PARTIAL SOLUTION
Homeless draw lots for housing in Yangon

HOMELESS people in Yangon drew lots to rent apartments at the new Maha Bandoola Housing Complex in South Dagon Township.

Since the buildings are between 70 and 90 per cent complete, the winners of the lotteries are expected to move into the apartments in early April, said U Nay Win, director of the Yangon Region Government. The winners of the lotteries will be announced at respective township general administration offices and the Housing Development Department daily.

A total of 35,491 people have applied for 1,152 rental apartments at the housing complex. Tenants will have to pay K30,000 per month for rent. According to the Yangon Region government, leases can be revoked if tenants fail to follow the terms of their tenancy, which prohibit re-renting or selling the apartment.

There are 24 apartments in each four-storey building in the complex, and each unit measures 22 feet by 25 feet. A total of 26 companies that won the tender for the construction of the buildings have constructed the complex in cooperation with the Housing Development Department.

—Thi Thi Min

New GIS power station to serve seven Yangon townships

A NEW 230-KV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) technology power substation was commissioned into service in East Dagon Township yesterday, supplying more electricity to seven townships in Yangon Region.

Myanmar’s first GIS power substation was installed in the 2011-2012 fiscal year along with several other facilities as part of an effort to satisfy an increase in power demand in Yangon due to rising urbanisation and industrialisation, said Union Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe at the opening ceremony held at the sub-power station.

The implementation of power facilities came with short-term and long-term plans as the electricity consumption of Yangon Region has increased from 1,050 MW in 2015 to 1,250 MW in the summer of 2016, while the country’s highest supply reached 2,430 MW in the dry season, he added.

The completion of the GIS sub-power station and power grid line are expected benefit people and industries in South Dagon, North Dagon, East Dagon, Shwepaukkan, South Okkalapa, North Okkalapa and Mingaladon townships.

A total of 26 companies that won the tender for the construction of the buildings have constructed the complex in cooperation with the Housing Development Department.

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See page 2 >>
Pre-World Water Day 2016 Technical Conference held


The seminar was held under the two themes of ‘sustainability and systematic management of water resources’ and ‘development of water-related job opportunities and implementation of better multipurpose water management’.

Discussions at the seminar focused on greater cooperation in development of river basins, the establishment of human resources for the management of water resources and challenges to pragmatic undertakings. U Tun Lwin Oo, the director general of the Water Resources Utilisation Department, invited scholars to contribute suggestions to the successful implementation of the undertakings to ensure the systematic management of water resources, including the Ayeyawady River.

The United Nations observed the first World Water Day on 22 March 1993. This year’s theme for the day is ‘Water and Jobs’. Myanmar formed the National Water Resources Committee in July 2013 and has observed the day since 2014. —Myanmar News Agency

Over a quarter million Ayeyawady villagers could experience El Nino induced water shortages

THE Department of Rural Development has made it known the El Nino weather front could cause drinking water shortages to over 250,000 citizens of 446 villages throughout the Ayeyawady Region.

It has been estimated that citizens need a daily water intake of half a million gallons, while villagers likely to experience water shortages should inform the relevant authorities a week before a shortage befalls them, according to the Department of Rural Development.

“Our departments have made estimations based upon studies conducted. We studied the nearest source of water to villages once the water source in the village dries up. We are ready to act as soon as these village experience any [drinking water] shortages,” said U Than Soe, head of the Department of Rural Development for Ayeyawady Region.

It is known that a government budget exists of over K35 million which can be used for short term alleviation to water shortages in these villages by transporting water via motorboat and car.

“Those villages in real need of water can get in touch. We will provide assistance, starting from the digging of wells.” said Ko Sithu Soe, managing director of the Ayeyawady Development Company that provides assistance to victims of flooding within the region.

A total of 146 villages suffered from water shortages during last year’s summer season, while this year has seen those figures increase to roughly 300 villages, with the majority of those villagers in Ayeyawady Region.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, 32% of the country’s population can access electricity. Yangon’s electricity consumption is higher than in other parts of the country. The GIS substation will provide additional electricity to the eastern parts of Yangon Region.

According to official statistics, out of the country’s 10 million households, only 2.22 million households had access to electricity in 2011. In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, 3.7 million households, or 34 per cent of the country’s households, had access to electricity, while about 6.8 million households still lack regular access. To provide people with sufficient power supply, successive governments are obliged to implement power projects, said Union Minister U Khin Maung Soe, stressing the need for boosting the country’s power generating capacity. While neighbouring Thailand produces 27,000 MW with 4,000 MW reserve, Myanmar can produce about 3,500 MW, said the union minister, adding that Myanmar needs to produce another 20,000 MW to catch up with Thailand. Only when the country builds more hydro power, coal-fired and natural gas stations to generate electricity will the goal of nation-wide power access be reached, he added.

—Myanmar News Agency

Man scores hole-in-one

U AUNG MAW scored an ace at the 12th hole by striking a Bridgestone No. 2 ball with Regryande Iron No. 9 from a distance of 150 yards at the Silvery Golf Course run by the Yangon City Development Committee on 12 March. U Aung Maw was playing with U Moe Kyaw Aye, Major Yan Aung, U Moe Kyaw Aung and U Tin Htut.—GNLM

Lethwei contests to be held at Kyaikkayartha Buddhapujaniya Festival

THE Buddhapujaniya Festival at the Kyaikkayartha Pagoda in Lamine, Ye Township, will kick off on 22 March with a Mon-Myanmar traditional boxing contest, musical concerts and theatrical shows.

The boxing contest will open at 1pm on 22 March and end on 23 March during the festival. There will be three-round or four-round contests with participants Saw Htoo Zaw (Doe Yoe Yar) against Tun Naing Oo (Aphyu-yaung-thwe-thit) and Shwe Yarman (Shwedawpon) against Aung Puang Lay (Shwe Thaung Yin) on 22 March. Soe Lin Oo (Doe-yoe-yar) will face Saw Gaw Mu Do (Thaungyin) on 23 March. Soe Lin Oo (Doe-yoe-yar) will face Saw Gaw Mu Do (Thaungyin) on 22 March. Soe Lin Oo (Doe-yoe-yar) will face Saw Min Aung (Taungkalay) and Saw Sa War (Doe-yoe-yar) will face Soe Htet Oo (Aphyu-yaung-thwe-thit) on 23 March. Famous singers like Shwe Htoo, Gfit, Aung Htet, DJ-Chan Nyein, Ni Ni Khin Zaw and Wine Lay will perform in the music festival on the night of 23 March. Theatrical shows will be staged every night of the festival, according to the event committee. —Nay Myo Htut (Ye)

New GIS power station to serve ...
National Buddhist body holds meeting

THE 47-member State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee held a meeting yesterday to discuss religious issues, including disputes, doubts and missions, with prominent monks expressing their points of view. The committee’s chairman Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumar-abbivamsa presided over the meeting and delivered a speech.

After Religious Affairs Union Minister U Soe Win briefed the committee on the government’s religious undertakings, monks read out progress reports of their respective committees.

The Sangha Plenary of All Orders of Sangha was held from 24 to 26 May 1980 for the first time in a bid to ensure the purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Sasana, or the teachings of the Buddha.

—Myanmar News Agency

Commander-in-Chief leaves for 13th ASEAN army chiefs meeting in Laos

THE local government in Dawei district, Tanintharyi Region, will provide substitute part-time electricity to local residents for a ten day period between 19-28 March during which time natural gas extraction from the Zawtika natural gas project will be halted. “We will consult with the regional minister as for how to provide substitute electricity. Since we don’t have the generators of the Hpothigyo company anymore, we’re currently anticipating the arrival of generators from regional government.” said U Win Swe, Minister of Electricity and Industry for Tanintharyi Region.

Extraction of natural gas from the offshore Zawtika natural gas project, a joint venture between Myanmar oil and gas enterprise and the Thai PTT Exploration and Production Company, will be temporarily halted in order to conduct maintenance activities on the gas rig.

Since the regional government has just a couple of 2 mega watt generators in its possession, it is not possible to provide the entire district with electricity which is why only a part-time supply of electricity can be provided, it is known. “Having been made aware [of the halting of electricity supply] at the last minute is causing up difficulties to provide [a substitute supply]. Even when we can provide electricity, we will have to prioritize towns [over villages], and even that will only be a part-time supply.” added U Win Swe.

The Adaman Power Utility (APU) company has taken responsibility for providing the distribution of power throughout the Dawei district, while according to the contractual agreement signed with the regional government, they are only to provide electricity whereby it is the sole responsibility of the regional government to provide availability of gas. As the government is not able to provide gas during the ten day period of gas rig maintenance, APU is exempted from responsibility to provide electricity, with it falling on the government to provide. —Myitmakha News Agency

Dawei braces for ten days of electricity shortages

THE Mercantile Marine Degree College under the Ministry of Transport concluded its diploma course with a graduation ceremony at its parade ground in Kamayut Township, Yangon Region, yesterday.

Union Minister U Nyan Tun Aung presented awards to Nay Ye Lwin and Kaung Htet Naing for their outstanding performance in nautical and engineering modules, respectively.

In his address, the union minister said the graduating officers were taught in line with the curricula recognised by the International Maritime Organisation. He encouraged further pursuit of knowledge in their related fields in this highly competitive world.

A total of 133 students—64 in nautical and 69 in engineering—graduated this year from the Mercantile Marine Degree College. Established in 1963, the school has produced 2,540 marine officers and 2,485 nautical engineers.—Myanmar News Agency

Mercantile Marine College holds graduation

THE Mercantile Marine Degree College of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing left Nay Pyi Taw for Laos yesterday to attend the 13th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces’ Informal Meeting (ACDFIM) to be held in Vientiane from 13 to 15 March.

Upon arrival at the Wattay International Airport in the Laos capital, the delegation led by the commander-in-chief was welcomed by the Director of Foreign Relationships of the Lao People’s Armed Forces Brig-Gen Kanchan Nathalaney, Director of the Airforce Department Brig-Gen Khampat and diplomats from the two countries.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing will have sideline meetings with each of the army chiefs of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

While in Laos, the commander-in-chief conducted an on-site inspection of the land chosen for the construction of a new Myanmar military attached office.

At the residence of the Myanmar ambassador to Laos, the senior general met with families of embassy staff, military attaches and scholars and encouraged them to play their parts in promoting bilateral relations.—Myawaddy
Donation ceremony to mark Sitagu Sayadaw’s 79th birthday

TO MARK the 79th birthday of renowned Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara, a large donation will be made at the World Buddha University located on Sagaing Hill in Sagaing Region this month.

The donation ceremony is scheduled to take place on 22 March. Meals and other gifts will be offered to around 1,000 nuns.

Thousand of monks will be provided robes and other gifts by the Sayadaw on 24 March in conjunction with a ceremony to fix a diamond orb and a golden umbrella to the top of the local Htupayone Pagoda.

Local and international visitors are invited to observe the Sayadaw’s birthday celebration on Sagaing Hill.

The venerable Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara was born on 23 February 1937, in the town of Thegon, Bago Division, in central Myanmar. From 1975 onward, he has given lectures to the public throughout the country and abroad.

The Sayadaw runs missionary operations at the Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Centre, which was newly established in Yangon, Myanmar.— *Tim Myaung*

Exporters plan to promote rubber exports to partner countries

LOCAL merchants plan to export 80,000 tonnes of rubber this fiscal year, although the price of natural rubber has declined to K540 per pound in domestic market, according to the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association. “Currently, price of rubber in the local market has fallen below K600 per pound. However, local exporters plan to promote regular exports of the country’s natural rubber to foreign countries,” said the secretary of the association.

Last fiscal year, Myanmar exported around 70,000 tonnes of rubber to partner countries, selling for $1,500 per tonne.

“It is not easy to expand the exportation volume to 100,000 tonnes to keep abreast with neighbouring countries because of the quality and our agriculture technology,” said farmer U Than Hla Aung.

Local growers have set up rubber plantations on 1.5 million acres of farmland nationwide with technical assistance from Japan.— MLT/Union daily

Crime NEWS

Revolver discovered in rubbish container in Bahan Tsp

A REVOLVER and bullets were found by staff of the Sanitation Department of the Yangon City Development Committee in Bahan Township in Yangon on Friday, according to a police report.

U Lay Myint discovered the .32 revolver with bullets in a bag when he and five other YCDC staff collected garbage from a rubbish container near the township administration office in Shwetaungkar (Golden Valley) Ward 2 in Bahan Township at around 1pm on that day.

They reported the find to the township police that evening.

The Bahan Myoma Police Station collected the revolver and accessories and is investigating the gun’s origins.—Police

Fire kills disabled man in Hpa-an Tsp

THAI authorities confiscated stimulant tablets and a gun from drug smugglers in Maesai, a major border crossing between Thailand and Myanmar, on Thursday.

A combined team found 200,000 WY variety yaba pills, a pistol and eight bullets from the suspects who were en route from Maesai to Chinu Township in Myanmar that day, arresting three men for illegal drug dealing.

One of the suspects named Maung Ar Si, 35, attempted to flee and was fatally shot three times by police.

According to the investigation, Maung Ar Si, 48, Maung Phile Lo, 30, and the dead suspect accepted 1,000 Thai baht each to deliver the illegal drugs to smugglers. All the suspects involved in the case were taken into custody by the Maesai Police Station.—Myintno

Married couple drowned in Mu River

A MARRIED couple drowned after falling into the Mu River while they were fish farming in Myinnmu Township, Sagaing Region, according to a police report.

According to locals, U Myint Oo, 30, fell into the river first, and his wife Zin Mar Khaung, 25, died when she attempted to rescue her husband from the river. The river measures 10 feet deep where they fell in. Police are investigating the case. The bodies of the couple have been sent to the Myinnmu Hospital.—KKN (Myinnmu)/Union Daily

Abandoned newborn found dead in Shan State

AN INFANT was found dead after being abandoned in the compound of ward administrator U Nay Oo Thar in Naungchozoy Ward in northern Shan State.

The body was found on Saturday morning by ward administrator U Myat Moe Aung of the Saydadamn social organisation and local police. According to a subsequent investigation, the abandoned newborn was beaten to death. Officials organised a funeral for the abandoned baby.—Swe Win

Thai border police fatally shoot Myanmar smuggler

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Myanmar’s new stock exchange plans its first listing on 25th March

Myanmar’s new stock exchange plans its first listing on March 25, the deputy finance minister told Reuters on Sunday, more than three months after it launched.

The Southeast Asian country’s economy was devastated by nearly 50 years of military rule and rapid reforms since the junta handed over power in 2011 have included the development of capital markets to help finance growth, such as the new stock market.

But with challenges ranging from governance standards to inexperience and lack of capacity, progress has been slow. Since the exchange’s official opening in December, there have been no transactions because there is nothing to trade.

Deputy Finance Minister Maung Maung Thein said three companies would list and start trading on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) on March 25. He declined to name the companies, but said the three initial listings would be those companies “most ready.”

Trading would be limited to one company at a time for several days because the market was still in its infancy, he said.

A Yangon-based banker said that none of the companies that have been discussed by officials as potential candidates for listing have issued a prospectus.

The exchange had tentatively planned to launch trading on March 11 but problems found in test trading delayed it, the banker said. That was the latest in a string of delays to the start of trading.

The first company to list would have been First Myanmar Investment (FMI), the banker said. FMI is a conglomerate of tycoon Surge Pun and one of Myanmar’s biggest public companies.

A spokesperson for FMI declined to comment and directed enquiries to the YSX.

Aside from FMI, the government wants five other companies to prepare to list. Among them are Myanmar Citizens Bank, First Private Bank and Thilawa SEZ Holdings, which controls a new industrial zone jointly run by the government and a Japanese consortium. Myanma Economic Bank owns 51 per cent of the exchange, presenting another potential problem if foreign investors should be allowed to invest in the future. The bank is among several lenders on the US Department of Treasury’s list of sanctioned entities due to its ties to the former junta.

FMI would list shares it has previously sold to the public through direct subscription, he said.

Pun’s firm has a head start on other companies in Myanmar in terms of meeting the governance and transparency standards required for a listing. FMI sister company Yoma Strategic Holdings is listed in Singapore, and is the only Myanmar company listed abroad.

Singapore remains top foreign investor

SINGAPORE remains the top foreign investor in Myanmar with 24.44 per cent of the total investment in the Oil and Gas sector, 20.31 per cent in the electric power sector, 19.79 per cent in the industrial sector and 18.84 per cent in the transport and communications sector.

Myanmar has received a total of over US$23.84 billion in foreign direct investment between the 2011-2012 fiscal year and 2015-2016, including $5.83 billion in the oil and gas sector and $3.48 billion in the communications sector, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) under the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development.—Min Sanbi

Maymyo flower growers flourish

FARMERS in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw, are profiting from the sale of Maymyo flowers, earning up to K1.5 million (US$1,230) per acre, according to a local flower grower.

Farmers in Chongyi and Kinmontan villages in Tatkon Township normally grow seasonal crops, depending on the availability of underground water pumped by the tube-well. This season, they turned to Maymyo flowers in order to gain extra money.

Each farm employs three to five labourers to carry out irrigation and weed-cleaning. A woman labourer is paid K2,000 per day, while a man makes K3,000. A bundle of seven flowers sells for between K200 and K220. The hawkers who buy the flowers at retail price gain a profit of up to K4,500 after selling their hauls, said a farmer from Chongyi Village.—Tin Seo Lwin

Maymyo flowers seen blossoming in a plantation in Tatkon. Photo: Tin Seo Lwin

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Maymyo flowers seen blossoming in a plantation in Tatkon. Photo: Tin Seo Lwin
Malaysian police arrest Australian reporters over security breach

KUALA LUMPUR — Two Australian reporters were arrested for suspected breach of security during an event attended by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, police said yesterday. The two Australians crossed the security line and aggressively tried to approach Najib during his visit to Malaysia’s Sarawak state on North Borneo Saturday evening, police said.

Both were subsequently arrested for failing to comply with police instructions not to cross the security line. The two claimed to be reporters from Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and was in Sarawak to cover the visit by the Malaysian prime minister.

They were released on police bail yesterday after giving statement and were under investigation for “obstructing a public servant in the discharge of his public functions”, according to a police statement. — Xinhua

Amid sea disputes, China to set up maritime ‘judicial centre’

BEIJING — China plans to set up an “international maritime judicial center” to help protect the country’s sovereignty and rights at sea, its top judge said yesterday.

Giving a work report at the annual meeting of China’s large rubber-stamp parliament, chief justice Zhou Qiang said courts across China were working to implement the national strategy of building China into a “maritime power”.

(“We) must resolutely safeguard China’s national sovereignty, maritime rights and other core interests,” he said. “(We) must improve the work of maritime courts and build an international maritime judicial center.”

He gave no details. It is not clear when the judicial centre may start working, where it would be located or what kinds of cases it would accept.

China disputes a group of uninhabited islets with Japan in the East China Sea, and also claims most of the South China Sea. Taiwan, Malaysia, and the Philippines have competing claims there.

The Philippines has lodged a case with an arbitration court in The Hague about its dispute with China in the South China Sea, angering China which has pledged not to participate.

China’s increasingly assertive claims in the South China Sea, along with its rapidly modernizing navy, have rattled nerves in the region.

Zhou said about 16,000 maritime cases were heard by Chinese courts last year, the most in the world. China has the largest number of maritime courts globally, he added. Zhou pointed to a 2014 case at a southeastern China maritime court involving a collision between a Chinese trawler and a Panama-flagged cargo ship in waters near the islands China disputes with Japan in the East China Sea.

The case, which was ended via mediation, clearly showed China’s jurisdiction over the region, he said. — Reuters

Abe renews resolve to win upper house election

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who heads the ruling Liberal Democratic Party renewed his resolve to win the House of Councillors election this summer at the party’s convention in Tokyo yesterday.

On the cooperation between the Democratic Party of Japan and the Japanese Communist Party to challenge the LDP-led ruling bloc in the upper house election, Abe said, “They can do anything for an election, teaming up with anybody. We cannot lose to such irresponsible power.”

The upper house election “will be a battle between the coalition of the LDP and the Komeito party which takes responsibility for the public versus the DPJ-JCP force,” he said.

Abe also criticised the DPJ and JCP for their plan to scrap security laws enacted last year, saying, “If they are scrapped, the bond of the strengthened Japan-US security alliance to protect the public will be spoiled.”

The controversial security laws pushed by the Abe government expanded the scope of the Self-Defense Forces’ operations overseas, allowing it to come to the aid of the United States and other friendly nations under armed attack, even if Japan itself is not attacked.

Komeito leader Natsuo Yamaguchi was among the guests invited to the party convention.

“We should not be caught off guard (for the election). If we are seen lax even only a little, we will receive a harsh verdict from the public,” Yamaguchi said.

Reflecting Abe’s strong willingness to amend the war-renouncing Constitution, the LDP also adopted a strategy for this year stipulating that the party aims to deepen public debate on revising the supra-law and discuss the matter fully in parliament.

According to the strategy the LDP defines the upcoming upper house election as an election to cement a stable political base for the ruling coalition to promote policies.

It urged upper house members to be ready for an election whenever it is held, amid lingering speculation that Abe could call a snap general election simultaneously with the upper house election.

Apparent in reference to a series of scandals and gaffes by LDP members, party members were warned to remember that the LDP gave up power in the wake of the defeat in the 2009 House of Representatives election.

“Based on that bitter experi- ence and remorse, we should rule with a sense of tension,” it said.

The ruling coalition of the LDP and the Komeito party controls a majority of the 242-member upper house and more than two-thirds of the 475-member House of Representatives.

Half of the 242 upper house seats come up for election every three years. Of the 121 seats up for grabs, 73 will be filled by winners in single- and multiple-member electoral districts while the remaining 48 are chosen under the nationwide party-list proportional representation system. — Kyodo News

Cambodian PM’s son leads ruling party’s youth group in visit to China

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen’s eldest son Hun Manet yesterday led a youth group in the ruling Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) to visit China with an aim to enhance youth-to-youth ties between the two countries.

Speaking to reporters at Phnom Penh international airport before the departure, 37-year-old Hun Manet, a member of the CPP’s Central Committee, said the 57-member delegation would spend 11 days in China to strengthen youth-to-youth relations between the two countries.

“Every year, we exchange such a visit that could enhance our relations and cooperation,” he said.

“The visit aims to exchange views between youths of the two countries, focusing on youth’s activities and contributions to national development.”

He said during the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the CPP’s youth and the Communist Party of China (CPC)’s youth would be signed in Beijing. — Xinhua
North Korea denies cyber attacks on South Korea officials

SEOUL — North Korea denied yesterday that it conducted cyber attacks against officials from rival South Korea, calling the South’s accusation that it did so a “fabrication”.

South Korea’s spy agency told lawmakers on Friday that North Korea had recently stepped up cyber attack efforts against the South and succeeded in hacking the mobile phones of 40 national security officials, according to members of parliament who received a closed-door briefing.

“The South is nothing new, it is the same as the previous one. The South uses the same methods,” the article said.

Recently, South Korea’s spy agency said that its sources close to the Defence Ministry had admitted to a local hospital, “he who is not as strong as the others.”

Officials have blamed the unification of North Korea on the release of a comedy based on its fictional assassination of the country’s leader, Kim Jong Un.

North Korea denied the accusation, saying the country was ready to bring out any more evidence.

 outgoing North Korean Foreign Ministry official said yesterday.

A hand is silhouetted in front of a computer screen. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan-made stealth fighter prototype delivery unlikely by end March

TOKYO — The delivery of a prototype of the first Japan-made stealth fighter is unlikely to meet the end-of-March deadline due to a delay in the flight test schedule, sources told the Defence Ministry said yesterday.

The prototype, developed by a consortium of domestic companies led by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., is now expected to be delivered to the ministry in mid-April or later, they said.

The fighter — 14.2 metres long and 9.1 metres wide — will undergo flight tests in central Japan, including the maiden flight, after several ground run tests, they said. The deadline had been extended from March last year to verify the functioning of the engine and flight control system.

The development of a full-scale test model began in fiscal 2009, with costs for the programme totaling about 39.4 billion yen ($346 million).

The fighter features stealth capabilities through the use of carbon fiber that absorbs radio waves and makes it difficult for radar to detect the aircraft.

The Defence Ministry’s Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency plans to assess data obtained from the prototype and decide by fiscal 2018 whether to develop domestically or engage in joint international development of a stealth fighter.

—Kyodo News

Five killed in building collapse in northern India

NEW DELHI — At least five people have been killed in a building collapse due to heavy rains in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, a senior police official said yesterday.

“The two-storey building collapsed in the state’s Meerut town because of heavy rains that have been lashing the region since Saturday,” he said.

While five bodies have been pulled out of the debris of the house by rescuers, efforts are on to bring out any more. The official said.

“Out of the five killed, three are children. Two others also sustained injuries in the building collapse and have been admitted to a local hospital,” he said. A probe has been ordered into the incident, the official added.

—Xinhua

China’s top judge says large jump in terrorism convictions

BEIJING — Chinese courts convicted more than 1,400 people last year for harming national security, including taking part in terrorism and secessionist activities, China’s top judge said yesterday, double a broadly equivalent number given for 2014.

Hundreds of people have been killed over the past few years in China’s resource-rich Xinjiang province, strategically located on the borders of central Asia, in violence between the Muslim Uighur people, who call the region home, and ethnic majority Han Chinese.

Officials have blamed the unrest on Islamist militants and separatists, though rights groups and exiles say anger at Chinese controls on the religion and culture of the Uighurs is more to blame for the strife.

China denies any repression in Xinjiang.

In an annual report to China’s largely rubber-stamp parliament, chief justice Zhou Qiang said Chinese courts in 2015 convicted 1,419 people for harming state security, including taking part in terrorist attacks and secessionist activities.

He did not give a comparison, but last year in his work report he said courts tried 712 people for separatism and terrorism in 2014, up 13.3 per cent on the previous year.

Last year courts stepped up their efforts against people who “instigated secessionist activities, led, organised and took part in terrorist groups and who spread video and audio products about terrorism”, Zhou said.

This year courts “will implement well the laws on state security and counter-terrorism and severely punish terrorists and secessionists,” he added.

New Chinese security laws, including the counter-terrorism law and the draft cyber security law, have been controversial as they codify sweeping powers for the government to combat perceived threats, from widespread censorship to heightened control over certain technologies.

Critics of the counter-terrorism legislation say it could be interpreted in such a way that even non-violent dissidents could fall within its definition of terrorism.

Western governments have expressed their concern to Beijing, though last week China’s third-ranked leader rebutted criticism saying the country was taking a “distinctly Chinese approach” to national security with its raft of new laws. —Reuters

Paramilitary policemen walk past Erdaqqiao Grand Bazaar in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region, in 2013. PHOTO: Reuters
CLIMATE change is the most urgent issue facing us today, changing the weather patterns in many parts of the world. Extreme heat waves, floods, sea level and widespread flooding are not without dire consequences. It is absolutely vital for us all to address this environmental catastrophe on a global scale.

Global warming leads to extreme heat waves with the potential to cause glottis to melt and sea levels to rise, thereby triggering flooding and erosion in coastal regions. Florida is one of the regions most vulnerable to these conditions due to its water and land resource in arid zones.

In the past few years, our country has experienced an emergence in the frequency of adverse weather conditions affecting the lives of people across a third of the country. As an agricultural country, 70 per cent of Myanmar’s population depends heavily on the natural environment, and as a result, they are left with few resources to cope with these issues.

However, it will not be fair if we find a solution to the problem of human beings.

The effects of global warming do not discriminate in favour of the lives of plants and animals. It is therefore, becoming increasingly evident that the evolving climate change because scientists have become aware of the mass migration of animal species to new locations and the increase in the number of heat waves and temperatures keeping soaring higher after year.

Above all, the most vulnerable to these issues are more than the need to live together in perfect social and racial harmony. It also means having to be in harmony with our environment.

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments, suggestions, analysis, portrayals or experiences you would like to share, please email khinmaungaye.hotmail@gmail.com with your name and email address. Your contributions and analyses are important.

Opinion

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New disturbance at Trump rally as crucial Republican contests near

DAYTON — Secret Service officers rushed on stage to protect US Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump during a disturbance at a rally on Saturday, a day after rowdy protests shut down his event in Chicago.

Trump briefly ducked at the podium and four Secret Service members scrambled to surround him after a man charged the stage at Dayton International Airport in Ohio.

Officers then grabbed the man, dressed in a black T-shirt and jeans, before he was able to reach the stage and hauled him away.

“I was ready. I don’t know if I would have done well but I would have been out there fighting, folks,” Trump told a rally later in the day. He said the man “was looking to do harm.”

The incident further increased tension after Trump’s Chicago rally was scrapped amid chaotic scenes on Friday.

Trump’s Republican rivals have condemned his rhetoric and the scenes in Chicago, which political analysts say should be trying to bring us together and not turn us against one another.

Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton criticised Trump directly, saying they “should be trying to build a wall against one another and then we won’t have a problem,” she said to cheers.

Outside the rally, police broke up confrontations between Trump supporters and protesters who shouted, “Shut it down!”

Police on horseback and riot gear briefly moved into a crowd of protesters and officers used pepper spray to arrest people who disrupted his event.

“I would have done well but I don’t know if I would have been out there fighting, folks,” Trump told a rally later in the day. He said the man “was looking to do harm.”

The incidents came just days after the European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde said yet to receive a ban on Muslims entering the EU, as US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump spoke at Dayton International Airport in Dayton, Ohio on 12 March 2016. Photo: Reuters

Belgrade — The inflow of migrants into Serbia has been stopped, Minister of Social Policy Aleksandar Vulin said on Saturday.

“No one is crossing Serbia’s borders,” Vulin told TV Pink in reply to the government on the current migrant situation.

At the time when some European countries are advocating the opening of borders, and others their closing, Serbia must take care of itself, as a country between a rock and a hard place.

“If the countries located behind us along this route or final destination countries do not want to receive migrants then Serbia cannot let them pass through its territory,” Vulin said. — Tanjug

Obama to visit London in bid to keep UK in the EU

LONDON — US President Barack Obama will come to London in April and urge British voters to back continued membership of the European Union, The Independent yesterday newspaper reported.

Britons vote in June on whether to remain part of the world’s biggest trading bloc and Obama has previously said he wants Britain to stay in the EU and help maintain the post-war transatlantic partnership.

Most opinion polls show voters are split with a large number of people as yet undecided.

Obama is due to attend a technology fair in Germany in late April and a source told the Independent yesterday he would visit the British capital around that time. “It would be pretty shocking if he didn’t ask voters to stay in the EU,” the source was quoted as saying. The White House declined to comment and Prime Minister David Cameron’s office did not offer an immediate comment when contacted by Reuters. — Reuters

Okinawa police arrest US sailor on suspicion of rape

NAHA, (Japan) — Police arrested yesterday a US Navy sailor on suspicion of raping a woman in Okinawa.

The suspect, identified as Justin Castellanos, 24, seaman at the US Navy’s Camp Schwab in northern Okinawa, denies the allegation, the police said.

He allegedly raped a woman in her 40s, who was a traveller from Fukushima Prefecture, in his room at a business hotel in the Okinawa capital of Naha in the early hours of yesterday. The suspect took the woman to his room after finding her sleeping in the corridor, the police said.

The suspect and the woman were both staying at the hotel but were not acquainted, they said. Crimes of US military personnel have caused concern and protests in Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of US forces in Japan. — Kyodo News

Al Qaeda in Syria seizes bases, weapons of Western-backed group

BEIRUT — The al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front has seized the bases and weapons of a Western-backed rebel group in overnight fighting in northwest Syria, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said yesterday.

Rami Abdulrahman, director of the Observatory, said the Nusra Front had also detained dozens of members of the 13th Division rebel group, one of the factions that has received foreign military aid including US-made anti-tank missiles.

The commander of 13th Division, which fights under the banner of the Free Syrian Army, could not immediately be reached for comment. A Nusra Front statement accused the 13th Division of attacking some of its bases in Idlib province. — Reuters

IMF’s Lagarde says yet to receive a request from Cuba for IMF membership

NEW DELHI — Cuba has not yet made a request for membership of the International Monetary Fund, the fund’s chief said yesterday, adding such a request would be considered in accordance with its rules.

Christine Lagarde’s comments came just days after the European Union and Cuba signed an agreement in Havana to establish normal relations, bringing the Communist-run island further into the international fold and paving the way for full economic cooperation with the 28-member bloc. Cuba was one of the founding members of the IMF until it quit in 1964. “We have not received a request by the authorities of Cuba to be included as a member,” Lagarde told reporters at the end of a conference in New Delhi. — Reuters
Border attack feeds Tunisia fears of Libya jihadist spillover

At least 17 militants killed in southern Yemen

Yazidi teenager escaped Islamic State, appeals for help for sex slaves
Poverty, child marriage, violence decline when women own land

NEW YORK — Can land rights for women drive down child marriage and domestic violence? “Yes and more”, says an international group of land and property rights specialists who are due in Washington this week to discuss how improved land management can reduce global poverty and foster development.

When women have rights to land, argues Klaus Deininger, a lead economist and organiser of this week’s World Bank conference, children’s health and education improves, household resources increase and there are fewer child brides as daughters do not need to be married off young for financial reasons.

Equally, women with land rights tend to have savings accounts, a factor that reduces domestic violence. “If women have stronger bargaining power, they actually can resist. Their husbands will think twice before beating them because they can move out and take their money with them,” Deininger said.

Organisers say the conference will focus on women and property with particular emphasis on gender equality and land rights which are key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The goals, adopted by the United Nations last September, provide the foundations for an ambitious plan to tackle the world’s most troubling problems over the next 15 years. Land and property rights experts say when women are included in a nation’s land ownership, there can be far reaching impacts. In sub-Saharan Africa, women make up more than half of the agricultural workforce, yet fewer than one in five own farms, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). But if women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) says. According to Rodney Schmidt of the Rights and Resources Initiative, a global coalition that works on forest and land policy reform, more than half the world’s land is still held under age-old customary arrangements often arranged by gender.

Traditionally, women are most often engaged in producing and collecting food, and as such, women do play a major role in how land is used, he said. When foreign companies enter the picture, buying land from local governments, they can find themselves on a collision course with resident communities, he added.

“These women and their families and men are watching their livelihoods disappear,” Schmidt said. “You have the seeds there of major social conflict.”

Some 1,500 delegates representing governments, the private sector, academia and non-governmental organisations are expected at the World Bank land and poverty conference from 14-18 March, organisers said.— Reuters

JOHANNESBURG — For the first time in decades, hunters with deep pockets cannot target the so-called “Big 5” game animals in South Africa because the government has imposed a ban on leopard hunts for the 2016 season.

The temporary ban comes in the wake of a global uproar last year over the killing of Cecil the Lion in Zimbabwe by a US dentist.

The decision, however, was driven by science, not emotion. South African Environment Minister Edna Molewa is a vocal advocate of the hunting industry, which the government estimates contributes 6.2 billion rand ($410 million) annually to Africa’s most advanced economy.

Leopard is one of five game most desired by hunters, along with lion, rhino, buffalo and elephant.

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), a government research organisation, recommended the temporary ban because it said leopard numbers could not be firmly established.

“There is uncertainty about the numbers and this is not a permanent ban, but we need more information to guide quotas,” John Donaldson, SANBI’s director of research, told Reuters.

Given their secretive and nocturnal nature, leopards are not easy to count.

SANBI drew on studies and data from a number of sources but Donaldson said most was from protected areas and national parks, not private lands.

The Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA) says this gives an incomplete picture.

“There are lots of leopards on private land,” said PHASA chief executive Tharla Unwin. She said SANBI was providing the government with leopard data from private lands.

South Africa has also been scarred by its worst drought on record and Unwin said this was good for leopard numbers as predators typically thrive when the rains are poor, leaving much of their prey in a weakened and easy-to-kill state.

Unwin said it cost up to $20,000 to shoot a leopard and several of PHASA’s members had to refund clients who had put down deposits for leopard hunts. Most of the foreign hunters who come to South Africa for such game are American.

Hunting all of the Big 5 has been legal in South Africa since the 1980s when hunts for white rhino were resumed.— Reuters

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TRADEMARK CAUTION

We, NAO GLOBAL Co., Ltd., a company registered under the laws of Thailand, which is located at 159 Soi Sukhumvit 62, Sukhumvit Rd, Bangchak, Prakanong, Bangkok 10260, Thailand, is the sole owner of the following trademarks:

**SNOW TOWEL**

Reg. No. 1231/2016

Reg. No. 1232/2016

Reg. No. 1233/2016

The above trademarks were registered and recorded with the Office of the Registration of Deeds Yangon in respect of the following goods in Classes 3, 5 and 16: “Perfumed cool towel, ice eau de cologne towel, terrycloth towel, cotton towel, refreshing tissue, cleaning wipe”.

We have learned that there are the products bearing the same name as our trademarks which is being illegally imported into and distributed in Myanmar without having our authorization. As the illegally imported product is a counterfeit product and is not produced by our company, there is no assurance that it was produced via a qualified manufacturing process and therefore it may not be safe for consumers. Furthermore, this illegal trading and importing constitutes a violation of the Criminal Law, Myanmar Merchandise Marks Act, and the Specific Relief Act, which may incur an injunction, fine or imprisonment for the infringer.

We claim the trademark, trade name and other relevant intellectual property rights to our above trademarks. We reserve the right to take any and all available legal actions, such as sending a letter, launching a raidation, and filing civil and Criminal Actions with the court under the applicable laws of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, against any infringer and/or person and/or company that violates our rights, passes off our trademark, and/or intimidates or deceives the public, including our customers, by any means, including through sales, distribution, or advertising.

Dave May Three Haining, I.L.L.B., I.L.M., (G.C.P.)

For NAO GLOBAL Co., Ltd.

Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd.
No. 1608, 16th Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Dated: 14.3.2016

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PICTURE OF THE DAY

HEZHOU — A woman of Yao ethnic group walks in a field of rape flowers in Shenpo Village under Yao Autonomous County of Fuchuan, south China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 12 March 2016. Rape flowers in south China were in full bloom in recent days. Photo: Xinhua

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KOBÉ — A 15-year-old boy was arrested Saturday for allegedly stabbing his mother to death in western Japan, police said.

The police arrested the boy at the scene in his home in Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, after he called them, saying he stabbed his mother in the neck around 7 pm Saturday. His name is being withheld as he is a minor under Japanese law.

According to the police, the teenager admitted to the charge. A kitchen knife, believed to be used to stab the boy’s 52-year-old mother, was found in his home.

The boy is quoted by the police as telling he goes to a school in neighbouring Kobe city. — Kyodo News
BIDV is preliminary approved establish its banking branch in Myanmar

On 4 March 2016, on behalf of the Union Government and the Central Bank of Myanmar, the Foreign Bank Licensing Committee announced its preliminary approval to prepare for commencement of banking operations in Myanmar to four foreign banks, including: BIDV (Vietnam), E.SUN Commercial Bank (Taiwan), Shinhan Bank (South Korea) and State Bank of India (India). This is the second time foreign banks are licensed by the Union Government of Myanmar. Earlier, in October 2014, the Government of Myanmar granted licenses to 9 foreign bank branches. With persistence, determination and kind support from the National Assembly and the Government of Vietnam, BIDV has successfully become the first Vietnamese bank approved to establish its banking branch in Myanmar.

Before that, in April 2010, following the Vietnamese Prime Minister’s directions, BIDV established its representative office in Myanmar and acted as the chair of the Association for Vietnamese Investors in Myanmar (AVIM). The representative office and AVIM have made positive contributions to economic investment, trade and tourism cooperation between the two countries. They also consulted and shared experiences with the Government of Myanmar in economic reforms.

As the Chairman of AVIM, under the guidance of Vietnam and Myanmar Governments, BIDV has been relentlessly supporting and promoting trade and investment programs between the two countries. This lays a solid foundation for creating a stable customer base for BIDV’s business activities in Myanmar. So far, BIDV has established relationship with almost Vietnamese enterprises investing or having interest in the Myanmar market. BIDV also proactively established channels to regularly communicate with the Government, ministries and large financial institutions in Myanmar (such as state-owned banks MFTB, MICB; SMIDB, or private bank KBZ, etc.).

Under the joint declaration between Vietnam and Myanmar on the 12 priority economic cooperation areas, including finance – banking, the economic cooperation between Vietnam and Myanmar has witnessed breakthrough development in the recent 6 years. On investment, Vietnam’s total investment value in Myanmar increased 28 times during the 2010 – 2015 period. Number of projects increased from 2 in 2010 with total registered capital of USD23.65 million (ranked 10th). Trade turnover between the two countries increased 2.9 times from USD152 million (2010) to USD434.7 million (2015).

The economic cooperation between the two countries over the last two years, however, has shown signs of leveling off. Main reason was attributed to the lack of Vietnam’s banking operations in Myanmar. No Vietnam’s projects were licensed in Myanmar in 2014 and value of trade in 2015 reached only USD434.7 million compared with USD480.6 million of 2014.

With the kind consideration of the State President of Vietnam, the Chairman of the National Assembly of Vietnam and the Vietnam Prime Minister, during their official visits and economic forums between the two countries, high-ranking leaders of Vietnam mentioned and expressed the aspiration of soon being granted the BIDV banking branch license in Myanmar.

In Jan 2016, the CBM announced the new foreign bank licensing for the 2nd time. On January 8 2016, BIDV submitted the “Expression of Interest”. On January 11 2016, BIDV submitted the “Response for RFP” for the next assessment round. On February 08 2016, BIDV submitted the “Response for RFP” to the CBM.

The foreign banking branch licensing assessment process has been publicly and transparently conducted through an international consultancy agent, based on specific criteria such as operation scale, financial capability, risk management, international practice compliance, capacity and experience on banking operation management, overseas subsidiaries, operation experience in Myanmar, ability to contribute to Myanmar’s economy at present and in the future.

On March 04 2016, the Licensing Committee has officially announced BIDV was preliminary approved to establish banking branch in Myanmar, which proved that the Myanmar Government has highly recognized and appreciated BIDV’s position and capacity.

According to the announcement, within 12 months from the preliminary approval date, BIDV has to complete all procedures and conditions for the branch grand opening as stipulated by the CBM. BIDV affirms and pledges to fulfill all of the conditions as stated in the preliminary approval to successfully obtain the official license. According to the plan, BIDV banking branch in Myanmar will be officially launched in 2016. Its head office will be located at the number 1 Myanmar trade center - the HAGL Yangon Tower.

Mr. Pham Thanh Dung, Vietnam’s Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Myanmar commented: “The lack of Vietnamese bank operating in Myanmar was previously a major obstacle for Vietnamese enterprises to do business in Myanmar. Therefore, the establishment of BIDV’s branch in Myanmar will meet the needs of businesses, providing strong support to Vietnamese enterprises in their economic, investment, trade and tourism activities in Myanmar. BIDV’s branch in Myanmar will also help to lead and promote business and investment cooperation, especially the 12 economic areas outlined by the two governments”.

The establishment of the Vietnam Banks in Myanmar also marked a milestone in the development of cooperative relations between the two countries’ banking sector.

Mr. Tran Bac Ha, BIDV Chairman said: “Following the direction of the Government and the State Bank of Vietnam, together with the support and facilitation of ministries and agencies over the past time, BIDV has been relentlessly determined to implement procedures to open a branch in Myanmar. BIDV has met all evaluation criteria for operation scale, financial capability, and risk management in accordance with international practices. BIDV also has capacity and experience in operating and managing banks and subsidiaries in overseas countries, as well as operating experience in Myanmar in the past 6 years, contributing to the economic development of Myanmar”.

“Following the successful implementation and experience in Laos and Cambodia markets over the years, BIDV branch in Myanmar will operate efficiently, providing modern banking products and services, accompanying and supporting Vietnamese enterprises in doing business in Myanmar, as well as contributing to the fulfillment of economic cooperation targets as agreed by the two governments”, Mr. Ha said.

Information about BIDV branch in Myanmar:

1. Full branch name: Joint Stock Commercial Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam, Yangon Branch (BIDV Yangon).

2. Office address: Hoang Anh Gia Lai Complex Tower, 192 KabarAye Pagoda Rd, Bahan Township, Yangon City, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

3. Initial capital: US$ 85,000,000 (Eighty-five million US dollars).

4. Products and services to be provided:
   - In the first phase, BIDV Branch firstly focus on financial products and services to serve foreign enterprises (major customers: Vietnamese investment to Myanmar businesses), Myanmar local banks and local enterprises (based on partnership with Myanmar local banks).
   - Dependent on the door-opening roadmap and regulations of Myanmar, BIDV Myanmar branch will continue to implement modern banking services according to the demand of local customers.

For further information, please contact: Joint Stock Commercial Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam (BIDV)
Branding and Public Relations
Tel: +84.4.22205256;
BIDV Representative Office in Myanmar
Tel: +95-1 553896/551521;
Eagles of Death Metal frontman apologises for comments on Paris attack

PARIS — Eagles of Death Metal frontman Jesse Hughes has apologised for suggesting security guards at the Bataclan concert hall in Paris may have had advance knowledge of the Islamic State attack at the venue that left 89 people dead.

The California-based Eagles of Death Metal were playing at the Bataclan on 13 November, 2015 when gunmen stormed the venue and shot and killed concertgoers.

Hughes told Fox Business Network in an interview that aired on Wednesday that he learned six security guards failed to appear for work at the Bataclan the night of the attack and that “it seems rather obvious they had a reason not to show up.”

The owners of the Bataclan had disputed the suggestions Hughes made in the Fox Business Network interview, saying in a statement he had made “grave and defamatory accusations” even though “all the testimonies gathered to this day demonstrate the professionalism and courage” of the guards, according to the entertainment trade publication Variety.

Hughes later apologised for the comment in a statement on the band’s Facebook page on Friday. “I humbly beg forgiveness from the people of France, the staff and security of the Bataclan, my fans, my family, friends and anyone else hurt or offended by the absurd accusations I made in my Fox Business Channel interview.” Hughes said. He said the accusations were “unfounded and baseless.” Indicating he was under stress, Hughes said he has dealt with nightmares and attended therapy since witnessing the attack.

Singer of Eagles of Death Metal, Jesse Hughes, is pictured at the concert at Debaser Medis in Stockholm, Sweden, on 13 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Selena Gomez becomes most-followed on Instagram

LOS ANGELES — Singer Selena Gomez has officially become the most-followed person on Instagram.

The 23-year-old former Disney star took to Snapchat, to share the good news with her fans. “Hey guys. I’m officially the number one most followed on Instagram. Thank you!” she said in the video. Gomez now has 69.1 million followers on Instagram, followed by her best friend, Taylor Swift, who has 69 million followers.

Her ex, Justin Bieber is not too far behind, with 61.3 million Instagram followers.

JUSTIN BIEBER

Meghan Trainor would love to collaborate with Bruno Mars

LONDON — Singer Meghan Trainor wants to collaborate with Bruno Mars.

The 22-year-old “All About That Bass” hitmaker is disappointed that she could not get time to make music with the “Uptown Funk” singer for her upcoming album, reported Female First.

“I love collaborating! I didn’t get enough time this time on my album to really go out and write songs with other artists that I wish I could’ve but I didn’t... I love it!” Trainor said.

“You know I would love to sing with Michael Buble or Bruno Mars, I always sing along to their records and I’m like, ‘Sounds great! We should do this.’ Andy would always say, ‘You and John Legend would sound great together!’ So when that happened it was one of those moments like, ‘Oh my gosh!’” Trainor said.

Justin Bieber, Star Wars wins at Kids’ Choice Awards

LONDON — Pop sensation Justin Bieber, “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” and Ariana Grande were honoured at the 2016 Kids’ Choice Awards.

Bieber was one of the early winners. The Canadian singer snatched the favourite male singer award during the ceremony at Los Angeles’ The Forum, while Grande got to the favourite female singer award.

Girl group Fifth Harmony won the favourite group category, Adele’s “Hello” won the votes for favourite song while Shawn Mendes took the favourite new artist.

The favourite collaboration nod went to Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth for their hit “See You Again”.

In the movie categories, “Hotel Transylvania 2” won the favourite animated movie while “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” took the favourite movie.

“The Hunger Games” star Jennifer Lawrence and “Daddy’s Home” star Will Ferrell won the favourite actress and actor respectively.

‘Frame Your Idea’ show in Mumbai from 30 March

MUMBAI — Nearly 70 filmmaking companies and studios will come together here from 30 March for a three-day session, where script writers would offer fresh ideas and content.

Top digital content players as well as broadcasters would be represented at the ‘Frame Your Idea’ (FYI) show launched by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry to listen to fresh ideas, stories and scripts from Bollywood people, it added.

The FYI made its debut at ‘FICCI Frames 2015’ in which over 650 meetings were held across 3 days between idea owners and content producers, the release said.

At FYI, anyone with a content idea or story or screenplay for a film, TV show, animation or gaming can pre-register, turn up and pitch it to the right people in the business of entertainment.

“This is the first time that India would see such a great platform created giving an unique opportunity to idea owners to meet producers/creators & studio one on one,” FICCI Animation & Gaming Forum chairman Ashish S K said.

Last year, over 200 content idea owners participated in the show which had representation of over 20 content producers, studios and content commissioners. The pitches were conducted across five categories like film, animation, TV, gaming and documentary.

Two categories have been added to FYI 2016 edition. The first one is Digital comprising of web series and short films. This is manifestation of the new content appetite emerging due to internet and mobile as growing platforms of content distribution.

The second category is Finished content comprising of films and documentaries which claim to be an ambitious step to wards the much-needed content market in the country, the release added. According to noted filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt, “The proprietorship of a great idea doesn’t lie with any one person and FYI is doing a great service to the idea owners and the practitioners of the trade.”

FYI director Viraf Phiroz Patel said, “Once the idea owner registers for FYI 2016, he or she is assured at least 4 meetings of 10 minutes each, with his or her preferred producers/studios/broadcaster, through a first come first serve basis automat ed slotting system. FYI is the shape of change to come.”

JESSIE HUGHES

Meghan Trainor

Selena Gomez

Justin Bieber

Kids’ Choice Awards

‘Frame Your Idea’
Nordic pulp firms see future in turning birch trees into fashion

STOCKHOLM — Nordic pulp makers are developing clean ways to turn birch and pine trees into clothes or sofa covers to help revive their industry and meet demand from fashion and furniture firms for alternative textiles to cotton.

There has been no Nordic production of viscose, the main textile fiber from timber, since the last manufacturer stopped nearly a decade ago, partly on environmental grounds.

The industry would like to see textile fiber factories set up at home that will meet environment and “closed loop” production standards for local firms such as IKEA and Hennes & Mauritz which want to project a green image.

“We have the forest here in the Nordics, we have our pulp mills. It would be better for us if more pulp production was needed in our region,” said Markus Mannström, chief technical officer of Finland’s Stora Enso the forestry industry, which accounts for a fifth of Finland’s and a tenth of Sweden’s exports, has been hit by lower newsprint demand and foreign competition. But global output of pulp for textiles is expected to grow by 30 percent by 2020 from 4.4 million tonnes in 2015, according to Oliver Lansdell of forest products industry consultancy Hawkins Wright.

Aalto and Helsinki universities of a decade ago, partly on environmental grounds, has led development at Stora Enso and pulp makers have been investing in “closed loop” production that stops chemicals seeping out.

Researchers are trying to develop new methods similar to Filippa K, which is leading on and cooperating with the pulp makers, keen to sell products made using local forests to environmentally-conscious shoppers.

“With them we find a more sustainable way to produce viscose,” said Cecilia Brannström, sustainability expert at H&M, which has increased its use of Tencel in recent years because it has a better green profile despite being more expensive.—Reuters

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Researchers are trying to develop new methods similar to Filippa K, which is leading on and cooperating with the pulp makers, keen to sell products made using local forests to environmentally-conscious shoppers.

“With them we find a more sustainable way to produce viscose,” said Cecilia Brannström, sustainability expert at H&M, which has increased its use of Tencel in recent years because it has a better green profile despite being more expensive.—Reuters

STOCKHOLM — Nordic pulp makers are developing clean ways to turn birch and pine trees into clothes or sofa covers to help revive their industry and meet demand from fashion and furniture firms for alternative textiles to cotton.

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Chelsea season ended by 16th minute.

Aspas scoring the winner in the home to Real Sociedad with Iago in the table with a 1-0 win at of halftime. suspension by netting either side marked his return to action after edge of the area, while Neymar brilliant curling finish from the missed a penalty, scored with a of Barcelona equalled a club re-scored and provided three assists and was soon setting up Neymar to stretch the hosts’ lead.

The 28-year-old Messi added the fourth before the break and was soon setting up Neymar to stretch the hosts’ lead.

Barcelona’s Lionel Messi vies the ball against Getafe’s Emiliano Velazquez, Juan Rodriguez and Emi Buendia during Spanish Liga BBVA at Camp Nou stadium, Barcelona on 12 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Barcelona remain eight points clear of nearest challengers Atletico Madrid, who beat Deportivo with goals Aspas scoring the winner in the 16th minute. An own goal by Getafe defender Juan Rodriguez put Barca on their way to their 12th straight victory after eight minutes but then Messi missed a fourth penalty of the season, before laying on passes for Munir El Haddadi and Neymar to stretch the hosts’ lead.

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