the website of the UEC at www. uecmymar.org.—MNA

Bago authorities, media to discuss ways for access to information

BAGO Region government and local media will hold a workshop on Tuesday in Bago on seeking ways for getting information from the local authorities.

The workshop is jointly organized by Ministry of Information, Bago Region Government and Myanmar Press Council (Temporary), focusing on getting access to information from the governmental departments.

Officials from the regional-level departments and members of the local journalist associations in Bago region will participate in the one-day workshop.—MNA

Foreign cruise ships line up for Myanmar’s tourist season

UNDER the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and travel tour company Destination Asia Co Ltd, cruise liner MV Oceania Insignia arrived at Thilawa Port in Yangon via Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 4 October. The ship carried 635 passengers and 400 crew members. The liner set off for Phuket, Thailand, on 6 October.

Similarly, Myanmar Voyages Co Ltd has arranged for the MV Silver Shadow, part of the Silver Sea Cruises fleet from the United States, to arrive with 326 passengers and 290 crew members in Yangon and stay from 3 to 6 November. The tour company has organised another trip for the cruise liner to visit again from 26 to 29 December with 300 passengers and 290 crew members.

Moreover, MV Seaborn Sojourn will come to Yangon with 200 passengers and 330 crew members from 11 to 14 December, and MS Volendam will come with 550 passengers and 632 crew members from 26 to 28 December. The ships’ tours were organised by Destination Asia Co Ltd.

While they are docked in Myanmar, these ships’ tour companies have also organised day trips around Yangon and Bago and one-night trips to Bagan and Mandalay.

Tourist arrivals to Myanmar by cruise ship have been increasing yearly. In 2014, 21,583 tourists came to visit on 20 cruise liners. In 2015, up to October, 25 cruise liners have arrived with 22,815 visitors, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Tourists visit Myanmar via sea, air and roads from bordering countries. People also travel Myanmar’s rivers, such as the Ayeyawady and Chindwin, on national cruise ships.—MoHT

Monk to build hospital for rural poor

Construction will start next month on a hospital that will help low-income families in Sagaing Region access medical treatment

Khaing Thanda Lwin

A prominent monk in Myinnmu, Sagaing Region, is working to establish a 150-bed hospital in the town to provide healthcare to low-income communities.

The five-storey building will be built at a cost of more than K1 billion (US$774,893) and the funds have been collected by the monk, Tipitakadhara Dhammabhanganadagarika Sayadaw Bhaddhanta Vamsa Pala Lankara, from donors in Myanmar and abroad.

The project is slated to begin in November in Htee Saung village, Myinnmu Township, which is located beside the Mandalay-Monywa Highway and is 74 kilometres from the city of Mandalay.

The facility is expected to be completed by 2017.

The hospital will specialise in treatment for people suffering from chronic diabetes and high blood pressure, which is also known as hypertension. Treatment will be free of charge.

“Diabetes and hypertension are the fastest growing health problems in the country due to people’s unhealthy lifestyles,” said Professor Than Than Aye at a public health seminar, adding that people often fail to take preventative steps to help them avoid non-communicable diseases.

The monk said he also has plans to raise awareness about the two chronic diseases among the general public.

Tipitakadhara Dhammabhanganadagarika Sayadaw Bhaddhanta Vamsa Pala Lankara also established an eye hospital in 2013, which provides treatment for eye diseases free of charge. The hospital provides healthcare services to over 1,600 patients per month.

Those who wish to donate to the new hospital can call 09 794 753 741.
ASEAN ministers discuss energy sector development in Kuala Lumpur

The 33rd ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 5 to 10 October. The participants issued a joint ministerial statement pledging to implement new action plans for development in the region’s energy industry.

In his opening remarks at the AMEM, Honourable Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili, Malaysia’s Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water, called for greater cooperation among the countries to achieve a sustained and cost-efficient energy supply without depleting future generations.

The meeting highlighted the achievements in the implementation of the 2010-2015 ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation and discussed strategies for the new plan of action for 2016-2025, which will be implemented in two phases. The first phase of the APAEC 2016-2025 will cover the period of 2016-2020 with the measures to enhance energy security cooperation and move toward greater connectivity and integration.

Myanmar’s delegation was led by U Zay Yar Aung, Union Minister for Energy, who served as the Vice Chair of the AMEM. The Myanmar delegation also attended the 12th ASEAN+3 Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM+3), the 9th East Asia Summit Energy Ministers Meeting (EAS EMM) and 5th Meeting of ASEAN Energy Ministers and International Automatic Energy Agency in Kuala Lumpur.

While in Malaysia, U Zay Yar Aung met Mr S. Iswaran, Minister for Trade and Industry of Singapore and General Ananatporn Kanjanarat, Thailand’s Minister of Energy, to discuss opportunities for cooperation in the energy, trade and industry sectors.—Ministry of Energy

Myanmar to attend anti-trafficking meeting in Bangkok

COMMIT taskforce meeting aims to promote cooperation among GMS countries to combat human trafficking

Khaing Thanda Lwin

MYANMAR will attend the third anti-human trafficking taskforce meeting of Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) Process, which will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 15 to 16 October.

The Myanmar delegation will include Police Brig-Gen Win Naing Tun, head of the Myanmar Police Force’s Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division, U Hsan Lin, assistant director from the Union Attorney-General’s Office and Daw Aye Mar Kyaw, project coordinator for UN Action against Trafficking in Persons (UN-ACT).

The meeting will focus on the achievements of the COMMIT Process and will include an Implementation Update. The participants will exchange best practices and discuss communication between countries, partnerships with CSOs, the COMMIT Capacity Baseline and methods of reporting the progress of COMMIT.

UN-ACT has extended invitations to the ASEAN Secretariat, World Vision and the International Organisation for Migration to attend the meeting.

UN-ACT was established in 2014 to ensure a coordinated approach to more strategically and effectively combating trafficking in persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) and beyond. The project builds upon the work previously undertaken by the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNJAP).

103 boat people repatriated to Bangladesh

MYANMAR handed over 103 verified Bangladeshi citizens out who were rescued off the coast of Myanmar in May and June to Bangladesh authorities on Monday.

The former boat people were repatriated after a meeting between Myanmar and Bangladeshi authorities in Taunggyi (Letwe) in Maung Taw District, Rakhine State.

A Myanmar team led by Deputy Director U Saw Naing of Maung Taw District handed over the Bangladeshi nationals to a Bangladesh team headed by the acting commanding officer of No 17 Border Guard Battalion at Cox’s Bazar.

Myanmar has repatriated a total of 729 verified Bangladeshi nationals on six occasions. The remaining boat people will be repatriated to their countries of origin upon the completion of the verification process, according to a press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar.—MNA

Landslide kills 17, six feared dead in Hpa-saung Township

TORRENTIAL rain caused a landslide on Sunday in a village in Hpa-saung Township, Kayah State, killing 17, according to a news report from the Myanmar News Agency on Monday. Others are feared dead.

Among the confirmed dead are 10 men and seven women.

About 60 houses were destroyed by the landslide, which happened at about 2pm in a hilly area between Mawchi Taung Paw village and Lokhalo village.

Local authorities and police teamed up with residents to carrying out rescue operations at the site of the tragedy.

Temporary relief camps have been opened at schools and at a Lokhalo Station Hospital, and more than 360 inhabitants of houses in the landslide risk area have been relocated there.

The Kayah State government held an emergency meeting and sent rescue teams to the disaster-hit area along with relief aid.

Members of the local regiments and battalions are clearing the road between Hpa-saung and Mawchi.

Myanmar’s weather bureau released a weather forecast at 7pm on Monday, saying isolated heavy rainfall is expected in Kayah State, with 100 percent degree of certainty and validity until the evening of 13 October.

Meanwhile, heavy rain is likely to fall in Mandalay, Magway and Ayeyawady regions and Rakhine State.

On Thursday, a flash flood in a creek caused by heavy rains in Kalaywa Township, Sagaing Region, swept away 16 people.

So far, two bodies have been found, and the remaining are feared dead, along with more than 20 cattle, local authorities told The Global New Light of Myanmar.

Around 200 acres of farmland were also buried under sand brought in by the flash flood in Phonnehtik creek in Kyanggyi Village, Chin Chaung village tract, in Kalaywa Township, Sagaing Region.

The disaster followed the country’s worst floods in 100 years, which struck from late July to August, killing more than 120 people nationwide and impacting more than 1.6 million people. Most of the flood-related deaths were reported in Rakhine State, where at least 56 people died, followed by Sagaing Region with 24, Mandalay with 12 and Shan State with 9 dead.—GNLM
New bridge to be built in Meiktila Township

A NEW Latpankhawt-Galon-kone bridge, which will connect 20 villages in Meiktila Township, is set to be built during the current 2015-2016 financial year, according to an official from the township’s Rural Development Department. The new steel-framed bridge with wood flooring will be 10.6 metres long and 4.2 metres wide, and its budget will come from the rural development fund of the Mandalay Region Government. The construction is expected to take one and a half months and will starting very soon, said department official Daw Hla Hla Oo.

A new bridge has become necessary as the current old bridge is deteriorating and becoming unsafe to cross. The new bridge, which crosses a creek, will provide a vital communication route for the rural community of over 20 villages in the township.—Chan Thar

Myanmar sends delegation to human rights seminar in South Korea

A Myanmar delegation left Yangon for South Korea on 10 October to attend the Seminar Programme on Human Rights Policy Development (Myanmar). The trip was arranged by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The seminar will run until 24 October in Seoul and Seongnam. The 15 members of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission will exchange views on education and the protection and promotion of human rights between Myanmar and South Korea.—Myanmar News Agency

Election competition visible on the streets of Natogyi

SIX candidates, including an independent, are campaigning for votes in Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region. The competition has roused vocal debate in the community over who should represent them.

Even members of a single family are split over the decision. Several sisters whose father works for the township election commission are in dispute over who should get their votes. Some voters said they would vote for the candidate who will benefit the community the most, regardless of which party the candidate represents. People on motorcycles have been circulating around the town adorned with their favourite parties’ emblems.

Residents have also placed bets on who will win on voting day.—Htay Myint Maung

Aikido course opens for police

AIKIDO training became available to staff of the Yangon Region Police Office on 10 October with the aim of improving the fighting skills of police officers. The training will take place every weekend until 27 December at the office.

Altogether, 16 police staff, including three officers, are attending the course.—Myanmar News Agency

Landslide dams pose no threat

LANDSLIDE dams, or lakes created by earth shifted by landslides, are common in Chin State. These dams pose a threat to nearby communities because they are prone to collapse, which causes flash floods. Recently, one big lake and four small lakes were created by landslides on the upper reaches of Twilone Creek, which flows into Yazagyol Dam through Nayinzayar Creek.

Seven people, including children, were killed by flooding and landslides in Chin State this summer. Donors and volunteers rushed to villages hit by landslides to provide victims with emergency shelters and food. Now, efforts are being made to relocate the victims to a forest reserve because their former villages are prone to landslides.

In addition to relief assistance, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement offered K100,000 to each family that lost a member to the natural disasters.—Su Hnin Lei

Officials in Pobbathiri, Tatkon receive polling procedure training

IN preparation for the general election on 8 November, 150 ballots officials from Pobbathiri Township in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, were offered a two-day polling procedure training course at the township’s General Administration Office yesterday.

The opening was attended by senior township officials and Potta District Election Commission member U Mya Thaung, who explained the procedures.

The chief polling officers, their deputies and polling station staff were given lectures on polling matters and were shown a demonstration of voting procedures.

That the same day, a video on polling procedure was screened for polling officials at the Tatkon Township town hall. The township has 136 polling booths. The attendees will also hear lectures in two groups on 12-13 October and 14-15 October.

Tatkon Township has six town wards and 49 village tracts.—Shwe Ye Yint/Tin Soe Lwin

Officials from the Irrigation Department who surveyed the landslide dams that formed in Chin State said the dams are not likely to collapse and do not pose a danger to local people. In the event of a collapse, the experts said, the water would flow through the spillways of the Yazagyol Dam.

Nonetheless, the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry taking measures to prevent the collapse of the landslide dams.—Su Hnin Lei

A new bridge will replace this ramshackle one in Meiktila Township. PHOTO: CHAN THAR

OFFICIALS in Pobbathiri, Tatkon receive polling procedure training. PHOTO: TIN SOE LWI
Thai judge to announce verdict in British murder trial in December

BANGKOK — A Thai judge will announce a verdict in the trial of two Myanmar migrant workers accused of killing two British tourists at the end of the year, a defence lawyer said on Monday, following a trial that has been mired in controversy.

Brionys Hannah Witheridge, 23, and David Miller, 24, were found bludgeoned to death on the southern island of Koh Tao last year. A forensics examination showed Witheridge had been raped.

The killings raised questions about the safety of tourists in Thailand, the competence of its police force and its treatment of migrant workers. Lawyers for the accused, Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun, both 22, have made police incompetence and mishandling of evidence central to their defence.

“The verdict will be on 24 December,” chief defence lawyer Nakhon Chompuchat told Reuters. “There is a chance we can still appeal.”

The court had previously offered the two accused men lost a high court challenge in August that sought access to their own needs. We are here to show that we are against the abuse of the law on our country.”

Mahathir, other leaders urge prompt end to 1MDB scandal

KUALA LUMPUR — Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and some leaders of the ruling party jointly demanded resolution of the 1MDB state fund scandal on Monday and condemned a crackdown on dissent, signaling a divide within the coalition.

Mahathir has openly called for Prime Minister Najib Razak to resign over allegations of corruption at 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and in a rare public display of unity, Mahathir and sacked deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin called a news conference to express their concerns.

Voices of dissent from within the ruling United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) were quickly silenced with a July cabinet reshuffle that ousted Mahathir’s critics, including Muhyiddin.

“A former senior member of UMNO, Khairuddin Hassan, and his lawyer, Matthias Chang, were formally charged on Monday with attempts to sabotage Malaysia’s banking and financial systems.”

Khairuddin had called for US law-enforcement authorities to probe the 1MDB scandal. Mahathir and the other UMNO leaders called for the two to be released.

“We see a climate of fear among the people,” Mahathir told reporters. “The government is now defining the law according to their own needs. We are here to show that we are against the abuse of the law on our country.”

Also present at the news conference were party vice-president Shafie Apdal, also sacked as a minister, and party elders Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Sanusi Junid.

Najib, who chairs the 1MDB advisory board, has been at the center of a political storm over allegations of graft and mismanagement.

The scandal hit crisis point in July when media reports said investigatory teams looking into 1MDB found that nearly $700 million dollars were transferred into bank accounts of the prime minister. Najib has denied asking any money for personal gain.

Muhyiddin, who is still the UMNO deputy president, said the party cannot be seen as uncaring. “UMNO has a certain culture...you tend to suppress your feelings. What I am asking is for them to be more expressive through the many platforms. Do not be fearful if what you’re doing is right,” he said.

Asked if he would call for Najib’s resignation, Muhyiddin said: “I don’t need to say it as others have said it... There are problems of concern and it is up to the prime minister to consider what he should do that is best for the nation.”

1MDB has amassed debts of over $11 billion. The attorney general’s office recently dismissed a recommendation by the central bank to prosecute.
Angus Deaton wins 2015 Nobel Prize for Economics

STOCKHOLM — British economist Angus Deaton won the 2015 economics Nobel Prize for "his analysis of consumption, poverty, and welfare," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said on Monday.

"To design economic policy that promotes economic growth and reduces poverty, we must first understand individual consumption choices," the award-giving body said on announcing the 8 million Swedish crown ($978,000) prize. "More than anyone else, Angus Deaton has enhanced this understanding."

The economics prize, officially called the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, was established in 1968. It was not part of the original group of awards set out in the will of Alfred Nobel’s 1895 will.—Reuters

China's top diplomat to visit Japan amid new spy report

BEIJING — China’s top diplomat will visit Japan this week for high-level political talks, the foreign ministry said on Monday, amid reports that China has detained two Japanese nationals for spying.

State Councillor Yang Jiechi, who outranks the foreign minister, will be in Tokyo on Thursday and Wednesday and will meet with the head of Japan’s National Security Council, Shotaro Yachi, a close ally of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the two sides would talk about bilateral and international issues and ways to “manage and control disputes”, though was not able to immediately say if Yang would meet Abe.

China and Japan have close economic and cultural ties, but have long bickered over their painful wartime history, and have an increasingly bitter argument over ownership of a group of uninhabited islets in the East China Sea.

A month China said that it had arrested two Japanese for spying.

Japanese media said over the weekend that two others had also been detained, one a Japanese woman who had been held in Shanghai since June and the other a Japanese national in Beijing.

Hua would not directly comment on those reports.

"As far as I understand, relevant Chinese departments are investigating the relevant cases in accordance with the law. The relevant situation has been passed on to the Japanese side," she told a daily news briefing.

A Japanese foreign ministry spokesman declined to comment.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has overseen a tightening of already strict security laws and regulations, including setting up a new national security commission and renaming the national security law, which took effect in 1993, as the Counterespionage Law.

In 2010, four Japanese nationals for spying. The detentions came at a time of escalating tensions between Tokyo and Beijing. Last year, China’s then-ambassador to Iceland disappeared following reports he had been arrested by state security for passing state secrets to Japan. China has never explained what happened to him.

Sino-Japanese relations, coloured by Japan’s occupation of parts of China before and during World War Two as well as rivalry for regional influence, have thawed since Abe met Xi twice since last November.—Reuters

Indian PM’s party in tight race as voting opens in northern state

PATNA — Voting began on Monday in India’s northern state of Bihar, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi faces a major electoral test whose outcome is crucial to his efforts to consolidate power and speed economic recovery.

About 67 million people are registered to vote in India’s third most-populous state over the next month in an election spread over five phases that will test the appeal of Modi’s policies aimed at industrialisation and creating jobs.

Women dressed in black burqas and young men holding identity cards queued outside a polling station as voting began in the district of Begusarai, about 100 km (62 miles) east of Patna, the state capital.

"We are voting for development," said one voter, Siya Ram Singh, as he left the polling station. "Our villages are not developed, all the attention has been focused on towns."

There were no jobs in the state for young people, another voter added. Votes will be counted on 8 November.

Modi’s ruling Hindu nationalist party is not in power in Bihar. The election could give him the strength to push through planned reforms nationwide by boosting his party’s numbers in the upper house of parliament, where it is now in a minority. Since taking office last year, Modi has struggled to build support in parliament for an ambitious overhaul of the economy.

"This is a crucial, crucial election for Modi," said S. Chandrasekharan, director of the South Asia Analysis Group in New Delhi.

"His prestige is on the line. If his party does well, it’ll be a huge boost to his credibility. If it doesn’t, he will be a much diminished figure."

S. Chandrasekharan
Director of the South Asia Analysis Group

Changes being blocked by opposition parties are a business-friendly land purchase law and the biggest overhaul of taxes since independence from Britain in 1947.

Victory in Bihar will help Modi as lawmakers in parliament’s upper house are picked on the basis of parties’ strength in state assemblies.

Opinion polls are divided on the outcome, but some show Modi may struggle to win the state.

Bihar, traditionally seen as a bellwether of national politics, is one of India’s poorest states, and its population of 100 million exceeds Britain’s.

Modi has visited 13 times over the last three months to deliver speeches, as he tries to win over a region where caste allegiances traditionally decide elections.—Reuters

Arrest warrant issued for ex-Thai PM

BANGKOK — A Thai court on Monday issued an arrest warrant for fugitive former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra after he failed to turn up for a defamation case filed against him by the army.

The ruling would appear to mean little as Thaksin lives abroad anyway to avoid a jail sentence handed down in 2008 for graft, but it is another setback for the former telecoms tycoon with some seeing it as the latest attempt to ensure he never returns to power.

Three governments backed by Thaksin have been forced to step down by the courts or military since 2006. Thaksin is accused of defaming the military during interviews given to a South Korean newspaper in May that were leaked on YouTube.

In rare comments to foreign media, Thaksin accused the military of being part of a conspiracy that overthrew his family, former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra, in 2014, days before a bloodless military coup.

The accused did not come to the meeting so a warrant was issued as the court saw he was not in the country even though an appointment was made for the first hearing," Major General Sarayuth Kinnakhom, director of the Office of the Judge-Advocate of the Royal Thai Army, told reporters.

Thaksin himself was ousted by the army in 2006. Since then, the country has been divided between his supporters and the Bangkok-based elite which sees him as a threat to the old royalist-military establishment.

For more than a decade, the country has seen at times violent street protests from both Thaksin supporters and their opponents.

Thaksin, whose parties have won every election since 2001, tapped into the changing aspirations of the working class.

But his popularity with Bangkok’s middle class soon waned and he was accused of vote-buying and harbouring republican sympathies, among other accusations, all of which he denies. From his base in Dubai, Thailand's most frequent flier to Africa and Asia where he has business interests.

Yingluck swept to power in 2011 on a wave of rural support but was ordered to step down after a court found her guilty of abusing power.—Reuters

Angus Deaton wins 2015 Nobel Prize for Economics

Angus Deaton, Permanent Secretary of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (C) announces Angus Deaton of Britain as the winner of the 2015 Nobel Economics Prize, on 12 October 2015 in Stockholm.

PHOTO: AFP

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UK response to migrant crisis is inadequate, say senior ex-judges

LONDON — Some of Britain’s most senior former judicial figures criticised Prime Minister David Cameron’s government on Monday for its response to the EU migrant crisis, saying it was inadequate and was pushing people into the arms of smugglers.

A statement, signed by more than 300 retired judges, working lawyers and legal experts, said Britain’s vow to take in 20,000 refugees over the next five years was not enough, and called for safe routes to be set up to deal with a flood of refugees from war-torn Syria to the European Union.

Britain’s judiciary rarely openly criticises politicians, but this public statement had the support of dozens of top legal figures such as Lord Nicholas Phillips, former President of Britain’s Supreme Court, and Nicholas Bratza, ex-President of the European Court of Human Rights.

“Like many others, we consider that the UK Government’s offer to resettle 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees from camps in the Middle East, spread over 5 years, is too low, too slow and too narrow,” their statement said.

It said under international law states had a duty to provide protection to refugees but many countries in the EU including Britain had made it impossible to people to access these rights by limiting their means of travel.

“This situation, coupled with draconian penalties on airlines and ships which carry undocumented passengers … has created the conditions which drive individuals and families into the hands of people-smugglers, with unseaworthy and overloaded boats or suffocating lorries,” it said.

In response, the government said Britain had been “at the forefront of the international response” to the refugee crisis.

“We are working closely with UNHCR to identify and resettle those in the regions who are the most vulnerable,” said Richard Harrington, Minister for Syrian Refugees. “This also deters people from attempting these perilous journeys which have already led to so many tragic deaths.”

The crisis comes at a time when immigration is a major political issue in Britain, with polls suggesting it is now Britons’ top concern, and could be a significant factor in influencing the country votes in a referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU due by the end of 2017.

Last week, Cameron’s interior minister said mass immigration was damaging British society, leading to criticism from some business figures but praise from party activists and right-leaning media.—Reuters

Islamic State is prime suspect in Turkey bombing: PM Davutoglu

ISTANBUL — Islamic State is the focus of investigations into a twin suicide bombing that killed at least 97 people in the Turkish capital Ankara and investigators are close to identifying one of the suspects, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Monday.

Speaking on Turkish broadcaster NTV in a live interview, Davutoglu said Saturday’s attack was an attempt to influence the outcome of a parliamentary election on Nov. 1 and that necessary steps would be taken if security failures were found to have contributed to the bombing.

“It was definitely a suicide bombing. DNA tests are being conducted. It was determined how the suicide bombers got there. We’re close to a name, which points to one group,” he said of the worst attack in Turkey of its kind.

Two senior security sources told Reuters on Sunday that initial signs suggested Islamic State was behind the attack, and that it bore striking similarity to a July suicide bombing in Suruc near the Syrian border, also blamed on the radical Islamists.

The two explosions happened seconds apart on Saturday as hundreds gathered for a march organised by pro-Kurdish activists and civic groups to protest over a conflict between Turkish security forces and Kurdish militants in the southeast.

The pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), which said it was the target of the attack, has put the death toll at 128 and said it had identified all but eight of those bodies. Davutoglu’s office has said 97 people were killed.—Reuters
Myanmar’s negotiator expresses belief in China’s willingness to help in peace process

A peace negotiator of Myanmar on Saturday expressed the belief that China would be willing to help Myanmar realize peace.

Dr. Min Zaw Oo, director of Ceasefire Negotiation and Implementation with the Myanmar Peace Center, made the remarks in an interview with Xinhua News Agency in Yangon, Myanmar, Oct. 10, 2015. PHOTO: XINHUA

Praising two Chinese special envoys as professional diplomats, he agreed that they attended series of peace talks between the government and the armed groups as pure observers with no pressure put on any side.

He pointed out that Myanmar’s peace issue belongs to its own domestic one and other countries hold no responsibility for the long failure to get resolved.

He highlighted that Myanmar-China relations have been good since ancient time and during the period of successive Myanmar governments, believing that no matter which government takes office, the two countries will have friendly ties.

Moreover, for the sake of stability and development of the two countries’ border areas, he stressed the need for the two countries to continue to strengthen cooperation and coordination.

According to the peace negotiator, the Myanmar government and eight ethnic armed groups would take part in signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Accord (NCA) planned for Oct. 15 in Nay Pyi Taw.

“It was a misreport of the media,” he told Xinhua.

The official denied that he has accused China of interfering in the country’s peace process.

He rejected the allegation that his prior interview with Reuters included remarks charging the Chinese government with exerting pressure on some ethnic armed groups of Myanmar to stay away from taking part in signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Accord (NCA) planned for Oct. 15 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Dear Editor

Green peafowl (Pavo muticus), a majestic, endangered species of peafowls that are cousins of the more abundant and least concerned blue peafowl or Indian peafowl (Pavo cristatus), the National Bird of India is most possibly extinct in its wild habitats of North East India. The green peafowls have been the glory of the unspeakable beauty and grandeur of North East India, predominantly Manipur and Mizoram at one point of time.

The species is currently believed to be extinct in the wild in Southern China, North East India and Bangladesh as part of its former range and presently restricted only in small pockets of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. Relentless anthropogenic pressures in the form of over hunting, capture for colorful plumage and habitat destruction are believed to be the major factors responsible for the loss of the species in the wild. In India, the species was previously found in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram and its distribution in Assam is not well recorded. However, there are no reliable reports of last sighting of the species ever in its core wild habitats of Manipur and Mizoram for over a decade. The only live specimens are available in the Manipur Zoological Garden at Imphal. Based on my research, this is the only zoo in the entire India where green peafowl specimens are available for public display. Since this species was once known from the speciﬁcally beautiful North East India, it is important to educate the people of the region about their lost treasures from a glorious and organic past. It is painful to ﬁnd such a beautiful species being lost in the wild; and hence I humbly wish to advocate for addressing the concerned authorities through your esteemed daily to start a comprehensive captive breeding program for the species in North East for slowly returning the species back to its original habitat in the Indian subcontinent.

Breeding stock could be acquired through neighboring Myanmar still maintaining a natural wild populations of green peafowl in the country. Both green and blue peafowls and their hybrids are available in the EU and the US international pet markets as a colorful and attractive caged species.

The breeding of the species is reported to be considerably easy and hassle free and should be looked upon as a viable alternative to return the species to the wild in North East India and Myanmar could be a crucial biodiversity source in providing a stock breeding population. Such cooperation between Indian and Myanmar in Joint Conservation Initiative (JCI), if successful can serve as exemplary global conservation model.

Thanking you

Sincerely yours

Saikat Kumar Basu
Nostalgic Memories of The University Hostel Life

Khin Maung Myint (MPT Retired)

I am not a sentimental person by nature. However, after I reminisced about my university days in an article on student unions, contemporary issues of mine urged me to write about the happy days as hostel students. The task is a bit challenging, as it would be of a different theme from the articles I had written earlier. However, it would be a different challenge, as those who had read my previous articles would have noticed that most of them dealt with conservation of the ecosystems, disciplines, civic duties, hygiene, health, developments of infrastructures that would solve traffic jams and to take advantage of our country’s strategic assets. Thus, I was reluctant to oblige my friends, but I do not want to disappoint them, so I am taking a great risk and attempt writing it. Though I had studied at both the Mandalay University and the Rangoon (Yangon) University (RU), I chose to write the hostel life at the latter. The reason is because I thought it would be more interesting, as the RU’s location, its environs, the hosts and the campus lay out render a unique atmosphere and beauty. That atmosphere and the beauty was what made the RU unforgettable to those who had trodden the campus grounds during their student days.

The fact that the Yangon University is situated on a very large plot of land and closeness to the beautiful Inya Lake made it more desirable. During the months of November and December, the sight of the later day famous modern universities in Thailand and Singapore, I dare say that there is none comparable to the Yangon University campus. Also, the level of the academic achievements at this university was recognized as the best in South East Asia since its establishment until the nineteen sixties. In those days there were some foreign students, including Russians, Chinese, Japanese and even Nigerians, who studied here. One of the most well-known of those foreign students is U Shwe Ba, a Japanese journalist who used to work for the NHK broadcasting station at the Myanmar language section. I had unexpectedly met him in 1986 in Tokyo, while I was attending a telecommunication seminar. He came over and introduced himself, speaking in fluent Myanmar language, while he was covering the seminar for the NHK. During our conversation, he reminisced passionately about his happy days at the Yangon University, in the nineteen sixties, as an exchange student. He explained to me how he came to be known as Shwe Ba, the same as that of the popular action movie star of that period. According to him another

Inlyar Hostel. PHOTO: GOOGLE

Japanese student adopted the name Kyaw Swe, another famous star. The names were given by their Myanmar friends.

During those heydays, the Yangon University hostel life was very enjoyable. There were many facilities and functions on the campus that the students could participate and were un-forgettable until today. The large campus and the nearby scenic Inya Lake provided the students with a perfect setting to take leisurely strolls and relax. In the evenings, the banks of the Lake were crowded with groups of students, both male and female, taking in the pleasant views and enjoying the cool and clean breeze that blew across the large expanse of water. It was the time to meet and socialize and forget about the tedious studies for a while. The Chancellor Road that leads from the main entrance right to the majestic and symbolic landmark, the Convocation Hall, also was another attraction for the hostel students of the past. For those few individuals, who had passion for playing musical instruments and singing, the night time afforded them the opportunity to show off their talents to the lady students. Early every night, during the open seasons, small groups of male students could be seen playing guitars, melodins, banjos and even accordions, singing in front of the ladies’ hostels. There were requests from the lady students, to sing for them the songs they wanted to listen.

Other functions are the annual grand dinners that every hostel student looked forward to. Each hostel would celebrate lavishly with live music concerts, or Ahnheint (traditional Myanmar dance) troupes. During the months of November and December, the university campus took on the carnival mood. There were one sort of function or the other going on at the weekend. The entertainments included those of the famous foreign artists too. During my two years’ stint at the RU, the Marther Graham Ballet troupe from the US staged a show at the Convocation Hall, free of charge, for the staffs and the students. The famous Benny Goodman Jazz band, from the US also entertained the students, live, in the open space at the front of the Science Faculty. In the fifties, jazz music was a craze and to have that opportunity was a great treat for the students.

The scientific exhibitions held annually were also very popular with the students and the public alike. During such exhibitions, the public was welcomed to roam the university campus, where the exhibits were on display. The military — Army, Navy and Air force also participated in those exhibitions. The military

We should not forget the fact that the Yangon University of the past had produced great leaders, most of whom were hostel students.

and returning to the hostel before midnight. At midnight the hostel doors were locked, but the watchmen would open them for the late arrivals. So, I must say that our hostel lives were very free, but no one take advantage of that situation. As we were treated like gentlemen, we behaved accordingly.

The hostels bred in us, the brotherhood spirit and thus we were very studious and cooperative to one another. The friendship nurtured as hostel-mates were everlasting. Even many years after we left the university and went our own ways, when we meet again in our waning years, our friendships were still firm. The friendship between hostel-mates are thicker than blood between class-mates, as the hosts provided us an atmosphere of a close-knit family. The hostels are also places where students from different regions and states could exchange their cultures and customs, thus promoting understanding among the national races, which would nurture our friendship and unity among our people.

I sincerely hope that the authorities would revitalize the Yangon University campus and its hostels very soon. This would be very welcome, by the public, if that should materialize. The hope is not born off the sentiment of my younger days, but because it would be a very positive step in the right direction. We should not forget the fact that the Yangon University of the past had produced great leaders, most of whom were hostel students. Before concluding, I would like to emphasize the importance to have hostels made available for the students as the cost of residing at private boarding places are exorbitant and lack security and discipline. Some places are not fit for female students to reside. I would not consider to keep my grand daughter, if I had one, at such places. In conclusion, I would like to urge the authorities to expedite the establishment of the main Yangon University campus, which was once the pride of every student who had passed down the annals of her history and for the country too. A university would not be complete without the hostels.
Police arrest Air France staff

PARIS — Police arrested several Air France workers at their homes early on Monday as investigators tracked down protesters who hounded executives from a meeting about mass job cuts last week and tore the clothes of two flying managers.

The arrests came a week after the world’s media broadcast footage of a Air France human resources manager, his shirt ripped off but tie still around his neck, scaled a fence to escape the angry workers. A second manager had his shirt ripped down the back.

Police and judicial sources said five Air France staff, all members of the hardline CGT labour union, were arrested at their homes in the Paris region and would be placed in custody in the capital. The incident took place on 5 October at Air France’s offices in the Charles de Gaulle airport zone north of Paris, where human resources head Xavier Brosseta and long-haul service executive Pierre Plissommer were attending a works council meeting.

The managers and Air France Chief Executive Frederic Gagey had been outlining a cost-cutting plan involving 2,900 layoffs when protesters stormed the room. The proposal is described by the company as “Plan B” after it failed to persuade its pilots to accept a less radical one earlier this year.

At least four of those arrested were from the airline’s cargo division, the police and judicial sources said. They were identified from video footage of the noisy protest.

Air France declined to comment on the latest developments. The airline’s management hopes to renew contact this week with a view to resuming discussions on the carrier’s future.

“Air France has no comment to make on a judicial inquiry,” a spokeswoman for the company told Reuters.

According to French newspaper Le Parisien, Air France management is ready to consider another form of restructuring along the lines of one agreed with pilots at its Dutch arm KLM.

That deal included a freeze on general pay rises, a gradual increase in the retirement age, productivity measures and profit sharing. In return, Air France could scale back the number of routes it closes and long-haul aircraft it withdraws.—Reuters

Syrian army, Russian jets advance against rebels in fiercest clashes for days

BEIRUT — Syrian army and allied forces supported by Russian warplanes made further advances as they pressed on an offensive against insurgents on Monday, in the fiercest clashes for nearly a week, a monitor said.

Russian jets carried out at least 20 air strikes on the town of Kafr Nabudah in Hama province in western Syria, and hundreds of shells hit the area as the Syrian army and Hezbollah fighters seized part of it, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad have in the past few days recaptured territory close to the government’s coastal heartland in the west thanks to Russian intervention, reversing rebel advances made earlier this year.

Moscow says its air campaign targets Islamic State, but most of the strikes have hit rival insurgents fighting against Assad, some of which are supported by the United States.

Pro-government forces including the Lebanese group Hezbollah on Monday captured the southern part of Kafr Nabuda, the Observatory’s Rami Abdelrahman said.

The fighting, shelling and air strikes killed and wounded dozens of insurgents, he said.

“Those are the most violent battles in the northern countryside (of Hama) since the start of joint operations several days ago” between the Russian air force and Syrian ground forces, he said.

Kafr Nabuda’s capture would bring government forces closer to insurgent-held positions along the main highway that links Syria’s main cities. “The town is very important and strategic,” Abdelrahman said.

Russia began its air campaign on September 30, alarming a US-led coalition which is carrying out its own air strikes against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.—Reuters

Swedish PM shuns opposition calls to push Green Party from power

STOCKHOLM — Sweden’s Prime Minister Stefan Lofven said on Sunday he had no plans to oust the Green Party from his government but that he wanted more cooperation with the centre-right opposition.

On Friday a grassroots rebellion at the Christian Democrats convention prompted the smallest opposition party to vote to pull out of an accord to let the minority government’s budgets through parliament, and the other centre-right parties quickly followed.

The deal was struck just 10 months ago to avoid new elections after the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, which holds the balance of power, brought down the centre-left minority government’s budget by voting for the centre-right opposition’s bill instead of its own.

Analyst feared the collapse of the deal could bring about the first snap election in Sweden in over half a century.

But in a televised debate on Sunday, PM Lofven of the Social Democrats rejected calls from the opposition Liberals to oust the Greens from government in order to facilitate smoother cooperation with the opposition.

“Forming a new government is not on the agenda,” said PM Lofven. “But I welcome the attitude (of cooperation).”

Several other party leaders in the debate talked of the need for cooperation and Anna Kinberg Batra of the Moderate party, the largest opposition party, said she would not try to bring down the government’s budget in a parliamentary vote in December or to use the possibility to alter it after it had passed.

“Sweden is facing acute challenges and it would not be responsible to throw Sweden into a political crisis now,” she said. The only party to make substantial gains in the polls since last year’s election is the Sweden Democrats. Most analysts deem a snap election unlikely as it would probably not to break the Sweden Democrat’s balance of power.—Reuters

Political crisis escalates in Iraq’s Kurdistan region

ERBIL — Kurdish security forces stopped the speaker of parliament in Iraq’s Kurdistan north from entering its capital on Monday in an escalating political crisis destabilising the region at war with Islamic State militants.

Speaker Yousif Mohammed’s personal assistant said forces loyal to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) had turned him back on the road from Sulaimaniyah to Erbil, where the regional parliament is located.

The KDP, which controls Erbil, accuses the Gorran party to which the speaker belongs of provoking violent protests in which five people died.

“He has been prevented by KDP forces and he’s now returned (to Sulaimaniyah),” said the speaker’s personal assistant Daroun Rahim. “It’s a very dangerous development.” The move came after protesters attacked and torched several offices of the KDP in Sulaimaniyah province in the worst unrest the relatively stable autonomous region has seen for years.

Gorran, which is based in Sulaimaniyah and enjoys popularity there, said late on Sunday it had been informed by the KDP that its ministers in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) should not return to work.

Senior KDP official Hemin Hawrami appeared to confirm that on Twitter, saying Gorran was “no longer in government”.

The crisis is reinforcing old divisions in the region, which used to have two separate administrations, one run by the KDP in Erbil and Duhok, and the other controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in Sulaimaniyah.—Reuters

IRAN news

Iran has performed a test launch of a medium-range ballistic missile, state media said on Sunday.

The United States last week accused Iran of preparing to test-fire medium-range missiles with the capability to reach Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Iranian state television quoted a military official as saying that the test was part of a “deterrence” campaign. The Iranian military has tested a new medium-range missile within the last few weeks.

The US military command in the Middle East said the launch was “consistent with Iran’s ongoing ballistic missile development efforts.”

When the radar tracking for the Iranian missiles was able to detect the launch, it was in the process of being decommissioned due to its age, the US military said.

The Israeli military has been monitoring the Iranian missile capabilities for years, and has in recent months been conducting drills to counter the threat.

The Middle East is already home to a number of missile programs, including in Iran, Israel, and Syria. The US military has warned that Iran could soon come to dominate the region in terms of missile capabilities.

In recent years, Iran has been building up its missile arsenal, and has in recent years been conducting a series of tests with its medium-range missiles.

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Novartis buys another 2.5 percent in Israel’s Gamida Cell

Swiss drugmaker Novartis’ logo is seen behind scaffolding at the company’s plant in the northern Swiss town of Stein January 27, 2015. Photo: Reuters

JERUSALEM — Swiss drugmaker Novartis will invest up to an extra $15 million in Gamida Cell, an Israeli developer of stem cell therapies, Gamida said on Sunday.

Novartis last year invested $35 million in the company for a 15 percent stake, in a deal that could reach $600 million if Novartis exercises a buyout option that expires in 2016.

The $15 million investment will be used to advance Gamida Cell’s clinical programmes, including the development of NiCord, an experimental treatment for patients with high risk hematological malignancies, or blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma and sickle cell disease.

Gamida plans to initiate a Phase III clinical trial with NiCord in mid-2016.

As part of the latest deal, Novartis will immediately invest $5 million in Gamida Cell for an additional 2.5 percent stake.

Also, subject to the close of an equity financing by the end of 2017 to fund the late stage development of NiCord, Novartis will invest up to another $10 million. Novartis will not have rights or options to Gamida Cell products or technology under the terms of the agreement.

Other Gamida shareholders include Clal Biotechnology Industries, Elbit Imaging, Israel Health-care Venture, Teva Pharmaceuti-cal Industries, Denali Ventures and Auriga Ventures.—Reuters

Florida circus elephants find second career in research

POLK CITY — At a Florida retirement home for former circus elephants, residents enjoy a steady diet of high-quality hay and local fruits and vegetables, as well as baths and occasional walks.

For these majestic beasts, this life of relative leisure at the 200-acre Centre for Elephant Conservation comes after years on the road, entertaining America in “The Greatest Show on Earth” for Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Under pressure of animal rights activists, the circus is now phasing the animals out of its show.

In March, the circus company announced with some reluctance that it would end its elephant acts by 2018. It said it wanted to use the retired animals to help save their endangered species through breeding and medical research.

“If we didn’t do it, the elephants would go extinct in North America, likely in 25 years or less,” said Kenneth Feld, chief executive officer of the circus’ owner, Feld Entertainment.

Animal welfare groups, which for years have accused the circus of mistreating the elephants, are still not satisfied and have questioned the company’s current plan.

“Certainly it’s an improvement to take the elephants off the road, but Ringling should immediately retire all its elephants to real sanctuaries instead of a bo-gus breeding farm in Florida,” said Rachel Mathews, legal counsel to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. “They should be allowed to just be elephants.”

Asian elephants, which are smaller and rarer than the African variety, have long been an audience favorite under the big top. Fewer than 40,000 Asian elephants remain in the wild. About 250 are in captivity in the United States, 26 of which were born over the past 20 years at Ringling facilities.

The ranch-like property in central Florida where 29 of the circus company’s 42 Asian elephants now live is about an hour’s drive south of The Villag-es, the sprawling human retire-ment destination and golfer’s paradise.

The elephants spend their days outdoors in fenced enclo-sures where they are in sight or earshot of one another and enjoy loaves of white bread as an occa-sional treat. At night they stay in large barns, with their feet often chained to keep them from stealing other’s food.

But the animals have not left their former lives behind altogether. They continue to receive training to make them easier to manage, staff said.

The elephants are still trained to lie down, which allows workers scrub them, and to put a foot on a stool, which helps in grooming their toenails. Their close interaction with trainers allows the staff to easily take weekly blood samples from the large veins behind their ears. The blood is used to monitor the elephants’ health and provide specimens for research. A Ringling spokesman could not say how many, if any, elephants had been officially retired since the announcement, only that the company still has 13 performing in three units.

Feld said he was saddened by the decision to remove the elephants, which have been fix-tures in circus shows for more than a century, but the company is committed to helping protect and preserve the species.

One example is the elephant conservation centre’s work with the Smithsonian’s National Zoo. The aim is to improve the diag-nosis and treatment of a herpes virus that kills 20 percent of elephant calves born in North Amer-ica, said veterinarian Dennis Schmitt, Ringling’s director of research.

On reproduction of the species, Ringling has established a Genomic Resource Bank for Asian elephants and has achieved a live birth through artificial in-semination. The center, which is not open to the public, has also helped in cancer prevention ef-forts for humans.

Despite a far-greater body mass and far more cells than hu-mans, the lifetime cancer mor-tality risk for elephants is less than 5 percent, compared with 11 percent to 25 percent in hu-mans, according to a new study by veterinary pathologist William Krzakel of the Smithsonian’s National Zoo.

“Many of India’s toughest TB cases end up in the metal cots of the state-run Sewri Hospital, where a recent Reuters visit to one open ward was lined with emaciated patients, many left alone by families scared by the disease and its stigma.

Medical Superintendent Rajendra Nanavare, Sewri’s toptoc-doc-tor, says an average of six patients a day die at the 1,200-bed hospi-tal.

Nanavare says a dozen hospi-tal workers had also died from TB in the last five years. But others say the real number of staff deaths is higher — although they could not give a precise figure — point-ing to a public health crisis at the heart of one of the world’s most densely populated cities.

“A lot of class 4 workers like the sweepers and the cleaners at the hospital leave work after they get the infection,” said Prakash Desai, president of the local workers’ union.

“We don’t know if they’re alive with the infection or dead. Nobody teaches them. That’s why I said the actual number would be much higher.”

Campaigners blame weak in-fection controls, poor oversight and infrequent checks on workers’ health in a country where the shame of TB has been diagnosed with TB since 2011, of whom 12 had died while 28 had been cured.

A lot of staff continue to work at the hospital long after be-ing infected.—Reuters

Staff deaths at leading hospital put India’s TB battle in spotlight

A security woman stands guard outside the Group of TB Hospitals in Mumbai, India. Photo: Reuters

MUMBAI — Campaigners and a former official overseeing Asia’s largest tuberculosis hospital in Mumbai say staff deaths there are being under-reported, highlight-ing India’s growing struggle to contain multi-drug resistant forms of the contagious, airborne dis-ease.

Many of India’s toughest TB cases end up in the metal cots of the state-run Sewri Hospital, where on a recent Reuters visit open wards were lined with emaciated patients, many left alone by families scared by the disease and its stigma.

Medical Superintendent Rajendra Nanavare, Sewri’s top-doctor, says an average of six patients a day die at the 1,200-bed hospital.

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China says plans to lift all out of poverty in six years

BEIJING — China hopes to lift all its 70 million living beneath the poverty line to safety within the next six years, at an average rate of a million people a month, a cabinet official said on Monday.

Despite rapid economic growth in the last two decades, poverty remains a huge issue in China, especially in rural areas where a lack of jobs drives able-bodied adults to work elsewhere, leaving children and the elderly behind.

“We have six years to eradicate child poverty,” said Hong Tianyun, deputy director of China’s State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, on the government’s website.

About 70 million people, mostly in the countryside, live beneath China’s poverty line, earning less than 2,300 yuan ($362) annually, the official Xinhua news agency reported last month, citing data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

Hong added the short timeframe put pressure on local governments.

“If there are no special major initiatives, it will be extremely difficult to achieve this mission,” Hong said. “So, from the central to local authorities, from top to bottom, the pressure has been coming down.”

The central treasury has channelled more money into a poverty relief fund this year after results last year fell short, analysts have said.

About 12.3 million people earned enough in 2014 to move above the poverty line, compared with 43.3 million in 2011, Xinhua said.

China has previously set poverty standards of 2,785 yuan ($443) annually, the official poverty line, for 2020 as a target for virtual elimination of poverty within that year.

But concerns about the yawning gap between the rich and the poor have intensified as the world’s second-largest economy slows.

Beijing also faces huge pressure in creating jobs for university graduates.

Leaders have said avoiding mass unemployment is a crucial police priority amid the slowdown.—Reuters

Ohio prosecutor criticised over reports on child’s shooting by police

CLEVELAND — An Ohio prosecutor handling the fatal shooting by police of a 12-year-old boy while he played with a replica pistol was criticised by activists on Sunday for releasing two reports that called the shooting “reasonable” before any grand jury decision on charges had been announced.

“It looks as though the prosecutor is trying to taint the grand jury process as well as manipulate the judicial process overall,” said Edward Little, one of the so-called Cleveland 8, a group of clergy, academics and activists who have called for the two police officers involved in the November 2014 playground shooting of Tamir Rice to be indicted.

The conclusions of a retired FBI agent and an out-of-state prosecutor were submitted to the Cuyahoga County prosecutor’s office ahead of an expected decision by a grand jury on whether criminal charges were warranted in the shooting, which was captured on surveillance video.

Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy McGinty said in a statement on Saturday that his office was not reaching any conclusions based on the two reports.

The reports said Timothy Loehmann, the white officer who shot Rice, who was black, opened fire because he felt threatened.

The case is one in a series of high-profile police-related shooting deaths of African-Americans which have raised questions about the use of force by law enforcement.

Little said the release of the reports to media late Saturday on a holiday weekend was “reminiscent” of prosecutors’ handling of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri where details of the case were leaked to the media before a grand jury decision not to bring charges against the police officer involved.

“This community has lost all hope in this prosecutor to be fair and impartial,” Little said.

Retired FBI agent Kimberly Crawford, in a review of the shooting, wrote that it was “apparent not only was Officer Loehmann required to make a split-second decision, but also that his response was a reasonable one.”

In another report, Colorado prosecutor S Lamar Sims also concluded that “Officer Loehmann’s belief that Rice posed a threat of serious physical harm or death was objectively reasonable, as was his response to that perceived threat.”

The Rice family’s attorney, Subodh Chandra, accused prosecutors of failing to properly advocate for the victim and of “sandbagging” the grand jury proceedings by improperly releasing case documents.

“Our prosecutor is freelancing. The officers here are being given special treatment,” he said in a phone interview.

Civil rights activists lit up social media on Sunday to criticise the handling of the case.

“It’s Mike Brown all over again. The police are working their tactics to make sure the family don’t get that day in court,” said Tory Russell, with Hands Up United, a Ferguson-based social rights group.

“This is a very transparent attempt to undermine the ability to receive justice for Tamar Rice and his family,” said Arisha Hatch, with the civil rights group Color of Change.

Rice was killed after Cleveland police received an emergency call about someone brandishing a gun outside a city recreation centre. Officer Loehmann shot Rice twice in the abdomen, seconds after his partner, who also is white, drove their vehicle to within 5 feet (1.5 metres) of the boy in the playground. The gun turned out to be an replica pistol that shoots pellets, but had the orange tip removed.—Reuters

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Retired FBI agent Kimberly Crawford, in a review of the shooting, wrote that it was “apparent not only was Officer Loehmann required to make a split-second decision, but also that his response was a reasonable one.”

In another report, Colorado prosecutor S Lamar Sims also concluded that “Officer Loehmann’s belief that Rice posed a threat of serious physical harm or death was objectively reasonable, as was his response to that perceived threat.”

The Rice family’s attorney, Subodh Chandra, accused prosecutors of failing to properly advocate for the victim and of “sandbagging” the grand jury proceedings by improperly releasing case documents.

“Our prosecutor is freelancing. The officers here are being given special treatment,” he said in a phone interview.

Civil rights activists lit up social media on Sunday to criticise the handling of the case.

“It’s Mike Brown all over again. The police are working their tactics to make sure the family don’t get that day in court,” said Tory Russell, with Hands Up United, a Ferguson-based social rights group.

“This is a very transparent attempt to undermine the ability to receive justice for Tamar Rice and his family,” said Arisha Hatch, with the civil rights group Color of Change.

Rice was killed after Cleveland police received an emergency call about someone brandishing a gun outside a city recreation centre. Officer Loehmann shot Rice twice in the abdomen, seconds after his partner, who also is white, drove their vehicle to within 5 feet (1.5 metres) of the boy in the playground. The gun turned out to be an replica pistol that shoots pellets, but had the orange tip removed.—Reuters
Key allies of disgraced China security chief jailed for graft

BEIJING — Chinese courts sentenced two key allies of disgraced former security chief Zhou Yongkang to jail on Monday, one for 16 years and the other for 13, after finding them guilty of corruption, the latest officials felled in a sweeping anti-graft campaign.

President Xi Jinping has spent the past three years waging war on deep-seated corruption, saying it threatens the very survival of the ruling Communist Party.

Scores of senior officials in the party, the government, and state-owned enterprises have been brought down, including Zhou, jailed for life in June after a secret trial in China’s most sensational graft scandal in 70 years. Zhou had also been at CNPC, the country’s top petroleum corporation (CNPC), the parent company of PetroChina Co Ltd, having risen through the ranks to serve as general manager from 1996 to 1998.

State television showed pictures of a grim-faced Jiang, who also ran the state asset regulator for five months before being sacked in September 2013, sitting in the dock with a policeman at each side. Jiang took more than 14 million yuan ($2.21 million) in bribes between 2004 and 2013, and with Zhou’s connivance broke rules to provide assistance to others in their business dealings, the court said without specifying.

Li Chuncheng, who was a boss in the southwestern province of Sichuan, to 13 years in jail on the same bribery and abuse of power charge. Li, president of the provincial party’s Standing Committee, had also been at CNPC, the parent company of PetroChina Co Ltd

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WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak in the Andaman Sea and South Bay weather is partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 13th October, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Mandalay, Magway and Ayeyarwady Regions, Rakhine State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Thundery activities in the Southern Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAHPITYAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13th October, 2015: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13th October, 2015: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Reminder for Companies

1. The notification has been publicized in local newspaper that the companies registered in accordance with Myanmar Companies Act (1914) and Special Company Act (1950) at the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) have to notified their existence regardless of whether their registration is valid or not latest by 16 October, 2015.
2. The reminder is therefore made that the companies which have not yet notified must report to DICA in due course and consideration will not be made for those reported beyond the deadline and will be struck off from the registered list according to Section 247 of Myanmar Companies Act.

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BANGKACHAI VOY NO (139)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGKACHAI VOY NO (139) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS WONGSAMUT OCEAN SHIPPING CO LTD.

Phone: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV CHENG SHAN WEI VOY NO (009)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CHENG SHAN WEI VOY NO (009) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS BRILLIANT SKY SHIPPING CO LTD.

Phone: 2301186
‘Pan’ flops with $15.5 Million, ‘The Martian’ keeps top spot

LOS ANGELES — “Pan” star Vin Diesel posted on Instagram a new photo of him showing off his abs in a reply to people, who mocked his round belly. Diesel made headlines for showing off his round belly during his stay at a hotel in Miami earlier this month.

The 48-year-old actor took to Instagram on Saturday, October 10 to address the news and say that “body-shaming is always wrong,” reported Aceshowbiz. Diesel posted a photo of him standing upright in a black shirt showing off his muscular pecs. He looked mysterious as he wore black glasses and held mobile phone on one hand. “It is amazing the re-sponse from the journalists who I have been talking to for the last two days in New York. Today one wanted to see the dad bod. Haha,” he wrote. The actor of “The Last Witch Hunter” continued, “I am wondering if I should show the picture... Body-shaming is always wrong! What do you think?” The snap came along with the hashtag “Last Witch Hunter,” a movie he is currently promoting.—PTI

Vin Diesel answers ‘body-shamers’ with six-pack abs photo

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Steven Tyler wants Trump to stop using Aerosmith

LOS ANGELES — Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler has reportedly asked Donald Trump to stop using his band’s song “Dream On” during his presidential campaign.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, representatives for Tyler sent Donald Trump for President Inc a cease-and-desist letter on 10 October, asking that he stop using the track during campaign events. This is said to be the second time Trump has been asked not to use the song, having been first warned after an event on August 21 in Mobile, Alabama.

However he has continued to use it at events, including during a recent appearance in Georgia.

The cease-and-desist letter stated, “Trump for President does not have our client’s permission to use ‘Dream On’ or any of our client’s other music in connection with the Campaign because it gives the false impression that he is connected with or endorses Mr Trump’s presidential bid.

“We are unaware of any public performance license granting Trump for President the right to perform ‘Dream On’ in connection with the Campaign. If Trump for President has any such license, please forward it to our attention immediately.”

Trump is thought to be an big Aerosmith fan and last year he attended one of the band’s concerts, after which he tweeted, it “doesn’t get any better than that”.

He was also believed to have been on friendly terms with Tyler, reportedly bringing the singer to the Republican debate in August as a personal guest.—PTI

I am single: Sam Smith

LONDON — Grammy-winner Sam Smith says he is “still very single” following his split from Jonathan Zeizel earlier this year as he is focusing on his relationships with friends and family.

The 23-year-old “Writing’s On The Wall” hitmaker had a short-lived romance with the American dancer earlier this year but now has confesses he is not yet ready for a relationship, reported Female First.

“At the moment I’m trying to hang on to a relationship with me and my family and my friends. Once I’ve got into the routine of this life, which may—be I’m still trying to get into that cruise-control with, then I think maybe I can introduce a guy. I’m still very single,” he said.

The singer also said he is glad he never had a real relationship before he found fame as he believes he would have missed the normality of it.

“I’m trying my best. There’s different challenges. The blessing for me is that I didn’t have a boyfriend before I got well known so I didn’t know any different. If I’d been in a relationship before I got well known I think I’d be a bit more upset,” Smith said.—PTI

Vin Diesel: Photo: Reuters

Actor Hugh Jackman arrives for the world premiere of “Pan” at Leicester Square in London, Britain. Photo: Reuters

out by Warner Bros. “The Intern” and Lionsgate’s “Sicario,” which earned $8.7 million and $7.3 million, respectively. “The Intern” has generated $49.6 million in receipts, while “Sicario”’s total stands at $26.7 million.

Limited release, Universal’s “Steve Jobs” scored, pulling in $521,000 across four theaters for a per-screen average of $130,236. That ranks as the best theater average of the year, and nicely positions the film about the Apple co-founder for its wide release launch on 23 October.

“This is a movie that’s executed so well that you’re not seeing anything like it so much as you’re seeing a work of art,” said Nicholas Carpo, Universal’s domestic distribution chief. Bruised by poor reviews and the continued strength of “Hotel Transylvania 2,” “Pan” failed to deliver family crowds. Roughly 55% of its opening audience was female and 52% of ticket buyers were over 25 years old. The film rolled out across 3,515 locations. “Pan” was originally slated to open in July, but Warner Bros. pushed the film back into October citing the need for more time to complete the visual effects work. The film’s cast includes Hugh Jackman, Rooney Mara and Garrett Hedlund. Joe Wright, best known for prestige fare like “Atonement,” directed the picture.—Reuters

Steven Tyler answers ‘body-shamers’ with six-pack abs photo

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Buffalo races attract crowds in Cambodia

KANDAL — Thousands of Cambodians flocked to Vihear Sour pagoda here on Monday to watch buffalo races along a dirt track as part of a ceremony marking the end of Pchum Ben, an annual 15-day festival honoring the dead.

Sam Sophy, director of Kandal Provincial Tourism Department, said 24 water buffaloes were registered for the 450-metre-race on a muddy road leading to the pagoda.

“The event is aimed to preserve and promote our Cambodian culture and tradition to national and international tourists,” he told Xinhua.

Last week, Cambodian men ride buffaloes during an annual water buffalo race at Vihear Sour pagoda in Kandal province, Cambodia, on 12 October 2015. PHOTO: XINHUA

Photo: Kyodo News

Safety of food from Fukushima emphasized at Milan expo

MILAN — A campaign began at the Japan Pavilion of the food-themed world expo in Italy on Sunday to demonstrate to visitors that food from Fukushima Prefecture is safe despite a nuclear disaster there in 2011.

During the four-day campaign through Wednesday, samples of local foods, such as fruits and Japanese sake, are being offered to highlight the quality control efforts producers have been making since the disaster.

At the pavilion, Norio Hashimoto, an official of the Fukushima prefectural government, said the quality of fruits shipped from the prefecture is “fully vouched for.” He added, “Fukushima is one of the major producers of fruits in the country.”

His colleague, Take-shi Fujita, said the purpose of the campaign is to convey “correct information” about Fukushima foods, but stressed that he does not intend to force it on anyone.

The campaign is also aimed at conveying how far rebuilding has proceeded since the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant suffered meltdowns in tsunami triggered by a powerful earthquake on 11 March, 2011.

A 59-year-old visitor said he enjoyed the dried peaches and sake that were served at the event, expressing hope that safety is pursued “sincerely” on matters of food. Some visitors had the chance to experience Fukushima folklore in which dump-lings are skewered on tree branches to wish for a good harvest.—Kyodo News

Photo: Kyodo News

Chinese visitors help boost New Zealand accommodation sector

WELLINGTON — A surge in Chinese visitors helped boost New Zealand’s accommodation sector in August, according to figures from the government statistics agency.

Guest nights in commercial accommodation for August were up 4.2 percent year on year, said a statement from Statistics New Zealand.

For the year ended August, national guest nights were up 5.4 percent from the August 2014 year.

Visitor arrivals in August were up 7.2 percent year on year to 202,900, the highest ever for an August month, Statistics New Zealand said last month.

Visitors arriving from China in August were up 5.200 year on year to 25,100, the highest ever for an August month.

The number of visitors in the year to the end of August was up 8 percent from an annual record of 3.02 million.

In the year ending August, three countries accounted for 61 percent of New Zealand’s overseas visitors: Australia with 1.29 million, China with 320,400 and the United States with 236,300.—Xinhua
Germany, Albania, Romania and Poland join 2016 party

LONDON — World champions Germany and perennial also-rans Albania do not share much in common in soccer but both were united in joy on Sunday when they qualified for Euro 2016 in France along with Romania and Poland.

The World Cup winners, who have lifted the Henri Delauney trophy three times as European champions, left it late but sealed their spot with a 2-1 win over already-eliminated Georgia which gave them top spot in Group D.

Albania, who have never previously reached the World Cup or European Championship since first entering both in the mid-1960s as a secretive state shrouded in hard-line communist aloofness, secured their place with a 3-0 win over Armenia in Yerevan.

Thousands of their supporters in both Albania and Kosovo, where a number of the Albania players were born, took to the streets, letting off fireworks and driving around towns and cities hooting their car horns in celebration.

Poland finished behind Germany with a 2-1 win over Ireland in Warsaw forcing the Irish into the playoffs. The winner was a stunning diving header by striker Robert Lewandowski who took his tally to 20 points, one behind them to 20 points, one behind already-qualified Germany and per-

Hazard says he’s in the worst form of his life

LONDON — Chelsea’s Eden Hazard cannot explain why he is struggling for his club this season and said manager Jose Mourinho has been right to drop him from the starting line-up as he is in the “worst form of his life”.

The Belgian was the Premier League’s best player last season as Chelsea cruised to the title, but paid the price for his stunning fall from grace this term when Mourinho dropped him from the starting line-up for the Champions League defeat by Porto on 29 September.

Hazard has no goals and just two assists in 11 appearances for the club this season, a slump that has contributed to Chelsea’s slide down the table, where they currently sit in 16th place.

“This is the first time in my career that I have had such a difficult spell like this,” Haz ard was quoted as saying by the British and Belgian media.

“I can’t really explain it. All I know is that I will need to work hard in order to bounce back. At Chelsea we have concerns both as a team and individually,” the 24-year-old winger added. Hazard admitted his poor performances meant he was no longer “untouchable” as one of the first names on Mour inho’s team sheet, but praised the Portuguese and backed himself to bounce back when the league resumes on 17 October after the international break.

“I was left on the bench against Porto in the Champions League, and I am no longer insinuate to being left out. You can be untouchable when you play well, and that has not been the case with me,” Hazard said.

“I think the manager wanted to send me a message by making me a sub. I don’t read everything he says, but he ex-

Young Fitzpatrick’s Matt finish secures Woburn win

WOBURN — European Tour rookie Matt Fitzpatrick, the youngest player in the field, showed the old stagers a thing or two by easing to a two-stroke triumph at the $4.55 million (€2.97 million) British Masters on Sunday.

The 21-year-old Eng-