WEATHER BUREAU UPDATE
EL NIÑO TO END EARLIER THAN EXPECTED

THE weather bureau in Nay Pyi Taw has predicted El Niño will end in Myanmar earlier than expected as sea temperatures in the East Central Tropical Pacific Ocean have decreased since early March.

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology announced, quoting international weather agencies, yesterday that the El Niño process would end in June in Myanmar.

The weather bureau said Kachin State, Chin State, and Sagaing Region, which are located in dry regions, are expected to receive above-average rainfall in the upcoming summer season from March to May with a 40 to 60 degree of certainty, while the remaining states and regions are expected to receive less rainfall than normal.

Parliamentarians submitted an urgent motion last month calling on the Union government to adopt risk mitigation measures against the negative effects of El Niño, which is expected to hit Myanmar this year.

MPs stressed the need to launch emergency response and preparedness drills in order to mitigate possible losses in the event of disasters. The MPs pointed out that such drills have not yet been conducted in the country, despite plans drawn up by ministries. MPs also called on officials to gear up for El Niño’s impact, warning that the situation is likely to get worse during the summer as some parts of the country have started suffering droughts, and fire outbreaks are reported frequently.

In his statement, Dr. Sein Mya Aye of Dala Constituency emphasised the importance of taking necessary measures to guarantee the socioeconomic wellbeing of the people, including farmers, as agricultural outputs and fishery exports are likely to be limited by the consequences of El Niño.

Defence Services Pyithu Hluttaw representative Lt.-Col Aung Kyaw Moe highlighted the leadership role of the Union government in the fight against the effects of El Niño in cooperation with regional governments, non-governmental organisations and the people. —GNLM

Irresponsible fishing methods deplete Rakhine State fish stocks

THE year upon year depletion of fish populations in Rakhine State waters is attributed to a change in fishing techniques as well as climate change.

Many people living in Rakhine State make a living from fishing activities, but local fishermen blame many years of irresponsible overfishing for the depletion of fish in rivers, streams and the ocean, which is causing them problems.

“The weather's not right, for one. Then, there's those offshore fishing vessels that come to fish close to the shore. Fishing with mines is causing some fish species to become extinct. Those fish that aren't killed swim off to other, more tranquil waters. We used to catch about K10,000 worth of fish a day in the past, but these days we only manage half of that. We have to seek employment as causal labourers in other sectors as being a fisherman by itself isn't a financially viable option anymore,” said U Win Shwe, a fisherman from Pauktaw Township.

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Second Pyithu Hluttaw abolishes special cases assessment committee

THE Second Pyithu Hluttaw’s first regular session entered its fourteenth day, during which it renamed a committee, substituted committee members and abolished a committee.

The Pyithu Hluttaw approved the renaming of the Farmer, Worker and Youth Affairs Committee as the Farmer and Worker Affairs Committee. It also substituted Dr Tin Aung of Kyaukse Constituency with U Tin Aung of Tatkon Constituency, U Shwe Hla (a) U Shwe Hla Win of Thinganpun Constituency with U Thein Tan of Hlegu Constituency, Dr U Aung Khin of Pyin Oo Lwin Constituency with U Aung Win of Hnawby Constituency and U Myo Nyunt of Homalin Constituency with U Myint Kyi of Katha Constituency in the Public Accounts Committee.

The parliament further substituted U Khin Maung Thaung of Pinlaung Constituency with U Thaung Htay Lin of Patheingyi Constituency for Hluttaw Rights Committee; Dr Mya Khwar Nyo Oo of Shwebo Constituency with U Kyaw Min of Letpadan Constituency in the Internal Peace-making Committee; U Soe Myint of Pindaya Constituency with U Aung Soe of Yinnabin Constituency and U Kan Myint of Thayet Constituency with U Ye Tun Win of Pauk Constituency in the Banks and Monetary Affairs Development Committee; U Myat Lay Oo of Htilin Constituency with Daw Aye Aye Mu (a) Daw Shar Moo of Kale Constituency in the Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee; U Kyi Moe Naing of Yadasseh Constituency with Saw Thalay Saw of Shweygin Constituency and U Zaw Win of Htanthabin Constituency with Dr Khin Maung Maung of Dagon Myothit (North) Constituency in the Transport, Communication and Construction Committee; U Kyaw Myo Min of Moenyo Constituency with U Than Nyunt of Pyu Constituency, U Aung Soe of Thayetchaung Constituency with U Nay Lin Tun of Bokepyin Constituency, U Aung Tha Than Sein of Kamit Constituency with U Kyaw Soe of Banmauk Constituency and U Ye Lwin of Aholne Constituency in the Education Committee for Economic and Financial Development Committee; and Daw Cho Cho Win of Mawlaik Constituency with Dr Daw Pyone of Inndaw Constituency in the Public Administration Committee.

Next, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint informed the parliamentarians of the abolition of the Pyithu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Committee.

Then, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat elaborated on the formation of committees.

The speaker read out congratulatory messages sent from Japan, Algeria, Slovakia, France and Poland, which were documented.

The fifteenth day session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw continues today.—Myanmar News Agency

MPT donates solar lamps to monastic education schools

MYANMA Posts and Telecommunications provided monastic education schools across the country with over 2,000 solar lamps worth a total of about US$300,000.

Funds received through selling MPT SIM cards were contributed to buy the solar lamps, said Mr Takashi Nagashima, CEO of the MPT-KSGM Joint Operation.

According to MPT, sale of MPT SIM cards last December brought in K297 million in revenues. “The solar lamp donation will bring light to 632 monastic education schools around the country, bringing solar power to 58,000 students,” said Bhaddanta Nayi, the presiding monk of the PhaungdawO Monastic Education School in Mandalay. This was MPT’s second donation to monastic education schools. The company donated 837 solar panels to monastic education schools in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway Regions last month.—Thein Ko Lwin

Myanmar, Japanese artists to perform symphonic orchestra in Mandalay

MYANMAR—National Symphony Orchestra Concert 2016 will take place at 6 pm at National Theater in Mandalay on 15 March. The concert set to be open to everyone is joint efforts of the State Orchestra of Myanmar Radio and Television under the Ministry of Information and a group of Japanese artists led by conductor-composer Mr. Yunosuke Yamamoto and pianist Mrs. Kyoko Koyama.

The symphonic orchestra performance between Myanmar and Japan will be aired live on News Channel of MRTV.—Myanmar News Agency

Military aircraft suffers drag parachute malfunction at Nay Pyi Taw airport

A MILITARY aircraft suffered an accident while landing at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport due to its drag parachute malfunctioning at 11:54am yesterday.

The military plane was flying to Nay Pyi Taw from Toungoo Air Base to conduct a drill.

During the accident, the aircraft crashed into three light poles on the taxiway following the drag parachute malfunction, which was caused by a mechanical failure.

No one was reported injured, but the cockpit area, fuel tank and tires of the aircraft were damaged in the accident.—Myawady

Relaxation of restriction brings more tourists to Kawhoung

Yacht trips have resumed now. PHOTO: HOTEL AND TOURISM MINISTRY

CROWDS of tourists are flocking to Kawhoung, Taninthayi Region, during the peak season for tourism in Myanmar after restrictions on sightseeing boat tours around the Myeik Archipelago were relaxed, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

According to the ministry, Kawhoung welcomed 270,573 foreign visitors and received 3,248 tourists on yacht trips during the period from January to December 2015.

Myeik Archipelago, which includes 803 islands, is one of major tourist attractions in Myanmar, offering activities such as underwater diving, sailing, canoeing, bird watching, exploring Salom culture, mangrove sightseeing and forest trekks.

Arrivals of tourists through sailing trips have also increased, with 713 visitors arriving this January, including 12 yachts carrying 92 tourists on 30 January, said the ministry.—Kay Khthing
Vice President inspects renovation of Yangon General Hospital

VICE PRESIDENT Dr Sai Mauk Kham inspected the progress of the renovation of Yangon General Hospital and follow-up works yesterday.

On his inspection tour, the vice president visited the PET/CT Cyclotron Center, wards in the main building and the operating theater complex, where he greeted patients and their families and medical staff of the hospital.

Next, the vice president heard reports on the work progress presented by Yangon Region Chief Minister Dr Maung Thura Moe Su, Regional Minister for Social Affairs Dr Myint Thein and other officials.

In his address, the vice president stressed the need to ensure quality improvements to healthcare, including medical equipment, manpower and services. He also called for further ways and means to adequately accommodate patients as the newly-extended five-storey building has grown crowded.

He also praised relevant committees, officials, medical staff and advisers for their efforts in improving the hospital.

Yangon General Hospital’s major renovation works, including the extended construction of five-storey building and others, began in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

The renovation of the main building was carried out in the 2014-2015 fiscal, reaching 60 per cent completion at the end of that fiscal year.

The remaining works continued throughout the 2015-2016 fiscal year, and the renovations are slated to be completed by 10 March after the installation of glass roofs in the main building.

So far, the construction of a five-storey building for cancer patients is 45 per cent complete and is expected to be 60 per cent complete by the end of this fiscal year.

Moreover, the construction of a 10-storey staff building is 20 per cent complete and is slated to be 50 per cent complete by the end of this fiscal year.—Myanmar News Agency

Climate change adaptation plans must be prioritised

CLIMATE change adaptation plans are necessary to properly respond to challenges brought about by possible extreme heat, changes in rainfall patterns, cyclonic storms and flooding during the decades to come, said Union Minister U Ohn Myint in his address at the ASEAN Forum on Improvement of Knowledge, Skills and Competence of Stakeholders in Climate Change Adaptation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Union minister added that the three-day forum will be of great benefit to the ASEAN community as a whole.

According to the Union minister, Myanmar’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2030 will be approved and released soon.

Moreover, awareness campaigns are being undertaken to establish biosecurity measures and a combined team on climate change in Myanmar.

The forum is set to feature discussions on designing university syllabi for climate change adaptation and excursion tours.—Myanmar News Agency

Sales of high-priced cashews boom in Ayeyawady Region

CAHSEW sellers in the Ayeyawady Region township of Thabaung are enjoying the appreciation in the value of the nut, which has not affected sales.

During the last five years, a viss (1.6 kilos) of cashews fetched K1,500, while the price for the same quantity increased by two thirds to K2,500 at the beginning of 2016.

“Cashews are going for such a good price. On top of that, there is a lot of buying and selling [of the nut],” said U Bone Kyaw, a cashew wholesaler.

The appreciation in the price of cashews can be attributed not only to good sales of the nut in Yangon and Pathein markets but also to competitive buying from other parts of the region.

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The appreciation in the price of cashews can be attributed not only to good sales of the nut in Yangon and Pathein markets but also to competitive buying from other parts of the region.

“The cashew is a type of crop which can quickly rise or fall in price. A year of good-quality cashews makes things favourable for us plantation owners,” said U Aung Soe, a cashew nut plantation owner.

There are between 500 and 1,000 acres of cashew plantations in villages along the western hills of Thabaung Township.—Myanmar News Agency

People waiting for lucky draw programme to resubmit for rental apartments in Mandalay. PHOTO: MI NYET AU NG

Rental apartments for squatters still available in Mandalay

THOSE who did not meet the requirements and missed the chance to apply for residency at apartments in Mandalay will be allowed to resubmit their applications, said the secretary of the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC).

The MCDC relocated squatters who lived in temporary huts along Ayeyawady River in Mandalay into rental apartments through a lucky draw programme yesterday.

The rental residential buildings, which include 1,584 apartments, were built at a cost of K11 billion—K6 billion from the MCDC and K5 billion from the Mandalay Region government.

“Squatters living along the river still have a chance to live in the rental apartments,” said U Khin Maung Tint, secretary of MCDC, adding that living in temporary huts will not be allowed after the squatters are relocated.

“We are very delighted to be relocated to rental apartments fitted with electricity and water,” said Daw Yi, one of squatters who applied for rental housing.

The MCDC said 1,206 applicants who met requirements have been relocated to the apartments through the yesterday’s lucky draw programme. They are required to pay K30,000 per month in rent.—Aung Thant Khang

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There are between 500 and 1,000 acres of cashew plantations in villages along the western hills of Thabaung Township.—Myanmar News Agency
Tourist arrivals up in Mandalay

FROM the beginning of 2016, tourist arrivals have been on the rise in Mandalay, according to the Department of Hotels and Tourism Development of Mandalay Region.

Tourist arrivals have increased from October 2015 to March 2016. Most tourists are American, French, German, Dutch, Japanese, Thai and Chinese. The department expects 5 million tourists to come to Myanmar in 2016, and about 500,000 of them will travel to Mandalay and the Bagan Cultural Zone. Mandalay International Airport is directly linked with Thailand, India and China. Over 120,000 tourists entered Mandalay in 2015 on direct flights from those countries.

Moreover, foreign travellers have been arriving at Mandalay by vehicles and motorbikes through the Mandalay-Muse Union highway and the Mandalay-Tamu highway. Tourists coming to Mandalay visit Myanmar’s Golden Palace, Mandalay Hill, Maha Muni Pagoda, U Bein Bridge, the Golden Temple, Altumashi Monastery, the Thatahtarna Pagodas, gold embroidery businesses and gold foil businesses.—Thiba Ko Ko

Mingala Jetty Bridge in Kyunsu Township opened

THE Mingala Jetty Bridge, which facilitates transportation for local people in Kyunsu Township, opened on 7 February. The bridge is 220 feet by 90 feet and made of reinforced concrete.

From the bridge, speed boats and motor boats take local residents to island villages of Myeik and Kyunsu townships. An average of 400 local people use the bridge daily.

At the opening ceremony of the Mingala Jetty Bridge a ribbon was cut by Tannathai Region Chief Minister U Myat Ko, region ministers and officials at 9:45pm on 7 February.

The Naung Yoe Myanmar Phwint Phyo Toe Tet Yay Company supervised the construction of the bridge, which cost K200 million and was funded through the 2015-2016 regional government budget. The construction of the bridge began on 10 September 2015 and was completed on 20 February 2016.

Afterward, U Win Shein, the Union Minister for Finance, delivered a speech. After that, the director of Naung Yoe Myanmar Phwint Phyo Toe Tet Yay Company handed over the documents of the bridge to township administrator U Nyein Htwe.

The bridge can be used for both up-tide and down-tide travel. One local resident gave a thankful speech on behalf of local people from 25 villages in Kyunsu Township, said U Khin Soe, a local resident.—Township IPRD

Crime NEWS

Fire destroys two homes in Toungoo

A FIRE caused by an electric short circuit engulfed two homes in Toungoo on 7 March 2016.

An over heated electric fan was blamed for the fire, which started at 5:25am. Firemen and volunteers with four fire engines managed to put the fire under control 35 minutes after it broke out.

Fire is being taken by a local police station against Daw Zam Bi, 50, owner the home where the fire started.—Police

Police arrest woman selling pirated CDs in Myaungmya

POLICE arrested a woman selling pirated CDs in Myaungmya, Ayayawady Region, on 6 March.

Action on a tip-off, police searched a CD shop owned Ma Hnin Hnin, 30, in Myaungmya, and confiscated 95 pirated CDs.

Action is being taken against her under Section 32(b) of the TV and Video Act.—Police

2,000 stimulant tablets seized in Lashio

A LOCAL anti-drug squad in Lashio discovered 2,000 stimulant tablets on a motorcycle on the Lashio-Mong Yaw Road in a surprise check on 5 March.

Action is being taken against Aik Sai Lu (a) Aik Tun, who drove the motorcycle, under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

On the same day, police in Hpakan stoped and searched a motorcycle driven by Thet Tun Oo and seized 1.29 kilos of solid opium in the surprise check.

Action is being taken against Thet Tun Oo.—Myanmar Police Force

2,337 stimulant tablets seized in Kale

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Ma Lar Htan Maw Re, Ma Zai Htan Maw Re, Lar Inn Zar Mar and Zo Nun Maw Ra

ACTING on a tip-off, a local anti-drug squad searched a house owned Ma Lar Htan Maw Re in Dowang Chaung Village, Kale Township, on 4 March and discovered 2,337 stimulant tablets. The police arrested her along with Mazai Htan Maw Re, Lar Inn Zar Mar and Zo Nun Maw Ra who were at the home during the search.

On the same day, a local anti-drug squad intercepted a Mark II vehicle driven by Shauk Sein Yoon near the Kutkai-Kaungkhar junction in Kutkai for searched. The squad seized six soup cans filled with heroin weighing 60 grams.

Similarly, a local anti-drug squad in Thingangyun Township discovered 130 stimulant tablets from Thuramin (a) Ko Ht. Action has been taken against all the drug dealers under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force
Shinhan, BIDV to open Myanmar branches

THREE days after winning a licence to operate banking services in Myanmar, Shinhan Bank announced yesterday that it will open a branch in Myanmar next year, seeking to expand its presence in the Southeast Asian country as part of its global strategy to find new revenue sources.

South Korea’s most profitable lender said it aims to open its branch in Yangon in the first quarter of 2017.

Mon State brick kiln enterprises hit by appreciated expenses, waning sales

ACCORDING to brick makers in Mon State’s Thaton Township, an increase in manufacturing expenses of earth brick kiln enterprises has coincided with a waning of sales, resulting in low profits.

The combination of waning brick sales, the destruction of bricks from torrential rains, together with an appreciation in value of wood fuel, has resulted in a current brick manufacturing market not being cost-effective.

“The nature of the salt business is that the summer months provide a more bountiful crop as little of the crop is destroyed. As we are now beginning to experience the El Niño weather front, things are starting to dry up, resulting in more salt being harvested from salt fields. Salt farmers have little investment, so they must produce and sell their salt regardless of the fall in its value,” said U Min Naing, a Mon State salt farmer from Thabyuzayat Township.

In the last week of January this year, a viss (1.6 kilos) of unrefined sun-dried salt fluctuated between K50 and K100, with the advance of the El Niño weather front causing the value of the same quantity to only fetch as much as K50. The combination of salt farmers incur roughly K40 to K50 per viss in expenses, profit margins become very thin at times when the price of salt depreciates in value.

Many parts of Mon State are suitable for producing salt, but scarcity of workers, the depreciation in value of the commodity and absence of money lenders to support the salt enterprise have rendered people in parts of Mon State unable to conduct salt harvesting activities.

“Fish stocks are in really bad shape. The volume of fish caught in the township has completely declined, which is linked to the irresponsible fishing practices of some fishermen. We try to take legal action, but these destructive fishing methods aren’t carried out when we’re in the village; they wait until after we’ve gone home. Fishermen need to cooperate [with us],” said U Kyaw Soe Lwin, head of the Department of Fisheries for Minbya Township.

In accordance with a report by the Yangon branch of the Rakhine Thaharya Association, which was conducted in a bid to highlight the extent of the problem of overfishing within the Rakhine State, there has been a distinct depletion in the last fifteen years of the species of placuna fish and golden shrimp, which once numbered in the tens of thousands. The ngapidu could also become extinct as it is being fished as a substitute to depleted numbers of golden shrimp.

Salt value depreciates in Mon State as El Niño causes surplus

Salt value is in the process of depreciating in Mon State, due to the impact of the El Niño weather front, which has contributed to the destruction of salt fields and the scarcity of workers in the industry.

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South Korea, US begin exercises as North Korea threatens attack

SEOUL — South Korean and US troops began large-scale military exercises yesterday in an annual test of their defences against North Korea, which called the drills “nuclear war moves” and threatened to respond with an all-out offensive.

South Korea said the exercises would be the largest ever following North Korea’s fourth nuclear test in January and a long-range rocket launch last month that triggered a UN Security Council resolution and tough new sanctions.

Isolated North Korea has rejected criticism of its nuclear and rocket programmes, even from old ally China, and last week leader Kim Jong Un ordered his country to be ready to use nuclear weapons in the face of what he sees as growing threats from enemies.

The joint US and South Korean military command said it had notified North Korea of “the non-provocative nature of this training” involving about 17,000 American troops and more than 300,000 South Koreans.

South Korea’s Defence Ministry said it had seen no sign of any unusual military activity by the North.

North Korea’s National Defence Commission said the North Korean army and people would “realise the greatest desire of the Korean nation through a sacred war of justice for reunification”, in response to any attack by US and South Korean forces.

“The army and people of the DPRK will launch an all-out offensive to decisively counter the US and its followers’ hysterical nuclear war moves,” the North Korean commission said in a statement carried by the North’s KCNA news agency.

The North, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), as it is officially known, routinely issues threats of military action in response to the annual exercises that it sees as preparation for war against it.

The threat on Monday was in line with the usual rhetoric it uses to denounce the drills.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei noted that the latest UN sanctions imposed on North Korea were posed on North Korea were “deeply concerned and firmly opposed to any trouble-making behaviour on the peninsula’s door-step.”

We urge all sides to keep calm, exercise restraint and not escalate tensions,” he told a daily news briefing.

The latest UN sanctions imposed on North Korea were drafted by the United States and China as punishment for its nuclear test and satellite launch, which the United States and others say was really a test of ballistic missile technology.

South Korea’s spy agency said it would hold an emergency cyber-security meeting on Tuesday to check readiness against any threat of cyber attack from the North, after detecting evidence of attempts by the North to hack into South Korean mobile phones.

South Korea has been on heightened cyber alert since the nuclear test and the rocket launch.

South Korea and the US militaries began talks on Friday on the deployment of an advanced anti-missile Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system in South Korea.—Reuters

Australian police respond to shooting, report of hostages at Sydney factory

SYDNEY — Three people have been shot and hostages may have been taken at a factory on the outskirts of Sydney, Australian police said yesterday, although it was not immediately clear what had sparked the incident.

A spokeswoman for the New South Wales state police said authorities believed three people had been shot.

Australian media reported that one person was killed and two were wounded and taken to hospital, although police could not immediately verify those reports.

“Negotiators and a tactical response team are at the scene and trying to gain access to the building,” the police spokeswomen said.

In December 2014, a lone gunman and self-styled shiek who claimed allegiance to the Islamic State militant group took 17 hostages at a cafe in central Sydney. The gunman and two hostages were killed in the final minutes of the 16-hour siege.—Reuters

US and South Korean marines participate in a US-South Korea joint landing operation drill in Pohang, South Korea, in 2014. Photo: Reuters

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Philippine boxer and poll candidate Pacquiao says TV bout cover not a low blow

MANILA — Former world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao said yesterday TV coverage of his WBO welterweight bout with American Timothy Bradley would not violate Philippine election laws or give him an undue advantage in his bid for a seat on the Senate.

In a five-page letter to the election commission, Pacquiao, 37, said that as a candidate for the May election he had received TV and radio air time for political advertisements and that his fight would not consume all of the allotted time.

The commission on Tuesday said it may bar broadcasts of Pacquiao’s bid to win back the world welterweight title next month from reigning WBO welterweight champion Bradley because it could give him an unfair advantage in the elections.

“There is obviously no case of undue advantage or undue exposure for Pacquiao as the same rights and privileges are extended by law to all said candidates,” Pacquiao said through his lawyers.

The bout will take a maximum of 36 minutes for a 12-round fight, or not five if the fight does not go the distance. Under the law, all candidates are given up to 120-minute TV and 180-minute radio advertisements per station.

Pacquiao’s description of gays as “worse than animals” last month drew criticism on social media at home and abroad, and cost him an endorsement deal with Nike, the world’s largest sportswear maker.

The election commission is expected to make a ruling on the broadcasts soon.

On 9 May, more than 54 million people in the Philippines will vote for a president, vice-president, 300 lawmakers and thousands of local government posts.

Pacquiao, who has also courted controversy with comments on same-sex marriage, is running for one of 12 vacant seats in the Senate, the upper house of parliament. — Reuters

Farmers see Modi’s budget as all promise, no delivery

KHANJARPUR (India) — Farmer Ram Pal Singh voted for Narendra Modi’s promise of “better days” in India’s 2014 general election, but he won’t be backing the prime minister again even after last week’s budget promised more aid to the countryside.

Growing discontent in rural India, home to two-thirds of the country’s 1.3 billion people, bodes ill for Modi as he tries to bounce back from a heavy defeat in a state election last year in Bihar and build a support base to keep power in the 2019 general election.

In an eye-catching announcement, the budget doubled spending on agriculture and farmers’ welfare to $5.3 billion in support of his promise that their incomes would double by 2022.

Yet critics say most of the extra spending is in fact an accounting entry that shifts the cost of an interest subsidy to the agriculture budget that was previously borne by the finance ministry.

“We have received nothing from the government. We don’t even recover our costs,” said Singh, whose 21-acre (8.5-hectare) plot is big by Indian standards.

Two failed monsoons, and sudden unseasonal rains, have caused widespread crop damage across northern India. Debt-laden farmers like Singh say low state purchase prices and a lack of compensation for crop losses are worsening their plight.

Singh lost $4,500 over the past two years because of severe damage to his wheat and sugarcane crops in the Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh, 30 miles (50 km) east of New Delhi. It has left him with debts of more than $10,000, and despair has driven him to think of selling his land.

“We have so much land but we still struggle to survive there is only sadness in farming,” said Singh, 60, who does not want his grandchildren to work in the fields.

Last month, farmers went on the rampage in neighbouring Haryana state to protest a lack of economic opportunity. Thirty people died and saboteurs cut metropolitan Delhi’s main water supply.

“The budget may give you an illusion the government has tried to address the problems faced by farmers,” said independent food and trade policy analyst Devinder Sharma. He called instead for a package of “immediate assistance” to stop a spate of suicides by farmers from spreading.

“Modi last year promised higher compensation for crop losses, but more than a dozen farmers interviewed by Reuters on a field trip said they had received no relief. Many have taken out more loans or sold cattle to tide themselves over.

All but one said they will not support Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in next year’s poll in Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state, home to 200 million people.

In 2014, the party swept Uttar Pradesh, winning 71 of 80 seats to claim the strongest parliamentary mandate in three decades. The budget play seemed designed to improve its standing in rural areas, traditionally a weak spot for the BJP.

“For the first time the agriculture sector has figured prominently in budget, and for the first time we’ve seen such a sharp rise in allocation for farmers’ welfare,” Farm Minister Radha Mohan Singh told a news conference.

But Jai Kisan Andolan, a peasants’ rights movement, and 35 farming unions countered that the budget offered them no debt relief, and failed to hike either government farm purchase prices or crop-loss compensation rates.”Most of what the budget speech projects as big favours to the farming community is actually ‘business as usual’ with a sleight of hand,” the groups said in a statement after the budget.

In addition, the main effort to expand irrigation - adding just 2 per cent of net cultivated area of 141 million hectares - is seen as piecemeal. And a new crop insurance scheme is expected to get off to a slow start.

“The government does not have a firm plan to address the rural crisis. They will have to pay a big political price for this,” said Satish Misra, a political analyst at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. — Reuters

Appeal filed against ruling over Nagasaki A-bomb compensation

NAGASAKI — Plaintiffs seeking to be acknowledged as victims of the US atomic bombing in the southwestern city of Nagasaki yesterday appealed a local court ruling that denied them official recognition and made them ineligible for special state assistance.

The appeal was filed by 151 plaintiffs who say they experienced the atomic bombing on 9 August, 1945. They were within a 12-kilometre radius of ground zero.

In the 22 February ruling by the Nagasaki District Court, 10 of 161 plaintiffs received recognition as survivors entitled to full compensation by the government including medical assistance.

The plaintiffs in the suit were outside the oval-shaped, state-designated zone stretching around 7 kilometres from east to west and about 12 km from north to south. The district court said only the 10 plaintiffs could be determined to have received radiation exposure high enough to qualify for state compensation.

In a similar suit, the Nagasaki court rejected demand by 395 other plaintiffs in 2012, prompting them to appeal to the Fukuoka High Court. The high court will hand down its ruling on 28 March. — Kyodo News

A farmer stands atop his sugarcane crop loaded onto a tractor at a farmland near Modinagar in Uttar Pradesh, India, on 4 March. Photo: Reuters

Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao, who is running for Senator in the May 2016 national elections, speaks to supporters during the start of elections campaigning in Mandaluyong city, Metro Manila on 9 February. Photo: Reuters
Good governance is not a guarantor for economic growth

Khin Maung Aye

THERE is no story in this world that does not have two sides. In the same manner, the notion of good governance is also discussed, debated and contested by scholars to arrive at its most meaningful meaning. Three aspects of good governance are debated, including the development strategies pursued by World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), public sector reforms and issues of economic development.

The World Bank and IMF believe that an active state should foster an environment where contracts are enforced and markets can operate efficiently. This being the case, a state ought to follow pro-growth macroeconomic policies and maintain moderate sized governments, sound financial development, respect for the rule of law, openness to international trade and rises in average incomes with little systematic effect on the distribution of income.

Concerning public sector reforms, scholars argue that the initial impetus for public sector reform came from a belief that the state was too strong and too active. However, developing states often have the opposite problem—the state is too weak and inept. Therefore, fads such as ‘New Public Management’ were often especially not suitable for the developing states. Public sector reforms attempt to restrict the scope of state activity, but the main obstacle to modernisation in developing states is a lack of state strength. As a consequence, reforms often prove to be tragically impractical for developing states. The pressing need in many developing states is to establish bureaucratic institutions with clear lines of accountability, impartial officials and abstract rules to guide them.

When it comes to the issues of economic development, some critics argue that the association of good governance with the economic development perpetuates ethnocentric ideas. According to such critics, good governance is not an absolute guarantor for economic growth and development. Specific development policies are required to reach this end, and the implementation of abstract concepts has to be grounded by considering regional, national and even local characteristics.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email khimaungaye.hotmail@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.

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EQUITY FOR WOMEN MEANS PROGRESS FOR ALL

Dr. Aung Soe (a) Aung Kyaw Moe
Ex United Nations Volunteer (UNV) UNDP

MARCH 8 is International Women’s Day (IWD), adopted by the United Nations. On that day, one should promote awareness and highlight the importance of achieving equality for women and girls, which is a matter of fundamental human rights and fairness. So also progress in so many other areas depends on gender equity, it is said.

Countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support.

The evidence is clear: equality for women means progress for all.

As we are marching forwards for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), following Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the above mentioned truth should be central to accelerate progress. No doubt, access to primary education for girls and political representation by women had some gains. To be honest, progress remains far too slow and uneven at different parts of the globe.

As such, a baby girl born today will still face inequality and discrimination, no matter where her mother lived. We have a common obligation to ensure her right to live free from the violence that affects one in three women globally; to earn equal pay for equal work; to be free of the discrimination that prevents her from participating in the economy; to have an equal say in the decisions that affect her life; and to decide if and when she will have children, and how many she will have.

It would be a message for every girl-born today, and to every woman and girl on the planet. Realizing human rights and equality is not a dream, it is a duty of governments, the United Nations and every human being.

Recently, esteemed GNLM, in its ‘February 2016 issue described a news item saying three Myanmar women and one foreigner from a neighbouring country were charged by police in a Myanmar border town for human trafficking attempt. Ma Nan Khum, Ma Nan Ban, Ma Aye Aye and a foreigner male were arrested. A subsequent investigation revealed that three women persuaded a teenage girl into marrying the foreigner from the adjacent country for the money she would need to support her family. The young girl, aged 16, was struggling to earn for her siblings because her mother was in prison. The traffickers told her she would get 30,000 foreign currency, equivalent to much more amount of Myanmar kyats, if she agreed to marry that foreigner of unknown background and to proceed for uncertain destination.

Let us look around at the women we are with. Think of those we cherish in our families and our communities. And understand that there is a statistical likelihood that many of them have suffered violence in their lifetime. Even more have committed a sister or friend, sharing their grief and anger following an attacker.

One young woman was gang-raped to death. Another committed suicide out of a sense of shame that should have attached to the perpetrators. Young teens were shot at close range for daring to seek an education. These are some of the global scenarios.

These atrocities, which rightly sparked global outrage, were part of a much larger problem that pervades virtually every society and every region of life.

Question was raised by New Light of Myanmar Project 2016 issue about if Myanmar women enjoy a greater degree of equality with men. But, a brief look into the parliament and government ministries will make it clear that Myanmar women just represent a small proportion in leadership and decision-making positions, in the past.

Traditionally, women have taken the back seat in Myanmar society —with the ruling expenses forced many women from their homes to the workplace to become earners themselves. Before this, male sex superiority was deeply entrenched in our society and both men and women took it as a normal thing. The time-honored maxim for housewives “Treat son as the master, treat husband as the Lord” explains well the traditional role of women, editorial said.

It is, however, encouraging to see Myanmar women striving to break this age-old glass ceiling by holding a series of women’s forums and discussions recently.

We renew our pledge to combat the global heaviest menace when ever it may lurk — in homes and businesses, in war zones and placid countries, and in the minds of people who allow violence to continue which, no doubt, creates Post Stress Psychological Disorders and even insanity! The United Nations stands for the welfare of all victims of sexual violence and gender-based violence in conflict at the forefront of its activities, making its responses to sexual violence a priority in all peace-making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, it is noted.

The United Nations system is advancing UNiTE to End Vio- lence against Women campaign, which is based on the simple but powerful premise that all women and girls have a fundamental human right to live free of violence.

During March 2014 in New York, at the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commis- sion members held the largest-ever UN assembly on ending violence against women — and kept pressing for progress long after it concludes, ever up to- day.

Obviously, many governments, including Myanmar, groups and individuals contributed to this campaign. Societies and community members lend their funds to a cause or raised voice to an outcry. To end this injustice and to provide the weaker sex with the safety, security and freedom they deserve, Myanmar people, being planet citizens, would accelerate their co-operation in this global push.
Hpa-an to get modern swimming pool

AUTHORITIES in Kayin State are building a high-standard swimming pool in Hpa-an, expecting to produce talented swimmers for the state.

This will be the first high-standard swimming pool in Kayin State, and it will also be open to local residents for exercise and leisure.

The facility will include a meeting hall, a car park, a rest room for athletes, a locker room, a bathroom and toilets.

The swimming pool project is being carried out under the supervision of the Department of Sports and Physical Education and the Kayin State government and by Twin & Soe Brothers Construction Company. It is now 85 per cent complete. The pool will span 50 metres by 25 metres.

The pool is being built with funding from the Kayin State government’s 2015-2016 budget with K300 million allotted by the state’s Sports and Physical Education Department. Well-known swimmer Mah Papi Minsoe and diver Ko Zwe Thet Oo represent the state in competitions.

—Nay Myo Lwin

Grape growers gain profit

WITH high grape prices in the market, grape growers in YameThin Township, Mandalay Region, gained higher profit than previous years.

The current price of Theechun grape ranges from K2,800 to K3,000 per viss (1.63 kilos), K2,000 to K2,200 per viss for Blackwin grapes and K1,500 to K1,800 per viss of ‘number three’ grapes. The ‘number three’ variety is the most popular among the growers.

Grape growers take more care of summer crops than rainy season crops because summer crops gain higher prices. Rainy season crops sell out before they are ripe as their prices are consistently lower.

Villages in YameThin Township grow grapes, especially the 24 villages within the Ywatan Station Area, supply the most grapes. The grape farmers have gained profits although fertilisers are costly, said a farmer from Kalamyaw village, Ywatan Station Area.

—Hlaing Than Tint

First Gastrointestinal and Liver Centre opens

MYANMAR’S first Gastrointestinal and Liver Centre was opened on 6 March in North Dagon Township, Yangon, with the aim of providing comprehensive quality treatment for patients infected with viral hepatitis. The centre will alleviate patients infected with viral hepatitis B and C.

The centre will alleviate patients infected with viral hepatitis B and C is widespread in Myanmar, according to WHO estimations jointly with local doctors.

There are a total of 3.3 million of people in Myanmar infected with Hepatitis B and 1.3 million with Hepatitis C, according to Ministry of Health records from 2015.

—Thi Thi Min

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

The discovery of rare lizard fossils from Myanmar throwing light to the past is indeed a heart warming news (Clue to the past, GNL, March 7). With new technologies and high level research support in the US it would certainly help understanding the process of evolution and possibly solve the mysteries of the elusive past of which we know very little. Thanks to GNL for the excellent sharp and eye catching images of fossilized ambers showing the lizard specimen distinctly. However, the only other comment that I would like to make is that the entire credit for the discovery, analysis and interpretations of the fossils though discovered in Myanmar, goes entirely to the investigating US scientific team. No Myanmar scientists or institutes seem to be associated with this landmark discovery. Let us accept the truth that a newly economically and democratically emergent Myanmar, needs to invest heavily both in primary as well as higher education. Myanmar institutes and universities need to set up close collaborations with other institutes overseas, learn from their shared experiences and slowly build their scientific capacities over time. A new, comprehensive higher education policy needs to be designed and implemented accordingly. I am sure that there is no dearth of talented researchers and academicians in Myanmar and brilliant, young enthusiastic minds that just need the initial technical and funding support to make their mark in the world.

Last but not the least, universities and institutes in Myanmar need to be net friendly and should have high quality information technology support for connecting and communicating with the world. One of the complaints from the West is that we have frequently heard about institutes, academicians and professionals in Myanmar is that they do not readily communicate and/or respond to email queries. If this is true, that needs to be changed. The first step will be to set up collaborations with institutes in Myanmar and from other institutes overseas, learn from their shared experiences and slowly build their scientific capacities over time. A new, comprehensive higher education policy needs to be designed and implemented accordingly. I am sure that there is no dearth of talented researchers and academicians in Myanmar and brilliant, young enthusiastic minds that just need the initial technical and funding support to make their mark in the world.

Thanking you

Sincerely yours

Saikat Kumar Basu

Hair and make-up training course offered to woman prisoners in Monywa Prison

THE Myanmar Correctional Department conducted a three-month hair and make-up styling course for woman prisoners in Monywa Prison with the aim to provide the inmates with vocational skills.

The closing ceremony of the training course was held at 10am on 7 March.

The programme aims to develop vocational careers for inmates after they have served time, said U Thein Lwin, an officer at Monywa Prison.

—Phoe Chan

Make-up training session in jail. PHOTO: Phoe Chan

Letter to the Editor

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Photo: Nay Myo Lwin

Make-up training session in jail. PHOTO: Phoe Chan
EU looks to Turkey to end migrant crisis, uneasy over rights

Former US first lady Nancy Reagan dies at 94

UN Secretary-General’s Message on International Women’s Day

From the Glass Ceiling to a Carpet of Shards

Former US first lady Nancy Reagan died at age 94 on March 6. She was the first lady of the United States during President Ronald Reagan’s two terms in office. Nancy Reagan was a strong advocate for women’s rights and used her platform to promote gender equality. She was known for her unwavering support of women’s issues and her commitment to improving the status of women worldwide.

**At least 4 injured in airport blast in central Somalia**

Mogadishu — At least four people were injured in a car explosion at the entrance of an airport in central Somalia’s city of Beledweyne, no one was killed, police and witnesses said on Saturday.

The blast happened at the front gate of the airport, not inside of the airport,” Dhuh told Xinhua.

He said security operation has been launched to ensure that all passengers who are safe. Ilyas Sheikh, a police commander of Beledweyne, said three explosions occurred at the entrance of Ugas Khalif Airport in Beledweyne.

There were three explosions, one of them brought a few casualties, and her warm and generous advice.” — Reuters

As an 8-year-old girl, she observed: women going into labour would leave their shoes at the threshold and then look back in fear. “They are wondering if they will ever step into those shoes again,” her mother explained.

More than a half-century later, the memory continues to haunt me. In poor parts of the world today, women still risk death in the process of giving life. Maternal mortality is one of many preventable perils. All too often, female babies are subject to genital mutilation. Girls are attacked on their way to school. Women’s bodies are used as battlefields in wars. Widows are shunned and impoverished.

We can only address these problems by empowering women as agents of change. For more than nine years, I have put this philosophy into practice at the United Nations. We have shattered so many glass ceilings we created a carpet of shards. Now we are sweeping away the assumptions and bias of the past so women can advance across new frontiers.

I appointed the first-ever female Force Commander of United Nations troops, and pushed women’s representation at the upper levels of our Organization to historic highs. Women are now leaders at the heart of peace and security – a realm that was once the exclusive province of men. When I arrived at the United Nations, there were no women leading our peace missions in the field. Now, nearly a quarter of all UN missions are headed by women — far from enough but still a vast improvement.

I have signed nearly 150 letters of appointment to women in positions as Assistant Secretary-General or Under-Secretary-General. Some came from top governments, international donors, diplomats said, while others are from women’s rights activists around the world.

Turkey’s top-selling newspaper, EU leaders met chair Monday’s talks, former Polish premier who oversaw redrafting.

As news of Nancy Reagan’s death was heard yesterday seeing a flood of condolences poured in. Washington to Hollywood. President Barack Obama, first lady Michelle Obama said Nancy Reagan redefined the role of first lady. Nancy Reagan once wrote that nothing could be done unless there was no reason to believe in the good of our country. She was right, of course. But we had a head start, because we were fortunate to be fit from her proud example.

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There were three explosions, one of them brought a few casualties, and her warm and generous advice.” — Reuters

Syrian refugees wait on a roadside near a beach in the western Turkish coastal town of Dikili, Turkey, after Turkish Gendarmes prevented them from sailing off for the Greek island of Lesbos by dinghies, on March 5. Photo: Reuters

BRUSSELS — EU leaders sit down with Turkey’s premier yesterday seeing a glimmer of hope for an end to the refugee crisis that has divided Europe but troubled by having to seek favours from a government that scorns their ideas of human rights.

With tens of thousands of migrants hoping to reach Germany stranded in Greece by closing borders, the summit will formalise the closure of the Balkan route out of Greece, diplomats said, while pledging help to Athens and seeking assurances that Turkey will, with NATO naval back-up, bar the sea to people smugglers.

The leaders in Brussels are likely to tell Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu of concerns about rights after the Turkish government seized of recent border closures will be accompanied by a renewed commitment to revise plans to relocate asylum claimants around the EU, diplomats said.

A draft EU agreement will declare that the “West Balkan route is closed”, although lobbying added that the statement was likely to go through considera-

ous not to alienate Ankara just as hopes are rising of a solution to the crisis. Fellow EU leaders, long bitterly divided over how to end chaotic movements that have put Europe’s Schengen free-movement system in jeopardy, will also assure Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of help housing those now stranded in Greece who hope to follow the million that found refuge in Germany last year.

An EU endorsement of recent border closures by Macedonia, Austria and other countries on the route north from Greece will be accompanied by a renewed commitment to revise plans to relocate asylum claimants around the EU, diplomats said.

A draft EU agreement will declare that the “West Balkan route is closed”, although lobbying added that the statement was likely to go through considera-

redrafting. NATO said on Sunday a new naval force secured approval for operating in Turkish and Greek waters. That will lend force to a deal with Turkey to take back migrants halted in its waters and those who reach Greek islands but fail to qualify for asylum.

Meeting Davutoglu two days after his government seized control of Zaman, Turkey’s top-selling newspaper, EU leaders are torn between anger at Ankara’s action and fear of derailing Turkish willingness to stop migrants sailing for Greece.

European Council President Donald Tusk, the former Polish premier who will chair Monday’s talks, had barely left a meeting with President Tayyip Erdogan on Friday and declared cautious optimism on the migrant crisis when police seized the newspaper. — Reuters

Former US first lady Nancy Reagan died at age 94.

Nancy Reagan, the former actress who was the progressive brain disorder, died on March 6. She was the first lady of the United States during President Ronald Reagan’s two terms in office. Nancy Reagan was a strong advocate for women’s rights and used her platform to promote gender equality. She was known for her unwavering support of women’s issues and her commitment to improving the status of women worldwide.

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Islamic State truck bomb kills at least 60 people south of Baghdad

Residents gather at the site of a car bomb attack at a checkpoint in the city of Hillal, south of Baghdad, on 6 March 2016. Photo: Reuters

HILLAL (Iraq) — A truck bomb at an Iraqi checkpoint south of Baghdad killed at least 60 people and wounded more than 70 on Sunday, medical and security officials said, and Islamic State claimed responsibility for the blast.

The suicide attack, involving an explosive-laden fuel tanker, is the second deadliest this year after one on 28 February that killed 78 people in Sadir City, a Shi’ite district of Baghdad.

This was also claimed by the ultra-hardline Sunni group that controls vast swathes of territory in Iraq and in Syria.

The escalation in Islamic State bombings suggests that Iraq’s security forces are being stretched thin against the group in the western and northern provinces. Responsibility for the bombing in Hillal, 117 kilometres (73 miles) south of Baghdad, was claimed in a posting on the website of the Amaq news agency, which supports Islamic State.

“A martyr’s operation with a truck bomb hit the Babylon Ruins checkpoint at the entrance of the city of Hillal, killing and wounding dozens,” the statement on the Amaq website said.

Hilla is the capital of Babylon province, a predominantly Shi’ite region with some Sunni areas.

“It’s the largest bomb in the Province to date,” Falah al-Radhi, the head of the provincial security committee, told Reuters. “The checkpoint, the nearby police station were destroyed as well as some houses and dozens of cars.”

A provincial hospital official confirmed the number of casualties, adding that 23 of them were members of the police and other security forces that were manning the checkpoint located at the northern entrance of the city.

Brett McGurk, the US envoy to a coalition fighting Islamic State, on Saturday told a news conference in Baghdad that Islamic State was losing the battle against forces arrayed against it from many sides in Iraq and Syria. He said the focus would turn to stabilizing cities seized back from them. —Reuters

Syria opposition signals will go to Geneva talks

BEIRUT — The main Syrian opposition council will go to talks that the United Nations aims to convene in Geneva “God willing” and wants an immediate start to negotiations on a transitional governing body, a spokesman for the council told Reuters yesterday.

“Our inclination is to go,” Riad Nassin Agha, a member of the High Negotiations Committee, said, adding that violations of a cessation of hostilities agreement on the part of the government and its allies had reduced in the last two days. He said people would start arriving in Geneva on Friday, cautioning that the HNC hoped nothing would happen that would prevent it from going to the talks.

“We started to notice that the volume of violations has started to reduce in the last two days. We hope that in the coming days until Friday that the violations reach zero,” he said.

“If these violations end this will create the favourable environment for the start of negotiations.” — Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY NO (129N)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY NO (129N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV E.R TURKU VOY NO ( )
Consignees of cargo carried on MV E.R TURKU VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

AGENT FOR: M/S HANJIN SHIPPING LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV E.R SYDENY VOY NO ( )
Consignees of cargo carried on MV E.R SYDENY VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MCC MERGUI VOY NO ( )
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC MERGUI VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (542N)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (542N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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AGENT FOR: M/S WAN HAI LINES PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185
WASHINGTON
Republican leaders desperate to stop Donald Trump from capturing the party’s presidential nomination are wrestling with whether to unite behind Ted Cruz, a polarizing figure popular with the conservative Tea Party movement.

Cruz, 45, a US senator from Texas, won nominating contests in Kansas and Maine on Saturday, bolstering his argument that he is the leading alternative to Trump, 69, the blunt-spoken billionaire businessman.

Mainstream Republicans are unhappy with Trump’s calls to build a wall on the border with Mexico, deport 11 million illegal immigrants, and temporarily bar all Muslims from entering the United States.

Many establishment Republicans are reluctant, however, to rally behind Cruz, whom they see as too conservative for the general electorate in the 8 November election to succeed Democratic President Barack Obama.

Cruz has run as an outsider bent on shaking up the Republican establishment in Washington. A favourite of evangelicals, he has called for the United States to “carpet bomb” the Islamic State militant group and has pledged to eliminate the tax-collecting Internal Revenue Service and four Cabinet agencies.

But he angered many Republican colleagues when he led the call in 2013 for a standoff in the US Congress that led to a 16-day shutdown of the federal government.

Republican pollster Neil Newhouse said Cruz had not yet shown an ability to appeal beyond the most conservative voters.

“The way things are going, I think it’s extraordinarily unlikely that Sena- tor Cruz becomes the focal point for Republicans who want to stop Trump,” said Newhouse, who was lead pollster for 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney.

Kim Reem, a member of the executive committee of the National Federation of Republican Women, said both Trump and Cruz were polarising figures within their party. She said three factions were emerging among Republicans: those supporting Trump, those backing Cruz, and supporters of the party establishment.

“The Cruz folks don’t want to yield to supporting Trump and the Trump folks don’t want to yield to supporting Cruz, and some establishment folks don’t want to support either one of them,” said Reem. “I don’t see a path to making everybody happy.”

Some Republicans argue Cruz is not polling strongly enough in states such as Florida and Ohio.

Both will soon hold nominating contests, leading some in the party to ques- tion whether backing Cruz would be the best way to stop Trump.

To win the nomination, 1,237 delegates are needed. Cruz has won 300 and Trump 374. US Sen- ator Marco Rubio, 44, of Florida, an establishment favorite still seen by some in the party as an option to Trump, stood to build on his 123 Florida delegates after winning the 23-delegate Puerto Rico primary on Sunday. Ohio Governor John Kasich trails with 25 delegates.

Some establishment Republicans say the best way to stop Trump would be for Rubio to win the 99-delegate Florida contest and Kasich the 66-delegate Ohio primary. Both states award all their delegates to the top vote-getter.

If Cruz, Rubio and Kas- ich can collectively pre- vent Trump from getting the needed majority of dele- gates, they could force a bro- kered Republican Party con- vention in July in Cleveland.

Even if Cruz gets the second-highest vote total, he may have trouble claiming the nomination at the conven- tion over Trump.

Former US Senator Trump, 63, of New York, said he would have a hard time supporting a Cruz nomination. “He’d have to change his tactics and his conduct an awful lot,” he said. Cruz has feuded with party leadership, including Republican Senate Major- ity Leader Mitch McCon- nell, and has accused fellow Republicans of sell- ing out conservative princi- ples.

Although he has been in the Senate for four years, Cruz has not won a single endorsement from any oth- er senator. He touts that on the campaign trail as evi- dence he is an outsider.

Cruz notably read Dr Seuss’s children’s book “Green Eggs and Ham” on the Senate floor as he pushed to repeal Obama’s signature healthcare reform law. That politically dam- aging effort shut down the government for more than two weeks in 2013.

If nothing else, the internal debate reveals a party still deeply divided about how to move forward with Trump and Cruz leading the primary fight. Slate Bayliss, a Florida Republic- can who raised money for former Florida Governor Jeb Bush before he dropped out of the race, said: “From my perspective, Senator Cruz’s views are indicative of only a very small cohort in our party.”—Reuters
BEIJING — China’s carbon emissions, by far the world’s highest, may have peaked in 2014, according to a study published yesterday, potentially putting Beijing under pressure to toughen its climate pledges.

Scientists have officially confirmed the ability of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes carrying Wolbachia bacteria to block the Zika virus and prevent it from being transmitted to humans, local Thanh Nien (Young People) online newspaper reported on Monday that the country’s emissions had not peaked in 2014 and were still growing.

While total energy consumption rose 0.9 per cent to 4.3 billion tonnes of standard coal in 2015, coal consumption fell 2.2 per cent on a year earlier, according to Reuters calculations based on official data. Chinese carbon experts said any fall in emissions in 2015 would be mainly due to a slowdown in China’s economy, and it was unlikely that emissions had peaked so early.

“It is quite possible that emissions will fall modestly from now on, implying that 2014 was the peak,” said the report, noting that recent data already showed that China’s emissions fell in 2015.

“If emissions do grow above 2014 levels, that growth trajectory is likely to be relatively flat, and a peak would still be highly likely by 2025,” the authors said.

Xie Zhenhua, China’s senior climate change envoy, said at a press conference on Monday that the country’s emissions had not peaked in 2014 and were still growing.

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“One of the main bones of contention during the Paris climate talks was a regular five-year “stocktaking” process that would compel countries to adjust their targets in light of new economic or technological circumstances, with China arguing that any such adjustments must be voluntary.

US climate change envoy, Todd Stern, said in Beijing last week that China could come under pressure to toughen its climate pledges because its existing targets are too easy.

The study, by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment and the ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy at the London School of Economics, said that the 2030 peak was a very conservative estimate.

HANOI — A new breed of mosquitoes infected with bacteria in central Viet Nam has been proven to be able to stop the Zika virus, according to Viet Namese health officials yesterday.

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Kesha receives visibility award for support of LGBT community

LOS ANGELES — Singer Kesha has been honoured with the Visibility Award by the The Human Rights Campaign in Nashville.

The 29-year-old singer was recognised for her support of the LGBT community and for speaking out against bullying and harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, reported E! online.

Accepting the award, Kesha referenced her recent struggles which have seen her embroiled in a contract dispute with Sony.

Last month a judge denied her request to be freed from her contract with Sony and producer Dr Luke, whom she has accused of physically, mentally and sexually abusing her. Dr Luke has always denied the allegations.

“As many of you know I am going through some personal things that have been really intense and hard lately and I just want to say thank you for the support I have received,” she told the audience.

During her speech the singer appeared visibly choked up and had to take a moment to compose herself. The singer went on to say that growing up, she was a “misfit” and had to make a “musical superstar” with a fanbase.

She said she still feels like an “everyman” and is “beyond the bunnies, Gerard Way’s ‘My Love’ from ‘Partner’ with ease which shows his versatility.

“The kind of songs we gave him, he selected all of them from ‘Lagan lagi’ of Tere Naam, (songs for) ‘Partner’, ‘Mujhse Shaadi Karogi’, even ‘Tere Mast Mast Do Nain’. One man selecting all these songs can’t be a fluke. Whatever he has worked with others has also been super hit,” he said.

“So I’ve been lucky that my songs have been appreciated by people. The collaboration is the result of love and respect we share with each other. He is like an elder brother so automatically you have to give it your best,” Wajid added.

The singer, who has given chartbusters like “Fevicol Se”, “Chinta Ta Ta Chita Chita” and “Son Di Nakhre” feels there is tremendous pressure on music composers to deliver hit songs consistently.

“The pressure is always there. If a person doesn’t give a hit song he will sit at home and make music for himself. Who is interested if you’re not hit? That’s a very sad situation.

If you are not a hit composer or singer then nobody wants to take your interview or talk to you.”

Wajid will be seen mentoring aspiring singers on the show “Sa Re Ga Ma Pa” along with Sajid, music composer Pritam and singer Mika Singh.—PTI

Salman Khan is a big musical superstar: Wajid

MUMBAI — He has composed several chartbusters for Salman Khan and popular singer-music composer Wajid Ali, of Sajid-Wajid fame, says Salman Khan has a very good taste for music.

The duo first composed a song for the 1998 Salman starrer “Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya” and went on to give music in films like “Wanted”, “Dabangg” and “Jai Ho”. Wajid says Salman is a “musical superstar” with a fanatical taste of songs.

“The he is a very big musical superstar. I started working with him in ‘Pyaar Kiya toh Darna Kya’ whose production started in 1997-98.

“We have been working for almost 18 years so we know what kind of taste Salman has. And he has a fantastic taste,” Wajid said in an interview.

The “Mashallah” singer said Salman selected various songs ranging from classical-based ‘Lagan lagi’ from ‘Tere Naam’ to the funky rap song “You’re My Love” from “Partner” with ease which shows his versatility.

“His kind of songs we gave him, he selected all of them from ‘Lagan lagi’ of Tere Naam, (songs for) ‘Partner’, ‘Mujhse Shaadi Karogi’, even ‘Tere Mast Mast Do Nain’. One man selecting all these songs can’t be a fluke. Whatever he has worked with others has also been super hit,” he said.

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Box Office: Disney’s ‘Zootopia’ opens big with $73.7 million debut

LOS ANGELES — Disney’s “Zootopia” scored the biggest March opening ever, debuting to $73.7 million over the weekend.

The animated story about a rabbit who joins the police force lands on overseas, where “Zootopia” is expected to gross $500 million.

During its opening weekend the film added another $63.4 million to its haul, pushing its global total to $232.5 million. The film has now “Zootopia” has shattered the $140 million action film flopped spectacularly. “London Has Fallen” opened solidly to $21.5 million from 3,490 locations for a second place finish. That does, however, trail the first film’s $30 million debut.

Focus Features fielded the picture, which carried a $60 million price tag. It played older, with more than 76% of the audience clocking in over the age of 25, while men made up 60% of ticket buyers.

“We’re really pleased with the opening and we think we’re going to do well here,” said Jim Orr, Focus’ distribution chief. “That older demographic doesn’t necessarily rush out on opening weekend.”

Tina Fey was not as lucky as Butler. The actress ‘Whiskey Tango Foxtrot’ stumbled with a $7.6 million launch from 2,374 venues. Paramount backed the $35 million dramedy about a war reporter who gets hooked on the adrenaline rush of covering Afghanistan. War films and political comedies can be tough sells — witness the financial failures of “Charlie Wilson’s War”, “Our Brand is Crisis,” and “Jarhead” — and “Whiskey Tango Foxtrot” appears to be no exception. The studio isn’t ready to wave a white flag yet. Paramount Vice Chairman Rob Moore said that he hoped the audience would build in the coming weeks, as it did for Fey’s recent hit “Sisters.”

“We were hoping for more,” he said. “But Tina’s last movie played to a good multiple and we had a good Saturday, so we have a chance of playing for a little while to a reasonable return.”

After four weeks in theaters, “Deadpool” barreled past the $300 million mark. The comic book movie finished in third place with $16.4 million, pushing its domestic haul to $311.1 million.

“Gods of Egypt” rounded out the top five, picking up $5 million. The $140 million action epic has earned a meagre $22.8 million domestically after two weeks — a terrible result for a picture that was intended to usher in a new franchise.

“Fresh off its best picture win at last weekend’s Academy Awards, newspaper drama ‘Spotlight’ capitalised on the Oscar love by pulling in $1.8 million. The film has netted $41.6 million during its theatrical run.

In limited release, Broad Green debuted “Knight of Cups,” Terrence Malick’s portrait of the spiritual journey of a writer (Christian Bale), in four theaters where it earned $56,688 for a $14,172 per-screen average.

March was once seen as a dumping ground for movies, but the success of spring releases like “The Hunger Games,” “Alice in Wonderland,” “Cinderella,” and now “Zootopia” has shattered that prejudice, analysts say.

“This proves March is now a blockbuster month,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst at ComScore. “You can open a blockbuster any time of the year.” —Reuters
Wind chimes made of iron chopsticks charm musicians

KOBÉ — The hibashi furin wind chime, made of four iron chopsticks, has long charmed professional musicians with its clear, beautiful sound.

A family-run business called Myochin Hompo, located in Himeji in western Japan’s Hyogo Prefecture, sells hand-crafted hibashi furin.

The some 800-year-old Myochin family, which has continued since the late Heian Period (794-1185), used to be an armorer but has adapted with the times.

When the era of samurai wares ended with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Myochin family began making metal chopsticks for handling charcoal in a "hibashi" brazer. But the family’s business did not go well. During World War II, the family had to contribute iron to the military. After the war, the business ran into financial trouble because the demand for metal chopsticks decreased as oil stoves started to replace braziers.

Munemichi Myochin, 73, who is the 52nd head of the family, said the family at one point even considered closing the business.

The previous head had to sell off the family house and the family fell into an "abyss," Myochin recalled. However, the family did not give up and tried to create something that matches the times — and hibashi furin was the answer.

Japanese composer Isao Tomita has used the wind chime in performances and as part of sound effects for a movie. American singer and musician Stevie Wonder is said to have asserted that its sound conveys the mystery of the Orient.

A few years ago, Myochin began making chopsticks made of titanium, which is light and resistant to corrosion. Titanium costs far less than iron and is difficult to forge, but wind chimes made of the material produce a longer resonant sound.

"Titanium is wayward," said Myochin. As he continued to strike titanium with a hammer in his studio, his wife, Kumiko, smiled and said, "It is just like you." Nowadays, the company also produces chopsticks, flower vases and Buddhist objects made of tamahagane, or steel made from iron sand that is used in sword blades. Myochin's sons are taking over the traditional skills.

"It is my mission to pass on the tradition," said Myochin. —Kyodo News

Regional destinations seek share of spoils from tourism boom

TOKYO — While Japan has seen a record surge in the number of foreign tourists in recent years, the so-called golden route encompassing Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka has attracted the lion’s share of the DMO under the Inland Sea, Setouchi Tourism Authority, which is due to start operations in April.

The DMO is aimed at supporting the Setouchi Brand Promotion Association jointly founded in 2013 by seven prefectures facing the Seto Inland Sea — Hyogo, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa and Ehime — to promote local attractiveness.

The tourism authority targets a threefold increase in the number of foreign tourists staying at hotels, inns and other accommodation in the Setouchi area by 2020 by promoting outdoor activities including boat cruising, as well as local cuisine, arts and crafts. —Kyodo News

‘Cut the bullshit,’ Israeli culture minister tells liberals

TEL AVIV — Israel’s culture minister had a blunt message on Sunday for liberals worried about what they consider efforts by the government to stifle dissent in the arts: “Cut the bullshit.”

Free-speech debate in Israel has grown fierce under conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Non-governmental organizations have prioritized helping DMOs lure more tourists to their respective areas.

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Man United lose to West Brom, Liverpool hit back to beat Palace

LONDON — Ten-man Manchester United suffered a blow to their Premier League top-four hopes with a 1-0 defeat at West Bromwich Albion as 10-man Liverpool kept up the pressure with a last-gasp 2-1 win at Crystal Palace on Sunday.

United lost Spain international Juan Mata to two yellow cards inside two minutes midway through the first half and went behind to a sharp goal from Venezuelan striker Salomon Rondon on 67 minutes.

Louis van Gaal’s side were unable to fight back and slumped to their first league defeat at The Hawthorns since 1984 to end their recent run of four straight wins in all competitions.

“When you have to play 75 minutes with 10 players, I don’t think we were so uncomfortable,” United manager Van Gaal told BBC Sport.

“The loss is a big blow because it was not necessary. When you see the first half it was not necessary, I think.”

United remain sixth, three points adrift of Manchester City in fourth place, with Liverpool breathing down their neck in seventh after fighting back from 1-0 down with 10 men to consign Palace to a 12th league game without a win.

The home side went ahead through Joe Ledley’s low drive just after the break and Liverpool found themselves further on the back foot when they lost James Milner to a second yellow card on 62 minutes.

Yet Jaeger Kopp’s men kept pressing and their perseverance paid off when Palace goalkeeper Alex McCarthy lost his footing and scuffed a clearance straight to Roberto Firmino, who fired it past him for the equaliser on 72 minutes.

Deep into stoppage time late substitute Christian Bentkeke surged into the left side of the Palace penalty area and went down after a slight contact with defender Damien Delaney, who was sliding on his knees.

Referee Andre Marriner awarded the spot kick after consulting his linesman and Belgium’s Bentkeke opted for a stuttering run-up before burying the penalty with virtually the last kick of the match.

“I feel sorry for Palace but I have just seen the replay in the dressing room and it was a clear penalty,” Kopp told BBC Sport.

“If there was no contact, Bentkeke would have been in a great position to shoot. He made the move and forced the situation.

“This is the third league win in a row. I can’t believe how it feels — really good, a big moment for us.”

Former Aston Villa striker Bentkeke was adamant he had been fouled, saying: “I believe he touched me, otherwise I don’t go down.” — Reuters.

More Murray heroes as Britain beat Japan

BIRMINGHAM — Britain’s Andy Murray won a gripping five-set match against Japan’s Kei Nishikori to secure a 3-1 Davis Cup win for the champions and a quarter-final with Novak Djokovic’s Serbia.

Murray, whose heroics helped Britain to oust Belgium last year, was pegged back after taking the first two sets, but eventually prevailed against the world number six 7-5, 7-6(6), 3-6, 6-3 in four hours and 54 minutes.

It was Murray’s first event back on court since the birth of his daughter, but any doubts over his fitness were dispelled as he once again carried Britain’s hopes almost single-handedly, winning three matches, including the doubles, in three days.

“I am lost for words at this stage; he (Murray) is a man of steel, isn’t he?” Britain’s captain Leon Smith said.

“What Andy managed to do was astonishing since he hasn’t played since the Australian Open final.”

After his exertions, Murray said he was keen to get back to his family. “It’s (wife) Kim’s first Mother’s Day, so it will be nice to get to see her this evening. I’ll try to get back for bath time and to put her to sleep the baby, not Kim.”

Murray has been dogged by the shadow of Fred Perry for much of his career, but victory over Nishikori allowed him to put another Perry milestone behind him.

Having become the first British man since Perry to win a grand slam and then Wimbledon, Murray surpassed the former great by improving his unbeaten streak in Davis Cup singles and doubles rubbers to 14.— Reuters.