INCHING TOWARD PEACE

State Counsellor calls for peace conference within two months

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has called for a national peace conference within the next two months in her effort to bring eternal peace to the country.

Speaking at the second meeting of the Union Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Committee (UJMC) yesterday, the State Counsellor also stressed the need to hold the national peace conference like the historic Panglong Conference concurrently with the nationwide ceasefire.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said she will make efforts to bring non-signatory groups into the nationwide cease fire deal as a priority, adding that she will observe the tasks of the joint monitoring committee.

“The word ‘stakeholder’ is quite famous these days. But all citizens, totalling more than 50 million people, are, in fact, the stakeholders because the peace process affects all citizens. It is not practical to include the entire mass of people in the peace process, so the UJMC was formed to include all sides—the government, the ethnic minorities and the civil society organisations, who represent enough of the more than 50 million people,” Suu Kyi said.

The State Counsellor also instructed participants to come to the table with the right mindset.

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Myanmar needs to prioritize resources in Union Budget: World Bank

MYANMAR needs to enhance the quality and efficiency of public spending for education and healthcare, prioritizing resources in Union Budget that are critical to improve living standards and incomes of the people, said the World Bank’s report Wednesday.

The World Bank Group presented a report of public expenditure review on Myanmar, which was a comprehensive analysis of country’s spending policies between 2009 and 2013.

AbdoulayeSeck, World Bank Country Manager for Myanmar, said that the review is a contribution to enhanced budget transparency in Myanmar and to a vigorous local policy dialogue on Union Budget issues and highlights the challenges in building the foundation for shared prosperity. An action plan based on the report’s findings and recommendations could have a pivotal impact on the public sector’s ability to promote inclusive growth, he added.

Policy reforms under previous government have increased spending for education and health care, resulting as more children are attending school and 79,000 more teachers have been hired and essential medicines and selected healthcare services available for free to children, pregnant mothers and emergency patients, according to report.

Economic recovery and long-term reforms on tax policy and administration have improved general government revenue from 6 to 11 percent of GDP between 2009 and 2014. Moreover, reforms have improved and expanded access and affordability of health care financed through a nine-fold increase in Ministry of Health spending between 2009-2010 and 2013-2014.

World Bank prepared a Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Myanmar for 2015 to 2017 to support ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity in 2015—Xinhua
JPN, UN sign agreement to help Myanmar

AN agreement on a ¥3.7 billion donation from Japan to fund four United Nations agencies which are working together with Myanmar’s Ministry of Border Affairs was signed in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the signing ceremony the Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi and resident representatives of the WFP, UN-HABITAT, FAO and UNHCR inked the agreement concerning the implementation of four projects in border regions and rural areas.

Next, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung spoke words of thanks, expressing his belief that the projects, aimed at meeting the basic needs and infrastructure goals of locals as well as enhancing support for sustainable livelihoods will be of great benefit to people in rural and border areas.

The Japanese government will provide ¥2.2 billion through the WFP, ¥607 million through UN-HABITAT, ¥531 million through the FAO and ¥365 million through the UNHCR to implement development and emergency food assistance projects in Kachin State, Chin State, Rakhine State, Shan State (North) and Yangon Region.

After the ceremony, the Union minister received UN-HCHR Resident Representative Mr. Giuseppe de Vincentis and WFP Country Director and Representative Mr. Domenico Scapelli at his office separately.

During the calls, they held discussions on projects being implemented by the ministry in cooperation with UN agencies and projects planned for the future.

— Myanmar News Agency

Union Minister for Information holds talk with UN Humanitarian Coordinator

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint received the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Renata Lok-Dessallien, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The order, signed President U Htin Kyaw, was announced yesterday, appointing four members namely U Win Maung, U Than Tun, Dr U Pwar and U Saw Valentine.

They have been appointed under article 246 (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, article 16 (b) (12) of the Union Government Law and section 5 of the Union Civil Service Board, according to the order.— GNLM

Union Civil Service Board formed

A UNION Civil Service Board, chaired by Dr Win Thein, has been formed with four members, according to an announcement from the President’s Office yesterday.

The order, signed President U Htin Kyaw, was announced yesterday, appointing four names to better ensure development tasks.

Next, Speaker U Win Myint inspected the progress of the new Mandalay Region Hluttaw Building in Aungmyay Thasang Township.— Myanmar News Agency

JMC-U organises workshop in Nay Pyi Taw

A JOINT Monitoring Committee-Union will organise a workshop today at the Horizon Lake View Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.

The workshop’s stated aim is to continue the country’s peace process, oversee and promote the truce during political dialogue, to implement political guarantees and to reaffirm agreements and pledges.— Ko Nyi

Corrections

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR would like to apologise to Mr Felix Zimmerman and Ms Wiebke Rosler for publishing their passport and visa information in our 27 Wednesday issue. We also acknowledge that the two victims of the landmine explosion are German, not Dutch.

We have removed the private information from The Global New Light of Myanmar’s website.

We wish Mr Zimmerman and Ms Rosler speedy recoveries.— Editorial Staff
State Counsellor reexamined following eye surgeries

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD CEC member U Win Htein were examined at the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Hospital in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday after both underwent eye surgeries at the hospital this month.

The medical superintendent of the hospital commented that their eyes are in good condition and further treatment will not be required. The State Counsellor was admitted to the hospital for an operation on her right eye on 9 April and had a cataract removed on her left eye on 16 April when Thura U Aung Ko, U Win Htein and Daw Shwe Hmone also underwent eye surgeries at the hospital.

After the reexamination, the State Counsellor comforted patients who are currently receiving treatment.

According to the medical superintendent, the Nay Pyi Taw Ottarathiri Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Hospital, inaugurated on 9 March, is receiving 50 patients a day and providing treatment with specialist and modern pharmaceuticals and equipment.—Myanmar News Agency

Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers revoked

PYIDAUNGSU Hluttaw enacted the Law Revoking the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring To Cause SubversiveActs.

President U Htin Kyaw signed the Law Revoking the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring To Cause Subversive Acts which was enacted in 1975.—GNLM

Thura U Shwe Mann vows to cooperate with all parties ‘for the good of the people’

FORMER USDP chairman and speaker of the Union parliament Thura U Shwe Mann told reporters at a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday that despite his expulsion from the party, he will continue to work for the safety and prosperity of the people.

The Union Solidarity and Development Party dismissed 17 members, including Thura U Shwe Mann and several other members of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Commission for the Assessment of Legal Affairs and Special Issues, of which Thura U Shwe Mann is now the chairman. The decision came after the party’s Central Executive Committee met on 22 April.

“Despite our dismissal, we will maintain our political standpoint on the protection of public security and wellbeing,” Thura U Shwe Mann said, stressing his commission’s commitment to act in the best interests of the people and the country.

U Zaw Myint Pe, a member of the commission, said he did not think the internal party issue would have a direct impact on the relationship between the armed forces and the National League for Democracy (NLD), which controls Myanmar’s new government.

“Judging from what the army said, I don’t see any problem,” he said. The Defence Services previously announced their support for and cooperation with the government.

When asked about the army’s statement in connection with a status on his Facebook account, Thura U Shwe Mann refused to comment, instead expressing his strong attachment to the army.

President U Htin Kyaw meets foreign newly-accredited ambassadors

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw received credentials from three newly-accredited ambassadors to Myanmar who presented their official papers to him at the Presidential House in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Newly-accredited Iranian Ambassador Mr. Molsen Mohammadi, US Ambassador Mr. Scot Alan Marcel and Slovak Ambassador Mr. Stanislav Opiela presented their credentials to the President.

Also present at the credentials presentation were Ministry of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and Director-General of Protocol Department U Ko Ko Naing.

The appointment of six ambassadors to Myanmar had been agreed on at the time of President U Htin Kyaw’s administration taking office.

Two more ambassadors will present their credentials to the President today.—Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor calls for peace . . .

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“See no reason not to succeed in the peace process if we all really desire peace and if we have genuine goodwill. In this regard, what counts is the approach to the give-and-take policy. If we come to the roundtable discussion with our minds bent on taking rather than giving, we won’t succeed. That’s why I’d like you to think of what you can give as the first priority, showing the correct attitude toward the country,” she said.

“As long as you’re only thinking of what you’d like to take, it will not be an easy task to seek peace and unity in a Union that was composed of a plethora of indigenous races,” she added.

She also announced the appointment of Dr Tin Myo Win as the peace negotiator for the nationwide ceasefire agreement.

Thura U Shwe Mann talks to media. Photo: MNA

Mr. Stanislav Opiela, Ambassador of Slovak, presents his credentials to President U Htin Kyaw. Photo: MNA
Lightning, wind storm ravage Kalay

A 32-YEAR-OLD farmer named U Myo Myint Oo died after being struck by lightning during a powerful wind storm in Kalay Township, Sagaing Region, on Monday.

The wind blew roofs off monasteries, schools, houses and hospitals in seven villages—Yazagyo, West Khontha, Nankyninhauung, Myasein, Myalin, Nyeinchanta and 56-Mile villages.

An umbrella from the top of the village pagoda was also destroyed during the storm.

Local authorities are now collecting lists of property destroyed by the strong winds in order to calculate the total loss, with plans to provide disaster relief to victims as quickly as possible.—Chindwin Thu

Police arrested two-digit lottery gamblers

POLICE have arrested a man who allegedly played two-digit lotteries in his house in Chanmyathazi ward, Monywa town, Sagaing region on Monday.

The police searched the house of one Tun Tun Aung, 37, and found K30,000 and items relating to two-digit lottery. On the same day police searched the house of one Daw Tin San alias Daw Nu Nu Kyi, 45, and found K92,500 and items relating to two-digit lottery.

Local police have filed charges against both suspects.—Myanmar Police Force

Buildings damaged by strong gale winds in Mong Rai

STRONG gales accompanied by heavy rains and hailstones destroyed houses and levelled trees in Mong Rai Township, Lashio, Northern Shan State on Monday.

The strong wind blew the roofs off the buildings and destroyed street lamp posts. Firefighters from the Township Fire Services Department and officials were engaged in rescue operations. The torrential rains and hailstones damaged the roofs of local office building of the office of the Information & Public Relations Department in Mong Rai Township. Local officials are compiling a list of damaged property.—Han Htay (Lashio)

Crime News

Two mines discovered in Muse

TWO mines were found by police near Sin Phyu market, Muse on Monday. The mines were found while the police were patrolling the market. The mines were discovered to be of Chinese manufacture and were subsequently destroyed by the Garrison Engineering Battalion.—Sayar Maung (Muse)

Train runs over man in Taungdwingyi

A MAN was killed in a train accident in Taungdwingyi township, Magwe region on the night of 24 April. The victim, Aung Ko Oo, 28, from Aung Myin Thar village was reportedly struck by a local train between mileposts 239/5 and 239/6. The victim was seriously injured and succumbed to his injuries at the scene of the accident.

Police are still investigating the case.—Bo Pyat (Taungdwingyi)

Yaba and hand grenade seized in Ye Township

LOCAL authorities seized Yaba and a hand grenade in Ah Sin Village, Ye township on Tuesday, it has been reported. Acting on a tip-off local police searched the home of one Soe Moe Oo, 27, and discovered 228 yaba pills weighing 22.8 grams with a street value of K570,000 and a MG1 hand grenade.

Likewise, police also searched the home of Arkar Oo, 25, in Ah Sin Village, Ye township. The police discovered 30 yaba pills weighing 3 grams with a street value of K90,000 and petty cash earned through the sale of drugs. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Law.—Nay Myo Htu (Ye)

Josephine Oo

PHOTO: Nay Myo Htu (Ye)

Two mines found in Muse, PHOTO: Sayar Maung (Muse)

Two mines discovered in Muse

A HOUSE was destroyed by fire in Dai Kyi village, Mrauk U town, Rakhine state on Monday night. According to an investigation, the fire broke out when U Sein Kyaw fell asleep without extinguishing a candle in his home. The fire was put out by local firemen with the assistance of neighbors. Police have opened a case against U Sein Kyaw.—District IPRD
Teak production discontinued this year due to deforestation

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has decided to discontinue the production of teak wood and to reduce logging of hardwood this year because of severe deforestation.

Taninthayi hospitality industry attracts new FDI

DOMEL Island Development, a joint venture company, will invest US$25 million in Myanmar’s hotels and tourism industry to establish hotel facilities in several towns in Taninthayi Region.

The investment was approved by the Myanmar Investment Commission in March, according to the MIC’s announcement.

The project covers the construction of resorts, villas and golf courses on undeveloped islands in the coastal region to provide better service to both locals and international tourists.

Myanmar has seen a massive influx of tourists over the last few years thanks to the country’s political stability and its sweeping reforms. According to myanmar-tourism.org, Myanmar welcomed nearly 3.1 million tourists in 2014 and over 4.6 million in 2015.

According to the Master Plan (2013-2020) drawn up by the Ministry for Hotels and Tourism, tourist arrivals are estimated to hit 7.49 million by 2020.

According to official figures, there are over 1,000 hotels with nearly 50,000 rooms across the country.

Singapore tops the tourism investors list with US$1.48 billion, followed by Viet Nam with $440 million and Thailand with $343 million, according to the last year’s figures.

The number of tourism companies has also increased to 1,922 this year from 1,670 in 2014. As many as 1,822 of the companies are owned by Myanmar citizens.—200

Price of betel reaches record high after unseasonal rain

THE price of Pantanaw betel leaf is at a record high, up to K15,000 per viss (approximately 1.6 kilograms) at Thirimin-galar market in Yangon because of widespread destruction of beetle crop due to unseasonal rains.

The daily supply of Pantanaw betel dropped down from 30 to six baskets at the market.

Betel from other towns is in high demand leading to a price rise from K4,000 to K8,000 per viss. “The supply has declined in the market. Some betel leaf plants fell down and the betel leaves were destroyed. The price rises when the demand and the supply mismatch”, said Daw Moe Moe from the Aung Thiri betel and areca nut shop.—200

Sesame and peanut oil said to be competitive with palm oil in price

SEMAME and peanut oil are to be sold against palm oil at competitive prices, it has been reported by market experts. The supply of sesame and peanut will need to be raised, said U Munt Kyu, the chairman of the Myanmar Oil Merchants and Entrepreneurs Association.

The price of sesame and peanut oil might decline by K1,000 if the yield has become high and the supply rises. Local manufacturers supply around 450,000 tonnes of oil while the volume of import of oil is about 550,000 tonnes.

Over 142 million tonnes of edible oil are required by the world’s population while among those, consumers require 4.82 million tonnes of peanut oil (3.39 per cent).

Private entrepreneurs received permits to import palm oil in 2011. The volume of oil import has risen year by year: 120,000 tonnes in 2011; 330,000 tonnes in 2012; 390,000 in 2013; 440,000 tonnes in 2014 and 550,000 tonnes in 2015.—200

Sugar price rises in Muse border market

SUGAR prices at the Muse border trade centre have risen by 15 yuan per bag.

Around 70,000 bags of sugar (about 3,500 tonnes) are sold daily at the border gate. Sugar merchants are collectively making an extra profit of 1,050,000 yuan daily, said a merchant from Muse, which borders China. The market price for a 50-kilo bag of sugar was 194 yuan on 11 April. The price has risen up to 209 yuan since the end of Thingyan. The rise of prices in India and Thailand resulted in the rise of prices in the Muse market. Furthermore, demand from China is on the rise. The volume of sugar trading and the price of sugar are both expected to continue to rise for some time. Myanmar re-export sugar imported from India and Thailand to China via the border trade channel.—200

A farmer seen with sugar cane. Photo: Aye Min Soe

Teak logs are loaded onto a lorry at a logging camp in Pinlebu Township, Sagaing Region. Photo: Reuters

The number of teak trees in Myanmar has gradually declined due to illegal logging.

The ministry will make arrangements to protect natural resources and the environment. Planting quality teak in Bago Mountain Ranges is the top priority for the ministry.

The rate of forest coverage in Myanmar decreased to 45 per cent in 2015, from over 57 per cent in 1990, according to official figures released by the ministry.

Myanmar, one of most resource-rich countries in South-east Asia, is 38 per cent covered by mixed deciduous forests and 25 per cent by hills and temperate evergreen forests. It has a population of more than 50 million people, most of whom depend on forest products, particularly for fuel and construction.

The logging of teak and hardwood in the 2012-2013 fiscal year totalled 925,050 tonnes.—200
Thai Facebook group charged over ‘foul language’ about draft constitution

BANGKOK — Thailand’s election commission on Wednesday filed charges against a group for posting “foul and strong” comments online criticising a military-backed draft constitution, the first case filed under a law that prohibits campaigning on the charter.

Groups on both sides of Thailand’s political divide have denounced the draft constitution as undemocratic.

The UN human rights chief last week urged the junta to curtail “dangerously sweeping” powers enshrined in the draft charter and urged the government to “actively encourage, rather than discourage” dialogue on the draft.

Election commissioner Somchai Srisuthiyakorn filed the charges against members of a Facebook group based in Thailand’s northeastern province of Khon Kaen.

“They posted comments on Facebook using foul and strong language,” Somchai told reporters after filing the charges. He did not disclose the group’s identity.

“We want them to be an example,” he said. “From now on, people should talk about the constitution using reason.”

Thailand’s king on Friday approved a law providing a 10-year jail term for those who campaign ahead of an 7 August referendum on the military-backed constitution.

Endorsement of legislation by the king, who is a constitutional monarch, is a formality. The new law criminalises “forcing or influencing” a voter to cast or not cast a vote.

Somchai Srisuthiyakorn (C) Election commissioner holds up a document during filing the charges against members of a Facebook group based in Thailand’s northeastern province of Khon Kaen at a police station in Bangkok, Thailand, on 27 April, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan, Singapore agree to assert rule of law in South China Sea

TOKYO — Japan and Singapore agreed Tuesday on the importance of respecting the rule of law at sea and to enhance bilateral assertiveness in the South China Sea, Japanese Foreign Minister said.

In talks with Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan in Tokyo, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida expressed deep concern about escalating acts to change the status quo in the South China Sea, in an apparent reference to China’s construction of artificial islands and outposts in the waters, the ministry said.

Balakrishnan said the freedom of navigation and overflight at sea are important and that disputes should be resolved peacefully in accordance with international law, it said.

Although Japan and Singapore are nonclaimant countries in the territorial disputes involving China in the South China Sea, the busy sea lane stretching northward from the Strait of Malacca is of vital interest to the two maritime nations.

Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Monday. The minister told Abe he welcomes the implementation in March of Japan’s new security laws, saying that it will strengthen the Japan-US alliance, which is the pillar of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, the ministry said.

In a major shift in Japan’s postwar security policy, the laws authorise an expanded overseas role for its Self-Defense Forces.— Kyodo News

Philippines’ Aquino denounces Abu Sayyaf’s ‘language of force’ after execution

MANILA — Philippine President Benigno Aquino, reacting publicly for the first time to the beheading of a Canadian hostage by Islamic Abu Sayyaf militants, vowed on Wednesday to devote all his energy to eliminating the group before he steps down in two months.

John Ridsdel, 68, a former mining executive, was executed on Monday by Abu Sayyaf who captured him and three others in 2015 while they were on vacation on a Philippine island.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemned the execution as “cold-blooded murder”. Security is precarious in the southern Philippines, despite a 2014 peace pact between the government and the largest Muslim rebel group that ended 45 years of conflict. “So, to the ASG (Abu Sayyaf Group), and whoever may aid or abet them, you have chosen only the language of force, and we will speak to you only in that language,” Aquino said in a statement. “Casualties are to be expected. But what has to be of utmost importance is neutralising the criminal activities of the ASG.” — Reuters
Cabinet to approve quake-linked extra budget 13 May: Abe

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (3rd from L) receives a request from Yutaka Aso (2nd from L), chairman of the Kyushu Economic Federation, and other business leaders from the quake-hit Kyushu region during a meeting at the prime minister’s office in Tokyo on 27 April, 2016. Photo: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Wednesday his Cabinet will approve a fiscal 2016 supplementary budget on 13 May to cope with deadly earthquakes that rocked southwestern Japan earlier this month.

“The Cabinet would like to approve (the budget) on 13 May and submit it to the Diet,” Abe said in a meeting with business leaders from the Kyushu region, part of which was open to the media.

Earlier Wednesday, secretaries general of Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner, the Komeito party, agreed that the ruling coalition will aim to get the budget, whose size has yet to be fixed, through parliament on 17 May ‘n cooperation with opposition parties, according to ruling party lawmakers.

Similarly, Toshiyuki Kato, Diet affairs chief of the main opposition Democratic Party, told a party meeting that he expects the Diet to approve the extra budget on 17 May.

In the meeting with Abe, Yutaka Aso, chairman of the Kyushu Economic Federation, said reconstruction of quake-hit areas centering on Kumamoto and Oita prefectures “will not be possible without the support of the government.”

“We would like (the government) to take initiatives such as (compling) a budget,” Aso said. Abe pledged the government’s commitment to assisting small and midsize companies, as well as the agriculture and tourism sectors.

Speaking at a meeting of LDP lawmakers, Secretary General Sadakazu Tanigaki said he will make his best efforts to re- vive affected areas through early implementation of the envisaged budget.

Tanigaki also said he plans to visit quake-hit areas in Kumamoto Prefecture on Saturday.

—KYODO News

North Korea to hold 1st party congress in 36 years on 6 May

BEIJING — North Korea said Wednesday the ruling Workers’ Party will convene its congress for the first time in 36 years on May 6, at a time of increased tensions over the country’s aggressive pursuit of nuclear and missile technologies.

North Korea’s official media reported the opening date, announced a day before by the party’s Political Bureau of the Central Committee, but did not say until when the rare political event will take place in Pyongyang.

The congress, the seventh of its kind, is expected to offer North Korean leader Kim Jong Un an opportunity to play up his achievements since taking power in late 2011 and serve as a stage for him to further consolidate his power.

In the months and weeks leading to the convention, North Korea has raised international tensions by carrying out tests of missile and nuclear technologies and put out a string of belligerent statements.

Countries including Japan, South Korea and the United States have been on the alert for a fifth nuclear test and more missile launches by North Korea before the key event, which was last held in October 1980, under the rule of Kim Il Sung, grandfather of the current leader.

In late October, North Korea unveiled its plan to hold the congress, the party’s highest-level guidance body, in early May, but did not provide the starting date.

At the previous five-day party gathering, Kim Jong Il, the current leader’s father, appeared in public for the first time and emerged as the successor to his own father, North Korea’s first leader Kim Il Sung.

During the upcoming congress, outside observers think the youngest Kim, in his fifth year in power following the death of his father, will likely underscore, among other points, that his so-called byungjin policy of simultaneously pursuing the development of nuclear arms and improving the nation’s economy has been a great success.

This will likely be trumpeted, although North Korea has long faced global condemnation and sanctions for its nuclear and missile programmes.

At the start of this year, North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test followed by a rocket launch one month later. The two acts, both in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions, led the world body to impose its toughest-ever sanctions on North Korea last month. While being under intense pressure from the international community, North Korea started waging a nationwide “70-day campaign of loyalty” in February to prepare for the congress, pressing its people to work harder and increase productivity.—KYODO News

Water trains bring scant relief to drought-ravaged Indian state

LATUR (India) — Haribhaun Kamble, an unemployed labourer in India’s richest state of Maharashtra, is forced to queue for hours in scorching heat to fetch water even as the government puts on trains to ship water to the region parched by back-to-back drought years.

Like Kamble, millions of Indians have been hung out to dry in the state with the worst drought in four decades ravaging crops, killing livestock, emptying reservoirs and slowing hydroelectric power output. Mismanagement of water resources, with powerful politicians pushing for bigger supplies to industries, have made the situation worse, experts say.

“The government says it is bringing water by train every day, but we are getting water once a week,” Kamble said, after standing in line for three hours to fill two pitchers at a tap in Latur district, 500 km (300 miles) southeast of Mumbai in drought-stricken Marathwada region.

Locals had been hoping a 50-wagon daily train would ease shortages, but they were disappointed as the 2.5 million litres carried by the train and ferried by tankers to villages was not enough to meet the needs of Latur’s half a million people and Marathwada’s 19 million.

Marathwada, home to many sugar mills in Maharashtra — the nation’s top producer, is one of the several regions in India that received below-average June-September rains in 2015. New Delhi estimates that overall 330 million people — a quarter of the country’s population — are currently affected by drought.

Water is set to get scarcer over the next two months as temperatures soar above 40 degrees Celsius (104°F), drying up Marathwada reservoirs that are now just 3 per cent full.

“That Marathwada would face a water crisis was clear when monsoons failed, yet the state took no action to curb supplies to water-guzzling industries like beer and sugar,” said Parineeta Dandekar, associate coordinator at the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People.

“There are limits on how much water the government can supply by train. Had it reserved water sources for drinking last year, the situation would have been much better now.”

A rapid expansion of sugar cultivation has made matters worse. Cane accounts for 4 per cent of Maharashtra’s crop area but devours two-thirds of its irrigation water. Also, given politicians have stakes in sugar mills and other industries, there is a growing concern they may try to ensure water supply for their ventures.

Pankaja Munde, a state minister from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and whose husband is a director of a distillery in Aurangabad, Marathwada, has said the liquor industry should get all the water allocated to it.

Munde did not respond to text messages seeking comment.

The Aurangabad bench of Bombay High Court, however, on Tuesday asked Maharashtra to halve water supply to liquor firms immediately and cut supply by another 10 per cent from 10 May.

Eknath Khadse, Maharashtra’s agriculture minister, said the state was also planning to restrict cane cultivation and propose a five-year ban on new mills in Marathwada to conserve water.

“The more, the better. Modi’s government is focusing on managing watersheds and linking rivers to move water to dry regions to combat the crisis in India, which has almost 17 per cent of the world’s population but only 4 per cent of fresh rain water resources. But the need of the hour is smaller, cost-effective steps such as enforcing restrictions on water use and ensuring canals do not leak.”

“Canals are leaking everywhere in Maharashtra. Only a third of water released from dams reaches farms,” said Pradeep Purandare, a water and irrigation specialist from Aurangabad.

“There is complete mismanagement of water resources.” —REUTERS

Residents climb a government-run water tanker with plastic hoses

—Photo: REUTERS
Extremes of love and hate harm peaceful coexistence

Kyaw Thura

Victory has one of the sweetest tastes; nothing seems to satisfy our craving for it. That is why we are completely obsessed with ourselves, constantly seeking a larger slice of the good life than our rivals. We ignore the reality that there is an acquired taste, and one much sweeter than victory in conflict. It is commonplace to see people take delight in saying they are not the type to react to wild accusations against them. However, a few moments of quiet contemplation often reveal that some accusations bear some truth, and as a result, the accused succumb to the urge to release a violent outburst, giving full vent to reactions out of all proportion.

It is natural that people seek consolation in religious instructions when faced with difficulty. This highlights that there is no religion that preaches revenge or that encourages followers to seek retribution against the other. Instead, every faith maintains its focus on tolerance to sinners. Despite this, people seem to remain enslaved to extreme, emotional behaviour. Consequently, brutality and aggression by people of one of faith against those of another result in religious conflict, thereby harming peaceful coexistence.

Duty Bearers and Right Holders

Dr. Khine Khine Win

Human rights define people as rights holders and states as duty bearers. Understanding the actors and relation between duty bearers and right holders is one of the most important issues in human rights. According to UNICEF, duty bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. The term is most commonly used to refer to State actors, but non-State actors can also be considered duty bearers. Although States play the role of the principal duty bearer, there are other non-state entities (Institutions, Individuals) that have obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of people. It is noteworthy that non-state entities are the moral duty bearers.

Every human being is inherently a right holder who should enjoy universal human rights that must be guaranteed. In short, a rights-holder is entitled to the rights set out in the treaties, laws and conventions and is entitled to claim these rights, although the rights-holder also has a responsibility to respect the rights of others.

By ratifying the different United Nations human rights treaties, states automatically assume the principal roles of guaranteeing these rights. As parties to human rights treaties, states have assumed the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the rights. For instance, Children have a valid claim (as rights holders) against their parents to be cared for and be given adequate food. The parents are for that reason the first line duty-bearers. But if the parents cannot meet their duties because they do not have access to the means to care for or provide food for their children, the state would be liable to ensure that the children did not suffer ill-treatment or starvation. This example shows how the ‘state’ is the ultimate duty-bearer: this is important because it is the state that has ratified the convention, in this case the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and is legally bound to meet the obligations set out in the convention.

Let me give one more example. Girls and boys are right-holders. Education is a basic human right and therefore it is the obligation of states to provide a school environment which ensures equal access to education and protection for girls and boys. States (duty bearers) must not only guarantee that girls and boys are safe in schools, but also establish facilities, curricula and strategies that adapt to their specific needs and rights, and will thus keep them in school.

It is important to recognize that duty-bearers are often also right-holders, whose own rights may remain unfulfilled, which can prevent them from fulfilling their duties to the child. For example, the limited salary may be an impediment to perform their duties.

There is no doubt that State has the primary responsibility to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms as duty bearer. At the same time all individual, right-holders have responsibilities to enjoy their rights and rights of other too. Here there is accountability. Accountability refers relationship between duty-bearers and right-holders. And also it is a dialogue between duty-bearers and right holders. One way of explaining accountability is to simply say that it is the right to say and duty to respond. However, ensuring accountability can be difficult in practice, particularly where national capacities are weak or duty bearers are unwilling to act. That’s why raise awareness of rights and responsibilities, develop the capacities of duty bearers at central and local levels to fulfill their obligations, build relationship between duty-bearers and right holders by working together, increases the incentives for better performance by duty bearers through educating people about their rights, supporting advocacy for information to monitor the realization of human rights, encouraging media freedoms, building capacities right holders to claim their rights are necessary to build. And also strengthen the capacities of National Human Rights Institution to monitor the effective realization of all rights is required. Indeed, we need to make sure that national laws are harmonized with international human rights treaties standards with duties spell out as clearly as possible at national, regional and local levels.

To conclude, it is needed to strengthen duty bearers to comply with their human rights obligations and empower right holders to realize their rights. And to claim their rights is essential in order to operationalize all rights at country level.

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C-in-C of Defence Services receives US Ambassador

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received the newly accredited Ambassador of the United States Mr Scot Alan Marciel in Nya Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the Senior General clarified the stance of the Tatmadaw on the process of the political transition in the time of incumbent government and the stance and cooperation of the Tatmadaw in ending armed conflicts in order to bring peace to the country.

He also discussed with the US ambassador matters regarding boosting the relations between the armed forces of the two countries based on mutual trust.

The US ambassador also exchanged views with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on promoting bilateral relations and cooperation during his tour of duty in Myanmar.

— Myawady

Myanmar celebrates International Jazz Day

INTERNATIONAL Jazz Day, which falls on 30 April, was celebrated at American Centre on Taawin Road in Yangon on Thursday with a wide range of entertainment programmes. This is the fourth time Myanmar has celebrated the International Jazz Day since 2012.

Young guitarists from Sweden, the 88 Degree Band, Bamboo Trio and other local musicians took part in the performance programmes, led by Susanna Risberg.

The event was sponsored by the US Embassy and the Embassy of Switzerland. UNESCO officially designated April 30 as International Jazz Day in November 2011 with the aim of highlighting jazz and its diplomatic role of uniting people in all corners of the globe.

— Myat Sandi Thin Zaw

Garbage collection activity aims to conserve Hopone Reservoir

“PUBLIC participation plays an essential role in conserving the Hopone Reservoir,” said Cherry Kyaw, a member of Living Earth Green Network.

Residents in Hopong, a town in Shan State, usually throw their waste into the reservoir, most of which consists of plastic bags.

Living Earth Green Network set up a garbage collection programme to maintain reservoir last Sunday. The programme was organised by U San Khun Lwin, chairman of the governing body of the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone.

Several government officials and staff joined the environmental conservation activity.

Local authorities called on residents not to cut trees or throw garbage into the reservoir.

— Nan Oo Khin

Training centre aims to raise public interest in meteorology

METEROLOGIST Dr Tun Lwin said he has a plan to establish a training centre in Yangon that will offer weather-related education to the public free of charge.

The centre will be set up as a philanthropic school, he said.

The meteorologist has been in talks with two organisations that are likely to contribute funds to develop the training centre. Detailed plans for the centre will soon be announced to the public.

“The major objective is to share our knowledge, experiences and lessons learned in the past as the country has a few experts in the field of meteorology,” Dr Tun Lwin said. He also called for meteorology to be included in public school syllabi.

— Min Thit

North Monastery to become ancient building

LOCAL authorities are discussing the designation of North Monastery in Kawa as an ancient cultural zone. The monastery was first built by the Reverend U Ottama and in 1920, Reverend U Zar Nay Ya renovated the building, adding a second floor. The century old buildings are being protected by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture under the law protecting ancient and important buildings.

The two storey monastery was built using 120 teak columns.

There are sculptural patterns on the first floor to depict the life of Buddha (Jataka stories).

— Saung Oo
**Trump and Clinton trade barbs after big wins in Northeast**

NEW YORK/PHILADELPHIA — Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton rolled up wins in Northeastern states on Tuesday in a major show of strength and immediately turned their fire on each other in a possible preview of a general election matchup.

Trump easily defeated rivals John Kasich and Ted Cruz in all five states that held contests, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware, with a margin of victory rivaling that of his home state of New York a week ago. He was on a path to winning the vote in every single county in each state.

Clinton, already in control of the Democratic race, defeated challenger Bernie Sanders in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Her only loss of the night was to Sanders in Rhode Island.

The two front-runners used victory rallies to snipe at each other in the kind of back and forth that will take place should they win their party’s presidential nominations and face off in the 8 November election to succeed Democratic President Barack Obama.

“I think she’s a flawed candidate and she’s going to be easy to beat,” Trump said at a news conference at New York’s Trump Tower.

Trump, who is delivering a foreign policy speech in Washington on Wednesday, criticised Clinton’s record as secretary of state and her vote as a US senator from New York in support of the Iraq war. He said her only advantage was as a woman seeking to become the first female US president.

“Frankly if Hillary Clinton were a man, I don’t think she’d get 5 per cent of the vote,” he said.

Clinton, in a victory speech in Philadelphia, took aim at Trump for accusing her of trying to “play the woman card.”

“Well if fighting for women’s healthcare and paid family leave and equal pay is playing the woman card, then deal me in,” she said to cheers.

For the Republicans, the Northeastern battles set the stage for a big contest next week in Indiana. Trump has a small lead in polls in the state but Cruz appears stronger there. Trump needs a victory to get closer to the 1,237 delegates required to win the nomination.

Of 118 committed delegates available on Tuesday, the Associated Press said Trump took 105, raising his total delegates to 950. Kasich won five, all from Rhode Island, and Cruz one, with seven delegates still to be assigned. Pennsylvania’s 54 unbound delegates will become clearer later.

Projecting confidence, Trump said it was time for Cruz and Kasich to get out of the race so the party can unify behind him. He also urged Sanders’ voters to support him.

“I consider myself the presumptive nominee,” he said, adding later: “As far as I’m concerned, this thing is over.”

Although the race remains fluid, Trump’s wins made it less likely that Republicans would choose their nominee at a contested convention in July in Cleveland, an outcome seen by Cruz and Kasich as their only chance at the nomination.

Cruz was already looking ahead to Indiana’s Republican primary on 3 May.

“I got good news for you: Tonight, this campaign moves back to more favourable terrain,” the US senator from Texas said in Knightstown, Indiana, inside the high school gymnasium made famous by the movie “Hoosiers,” which celebrated underdogs.

Clinton’s strong showing in the Democratic race added to the pressure on Sanders to get out of the race or ease his criticism of her.

In her victory speech, Clinton gave a nod to Sanders and spoke of the need for party unity.

“Whether you support Senator Sanders or you support me, there is much more that unites us than divides us,” she said.

Clinton’s victories on Tuesday gave her 2,141 delegates, according to the AP, pushing her closer to the 2,383 needed for the nomination. Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid told reporters earlier on Tuesday he did not think Sanders, a US senator from Vermont, had a realistic path to winning the nomination.

Sanders, in a speech in Huntington, West Virginia, and a subsequent statement, showed no signs of getting out of the race.

“The people in every state in this country should have the right to determine who they want as president and what the agenda of the Democratic Party should be. That’s why we are in this race until the last vote is cast,” he said in his statement. Trump has consistently done well among lower-income voters and voters with only high school diplomas or less. But he performed well in the Northeastern region, which is the most highly educated in the country and also was strong across income levels.—Reuters

**Syria opposition: Setting date for next round in peace talks is up to UN**

BEIRUT — A Syrian opposition official said on Wednesday it was up to the United Nations to say when peace talks would resume, after a Russian official said they would restart on 10 May, adding that the opposition would not take part until its demands were met.

George Sabra of the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) was responding to comments earlier on Wednesday by Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov of Russia, a major ally of President Bashar al-Assad.

“All the while real steps aren’t taken on the ground in Syria, the participation of the delegation of the HNC will remain suspended,” Sabra told Reuters.

The HNC suspended its participation in the peace talks last week as violence escalated on the ground and the negotiations made no progress towards discussing a political transition. —Reuters

**Iran’s Supreme Leader says US lifted sanctions only on paper**

DUBAI — The United States has only lifted Iranian sanctions on paper and in practice is scaring businesses away from the country, its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday.

“On paper the United States allows foreign banks to deal with Iran, but in practice they create Iranophobia so no one does business with Iran,” Khamenei was quoted as saying by his official website, addressing hundreds of workers in Tehran.

“The US official says the sanctions regime is still in place to scare away the foreign investment from Iran.”

The deal with world powers allowed for the easing of some sanctions in return for Tehran curbing its nuclear programme. Iran has previously called on the United States to do more to remove obstacles in the banking sector. —Reuters

**Paris attacks suspect to appear before French magistrates on Wednesday**

PARIS — Salah Abdeslam, suspected of playing a major part in the Paris attacks which killed 130 people, will appear before French magistrates on Wednesday with a view to being placed under formal investigation, the French public prosecutor said.

“The prosecutor will request that he be held in custody, according to a statement.

“The move comes after Abdeslam was extradited to France from Belgium earlier on Wednesday. The suspect arrived in France at 0705 GMT according to the prosecutor. —Reuters

**Two killed in South China helicopter crash**

NANNING — Two people were confirmed killed when the wreckage, along with the pilots’ bodies, was discovered in a mountainous area of Yongfu, according to the company. Further investigation into the exact cause is under way.—Xinhua
More migrants ferried from Greece to Turkey under EU deal

ATHENS — Migrants in a Greek detention camp threw stones in clashes with police on Tuesday hours after two ferry ships slipped refugees back to Turkey under a disputed deal intended to stem the human influx into Europe.

Plumes of smoke billowed from the Moria compound on Lesbos island that Pope Francis visited on 16 April. Tensions simmered for days boiled over just after the Dutch and the Greek ministers responsible for migration toured the camp.

Garbage bins were set on fire, a police spokesman said, and migrants “were throwing stones and pieces of metal at police”. Earlier about 200 youths broke through a partition in the camp.

“Events at Moria highlight the level of frustration there,” said the International Rescue Committee’s director for Greece, Panos Navrozidis.

“Many of these refugees have been held at Moria for well over a month with a inadequate services available to them and very few answers. They deserve much better.”

Police said eight minors were taken slightly hurt to a local hospital after scuffles between groups of Pakistanis and Afghans.

Just over 340 people have so far been returned to Turkey since 4 April under the accord agreed with the European Union in March after more than 1 million people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and beyond reached the continent last year.

On Tuesday, 13 people were deported from the island of Lesbos to the Turkish town of Dikili, five were ferried back from Chios to Cosme, and 31 from Kos, police said. Most were Afghans and none had requested asylum in Greece, a government official said.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and human rights groups have questioned whether the deal is legal or moral. They are also concerned about whether Turkey is a “safe” country for returnees. UNHCR does not currently have access to the Kiklareli camp where returnees are sent to.

The European Commission said on Tuesday it had been formally reassured by Turkey that it would grant access to asylum procedures to all asylum-seekers sent back from the bloc, a key outstanding element in the deal.

Turkey applies the Geneva Convention on refugees only to Europeans, offers limited protection to Syrians and no legal guarantees for other nationalities.

Refugees walk along a border fence next to a makeshift camp for migrants and refugees at the Greek-Macedonian border near the village of Idomeni, Greece, on 25 April 2016. Photo: REUTERS

Taiwan’s Tsai says democratic principles will rule ties with China

TAIPEI — Taiwan President-elect Tsai Ing-wen said she will maintain the status quo in the island’s relationship with China, but that her policy will be based on democratic principles and transcend party politics, a move likely to be lost on Communist Party leaders in Beijing.

China regards self-ruled Taiwan as a wayward province to be taken back by force if necessary and wants the new government to stick to the “one China” policy agreed upon with the outgoing China-friendly Nationalist government.

Beijing distrusts Tsai’s Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which it believes supports formal independence for Taiwan.

“Only in this way, can the cross-Strait relationship last and give ‘maintaining the status quo’ real meaning,” Tsai said, referring to the body of water separating the two sides, in a speech.

“In these 10 years or so, the rise of China’s economy and its increasing overall influence has changed the structure of the cross-Strait relationship,” Tsai said. “It has also resulted in far-reaching impact in all aspects of interaction.”

Taiwan president-elect Tsai Ing-wen attends an event in New Taipei City, Taiwan, on 18 March. Photo: REUTERS

Her comments come less than a month before she takes power amid keen interest in what she will say during her inauguration speech on 20 May.

Tsai has always said she will maintain the status quo but has not specified on how she will engage Beijing beyond broad principles.

Tsai and her independence-leaning DPP were voted into power in January on growing pressure on Taiwan. In the past few weeks, China has established ties with former Taiwan ally Gambia, sent a top general to inspect troops based in a frontline province and scooped up dozens of Taiwanese from Kenya wanted in China for fraud — a move denounced by Taipei as being more about politics than crime.

China has 22 countries recognising Taiwan as the “Republic of China”, with most having diplomatic relations with the “People’s Republic of China”, with its leaders in Beijing. —Reuters

Photo: REUTER
German nuclear plant infected with computer viruses: operator

The nuclear power plant of Gundremmingen on 11 March 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

FRANKFURT — A nuclear power plant in Germany has been found to be infected with computer viruses, but they appear not to have posed a threat to the facility’s operations because it is isolated from the Internet, the station’s operator said on Tuesday.

The Gundremmingen plant, located about 120 km (75 miles) northwest of Munich, is run by the German utility RWE.

The viruses, which include "W32.Ramnit" and "Conficker," were discovered at Gundremmingen’s B unit in a computer system retrofitted in 2008 with data visualisation software associated with equipment for moving nuclear fuel rods, RWE said.

Malware was also found on 18 removable data drives, mainly USB sticks, in office computers maintained separately from the plant’s operating systems. RWE said it had increased cyber-security measures as a result.

W32.Ramnit is designed to steal files from infected computers and targets Microsoft Windows software, according to the software firm Symantec. First discovered in 2010, it is distributed through data sticks, among other methods, and is intended to give an attacker remote control over a system when it is connected to the Internet.

Conficker has infected millions of Windows computers worldwide since it first came to light in 2008. It is able to spread through networks and by copying itself onto removable data drives, Symantec said.

RWE has informed Germany’s Federal Office for Information Security (BSI), which is working with IT specialists at the group to look into the incident. The BSI was not immediately available for comment.

Mikko Hypponen, chief research officer for Finland-based F-Secure, said that infections of critical infrastructure were surprisingly common, but that they were generally not dangerous unless the plant had been targeted specifically.

The most common viruses spread without much awareness of where they are, he said.

As an example, Hypponen said he had recently spoken to a European aircraft maker that said it cleans the cockpits of its planes every week of malware designed for Android phones. The malware spread to the planes only because factory employees were charging their phones with the USB port in the cockpit.

Because the plane runs a different operating system, nothing would affect it. But it would pass the virus on to other devices that plugged into the charger.

In 2013, a computer virus attacked a turbine control system at a US power company after a technician inserted an infected USB computer drive into the network, keeping a plant off line for three weeks.

After Japan’s Fukushima nuclear disaster five years ago, concern in Germany over the safety of nuclear power triggered a decision by the government to speed up the shutdown of nuclear plants. Tuesday was the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.—Reuters

Traffic to Wikipedia terrorism entries plunged after Snowden revelations, study finds

SAN FRANCISCO — Internet traffic to Wikipedia pages summarizing knowledge about terror groups and their tools plunged nearly 30 per cent after revelations of widespread Web monitoring by the US National Security Agency, according to a study released on Tuesday.

A forthcoming paper in the Berkeley Technology Law Journal analyses the fall in traffic, arguing that it provides the most direct evidence to date of a so-called “chilling effect,” or negative impact on legal conduct, from the intelligence practices disclosed by fugitive former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

Author Jonathon Penney, a fellow at the University of Toronto’s interdisciplinary Citizen Lab, examined monthly views of Wikipedia articles on 48 topics identified by the US Department of Homeland Security as subjects that they track on social media, including Al Qaeda, dirty bombs and jihad.

In the 16 months prior to the first major Snowden stories in June 2013, the articles drew a variable but an increasing audience, with a low point of about 2.2 million per month rising to 3.0 million just before disclosures of the NSA’s Internet spying programmes.

Views of the sensitive pages rapidly fell back to 2.2 million a month in the next two months and later dropped under 2.0 million before stabilizing below 2.5 million 14 months later, Penney found.

The traffic dropped even more to topics that survey respondents deemed especially privacy-sensitive. Viewership of a presumably “safer” group of articles about US government security forces decreased much less in the same period.

Penney’s results, subjected to peer-review, offer a deeper dive into an issue investigated by previous researchers, including some who found a 5.0 per cent drop in Google searches for sensitive terms immediately after June 2013. Other surveys have found sharply increased use of privacy-protecting Web browsers and communications tools.

Penney’s work may provide fodder for technology companies and others arguing for greater restraint and disclosure about intelligence-gathering. Chilling effects are notoriously difficult to document and so have limited impact on laws and court rulings.—Reuters

The Bank for Investment and Development of Viet Nam JSC (BIDV) Rep office in Myanmar is planning to implement new Core Banking System (CBS) for Myanmar branch in 2016. We would like to call for a tender for the implementation plan to tackle air pollution in five major cities in Britain by 2020 will not be enough and more urgent action needs to be taken, lawmakers said on Wednesday.

Britain has some of the highest levels in Europe of the pollutant nitrogen dioxide, which is produced by diesel vehicles, and has already breached EU limits.

Last year, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said it would introduce so-called clean air zones in areas of Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton by 2020 in a bid to improve air quality.

Vehicles such as old buses, taxis, coaches and lorries will have to pay a charge to enter these zones but private passenger cars will not be charged.

Plans have already been announced to improve air quality in London by 2025, such as introducing an ultra-low emissions zone and retro-fitting buses and new taxis.

However, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs parliamentary committee said the schemes do not go far enough to tackle air pollution.—Reuters
Trafficking risk rises as villagers flee India’s worst drought in decades

MUMBAI — The worst drought in decades across several states in India is forcing tens of thousands of people to migrate from rural areas as a search of water, food and jobs, increasing the risk that they may be trafficked or exploited, activists said.

About 330 million people, almost a quarter of the country’s population, are now affected by drought, the government estimates. Desperate women, children and older family members left behind in the villages are most at risk of exploitation.

“People in the rural areas have always been vulnerable because they want better jobs, better lives,” said Mangala Daithankar, executive director at Bachpan Bachao Andolan, which is helping build water management systems in some villages.

“Women and children are particularly vulnerable, as there is no one looking out for them,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Men and their wives have moved to cities including Mumbai and Pune in search of jobs on construction sites and day labourers, sleeping under flyovers and on pavements. Some have reduced to begging on the streets, activists say. Others, with their families, have been lured to work for little money in harsh conditions in one of the hundreds of brick kilns in the state.

Many single women and widows have been trafficked into prostitution in the cities.

“Disasters are the ground zero for trafficking,” said Dhananjay Tingal, executive director at Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save the Childhood Movement), which says it has rescued more than 8,000 children from modern slavery in India.

“Everybody’s so focused on just getting by, that they are easy prey,” he said.

A police spokesman in Mumbai said police had not found cases of drought-related human trafficking but were aware of the rise in migration and remained vigilant.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pledged a nationwide drive to conserve water, but activists and economists said the drought had resulted in “massive distress movement of populations, causing broken childhoods, interrupted education, life in camps, city pavements or crowded shelters.”

In Maharashtra, among drought-hit states in the country, the drought has not stemmed the flow of migrants from neighbouring Karnataka state and elsewhere, seeking work.

The drought has hit an estimated 10 million people in Karnataka. In some places the drought is spurring the migration of entire families, including the elderly and children who would traditionally have been left behind, activists say.

“The crisis is by far the worst the region has seen in many years. There is no fodder, no water and no agriculture in the region as of now,” said Indian Aditya Biswas, regional commissioner in Gulbarga in North Karnataka.

“We are concerned about the spurt in migration,” he said.

The state government is working on building farm ponds and de-silting tanks in affected areas so that the monsoon rains in June will fill them and provide some relief to small farmers, he said.

For now, those left behind in the villages are tending to their fields, digging wells and laying down drip irrigation systems as they prepare for the upcoming rains — which are expected to be above average this year, easing some fears.

“It all depends now on the rains,” said Daithankar. “People will come back to the villages if the rains are good. Otherwise there is nothing for them to come back to.” — Reuters

CLAIDS DAY NOTICE

MV E.R. TURKU NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV E.R. TURKU NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.P.W.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.

Phone: 09 250107962, 09 251022355

MV KOTA RESTU NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA RESTU NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T.H.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.

Phone: 2301185

MV THAI BINH-039 NO (03/2016)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THAI BINH-039 NO (03/2016) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W 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.

Phone: 2301928

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

(CONSULTING SERVICES-Individual Consultants)

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Agricultural Development Support Project (ADSP) Credit No.: 5624 MM

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is in the process of receiving funds from the World Bank to finance the cost of the ADSP Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The Project Management Unit now invites expressions of interest from qualified candidates for the below positions. Interested consultants must provide their updated curriculum vitae, indicating relevant technical skills, qualifications and experience in similar assignments. In submitting their expressions of interest, consultants are kindly requested to indicate the positions they apply and the reference number stated below:

1. National Finance Officer (Ref: SC-23)
2. National Procurement Officer (Ref: SC-25)
3. National Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (Ref: SC-21)
4. National Environmental Safeguards Specialist (Ref: SC-19)
5. National Social Safeguards Specialist (Ref: SC-20)

The Services are expected to be carried out over a period of 12 months with the possibility of extension depending on the performance, starting in May 2016. The location of work will be the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank’s Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) Loans and International Development Association (IDA) Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers dated July 2014 (“Consultant Guidelines”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest. The Consultant will be selected in accordance with procedures set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information and a copy of the detailed Terms of Reference (TORs) can be obtained at the address below during working days from 10:00 to 15:00 hours.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail, or by Fax) not later than May 16, 2016.

Attn: U Tin Lwin, Director of Procurement
Department: Department of Irrigation and Management of Water Utilization,
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
Address: Building No. 15, MOALL, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
Phone: +95-67-410102, Fax: +95-67-410101
Email: tinwtdr@gmail.com; hatin2009@gmail.com
LOS ANGELES — Court said in court documents on Tuesday listing his six siblings or half-siblings as heirs to a legacy estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars.

The sister, Tyka Nelson, asked that a special administrator be appointed to handle Prince’s affairs and that she be appointed to probate his estate.

In documents filed in a state court in Carver County, Minnesota, Nelson listed herself and five other siblings or half-siblings as Prince’s heirs but gave no value of his assets or debts.

Prince, born Prince Rogers Nelson, was married and divorced twice. Under Minnesota law, Prince’s assets are likely to be split evenly between the siblings, according to attorney Stephen Hopkins.

The influential singer, musician and songwriter behind hits like “Purple Rain” was found dead at age 57 on Thursday in an elevator at his Paisley Park Studios compound in a Minneapolis suburb. The cause of death was not yet known.

Michael Kosnitzky, a New York- and Miami-based attorney who advises the extremely wealthy, said he was surprised Prince had died without a will, given the artist’s tendency to control his image, likeness, name and recordings. “... That he would put himself in a position that he would lose control of those things at death I found very surprising,” Kosnitzky said.

“What is to stop someone who controls his estate from saying that they’re going to promote purple Skittles?,” he said, referring to Prince’s signature color and the popular candy, adding that he did not think Prince would approve.

In her court filings, Nelson said she did not know of the existence of a will and had “no reason to believe that the Decedent executed testamentary documents in any form.”

She proposed the Bremer Bank in Minnesota as special administrator, saying it had done business for years with Prince.

Since his death, sales of his albums have soared; more than 2.3 million songs and some $500,000 albums have sold since Thursday, according to Nielsen Music.

Aside from royalties from his more than 30 albums, Prince regained ownership of his master recordings after a dispute with his Warner Bros. (TWX.N) music label. He was also said to have a cache of unheard recordings, including an album cut with late jazz trumpeter great Miles Davis.

Hopkins, the Minnesota attorney, predicted a long, drawn-out case over Prince’s assets, probably lasting years.—Reuters

**Bill Cosby takes legal hits in abuse cases on both US coasts**

NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES — Courts on both US coasts dealt setbacks to Bill Cosby’s legal team on Tuesday, as the comedian kept trying to fend off lawsuits over allegations that he sexually abused women for decades.

A California judge, in a ruling made public on Tuesday, refused Cosby’s second attempt to dismiss a lawsuit brought by a woman who accused the entertainers of sexually abusing her when she was 15 at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles.

In New York, a federal judge ruled against Cosby’s effort to compel the publisher of New York magazine to provide access to unedited interviews of six women who are suing him over allegations of abuse.

Representatives for Cosby declined to comment.

More than 50 women have publicly accused Cosby of sexually assaulting them, often after plying them with alcohol or drugs in instances dating back decades. Many of the accusations are too old to be litigated, but the mounting scandal has knocked Cosby, 78, off his pedestal as one of the most popular, family-friendly entertainers in America.

As star of the long-running hit TV comedy “The Cosby Show” in the 1980s and early 90s, Cosby played a loving dad who was a model of responsible fatherhood. He has acknowledged marital infidelity but denied ever engaging in non-con-sensual sexual behaviour.

In the California case, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Craig Karlan sided with Cosby’s accuser, Judy Huth, in allowing her case to proceed, rejecting defense assertions that the lawsuit was barred under the statute of limitations.

The judge ruled that Huth properly brought her case under a California law allowing childhood abuse victims to sue as adults within three years of claiming to have realised they suffered repressed psychological damage. Cosby lost a previous bid to fend off the same lawsuit on similar grounds last year.

Huth, now in her 50s, sued Cosby in December 2014, alleging that he pried her with alcohol and molested her during an encounter at the Playboy Mansion in 1974. Her lawyer, Gloria Allred, said Huth’s next step would be to take Playboy founder Hugh Hefner’s deposition in May.—Reuters

**Richard E Grant to play mad scientist in ‘Wolverine 3’**

LOS ANGELES — “Jekyll & Hyde” star Richard E Grant has joined the cast of Hugh Jackman-starring “Wolverine 3.”

Patrick Stewart, who will play X-Men leader Professor X and Boyd Holbrook as Jack- man’s nemesis are also a part of the project, according to the Hollywood Reporter.

Not much is available about the plot but Grant is said to play villainous mad scientist type of character. The movie is being di-rected by James Mangold.—PTI

**‘Harry Potter’ actor Josh Herdman turns cage fighter**

LONDON—Josh Herdman, the actor who played Draco Malfoy’s right-hand man in all eight “Harry Potter” movies, made his amateur debut as an MMA cage fighter.

Herdman defeated his Polish opponent Janusz Walachowski at the City Pavilion in London, reported Daily Mirror.

“I’ve been training traditional Japanese jujitsu for nearly five years and hold a shodan black belt.” Herdman, 28, said.

“It’s raw, exciting and unpredictable. I find it more interesting than boxing although I appreciate the beauty and art in boxing. It also made sense to move onto MMA because of my jujitsu training.”

Herdman hasn’t lost any love for acting, but he compared it to “playing the lottery for a living.” He said he still has an agent and goes for auditions. Herdman doesn’t see competing as an MMA fighter “so much as a career change” either, noting he’s “passionate about both acting and fighting.”

Speaking of acting and fighting, did Herdman ever have any fight with the other Harry Potter kids? “No, we truly all got on pretty well.”

“Jamie (Waylett, who played Vincent Crabbe) and I didn’t get on in the early days but towards the end he was probably one of my closest friends on set. He’s a really funny guy. He’s a good rapper too.”—PTI
Taiwan finds 4,800-year-old fossil of mother cradling baby

A young mother looking down at a wan. The most striking discovery found in central Taiwan's museum officials said on Tuesday.

"When it was unearthed, all of the archaeologists and staff members were shocked. Why? Because the mother was looking down at the baby in her hands," said Chu Wer-lee, a curator in the Anthropology Department at Taiwan's National Museum of Natural Science.

The excavation of the site began in May 2014 and took a year to complete. Carbon dating was used to determine the ages of the fossils, which included five children.

Cool Asian fashion brands challenge Western labels

SEOUL — Fashion brands from South Korea, China and Japan are becoming serious rivals of their Western peers as Asian consumers become increasingly confident in their own style and take pride in buying home-grown labels.

Asian consumers are the world's biggest spenders on high-end fashion, partly due to excessive price increases, over-exposure in certain markets such as China and mega-brand fatigue.

Chinese fashion brands, such as Ms Min and Comme mou, are the fastest-growing contemporary design labels sold at department store Lane Crawford, which has outlets throughout China and Hong Kong, its Chairman Andrew Keith told Reuters. Lane Crawford also sells Korean menswear brands such as Woo Young Mi and expects to start selling Korean womenswear soon.

"You sense there is a pride about seeing China develop its own creative community and seeing China emerge as a creative force," Keith said in an interview on the fringes of the Conde Nast luxury conference in Seoul.

Lane Crawford has seen its pool of Chinese labels grow over the past four years to more than 30, from just four. Twenty per cent of Chinese-designed clothes bought online are shipped outside of China "mainly to Chinese nationals living abroad who want access to these brands," Keith said.

He estimates that his average customer in mainland China is 25 while in Hong Kong the average age is 35-40.

Also high on Asians' shopping list are Japanese brands, such as Sacai and Tsumori Chisato, many of them older and better established than South Korean or Chinese labels.

Lady Gaga regularly wears Japan's Yohji Yamamoto, created in 2006 by two graduates from Osaka College of Design.

— Reuters
Let’s get ready to rumble at Bernabeu, says City’s Hart

MANCHESTER — Manchester City are set up to land Real Madrid a knockout blow at the Bernabeu next week and earn a place in the Champions League final, Joe Hart said after his saves helped earn a 0-0 draw in Tuesday’s first leg.

The England goalkeeper produced two incredible late stops at the Etihad Stadium to leave the tie hanging in the balance for next week’s second leg in the Spanish capital.

Ten-times winners Real have won six out of six at home in this year’s competition, racking up 18 goals without conceding, but Hart said he was relishing the challenge.

“We’ve set it up for a good, old-fashioned rumble at the Bernabeu,” said Hart, who made a superb point-blank save from Pepe late on after sticking out a foot to block a goalbound Casemiro header. “Bring it on.”

“We are not disappointed with the result. We are ready. We have a brilliant squad who are coming to fruition.” “Big game next week, simple as.”

City have already won at Sevilla in the group phase and in Kiev in the last 16 and also drew at Paris St Germain on their way past the French champions into the semi-finals.

Real, who should have their injured top scorer Ronaldo back next week after he was forced to sit out Tuesday’s opener with a thigh strain, will be a formidable hurdle, but City captain Vincent Kompany said the Spanish giants will be wary. “0-0 is a very dangerous scoreboard. From the moment we manage to score in Madrid, it will be very different,” he said.

Real manager Zinedine Zidane said he felt his side deserved to be heading home with their noses in front.

“It was difficult. We defended well, we had more of the ball in the second half and we had chances to score,” he said. “I’m a bit disappointed because in the second half we deserved to win.”

Explaining why Ronaldo was not even on the bench, the Frenchman said the Portuguese had aggravated a thigh strain during a training session.

With striker Karim Benzema failing to come out for the second half, Zidane has some striking worries.

“Benzema’s situation was different, he got worse the more the game went on and we didn’t want to risk him. I hope they both are in the next game,” Zidane told reporters. — Reuters

Infantino brings vision of new FIFA to Asia

SEOUL — FIFA President Gianni Infantino dangled the carrot of more World Cup spots for Asia during a visit to Seoul on Wednesday but while the Swiss was keen to press his case for an enlarged 40-team tournament, he will not try to twist anyone’s arm.

Infantino, who arrived in South Korea earlier in the day to meet with sponsors Hyundai Motor Group, said his visit was aimed at rebuilding trust with corporate partners and presenting his vision of a “new FIFA.”

World football’s scandal-hit governing body is in the midst of the worst crisis in its 112-year history, with more than 40 individuals and entities, including many former FIFA officials, charged with corruption-related offences in the United States.

Infantino, elected in February to replace the disgraced Sepp Blatter, told reporters that adding eight more teams to the World Cup from 2026 was “perfectly justified.”

“Football is not only Europe and South America. Football is the world,” he said.

“I’m not a dictator so I can’t impose anything but I’m trying to convince everyone. I believe we have to increase the number of teams... because we have to be more inclusive.” — Reuters

Wimbledon to beef up measures against doping, corruption

LONDON — The Wimbledon championships will protect its squeaky clean image with enhanced anti-doping and anti-corruption measures for this year’s 130th tournament, organisers said on Tuesday.

Tennis was rocked by allegations of match fixing on the eve of this year’s Australian Open and suffered another blow to its integrity when former Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova said in February she had failed a drugs test.

At a news conference announcing yet another substantial hike in prize money, the All England Club said the prestigious tournament needed to safeguard public trust, admitting that the sport’s image was under threat.

“We don’t think there is a big issue but we will do whatever it takes to keep the sport clean,” said Richard Lewis, chief executive of the All England Club, told reporters.

“The Tennis Integrity Unit (TIU) received no betting alerts during the 2015 championships, but All England Club chairman Philip Brook said the prestigious tournament needed to safeguard public trust, admitting that the sport’s image was under threat.

“Tennis has been lots of media scrutiny since January and it’s appropriate that we respond accordingly,” he said.

The winners of the men’s and women’s singles titles will pocket two million pounds, up 64 per cent from 2011 when Wimbledon pledged to assist those players struggling lower down the rankings. — Reuters