SINO-MYN TIES UNCHANGE

FM Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with her Chinese counterpart

Aye Min Soe

CHINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Myanmar Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to hold general discussions, it has been learned. Though the talks were held successfully it has been reported that the discussion did not involve any issue of China’s controversial projects in Myanmar.

The purpose of Mr Wang Yi’s visit to Myanmar was to offer his praise and congratulations to the new government on their smooth democratic ascension to becoming the ruling party. This was the scope of the talks and the two state representatives did not discuss in detail any other issues, said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at a press conference which followed the meeting.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi thanked the Chinese government for Mr Wang Yi’s visit, which marks the first visit of a foreign high-ranking official under the new government, saying that the friendship between neighbouring countries is of great value to the socio-economic development of the people and expressed that the new government attaches great value to Myanmar’s friendship with neighbouring countries.

Speaking to reporters, Mr Wang Yi said Myanmar has seen change in internal affairs but China’s friendly relations with Myanmar have remained unchanged, pledging that China would not interfere in the internal affairs of Myanmar.

“China supports the choice of the Myanmar people and I hope Myanmar will find itself on the right path in conformity with the country’s reality,” Mr Wang Yi said.

He further said that the two sides had reached some agreements during the talk but did not mention anything in detail.

Asked to give his view on some of China’s huge controversial projects in Myanmar, he said such challenges can be solved through the means of friendship and cooperation.

Asked how the new government will handle the controversial Myitsone Dam project in Myanmar, referring to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s pledge during her election campaign that the NLD would ensure transparency in regard to the contracting of the project, she replied that she has not yet read the contract.

The Chinese foreign minister will meet President U Htin Kyaw today.
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves two Union ministers, Union attorney-general, Union auditor-general

PYIDAUNGSU Hluttaw approved the appointment of two Union ministers, Union Attorney-General and Union Auditor-General yesterday.

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced that U Pe Zin Tun as Union Minister for Electricity and Energy, Dr Myo Thein Gyi as Union Minister for Education, U Tun Tun Oo as Union Attorney-General and U Maw Than as Union Auditor-General were approved with no objection in Parliament.

Next, the process of approving Dr Than Win as vice-chairman (2) and U Win Htein, former Pyithu Hluttaw representative, U Nyi Tun, former member of Union Civil Service Board, and U Bo Win, retired director-general of Education Planning and Training Department under the Ministry of Education, as members of Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission was carried out.

Then, the Speaker announced that the chair position of ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly which was previously held by Daw Su Su Lwin of Thongwa Constituency was filled with U Zaw Thein, MP for Wakema Constituency.

According to a parliamentary session agenda, the two newly-appointed Union ministers, the Union attorney-general and the Union auditor-general are set to be sworn in today before the Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

—Myanmar News Agency

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker meets charge d’affairs a.i of Polish Embassy in Myanmar

Mahn Win Khaing Than receives Mr. Miroslaw Zasada in Nay Pyi Taw. Photo: MNA

SPEAKER of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than received Mr. Miroslaw Zasada, charge d’affairs a.i of Polish Embassy in Myanmar, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Also present were Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mr. Yaw Tha Aung and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office. —Myanmar News Agency

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Polish charge d’affairs a.i

U Win Myint receives Mr. Miroslaw Zasada in Nay Pyi Taw. Photo: MNA

SPEAKER of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint received Mr. Miroslaw Zasada, charge d’affairs a.i of Polish Embassy in Myanmar, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present were Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and officials of Pyithu Hluttaw Office. —Myanmar News Agency

Yangon Region Parliament forms three more committees

THE Yangon Region Parliament formed three more parliamentary committees yesterday with the nomination of 11 members each for the committees.

The three committees are the Transport, Communication, Construction and Industrial Affairs Committee, Social and Management Committee and the Committee on Scrutinising Hluttaw representatives.

Transport, Communication, Construction and Industrial Affairs Committee is set to be headed by U Thet Htun Win of Botataung Township Constituency 2 with proposed secretary U Wai Phyo Han of Insein Township Constituency 2 and nine members including two Defense Services personnel representatives.

U Tha Aung of Insein Township Constituency 1 was named to head Social and Management Committee with proposed secretary U Nyi Nyi of Dagon Myothit (South) Constituency 2 and nine members including two Defense Services personnel representatives.

The committee formed with young and old representatives alike is tasked with focusing on development matters being carried out by Yangon City Development Committee.

Likewise, Daw Aye Aye Mar of Lanmadaw Township Constituency 1 was proposed to chair Committee on Scrutinising Hluttaw Representatives formed with proposed secretary Daw Thit Thit Myint of South Okkalapa Township Constituency 1 and nine members including two Defense Services personnel representatives.

According to sources, eight parliamentary committees and two scrutinizing committees including the three committees formed yesterday have been formed for the second Yangon Region Parliament. —Ko Moe

Appointment of Lithuanian Ambassador to Myanmar confirmed by Government

MYANMAR has agreed to the proposed appointment of Ms. Ina Marciulionyte as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Beijing yesterday.

Ms. Ina Marciulionyte studied Lithuanian language and literature specialising in translation from English at the University of Vilnius from 1981 to 1986. She attended a PhD course on international relations and diplomacy at the Centre d’études diplomatiques et stratégiques, Paris from 2004 to 2005.

From 1986 to 1991, she worked as a correspondent, deputy editor and head editor. From 1992 to 1999, she worked for the Open Society Fund House and Open Society Fund Lithuania (OSFL)/Soros Foundation as a director. In 1999, she was appointed as a Vice Minister at the Ministry of Culture and has served in that capacity until 2003.

She then served as an Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Lithuania to UNESCO from 2003 to 2010. She also served as Ambassador-at-Large for Eastern Partnership and chief coordinator of Lithuanian Presidency of the Community of Democracies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2010 to 2011. She then served as Director of the Department of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Pacific, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2011 to 2015.

Ms. Marciulionyte has been serving as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania to the People’s Republic of China since September 2015. She is fluent in English, French, Russian and Polish. —MNA
Ban Ki-moon congratulates President U Htin Kyaw

The United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon Tuesday telephoned President U Htin Kyaw on the latter’s assumption of the office of the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar yesterday, assuring continued support of the UN to Myanmar.

In his congratulatory phone call to the President, the UN Secretary-General congratulated President U Htin Kyaw on his election as the first civilian President of the country in more than five decades.

It symbolises the dramatic recognition by people from all walks of life in the country of sacrifices and struggles endured by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her senior colleagues including the President, as well as other representatives of the National League for Democracy, to bring democracy to the country, he said.

He called to bring political inclusion and inclusive socioeconomic development to the country and assured President U Htin Kyaw of the continued support of the United Nations to Myanmar.

He expressed his wish to visit Myanmar again and to meet the President at upcoming ASEAN meetings.

In his reply, President U Htin Kyaw thanked Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his congratulatory phone call and his vow to support Myanmar for meeting its challenges.

The President pledged to work together with the United Nations and to strive for ensuring peace and stability, socioeconomic development and the promotion of human rights in the country.

The President also assured the UN Secretary-General of Myanmar continued contribution to the works of maintaining international peace and security, sustainability and environmental conservation in the international arena.—Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor Bill passed by Lower House

The Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) has approved the State Counsellor Bill as approved without any amendment whatsoever by the Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) yesterday despite opposition by Tatmadaw representatives.

Brig-Gen maung Maung, Col Aung Thuha, Col Tun Myat Shwe and U Thein Tun from Kyaunggon Constituency discussed 13 proposals concerning amendment. "As the Hluttaw did not consider our proposed amendments, we refused to vote", said Brig-Gen Maung Maung. This is the right of a representative not to vote, he added.

According to the military representatives, the title of the bill should be the president’s counsellor bill, and the counsellor should be accountable to the president not to the Hluttaw. Moreover, the expression Democratic federal Union should be replaced with the clause 'the union where disciplined multi-party democracy is practiced as prescribed in 2008 constitution'.

In response to the objections raised by the military representatives, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint said, "We're not doing just for our party or our party leader. What we are doing is in accord with the Pyithu Hluttaw Law and rules'.

U Wai Hlaing Tun, a member of Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee also said, The State Counsellor Bill was drawn in accordance with Article 217 of 2008 Constitution. This bill does not affect separation of three branches of sovereign power. As the counsellor is to be assigned with duties by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the state counsellor shall be accountable to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. That's why this bill should be approved as sent by the Amyotha Hluttaw".—Myanmar News Agency

Diversified views will be reported

ThePyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) released a statement, the State Counsellor Bill, passed by Lower House and approved without any amendment by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint delivers an address to the officials and other ranks in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

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People will be well informed by having a chance to listen to the voices and opinions of general public in addition to reading information and analyses given by the government, said Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint during his meeting with officials and other ranks from the minister's office, Information and Public Relations Department, Printing and Publishing Enterprise and News and Periodicals Enterprise held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

"We will not use the top-down approach in our giving of information to the people. What we're going to use is bottom-up approach, making our new reports look like reports to the people," said Dr Pe Myint.

As it is the time now for our ministry to change, we will criticize inappropriate actions of the authorities at different levels. We will also present the diversified views and opinions of the individuals who are well-versed in the political, economic and social sectors.—MNA
MUFG Awards Scholarships to 30 Students of the Yangon University of Economics

THE Japanese Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG) awarded scholarships to 30 students from the Yangon University of Economics (YUE) on 28 March as part of an initiative of the Mitsubishi UFJ Foundation (the Foundation).

The scholarships are awarded to promote economic growth and international relations between Japan and the Asia region and are a part of the Foundation’s contributions to educational development in Asia which has been running since 1991.

Mr. Mitsuhiro Kinuma, General Manager of the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Ltd (BTMU) Yangon Branch awarded the scholarships at the official awards ceremony. Also in attendance were Yangon University of Economics Rector Dr. Khin Naing Oo as well as the students’ professors and heads of department. The 30 students were awarded their scholarships based on their outstanding academic achievements in their respective fields of study such as Business Administration, Public Administration, Economics, Commerce, Accounting, and Development Studies. Through BTMU the Foundation has been awarding scholarships in Yangon since 1996. As of March 2016, it has awarded 360 students from the YUE.

BTMU opened a Computer and Language Laboratory at the Myanmar Institute of Banking (MIB) on 1 December 2015. The laboratory is equipped with 50 computer laptops and language training resources, and allows members of the banking association to raise their proficiency in computer and language programmes.

“BTMU is committed to contributing to Myanmar’s long-term economic growth meaningfully. This includes supporting, training and cultivating talents that fit the needs of the banking and finance sector. It is our pleasure to award these meritorious students for their academic excellence, and we hope they will continue to excel in their studies, and eventually make their own meaningful contributions when they enter the workforce.” Said Mr. Kinuma at the ceremony.

BTMU was the first foreign bank to officially open branch operations in Myanmar in April of 2014.—GNLM
Competition between beverage makers likely to become stiffer

THE competition between beverage manufacturers in the Myanmar market is likely to become stiffer in future, according to the recently released Asian Beverage Markets Report.

International beer companies are reportedly eyeing the Myanmar market because of the country’s growing number of middle-age people, particularly men. In addition, the country has good prospects for economic development and inviting international brands over the coming years.

These are the main given reasons for the increased interest in Myanmar of international beverage makers. According to a statement released by Heineken, the Netherlands-based beer company, the company currently sees a low demand for its products in the country’s drink industry. It is, however, establishing a master plan to occupy the majority of the local market share by 2020.

With US$60 million planned investment, Heineken has opened and is operating its first beer factory, located on the outskirts of Yangon. The factory began operating at the end of 2014.—PPN/Union Daily

Exports by garment industry estimated to raise around US$12 billion by 2020

MYANMAR’S garment industry is estimated to see an increase of exports worth around US$12 billion within the next four years, according to a statement issued by an international textiles monitoring body. The industry exported $1.5 million worth of products in 2014.

The number of industry workers is expected to rise by about 1.5 million people by 2020. In 2015 alone the sector created more than 200,000 new jobs across the country.

International textile companies have shown greater interest in the local garment industry after H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB, a Swedish multinational retail-clothing company, began doing business in the country in 2013. In 2014, U.S-based GAP Company (clothing) came to Myanmar to begin their own garment manufacturing initiatives in the country.

The flow of foreign direct investment into the garment sector is steadily increasing following the reduction of sanctions against Myanmar by western nations. Economics experts say that the industry plays an important role in developing the country’s economic sector, which is facing a trade deficit every financial year.

A lack of skilled labourers, insufficient access to power and high amounts of expenditure in establishing commercial infrastructure are the main barriers to growth of the industry, it is reported.—PPN/Union Daily

Thai energy company to boost power capacity in Myanmar

GLOBAL Power Synergy Co, a Thailand-based energy company, is currently preparing to establish power plants in Myanmar with a capacity to produce around 3,000 megawatt of power, according to its chairman and chief executive officer.

This is part of the GPSC’s five-year plan (2015 to 2019) which is designed to expand such power facilities across the ASEAN region so as to fulfill electricity needs when the ASEAN Economic Community emerges.

The company recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Myanmar authorities to implement a development project covering construction of a 2,000 MW Coal-fired power plant and two power factories which are capable of producing 500 MW and 400 MW each.

“Establishment of gas-fired power plants is on the company’s list of priority,” said the CEO, stating that the company will invest 18 billion Thai baht across the ASEAN region.—Thuta

Vietjet honoured as ‘top brand’ in Viet Nam

VIETJET, the ‘Best Asian Low-Cost Carrier’ award winner, received an award for the most popular brand and most favorite airline in Viet Nam at a presentation ceremony of the Golden Dragon Awards for Favorite Brands in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

The annual Golden Dragon Awards were organised by the Viet Nam Economic Times Publication and the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The awards were presented to businesses for their achievements in providing best services and having corporate social responsibility initiatives as well as for being eco-friendly.

Vietjet has a fleet of 35 A-320 and A-321 aircrafts operating 250 flights for 47 routes in Vietnam and across Asia-Pacific region each day.—Win Win Maw
Indian dance troupe performs in Mandalay

A PERFORMANCE of traditional Indian songs and folk dances put on by an Indian dance troupe named Phythm Divine II attracted a crowd of visitors in Mandalay.

The free event took place at the National Theatre in Mandalay on Tuesday evening in cooperation with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and the Indian Embassy in Myanmar.

The event is part of the cultural exchange programme between the two countries, it has been learned.

Phythm Divine II is a popular dance troupe and the gold medal winner of the Indian Culture Contest. The troupe is touring Asia and Europe to exchange culture by performing traditional folk dances.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Crime

Yaba and heroin seized in Magwe

A COMBINED team comprising local authorities and members of the anti-drug squad from Magwe seized 36.9 grams of heroin from motorbike driver Kyaw Hay with one Ma Wine Sein on board near milepost 336/7, Magwe- Yenangyaung road, on 31 March. Police also searched the home of one Kyaw Hay and found 16.2 grams of heroin and 195 yaba pills in the possession of Ma Tin Tin Yu and 0.2 grams of heroin on Mone Ar Pin. One Sai Aung was found together with Ma Tin Tin Yu and Mone Ar Pin.

Police further searched a house owned by one Ma Tin Tin Yu in Aung Myitta ward, Magwe town and discovered 11 grams of heroin and 889 yaba pills. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Law.— The Mirror

Police arrested two-digit lottery gamblers

POLICE have arrested a woman who allegedly played two-digit lotteries in her own home in Dawna Chan ward, Monywa town, Sagaing region on 1 April.

The police searched the home of Ma Thazin Oo, 35, and found K225,100 and the relevant document items of two-digit lottery. Similarly, the police searched a house owned by one Tun Tun Naing, 32, and found K186,200, two laptops, a printer and the relevant document items of two-digit lottery. Police further searched another house owned by one Aung Myint Shinn, 41, and discovered the relevant documents items of two-digit lottery and K429,600. Kyaw Moe Htet, 23, and U Aung Thwein, 62, were found together with the host.

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

Landslide damages two huts

TWO huts owned by U Sein Myint and U Myat Soe collapsed on the brink of Twante canal due to landslides. The huts are situated on Bohmu Sein Lwin street, Oho Bo ward, Twante Township, Yangon on 4 April.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. “We’ve also moved other four huts out of concern over possible collapses,” said U Saw Maung Than, Stationmaster of Twante Township Fire Services Department.—Tin Win Lay (Kyimyindaing)

Accident kills a man

A 56-year-old man on a motorcycle died when a ten-wheel vehicle crashed his bike on Yay-Dawei motor road near milepost No.1/2 in Anawa ward, Yay Township in Taninthayi Region on 3 April.

The ten-wheel vehicle driven by Htin Kyaw Htet, 30, en route Kyon Laung new village to Yay Township crashed into the motorcycle when Htin Kyaw Htet lost control.

The motorcyclist died on the spot. Police from Yay Township have filed charges against the case.—Nay Myo Htut (Yay)

Kawthaung authorities crack down pharmacies ahead of Thingyan

TO reduce crime rates during the coming Thingyan Festival in Kawthaung, a combined team comprising members of the Kawthaung Township Police Force, a Special Anti-Drug Squad and officials of the Food and Drug Administration inspected pharmacies in the town on 3 April.

The combined team inspected pharmacies around the town and urged the owners of the stores not to sell illegally imported sexual stimulant tablets, yaba pills, stimulant tablets, expired medicines or unregistered medicines.—Kyaw Soe
South Korean navy launches 7th class-214 submarine

SEOUL — South Korea’s navy on Tuesday launched its seventh class-1,800-ton submarine, the country’s top shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industry said.

The launching ceremony was held in the southeastern coastal city of Ulsan, attended by chief of naval operations Admiral Jung Ho-sub, the submarine’s builder said in a statement.

Hyundai Heavy has won six of nine orders to build 1,800-ton submarines procured by the South Korean Navy. The ninth submarine has been under construction from February 2014.

The seventh will be delivered to the navy by July 2017 after seaborne operational trials.

The diesel-electric air independent propulsion (AIP) submarine, which measures 65 meters in length and 7 meters in width, can sail at a maximum speed of 20 knots with a crew of 40. With a 1,800-ton displacement capacity, the country’s largest-class submarine can dive up to 400 meters and last for two weeks under water with fuel cells.

It is loaded with long-range submarine-to-ground cruise missiles developed by the country’s own technology, torpedoes and mines, featuring an automatic simultaneous target tracking system and a torpedo guidance and detection system.

The submarine was named after the late Hong Beom-do, a former commander-in-chief of Korea’s Independence Army who achieved splendid victories over the Japanese Imperial Army during the 1910-1945 Japanese colonisation of the Korean peninsula.—Xinhua

Australian government traits opposition Labour ahead of likely election

SYDNEY — Support for Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s conservative government has fallen to its lowest level since he assumed office, undermining expectations he will secure a comfortable election victory later this year.

Support for the ruling Liberal-National coalition is now at 49 per cent, a Newspoll found on Tuesday, on a two-party preferred basis where votes for minor parties are redistributed to the two main blocs according to preferences.

With an election expected to be called as early as July, the poll findings give the opposition Australian Labour Party a lead for the first time since Turnbull ousted former conservative Prime Minister Tony Abbott in September 2015.

Support for the conservative coalition jumped to as high as 53 per cent after Turnbull became prime minister, but Turnbull’s popularity has waned amid disappointment that he failed to push through any major policy changes amid internal party bickering. —Reuters

China announces restrictions on trade with North Korea

BEIJING — China’s Commerce Ministry on Tuesday banned imports of North Korean gold and rare earths and exports to the country of jet fuel and other oil products used to make rocket fuel, a move in line with new United Nations sanctions on Pyongyang.

The Security Council unanimously passed a resolution in early March expanding UN sanctions aimed at starving North Korea of funds for its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes after Pyongyang conducted a fourth nuclear test in January and launched a long-range rocket in February.

The mining sector is a key part of North Korea’s economy, which is already largely cut off from the rest of the world. Experts believe revenue from the sector helps underwrite North Korea’s military expenditures.—Reuters

Viet Nam reports first Zika infections, raises alarm

HANOI — Mosquitoes have infected two women with the Zika virus in Viet Nam, health authorities said on Tuesday, in the country’s first cases of a disease linked in Brazil to thousands of suspected cases of microcephaly, a rare birth defect.

A 64-year-old woman in the beach city of Nha Trang and a pregnant 33-year-old in Ho Chi Minh City fell sick in late March, and three rounds of tests have confirmed they are Zika-positive, health officials said.

The sufferers are in stable condition and no further infections have been found among their relatives and neighbours, the health ministry said in a statement.

“After epidemic investigations, we consider the source of infection could be mosquito,” Deputy Health Minister Nguyen Thanh Long said of the patient in Ho Chi Minh City.

She is eight weeks pregnant, Long said in a Viet Nam Television broadcast, but gave no details of the first woman.

Health officials have quarantined the living areas of the patient’s families and taken samples from others living nearby for further tests, said Nguyen Chi Dung, head of Ho Chi Minh City’s department of preventive medicine.

The World Health Organisation is working closely with Viet Nam, a WHO official told a health ministry meeting to announce the infections. Zika is carried by mosquitoes, which transmit the virus to humans.

The WHO says there is a strong scientific consensus that Zika can cause microcephaly as well as Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that can result in paralysis, though conclusive proof may take months or years.

Microcephaly is characterised by unusually small heads that can result in developmental problems. Zika has been endemic in Asia, with infection cases confirmed in Bangladesh, South Korea, Thailand and China. Brazil said it had confirmed more than 860 cases of microcephaly, most of which it considers to be related to Zika infections in the mothers. It is investigating more than 4,200 additional suspected cases of microcephaly.—Reuters
**Opinion**

Top-down approach vs federal or presidential form of government

Khin Maung Aye

There are several theories of government as discussed by Jon Pierre and Guy Peters (2000). These theories are: traditional authority; autopoiesis and network steering; cybernetics and steering or system theory; policy instruments; institutional analysis; national choice; network and policy communities or policy network theory; interpretive theory; and organization theory.

Among the aforesaid theories, the traditional authority theory will be dealt with. This approach generally refers to the ‘top down’ authority vested in the state. Here in this juncture, government as the legitimate embodiment of the general will, or the crown, or whatever the source of authority is assumed to be, the only source of governance in these models. Under this approach, law and coercion are viewed as the technique of governance, and any attempt to challenge or weaken the authority of the state is seen as an unacceptable usurpation of the state power. This traditional view of governance can also be seen as common in the communist states which talks about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Some hierarchicalists while discussing the constitutional norms of countries like the United Kingdom, refers to the unlimited power that the Queen enjoys in parliament. In the context of ‘new government’ scholars forward that it is the function of the deeply embedded conception power of the crown (the government) in most Westminster systems. The traditional authority theory also refers to the legalistic conception of governing.

It is worth mentioning here in this juncture that a good education can be Germanic where the Rechtsstaat system, which refers to a law based state, and which is a core concept of German constitutional thinking, is central to the role of state in its tradition.

It presumes acceptance of law and the capacity of the government to govern through law with only minimal opposition. The top-down approach is less compatible with the system in most of the small European state where there exists the history of compromise, coalition and conflict management. This meant that centralized directives are likely to be questioned. Similarly, the centralized top-down authority does not go as well with that of the federal or presidential form of government.

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**Holistic Development for Kindergartners**

Dr. Khin Myoe Myint Kyu
Chairman (KG Curriculum Committee)

Concerning resources, there are two types: material resources and human resources. A country which stands alone on material resources is very likely to face difficulties to pursue sustainable development. Most of the developed countries depend on human resources (e.g. Singapore, Japan, Ireland, The Netherlands, etc.) and as a consequence they achieve sustainable development.

Whether a nation developed or not is very much depended upon the citizens’ development (human resource development). Hence it is necessary to nurture well developed citizens for the sustainable development of our country. Well-developed citizens mean not only equipped them with 21st century skills but also with physical, mental, emotional, social and moral skills.

These days, I have heard/read many (negative or positive) comments concerning with our KG new curriculum. Some think KG curriculum was developed as usual or some consider that it was developed by the group influenced by policy or decision makers. In reality it is not like this. Developing the KG Curriculum Framework is the very first beginning step of the KG roll out and it was done by international/national curriculum experts. Many consultation meetings were conducted with the chairmen from academic subject committees, professors and pedagogues from universities of education, experts from the Myanmar Language Commission and other stakeholders. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for the Kindergarten is focused on the care, development and learning needs of kindergartners. The KG Curriculum Committee was formed after finalizing the KG Curriculum Framework and I (retd. Deputy Director General, Pro-Rector as well, and have more than 37 years service in education) am the chairman of that committee.

Three education experts – Professor Dr. Thein Lwin (Educational Psychology and Developmental Psychology expert), Dr. Myint Thein (Curriculum expert) and Dr. Win Aung (Language expert) – supervised the team for developing the KG curriculum. By the end of the KG year, the child should be a self-directing, confident, happy, healthy, well-nourished, socially adapt, emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected and well-respected; emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected and well-respected; emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected and well-respected; emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected and well-respected; emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected and well-respected; emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected and well-respected; emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected and well-respected.

Consequently, I believe that the KG new curriculum is designed to serve children to be:

1. Self-directed, independent, and having strong sense of being;
2. Well-nourished, happy, healthy, well protected, and resilient;
3. Emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learners, wishing to explore through further reading, writing, mathematical and knowledge-intensive activities; and
4. Contributing to the wellbeing of the group (the family, community, and the country).

In order to achieve the above mentioned aims, the approaches and teaching methodologies are needed to change drastically; in the past the approaches and methods led to rote learning but now the new KG curriculum is designed to use (i) holistic approach, (ii) developmentally appropriate approach and (iii) the matric approach. These approaches will enable children to obtain higher order thinking skills, such as creative thinking skill, problem solving skill, inquiry learning skill, etc. We have to consider what type of children we want to nurture: just a literate person or an educated one. Here I would like to refer to the philosophy given by Sayargyi U Myint Han (retd. DG of Myanmar Education Research Department) that “literacy is only a tool for getting education to a great extent in an accelerated manner”. In the past rote learning was rational, but now we are entering into the 21st century and in order to keep pace with the knowledge explosion era, rote learning is no longer suitable for our human resource development. Holistic education is the best solution for nurturing children keep away from rote learning and encourage them for getting 21st century skills and higher order thinking skills.

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Due to limited space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” posts that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

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**Balaji V**

Come April and Myanmar begins the new financial year and also get into a celebratory mode, one of the biggest in SE Asia, the Thingyan Water Festival. One can sense the mood of celebration and fun in the beginning of the month itself. Working people start planning their holidays and the Thingyan pandals they will celebrate in. Students gear up with excitement and plan their do’s. Generation X start their thinking, is central to the role of state in its tradition.
Holistic Development for Kindergartners

Holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to other skills like compassion and peace. Holistic education aims to call forth people an innate reverence for life and for alternate love of learning. This is the definition given by Ron Miller, founder of the journal Holistic Education Review (now entitled Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice). The term holistic education is often used to refer to the more democratic and humanistic types of education. Robin Ann Martin (2003) describes this further by stating, “At its most general level, what distinguishes holistic education from other forms of education are its goals, its attention to experiential learning, and the significance that it places on relationships and primary human values within the learning environment.”

In considering curriculum using a holistic approach, one must address the question of what children need to learn. Since holistic education seeks to educate the whole person, there are some key factors that are essential to this type of education. First, children need to learn about themselves. This involves learning self-respect and self-esteem. Secondly, children need to learn to love others. In learning about their relationships with others, there is a focus on social “literacy” (learning to see social influence) and emotional “literacy” (one’s own self in relation to others). Third, children need to learn about resilience. This entails overcoming difficulties, facing challenges and learning how to endure long-term success. Fourth, children need to learn about aesthetics – This encourages the student to see the beauty of what is around them and learn to have admiration in life. (Holistic Education, Inc, Home Page).

To be in line with holistic education to nurture the holistic development of the child, the six learning areas included in the new KG curriculum are:

(i) Wellbeing
(ii) Moral, social, and emotional development;
(iii) Communication;
(iv) Exploring basic mathematical and
(v) Aesthetic and creative skills;

(vi) Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

In the past the KG (Grade one) students had to study the subjects such as Myanmar English, Mathematics and so on, while according to the thematic approach using in the new KG curriculum, the students will have to learn the topics as follows:

(1) My Self
(2) My Family
(3) Our School
(4) Our Community
(5) Plants
(6) Fish
(7) Birds
(8) Insects
(9) Mammals
(10) Climate
(11) Festivals
(12) Market
(13) Water
(14) Houses
(15) Transportation

In the new KG system, teachers need to make plans for KG teacher training and within these days Training for Trainers are being conducted in Mandalay. Trainers should keep in their mind that when they are showing the ways and means – what and how KG teachers should do. Successful KG implementation is very much depended on KG teachers. Starting from the training they have to learn the new approaches and methodologies. Interest and active participation/learning at training are necessary. Hence they are well-prepared to enter KG classrooms with confidence that teachers should have, since they are the key actors not only for the children but also for the Nation’s future. In brief, it would be concluded that kindergartners will learn not only alphabets but knowledge, skills and attitudes to become well qualified human resources. Our ultimate goal is to achieve holistic development of the kindergartners.

Concert held to mark Sino-Myanmar friendship in Mandalay

A CONCERT to mark Sino-Myanmar friendship took place with the performance of three young Chinese artists at the national theatre in Mandalay on Monday. The three Chinese artists—a pianist, a vocalist and a violinist—are international musical award winners. The famed artists entertained Mandalay audiences with songs and made New Year wishes at the concert held ahead of Myanmar Thingyan Festival.

— Kyaw Htway

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President’s Office
Order No. 13/2016
13th Waning of Tabang, 1377 ME
(5 April, 2016)
Appointment of Deputy Minister

IN accord with the provisions stated in section 234 (b) and (d) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 16 (b) (9) of the Union Government Law, U Kyaw Tin has been appointed as Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Sgd
Htin Kyaw
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Myitkyina-Sonparabon-PutaO Road being expanded

AN expansion of the 218-mile long Myitkyina-Sonparabon-PutaO road is currently being carried out by local authorities with the use of Union government funds for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

With the aim of providing better transportation services to road users local authorities began implementing the development project during the 2012-2013 FY, expanding the width of the road from 12 feet to 24 feet as well as paving the road to ensure safer travel and constructing three RC bridges below the 50 feet spans.

The original road was built during the Second World War era and has reportedly been bad-

Myitkyina-Sonparabon-PutaO Road being expanded. Photo: Moe Myint Hlang

Myitkyina-Sonparabon-PutaO Road being expanded.
Panama Papers probes opened, China limits access to news on leaks

BEIJING/HONG KONG — Authorities across the globe have opened inquiries into a leak of documents from a Panamanian law firm that showed possible wrongdoing using offshore company structures.

The “Panama Papers” have cast light on the financial arrangements of high profile politicians and public figures and the companies and financial institutions they use for such activities. Among those named in the documents are friends of Russian President Vladimir Putin and relatives of the leaders of China, Britain, Iceland and Pakistan, and the president of Ukraine.

Leading figures and financial institutions responded to the massive leak of more than 11.5 million documents with denials of any wrongdoing as prosecutors and regulators began a review of the reports from the investigation by the US-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and other media organisations.

Following the reports, China has moved to limit local access to coverage of the matter with state media denouncing Western reporting on the leak as biased against non-Western leaders.

France, Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Sweden and the Netherlands are among nations that have commenced investigations, and some other countries, including the United States, said they were looking into the matter.

Mossack Fonseca, the Panamanian law firm at the centre of the leaks, has set up more than 240,000 offshore companies for clients around the globe and denies any wrongdoing. It calls itself the victim of a campaign against privacy and claims media reports misrepresent the nature of its business. In a printed statement given to Reuters by a senior Arab client at Mossack Fonseca’s Hong Kong office on Tuesday, the firm said it has never been charged with or formally investigated for criminal wrongdoing in its nearly 40 years of operation.

“We do not advise clients on how to operate their businesses. We don’t link ourselves in any way to companies we help incorporate,” the firm said in the statement.

“The exclusion of professional fees we earn, we don’t take possession of clients’ money, or otherwise have anything to do with any of the direct financial aspects related to operating these businesses,” Mossack Fonseca also said it supports international initiatives requiring greater transparency of newly incorporated companies and trusts and has implemented such measures as part of its own due diligence.

The staff at the office declined to answer questions. The Hong Kong government said in a statement that its Inland Revenue Department has taken note of the recent release of the documents and will take “necessary actions” based on any information it gets. It will not comment on individual cases or disclose the course of action because of secrecy provisions in Hong Kong tax law, the government said.

Credit Suisse (CSG.S) and HSBC (HSBA.L), two of the world’s largest wealth managers, on Tuesday dismissed suggestions they were actively using offshore structures to help clients cheat on their taxes.

Both were named among the banks that helped set up complex structures that make it hard for tax collectors and investigators to track the flow of money from one place to another, according to ICIJ.

Credit Suisse CEO Tidjane Thiam, who is aggressively targeting Asia’s wealthiest for growth, said his bank was only after lawful assets.

Speaking at a media briefing in Hong Kong, he acknowledged the bank uses offshore financial structures, but only for very wealthy customers with assets in multiple jurisdictions and did not support their use for tax avoidance or allow them without knowing the identities of all those concerned.

“We do not condone structures for tax avoidance,” he said.

Whenever there is a structure with a third party beneficiary we insist to know the identity of that beneficiary,” he said.

Separately, HSBC said the documents pre-dated a thorough reform of its business model.

Both banks have in recent years paid large fines to U.S. authorities over their wealth management or banking operations.

Credit Suisse agreed in 2014 to pay a $2.5 billion fine for helping rich Americans evade taxes. HSBC agreed in 2012 to pay $1.92 billion in fines, mainly for allowing itself to be used to launder Mexican drug money.

The reports on leaks also pointed to the offshore companies linked to the families of Chinese President Xi Jinping and other powerful current and former Chinese leaders.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei, when asked if the government would investigate tax affairs of those mentioned in the Panama Papers, told reporters at a daily news briefing the ministry would not comment on “these groundless accusations”.

SPOT is a unique and powerful tool for promoting dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of every member of the human family. It is a driving force for positive social change. That is why some of the world’s greatest sportsmen and women have been, and remain, engaged in helping the United Nations to raise awareness on important issues such as hunger, HIV-AIDS, gender equality and environmental stewardship.

This year the world is embarking on a major new challenge — implementing the visionary 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations Member States have adopted 17 universal Sustainable Development Goals to build a future of peace, justice, dignity and opportunity for all. Together, they provide a set of integrated and indivisible priorities for people, planet, prosperity, partnership and peace.

To reach these global goals, we must engage all sectors of society, everywhere. Sport has an essential role to play. Sport promotes health and well-being. It fosters tolerance, mutual understanding and peace. It contributes to social inclusion and equality. It empowers women and girls and persons with disabilities. It is a vital part of quality education in schools. It empowers, inspires and unites.

On this third International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, I urge Governments, organizations, businesses, and all actors in society to harness the values and power of sport to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. By working — and playing — together, we can create the future we want.

UN Secretary-General’s Message on the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

6 April 2016

Islamic State hints at attacks in London, Berlin and Rome

LONDON — The Islamic State militant group released a video on Tuesday suggesting it may carry out further attacks in the West, naming London, Berlin and Rome as possible targets.

“If it was Paris yesterday, and today Brussels, Allah knows where it will be tomorrow. Maybe it will be in London or Berlin or Rome,” said a member of the group in English in the video which showed footage of the aftermath of previous attacks.

Islamic State has claimed responsibility for bombings that killed 31 people in Brussels in March and attacks in Paris last November that killed 130. The video showed images of the House of Commons in London and Rome’s Colosseum.

Russia to start deliveries of S-300 missiles to Iran in coming days

MOSCOW — Russia will begin the first shipment of its S-300 air defence missile systems to Iran in the coming days, Interfax news agency quoted a senior Russian diplomat as saying on Tuesday.

“I don’t know if this will happen today, but they (S-300 missiles) will be loaded (for shipment to Iran),” the agency quoted Zamar Kabulov, a department chief at the Foreign Ministry, as saying.

Saudi Arabia to sign $21.5 billion energy, development deals with Egypt

CAIRO — Saudi Arabia is expected to sign a $20 billion deal to finance Egypt’s petroleum needs for the next five years and a $1.5 billion deal to develop its Sinai region, two Egyptian government sources told Reuters on Tuesday.

The agreements are to be tabled on Thursday during a visit to Cairo by Saudi Arabia’s King Salman, a rare foreign trip.

Saudi Arabia, along with other Gulf oil producers, has pumped billions of dollars into Egypt’s flagging economy since the army toppled President Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 after mass protests against his rule.

The Gulf Arab countries see the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat. Egypt is struggling to revive an economy which unravelled following an uprising that toppled President Hosni Mubarak in 2011.
At least 55 killed in flash floods in northern Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — Flash floods triggered by heavy rain in Pakistan have killed at least 55 people and rescued were trying on Monday to help thousands of survivors including some cut off by a landslide in a mountain valley, officials said.

The weather system that brought the unusually heavy rain was expected to move northeast, towards northern India, although more isolated storms were expected in northern Pakistan, the Meteorological Department said.

Yousuf Zia, a disaster management official in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said nearly 150 homes had been destroyed and tents and blankets were being distributed to the homeless. “There are 30 people stranded by a landslide in the Kohistan Valley where we have sent a helicopter to rescue them,” Zia said.

Forty-seven people were killed and 37 injured in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zia said, while eight people were killed in Pakistani-administered Kashmir, officials there said.

Landslides caused widespread damage to roads and communication infrastructure in the Pakistani side of Kashmir, they said. One of the worst-affected districts was the Swat Valley, northwest of the capital, Islamabad, where 121 (4.76 inches) of rain fell on Sunday, the Meteorological Department said.—Reuters

India sacks some foreign-funded consultants; health programmes may suffer

NEW DELHI — India is firing dozens of foreign-funded health experts working inside the government, seen as part of a broader clampdown to reduce the influence of non-government organisations (NGOs) on policy.

The loss of these professionals, most of whom are Indian nationals, has raised concerns that signature programmes to combat HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis may suffer just as they face funding shortfalls due to slow bureaucracy. A shortage of technical experts has for years forced India to turn to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and aid groups like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to manage large-scale public health schemes.

Of the nearly 140 people who run India’s HIV/AIDS programme, 112 are consultants seconded from foreign organisations. Some are engaged in planning and monitoring of prevention activities in high-risk Indian states.

Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government ordered 45 of them to be removed in service by June as they had served more than three years, according to health ministry officials and a document seen by Reuters.

By December, 70 of these experts will leave, while others, who have worked for less than three years, face a government screening committee to decide whether they are needed.

“It’s like questioning our integrity just because we are foreign funded,” said an HIV/AIDS consultant who worked in the health department for three years and is now looking for a job.

The programme has won global acclaim for sharply reducing annual new HIV infections, but the rate of decline has slowed in recent years. India recorded 80,000 new infections last year.

S. Selvakumar, a joint secretary in the finance ministry who signed off on clarifications to the new policy rules in January, said he did not know why consultants working in the government were being removed. He said the finance ministry received a request from the cabinet secretariat to compile a list of government consultants last May.

Two other finance ministry officials said the move was driven by fears that foreign agencies could use their consultants to influence policy in New Delhi. “Their loyalties would be divided,” said one. The security of information was also a concern, the other officer said. More than 500 consultants work across the Indian government, about half in the health sector alone. Some are from Britain’s Department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations’ UNICEF.

A spokeswoman for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation did not comment on the government’s decision, but said it would adhere to the directive. A DFID spokesperson said the department had “not received any complaints from the government of India about data theft or undue influence on policies.”

The WHO and UNICEF did not respond to requests for comment. The move on consultants employed by government departments but who get their salaries from the parent organisations comes at a time when the government has tightened controls on foreign NGOs operating in India.

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ASEAN finance ministers to work toward regional financial integration

BANGKOK — Finance ministers and central bank governors from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have agreed to make efforts toward realising financial integration in the region by 2025, according to their statement adopted on Monday.

During their meetings in the Lao capital Vientiane, representatives from the 10 member states of ASEAN welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community and pledged to promote financial inclusion and stability based on a blueprint for the coming decade for the AEC.

“The ASEAN economy grew by 4.4 per cent in 2015, despite challenges in the global economy,” the joint statement said, inferring to the world economic downturn last year marked by the slowing of Chinese economic expansion.

The representatives noted that despite “downside risks arising from external factors,” the region will work on maintaining economic growth and promoting financial stability this year by putting in place “appropriate monetary, fiscal and macroprudential policies.”

They affirmed continued efforts to toward liberalising financial services and developing capital markets as pillars for realising regional financial integration.

“We also agreed to intensify our cooperation and integration initiatives to strengthen the ASEAN region’s resilience against potential market vulnerabilities, external shocks and volatile financial market conditions,” they said.—Kyodo News
Brazil attorney general urges Congress to end impeachment case

BRASILIA — Brazil’s attorney general urged a congressional committee on Monday to dismiss impeachment charges against President Dilma Rousseff, saying there is no legal basis for the process.

Jose Eduardo Cardozo, the government’s main legal advisor, told members of Congress that the decision by lower house speaker Eduardo Cunha to accept the impeachment request was motivated by Cunha’s desire for political revenge against Rousseff, his bitter political rival.

“The impeachment process was compromised from the start and as such it is invalid,” Cardozo said, telling lawmakers that to conclude the impeachment would be to “rip up the constitution.”

The hearing came just weeks ahead of a vote that could suspend Rousseff from office in the middle of an economic crisis and a bribery scandal at state-run oil company Petrobras that has shaken Brazil’s political establishment. Markets favour Rousseff’s ouster on hopes it could usher in business-friendly policies under her substitute, Vice President Michel Temer.

The opposition’s impeachment request, which is not formally tied to the graft probe threatening her inner circle, alleges that Rousseff deliberately manipulated budgetary accounts to boost her re-election campaign in 2014.

Cardozo, Rousseff’s former justice minister, decried allegations that lending from state banks to the federal government was used to fund social programmes.

The testimony by the attorney general, appointed in March, is the latest step in a process that started with Cunha’s acceptance of impeachment charges in December.

The committee will recommend to the lower house whether there are grounds to impeach Rousseff. The full house would then vote on the committee’s decision, which could happen as soon as mid-April.

of the impeachment passes to lower house, Rousseff would be suspended for up to six months while facing trial in the Senate, making Temer acting president. Temer and Rousseff’s PMDB party, the largest in Congress, formally broke with the government last week.

Rousseff’s opponents need the votes of two-thirds of 513 deputies to take the impeachment case to the Senate. Rousseff has to get at least 171 votes or abstentions to block the process. Political consultancies, such as the Eurasia Group, see a 60-70 per cent chance she will lose the vote.

In an effort to rally her leftist base and consolidate support for her impeachment, Rousseff last month appointed her predecessor and political mentor, former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, as cabinet chief.

The move set off a wave of legal challenges from critics accusing her of shielding Lula from the snowballing corruption investigation that started at state-run oil company Petroleio Brasileiro SA (PETR4.SA), known as Petrobras.

If Lula takes office as Rousseff’s minister, proceedings against him will remain under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

A dozen other impeachment requests are also waiting for consideration by Cunha, a fierce critic of Rousseff who himself is facing corruption charges over millions in the Petrobras scheme through undeclared Swiss bank accounts.

Cunha can accept a second bid to impeach the president in a tandem with the current process but he is expected to do so only if the first case against Rousseff is defeated.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BANI BHUM VOY NO ( )
Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANI BHUM VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.L.I.T.T-3 which 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.

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: MS MERIDIAN SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE LTD.
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BUM VOY NO ( )
Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BUM VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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.

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: MS REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

Slow fault movements may indicate impending earthquake

SINGAPORE — Scientists from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) at its Earth Observatory of Singapore (EOS) have discovered a way to forecast earthquakes based on slow fault movements caused by moving sub-layers of the earth, announced NTU in a press release on Tuesday.

NTU scientists found that slow fault movements or small vibrations not only potentially point to an impending earthquake, and there is also a discernible pattern to them.

The findings are different from what scientists have thought so far. Scientists believe that large earthquakes are unlikely to occur following tremors or small-scale earthquakes that are caused by slow vibrations or slow fault movements such as those observed in the area southwest of Parkfield along the San Andreas Fault in California, the United States.

Sylvain Barbot, assistant professor at NTU’s Asian School of the Environment and earth scientist at EOS, said the discovery delved understanding of how faults accumulate and release stress over time.

These vibration patterns are caused by alternating slow and fast ruptures occurring on the same patch of a fault.

“If only slow movements are detected, it does not mean that a large earthquake cannot happen there,” Barbot said.

On the contrary, the same area of the fault can rupture in a catastrophic earthquake,” he added.

Seismic hazards in the Southeast Asia region will probably come from an impending large earthquake in the Mentawai seismic gap in Sumatra, Indonesia, which is a current area of active monitoring and investigation.

EOS scientists previously pointed out a large earthquake may occur any time in this area southwest of Padang, the only place along a large fault where a big earthquake has not occurred in the past two centuries. NTU said the team’s latest findings could potentially be applied in the seismic monitoring of the area to help better forecast large earthquakes in the region.

The findings were published in Nature, one of the most prestigious scientific journals in the world.—Xinhua
Chinese fertiliser company to set up Australian operation

CANBERRA — Chinese fertiliser producer Hubei Xinyangfeng has secured its first foreign investment, a land outside of China, after it purchased a farm in southern New South Wales, Australia.

The Chinese company, listed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, has pledged to spend 50 million US dollars setting up a number of locations in Australia, and began its operation by purchasing the farm for 4 million US dollars.

On Tuesday, a spokesperson from the producer said it was hoping to further expand its international operations through opening up a number of Australian sites.

"Xinyangfeng, one of the top fertiliser makers in China, has pledged to invest 50 million US dollars in Australia, including setting up a new 30,000 tonne a year waste-to-fuel fertiliser project and farming business," the spokesperson told News Corp.

Jason Hellyer from Hellyer Consulting, the firm which assisted Xinyangfeng in acquiring the farmland in southern New South Wales, said the purchase would ensure the Chinese company has a ‘solid’ base for expansion in Australia.

"(This) purchase is their first in Australia and through this exercise we think they’ve now got the template and people in place to help them establish a solid Australian base," he told News Corp. Hubei Xinyangfeng is one of China’s largest top producers of fertilisers.—Xinhua

Smelly Beijing sewage plant to be moved underground

BEIJING — A wastewater treatment plant in Beijing’s suburban Tongzhou District, the site of the capital’s new subsidiary administrative center, will be moved underground to hide its smell and noise, local authorities have announced.

The existing plant, which handles 84 per cent of the sewage in the district, has been operating since 2002, becoming a headache for residents of neighborhoods that have been built around it.

The new plant will have higher treatment standards and larger water reclamation capacity, will be completed by September, the local government said.—Xinhua

Drought rules pushed Californians to cut water use by nearly 25 per cent

SACRAMENTO, (Calif) — Residents and businesses in drought-stricken California cut back water use by nearly 25 per cent from June 2015 through the end of February 2016 — enough to supply nearly 6 million people for a year, officials said on Monday.

The state’s first ever mandatory cutbacks in water use were imposed by Democratic Governor Jerry Brown as the state entered its fourth year of devastating drought last spring, leading to a savings of 1.19 million acre-feet of water, about the amount used annually by the cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego combined.

“Californians rose to the occasion, reducing irrigation, fixing leaks, taking shorter showers, and saving our precious water resources in all sorts of ways,” said Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board, which developed the regulations and is responsible for enforcing them. Under the rules, Californian residents and businesses were required to cut back their usage by up to 36 percent over 2013, in a range determined by a combination of geography and past conservation efforts. All told, they conserved by 24 percent, close to the 25 per cent goal set by Brown in an emergency order issued by Brown last April.

Regulators are weighing whether to lift or adjust the cutbacks following a wet winter that has left the northern part of the state with a plentiful water supply. The State Water Resources Control Board is set to reconsider the orders at a series of meetings later this month, as consumers and water utilities chafe under the continued ban. “We need to adjust to reflect the reality we’re in, while still being mindful of the fact that we don’t know what next year is going to bring,” Marcus said Monday.

One water district, responding to consumers who are irate that they must continue to conserve even as their local reservoir is reaching flood-control levels, has on its own told residents that they will no longer require cutbacks.—Reuters
Grieve, smash, dance: Gyllenhaal’s ‘Demolition’ has it all

NEW YORK — In the movie “Demolition,” actor Jake Gyllenhaal loses his wife in a traffic accident, pours his heart out to a vending machine company, and smashes up his home with a sledgehammer. But perhaps the biggest challenge in the drama-comedy about grief was having to free-style dance on stage to “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction.”

For those who have yet to see the Stones live, a re-creation of their concert backdrop — with makeup table, audio instructions, guitars — leads to a 3D experience of seeing the band rock on stage to “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction”.

The exhibition also recreates the messy London flat Richards and Jagger shared with late founding band member Brian Jones, with dirty plates piled up and unmade beds. “It’s an incredible walk through your own life, you know? For me, it’s quite emotional in a way,” Richards told Reuters.

Fans can also peek inside a Rolling Stones studio and see a selection of classic album covers, tour posters, Andy Warhol works and depictions of the band’s tongue-and-lips logo. Their colourful fashion is also featured — from Watts’ 1966 tartan suit, to Jagger’s 1972 velvet jumpsuit, Richards’ 1994 antelope coat and Wood’s 2005 embroidered jacket — with many other elaborate concert outfits on display.

“There’s a magic that happens every time we get together for rehearsals, for a new tour, or when we go in the studio,” Wood said of the band’s enduring success.

The Stones just completed a Latin America tour, which ended with an historic concert in Cuba. They are now aged in their late 60s and early 70s, and “a lot softer, a lot wiser” according to Watts, but have no plans to retire just yet.

“Hopefully...we’ll never give up. They’ll have to shovel us in the grave. We feel like we’re still evolving and I think you have to feel that way,” Richards said. “Every show that you do, you say the next one is going to be a little bit better.”

“Exhibitionism” runs at the Saatchi Gallery from 5 April 5 to 4 September, after which it will tour 11 cities around the world over a four-year period. — Reuters

Jennifer Lopez announces new single

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Jennifer Lopez has announced her new song “Ain’t Your Mama”, which she will be reissuing in a few days.

The announcement comes just a month after she signed a multi-album deal with Epic Records, reported Aceshowbiz. Lopez, 46, was chatting with a fan about the upcoming “American Idol” series finale in the clip when she revealed that she was going to perform the tune live for the first time during the show’s Thursday episode.

She then played a portion of the upbeat track, which includes lyrics like, “I ain’t going cook all day, I ain’t your mama/ I ain’t going to do your laundry.” — Reuters

Sarah Michelle Gellar believes in creating memories with kids

LOS ANGELES — Actress Sarah Michelle Gellar says she gives her hundred per cent to her kids when she is with them. The 38-year-old actress said she makes sure to put her phone and work aside when with her children, reported Entertainment Weekly.

“We’re all time-impervious, we’re all busy. But I make sure when I’m there, that I’m present. I’m not checking my phone. I’m not doing a million things,” she said. The “Cruel Intentions” star and her husband of 13 years, Freddie Prinze Jr, are parents of Charlotte, 6, and Rocky, 3. — Reuters
Greece picks own director to head arts festival after Belgian artist quits

ATHENS — Greece on Monday picked a local theater director to curate its most renowned annual summer arts festival after Belgian artist Jan Fabre quit following protests from artists that his plans excluded Greek works.

Fabre resigned on 2 April, complaining of a “hostile artistic environment” only days after giving a news conference where he said the festival in 2016 would be devoted to Belgium.

The next two years would have focused on artists who cooperated with Fabre, while Greek artists would have made up one third of the lineup.

The 61-year-old festival, which has featured iconic figures from Maria Callas to Dame Margaret Fonteyn alongside ancient Greek drama, runs from June to the end of August and is held in Greece’s well-preserved theater of Epidaurus in the Peloponnese.

Fabre’s programme, which would have focused on the “Belgian Spirit”, was met with howls of protest from performing artists, say festival organizers.

In his resignation letter, Fabre said he accepted the job because he would make artistic choices freely.

“This does not seem possible in Greece,” he said according to a culture ministry statement. “I don’t want to work in a hostile artistic environment, to which I came with an open mind and heart.”

When Fabre announced his lineup on 29 March, he said: “I want to do a tribute to Belgium... because this small country is my home and my sanctuary.”

On Monday, the culture ministry said 63-year old Greek actor turned director Angelos Theodoropoulos would take the post.

“The new artistic director’s task is tough, but we are certain that the director will cooperate constructively with the board of the Greek festival as well as the Greek artists for the result to be the best possible in the current circumstances,” the ministry said in a statement.—Reuters

 Builders find remnants from Byzantine period in Gaza

GAZA — Construction workers in Gaza have discovered ancient ruins that archaeologists say may be part of a Byzantine church dating from around 1,500 years ago, the Palestinian tourism and antiquities ministry said on Monday.

The findings include segments of marble pillars with ornate Corinthian capitals, one nearly three meters (yards) long, and a 90 cm (35 inch) foundation stone bearing a Greek symbol for Christ. Fifteen pieces have been uncovered, with excavations continuing.

“Our first thought is that the site is a cathedral or a church from the Byzantine period,” said Jamal Abu Rida, the general director of the antiquities ministry.

“During that era, there was a great interest among the Byzantine rulers to build churches in the Gaza Strip.”

Gaza was a prosperous sea-port during the Roman period, with a diverse population of Greeks, Romans, Jews, Egyptians and Persians.

Abu Rida said the preparatory work for a shopping center may be part of a Byzantine church or cathedral dating from around 1,500 years ago, were found in Gaza City on 4 April. PHOTO: Reuters

“arid” the place is of historical value,” said Abu Rida, estimating the ruins to date from somewhere between 395 and the late 6th centuries AD.

Dozens of onlookers watched on Monday as a bulldozer and a digger continued to shift earth in Palestine Square, a busy shopping district in downtown Gaza. Bystanders used their phones to take pictures and video of the archaeological pieces laid out next to the digging site.

The discovery was first made on Saturday, as construction workers prepared the ground for a shopping center. The antiquities ministry was called in and immediately uncovered three large pieces. Then a dozen more were found.

Abu Rida said the preparation for a shopping center may have to be halted should excavations lead to the discovery of more pieces. Construction workers showed no sign of stopping on Monday, with diggers shifting huge mounds of earth.

“Our mission is to preserve our Palestinian history before Islam and after Islam,” said Abu Rida. Over the millennia, Gaza has served as a trading post for Egyptians, Philistines, Romans and Crusaders. There are ruins from the time of Alexander the Great’s siege of the city and the arrival of the Islamic armies some 1,400 years ago.

Several discoveries have been made in recent years but a lack of funding and skills has hindered the ministry’s ability to excavate and preserve the findings. Abu Rida said his ministry employs just 40 excavation workers.

“The site we are talking about is 2,000 square meters and 10 metres deep and requires hundreds of workers and millions of dollars to carry out proper excavation to extract pieces and read the texts written on them,” he said.

The site is located not far from Gaza’s old spice market, near the ancient Omari Mosque, built a thousand years ago, and the Church of Saint Porphyratus, dating from the 5th century. —Reuters
Messi, Suarez and Neymar are not machines, says Luis Enrique

BARCELONA — Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez have scored 107 goals between them this season but after Barcelona’s celebrated trio failed to find the net in the defeat by Real Madrid, coach Luis Enrique defended them by declaring “they aren’t machines”.

Luis Enrique said he was not concerned about the physical state of his all-star attacking line despite their below-par performance in Saturday’s 2-1 home defeat.

Although Real halted their 39-game unbeaten run, the 45-year-old coach said he retained full confidence in his side as they prepared to host Atlético Madrid in the first leg of an all-Spanish Champions League quarter-final on Tuesday.

Messi (37), Suarez (43) and Neymar (27) have 107 goals between them in all competitions this season but Barcelona’s only goal on Saturday came from defender Gerard Piqué. “They aren’t machines, they are the best players in their position but they aren’t unbeatable or unsurpassable,” Luis Enrique told a news conference on Monday.

“I think all my players are in perfect condition. We had forgotten what it was like to lose but when you do you remember how difficult it is to win and we all hope the defeat serves as a stimulus to win again. Looking at how we have done in the last few months, I’m optimistic.”

Piqué reaffirmed his coach’s belief in the three South American forwards.

“Our three attackers are on another level, from another world. I’m not worried about them at all, it’s impossible for us to have more faith in them, they have brutal qualities and we’re so lucky to have them at Barça,” he said.

The Spain international was also adamant his team would bounce back from the defeat to Real, but said Atlético would pose his side even more problems than Zinedine Zidane’s men did.

“We’re not scared of them but they are having a spectacular season, they are the second best team (in La Liga) and it’s going to be even harder for us than Saturday,” Piqué said.

Diego Simeone’s robust side have conceded only three goals in eight Champions League matches this season, the joint best record in the competition alongside Real. They also have the meanest defence in La Liga, letting in 15 goals in 31 games — 11 fewer than Barcelona.

Atletico pipped Barca to the La Liga title in 2014 and its glory days of the Champions League in the same season en route to the final. They are six points behind Luis Enrique’s side in La Liga and warned up for their trip to Barcelona by thrashing Real Betis 5-1 on Saturday.

However, Piqué reiterated his confidence in his own team, who have beaten Atletico in all six matches under Luis Enrique.

“We’ll see how they approach the game but it’s all down to us, we need to move the ball around quickly and for the fans to put pressure on them,” he said.

“If that happens we’re practically unstoppable.”

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Toure will leave Man City in June, says agent

LONDON — Manchester City’s midfield powerhouse Yaya Toure will leave the club at the end of the season having not been offered a new contract, his agent said on Monday.

The 32-year-old Ivory Coast international, who was the African Footballer of the Year four times in a row from 2011, joined Premier League City from Barcelona for 24 million pounds in July 2010.

Six years ago Toure was sold by Barca boss Pep Guardiola, who will replace Manuel Pellegrini as City’s coach when the Spaniard leaves Bayern Munich at the end of this season.

“We have waited too long. Manchester City promised a lot but nothing has materialised so Yaya will leave in June,” his agent Dimitri Seluk told Sky Sports television.

“Yaya is disappointed, of course, but he is a professional and he remains under contract so he will continue to do his best for City.”

Toure has been linked by the media with a move to Inter Milan who are coached by former City boss Roberto Mancini.

“Various offers have arrived for Yaya and we’re evaluating them,” Seluk said. “Inter? We’re definitely talking about a great club.

“Everyone knows about the relationship between Yaya and Mancini but... we haven’t made any decision yet.”

The Nerazzurri’s project is great and Inter is a fantastic club so it’s normal that they want a player of this level.”

Toure won the Premier League with City in 2012 and 2014, the FA Cup in 2011 and the League Cup in 2014 and 2016. City visit Paris St Germain in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final on Wednesday.

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Rooney keen to extend England career as competition grows

LONDON — England captain Wayne Rooney believes he still has “a few years left” playing for his country, dispelling speculation that the 30-year-old Manchester United forward could soon bring the curtain down on his international career. A knee injury has kept Rooney out of action since February and the emergence of strikers such as Tottenham Hotspur’s Harry Kane and Leicester City’s Jamie Vardy has led to questions over England manager Roy Hodgson’s perceived reliance on Rooney.

Like Hodgson, who rejected talk of Rooney’s ability to lead England during the 10 June-10 July European Championships in France, the Liverpudlian is not ready to call time on his international career.

“Over the past two years my form for England has been really good. I’ve scored a lot of goals,” Rooney told the PFA’s 4 The Professional Footballers’ Association magazine.

“I’ll keep trying to, first and foremost, help the team be successful and if I can score the goals to help achieve that then that’ll be great.

“I’ve still got a few years left. I feel, I’m a lot more patient now in my play. When I was younger, I could be impatient and I’d end up in positions I didn’t really need to be in.”

Rooney, who will turn 31 in October, made his international debut at the age of 17 as a substitute against Australia in 2003 and became the side’s youngest-ever scorer with a goal in a 2-1 win over Macedonia seven months later.

Last September, he surpassed Bobby Charlton’s long-standing record of 49 goals for England against Switzerland and now has 51 goals in 109 internationals. He scored his first goal in a World Cup finals against Uruguay in Brazil in 2014 and was England’s highest scorer in the Euro 2004 qualifying campaign with seven goals. He is also closing in on Charlton’s all-time scoring record of 49 goals for England against Switzerland and now has 51 goals in 109 internationals. He scored his first goal in a World Cup finals against Uruguay in Brazil in 2014 and was England’s highest scorer in the Euro 2004 qualifying campaign with seven goals. He is also closing in on Charlton’s all-time scoring record of 49 goals for England against Switzerland and now has 51 goals in 109 internationals. He scored his first goal in a World Cup finals against Uruguay in Brazil in 2014 and was England’s highest scorer in the Euro 2004 qualifying campaign with seven goals.

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